President’s Report
By Robert G. Rose

Planning for this year’s Lasting Impressions Gala is well underway. The Society will honor Thelma Florin, “Our Woman of the Community,” on May 9, 2018 at the Crystal Plaza.

For many years, Thelma has committed herself to the support of our Society, Federation and its many agencies. Please be sure to watch for the invitation and respond with your generous support in honoring Thelma and furthering the work of our Society.

We are the community’s historical memory. We preserve its history in our archives. We bring that rich history to life with public programming, exhibitions, publications and on-line resources available on our website.

Come to the Gala, show your support of the Society at this, our major fund raising event, and enjoy what will be a wonderful evening in recognizing Thelma, as one of our community’s “very best.”

The Society lost one of its most treasured members last year, our former president and leader, Howard Kiesel.

(continued on page 2)

Thelma Florin is 2018 “Lasting Impressions Gala” honoree

For Thelma Florin, Tikkun Olam is not an abstract imperative. She has spent decades bringing her energy, leadership, and resources to vital community projects.

A New Hampshire native, she has resided in West Orange since her marriage to Richie in 1957. She taught at Newstead School in South Orange and was a Special Education teacher at Roosevelt Junior High in West Orange.

Their daughter Jane Langendorff and her husband Frank, and their son John and his wife, Robin, live in Short Hills with Thelma’s beautiful grandchildren, Marc and Ally Langendorff and Ross, Kate and Owen Florin.

A generous Historical Society Board Member since 2008, the Florins are members of Greater MetroWest’s Achim Society and Thelma is a Lion of Judah at the Prime Minister’s Council level.

A proud founder of the Rachel Coalition, she endowed its Florin Education Series. As a long time Jewish Family Service Board member, she and her husband made significant contributions with the Florin Family Library and the Florin Family Social Workers offices.

At Temple B’nai Jeshurun, their commitment to family and education is reflected in the Florin Family Fund for Child and Family Programming and the Splash Pad Water Park.

Further, Thelma is a Founding Member of the Jewish Women’s Foundation of New Jersey, and serves on the Boards of Greater MetroWest Women’s Philanthropy, the JCC, Daughters of Israel and, formerly, the New Jersey Jewish News.

She is also a past Chair of the Women’s Division of State of Israel Bonds as well as a member of American Jewish Committee, the National Council of Jewish Women and the League of Women Voters.

The Jewish Historical Society is proud to honor Thelma Florin as a woman who has indeed made a Lasting Impression upon our community.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT By Linda Forgosh

On May 19, 2018 between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., the main branch of the Newark Public Library will host an event that it is being called Community History Day: Our Newark Story. Included are workshops, performances, demonstrations, portraits, crafts, prizes, exhibits and MORE!!

What makes this event noteworthy is that we, the Jewish Historical Society, have been invited to participate in the library’s celebration of Newark’s history, which is something that hasn’t happened since 1995, the year that the Jewish Historical Society prepared an exhibit titled “Lasting Impressions Greater Newark’s Jewish Legacy.”

Attendance at opening night exceeded all expectations. After all, Newark is where our Greater MetroWest community traces its roots. This is where we settled, opened thriving family businesses, started industries making everything from shoes, to gold jewelry, to wireless radios, and even leather seats for automobiles.

Religious traditions were observed. Numerous synagogues were established but it was Newark’s three oldest synagogues, Congregation B’nai Jeshurun (1847), Congregation B’nai Abraham (1855), and Congregation Oheb Shalom (1860) that get the most attention.

Important institutions were founded by Newark’s Jews. Newark and New Jersey’s first and only Jewish hospital, Newark Beth Israel, was started in 1901; Newark’s first Jewish Home for the Aged, Daughters of Israel, started in 1908; Newark’s meeting place for Jews who wanted to socialize with their own, affectionately known as “the Y’ on High Street” opened its doors in 1924.

So, why not make a plan to spend May 19 at the Newark Public Library? Not only will you have an opportunity to view photographs, artifacts, and video clips from the Jewish Historical Society’s archives, you can spend time in the library’s building, which in itself is a magnificent structure befitting of this city’s greatness.

