PRESIDENT’S REPORT
Robert G. Rose

It is with great disappointment that the Society’s Lasting Impressions Gala, scheduled for May 21st, has been postponed due to unforeseen circumstances. It will be rescheduled at a later date.

Refunds will be available to those who have purchased Gala tickets and/or made contributions as Gala sponsors. Please contact the Society’s office administrator, Irene Segal at (973) 929-2703 to request a refund.

On a happier note, the Society has an exciting array of upcoming public programs that cover a wide range of interests touching upon Jewish life. On