NOTE: The Society’s 6700 series has photographs to document what was in its 1995 Lasting Impressions exhibit. They are well worth a visit to the JHS archives.

Contact Linda Forgosh (973) 929-2994 or e-mail lforgosh@jfedgmw.org or Jill Hershorin (973) 929-2995 or e-mail jhershorin@jhsrn.org.
Dedicating the Howard Kiesel Memorial Archive

The recent passing of our JHS past-President, Howard Kiesel (June 11, 2017) has prompted the Society’s board of trustees to acknowledge the unique role that “Howie” played in promoting and preserving the history of Jewish life in Greater MetroWest.

Almost as irreplaceable as the items he contributed to the JHS archive, Howie’s activities spoke to what an archive does – serving as a guardian of the history of our community and its culture.

To begin, Howie was well-known as a community leader. Photographs in the JHS archives feature him as a speaker at a JHS public forum reliving what he and others did to save Soviet Jews at a 1976 Solidarity Day Rally in Washington, D.C. - as the moderator of a Veteran’s Day forum.

Another pic has him seated in front of Newark Beth Israel Hospital with daughters Linda and Pam, talking about the monthly lunches he had with civil rights leader, Rabbi Israel Dresner, who introduced him to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on King’s visit to Howie’s synagogue, Springfield’s Sha-arey Shalom in 1963.

Then there are recollections of him playing his saxophone at Mount Freedom’s Klode Hotel - boasting about his children’s and grandchildren’s accomplishments - showing love and admiration for his wife Audree who was his partner for a life time - and sitting alongside granddaughter Shira, as the two conspired to write his autobiography, “A Kid from Hillside.”

To his credit, Howie made it possible to preserve a unique collection of Greater MetroWest history on the strength of his negotiating skills – Howie arranged to have the history of Beth Israel Hospital transferred to our archives; he continuously added items to the Society’s Sha-arey Shalom collection; and spearheaded the Society’s annual Lasting Impressions Gala, for which he too was honored.

For all these reasons and more, the JHS is pleased to announce the dedication of its archives as the HOWARD KIESEL MEMORIAL ARCHIVE.

Notes From the Stacks

By Jill Hershorn, JHSNJ Archivist

Collections:

We received new items to add to the Partnership’s Collection from its director, Bob Lichtman. In addition to documents, Bob donated a typewriter that has keys in Yiddish!

- Ben Perlmutter brought over additional Unity Club of Maplewood materials to add to the Unity Club Collection.
- Ellen Cramer brought over additional materials to add to the Jackie Levine Collection.
- Alice Barron donated a 1924 Confirmation Services program from Temple B’nai Jeshurun.
- 15 boxes of materials were delivered to us from the now closed, Temple Emanu-El of Livingston.
- Susan Dolinko added minutes from the Kalishman Family Foundation to her collection.

Research and Visitors:

- Use of the Jackie Levine Collection by Adam McGovern, who will write her biography.
- Warren Grover’s collection was researched by a journalist who is interested in Nazis in the U.S. and particularly about Nat Arno’s role as a Minuteman.
- Federation minutes from MetroWest as well as Central examined by a Jewish Community Foundation employee.
- A researcher was interested in digitizing 8 and 16 mm film of Erste Bershader from The Joseph Weinberg Collection.
- Researcher called looking for any information on the construction of the cemetery fence and gate at the Morristown Jewish Center’s cemetery in Cedar Knolls. We were able to find a number of documents.
- A researcher was looking for any evidence of organized Jewish religious activities in 18th and 19th centuries.

Genealogy questions come on a regular basis and we do our best to help. Once The Jewish News digitization project is completed, it will make researching so much easier. Here at the JHS, we pride ourselves on great customer service.
GRANT WINS THE DAY

No, this is not a story about President Ulysses S. Grant. Instead it is about the Jewish Historical Society’s successful application for a general operating support grant (GOS) from the Morris County Heritage Commission.

Unless you are in the business of writing grants you may not know that there is fierce competition to secure a general operating support grant. Careful research reveals that the majority of corporations, private individuals, and institutions who have endowments to award, will do so only if the request accompanies a carefully crafted project grant – but not a grant to pay for the day-to-day operations.

So it is very exciting to receive a grant that will provide for costs which includes items such as postage, maintenance of websites, graphic design of invitations for special events, and newsletters (like the one you are reading now).

Nothing is as sweet as opening a letter (January 22, 2018) from Peg Schultz, Archivist/Acting Director of the Morris County Heritage Commission and reading the words “Congratulations on your grant award.”

If you, a relative, or a friend would like to offer their “services” to help the JHS find other sources for general operating support grants please contact Linda Forgosh at (973) 929-2994 or e-mail her at lforgosh@jfjedgcmw.org. ◆

YIDDISH, ANYONE?
— Debra H. Levenstein, right, a senior development officer at the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater MetroWest NJ, is doing research in the Jewish Historical Society of NJ’s archives. She and JHS executive director Linda Forgosh view a recently acquired type-writer that prints in Yiddish. The JHS welcomes donations of historic artifacts, documents, and photographs for its collections. Contact isegal@jhsmw.org or go to jhs-nj.org.

NEWARK RESEARCH — Journalist Eric Markowitz, who can be heard over NPR, recently visited the Jewish Historical Society of NJ to read through author/historian Warren Grover’s papers. Grover is the author of “Nazis in Newark” and a past JHS president. For appointments to tour the archives, contact Linda Forgosh at 973-929-2994 (lforgosh@jfjedgcmw.org) or Jill Hershonin, 973-929-2995 (jhershonin@jhsmw.org).

PROFILING A LEADER —
Adam McGovern, researcher and author of “The Fabric of Care: 150 Years of Jewish Family Service in MetroWest New Jersey,” has been commissioned to write the autobiography of social activist and Greater MetroWest community leader Jacqueline Levine. He visited the Jewish Historical Society of NJ recently to explore her papers, and is seeking individuals with stories about her to speak with him. Contact Linda Forgosh at 973-929-2994 or lforgosh@jfjedgcmw.org.
Project Intergenerational

By Robert Singer

The Jewish Historical Society in conjunction with the Daughters of Israel Recreation Department (DOI) and West Orange High School (WOHS) started its intergenerational program eight years ago under the leadership of its Board Member Mali Schwartz who continues to be involved in its operations.

In Mali’s absence JHSNJ Secretary, Robert Singer, has assumed the role of liaison between the Society and Daughter’s residents. Singer has held this post for the last four years in conjunction with high school’s history teacher Doug Drabik, who has been an active supporter of the program and instrumental in its success. DOI also provides invaluable support including staff and the use of their facility.

The program involves a diverse group of 40 ninth grade honors history students from WOHS who meet with fifteen seniors at DOI six times during the school year. The students and seniors interact from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm which includes lunch served by the students to their seniors.

The program ends in June with a final project prepared by the students summarizing what each has learned during their interviews and then given to the seniors as a memento of their time spent talking about their life experiences. A copy of the project report is also deposited with the Society.

On occasion, students will have guest speakers, such as Robert Max speaking about his experience as a WWII survivor of a German slave labor camp and author and Linda Forgosh speaking about the life of department store magnate and philanthropist, Louis Bamberger.

Another name for the program is “HIStory HERstory: Gaining Deeper Understanding of History Using Personal Accounts.” Some of the program’s goals are:

- Recognizing the historical significance of the experiences of the elderly population in the community.
- Encouraging teens and seniors to dialogue and share personal stories in order to create a living history of MetroWest community members.
- Provide a chance for a dialogue between different cultures and age groups to create a bridge of understanding.
- Helping students to become better neighbors by learning to recognize people’s similarities and appreciate their differences.
- Training students in the art of oral history taking.
- Giving youth the tools to frame universal questions about the consequences of their actions and their beliefs based on historical events.

THANKS

This JHSNJ newsletter is funded by a generous donation from the Klein/Fien Philanthropic Funds which enables the Society to publish its biannual newsletters. The fund is managed by Judie Fien-Helfman and Mark Fien, the children of the Society’s founders, Ruth and Jerome Fien.
COMING EVENTS

- **April 12, 2018:** Last opportunity to take a tour of the exhibit, “Meet me under Bamberger’s Clock” located at the New Jersey Historical Society 52 Park Place, Newark. Tour starts at 10:00 a.m. To make a reservation contact Linda Forgosh 973-929-2994 or e-mail at lforgosh@jfedgmw.org.

- **May 9, 2018:** Lasting Impressions Gala honoring Thelma Florin, includes hors d’oeuvres buffet, dessert and open bar, Crystal Plaza, 305 West Northfield Road, Livingston - hours 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Tickets can be purchased by contacting Irene Segal (973) 929-2703 or e-mail her at iseagal@jhsmw.org /or at our website at www.jhs-nj.org.

- **May 13, 2018:** All are invited to attend the final session of our JHS Intergenerational Program held at Daughters of Israel located at 1155 Pleasant Valley Way, West Orange. Speaker for the day is World War II veteran Robert Max, author of “The Long March Home.”

- **May 19, 2018:** You are invited to attend the Society’s first-ever Community History Day, at the Newark Public Library, 5 Washington Street, Newark hours 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- **June 5, 2018:** JHS Annual Meeting, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Alex Aidekman Jewish Community Campus 901 Route 10 Whippany. Light refreshments will be served.

**KUDOS TO:**

- JHS past-President Bob Max whose autobiography “The Long March Home” has been published by Hellgate Press. A comprehensive review of Bob’s book is on Amazon.com.

- Congratulations to JHS past-President Warren Grover who was honored by the Newark History Society on the occasion of the group’s 15th anniversary.

- Worth noting is JHS executive director Linda Forgosh, author of “Louis Bamberger Department Store Innovator and Philanthropist,” who was the recipient of the Charles Cummings Award given by the Newark Preservation and Landmarks Committee for her written account of Newark and Weequahic history.

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Years have passed since the JHS acquired a series of 16mm films from former Newark resident, Joseph Weinberg. Known as the *Joseph Weinberg Collection* the amateur films in this collection document the activities of the one-time mutual-aid society known as the Erste Bershader K.U.V. which was organized June 1, 1906. (K.U.V. translates as Kranken Untersteutzung Verein or Chronic Sick Benefits Society). Try saying that!!!

For those not familiar with the term mutual-aid society, this was a term used to describe a group of individuals who were first generation Jews who, in this instance, settled in Newark whose members joined together for the purpose of arranging for death benefits, medical care, re-imbursement of lost wages during illness, life insurance, funeral costs, emergency assistance, and most important of all, a cemetery plot in an area owned by the society which in this case is Newark’s McClellan Street Cemetery.

Their meetings were both social and cultural affairs. Some of the events featured on our newly digitized videos include titles such as “Soldier’s Night” 1943, “Bershader 50th anniversary 1956,” “Bershader Masquerade,” “Bershader 60th anniversary,” and “Bershader Picnic.”

Despite their being silent, these films have a “joie de vivre” quality whereby the participants are clearly enjoying themselves. Today, these films reflect a time gone by by making organizations such as Erste Bershader a distant memory for the children and grandchildren of their beneficiaries.

By now you might be asking why this sudden interest in a collection that, due to financial restraints, has been kept on the Society’s shelves since 1996. The answer lies in a Florida-based researcher whose great grandparents were founders of Erste Bershader. He made an appeal to us to hire a professional videographer to digitize the films and followed it with a donation made in the name of Miriam Marantz Fand and Joseph and Elsie Marantz.

His reason was for “both personal and altruistic reasons.” He wanted to show the videos to his ailing grandmother Miriam, age ninety-six, hoping that when she saw them she might even be in the films or identify others she knew as a young woman growing up in Newark.

It is gratifying for us who oversee the JHS archives when a researcher makes use of the Society’s website [www.jhs-nj.org](http://www.jhs-nj.org) and discovers what they are looking for. To quote the late Dr. Clement A Price, “if anyone wants to know something about local and New Jersey Jewish history all they need to do is contact the Jewish Historical Society of New Jersey.”
Celebrates

Thelma Florin

Our Woman of the Community

Lasting Impressions Gala

Wednesday, May 9, 2018 - 6:30 pm

The Crystal Plaza - 305 West Northfield Avenue in Livingston

Invitation to follow - Please join us!

Tickets can be purchased by calling Irene Segal (973) 929-2703 or the JHS website at www.jhs-nj.org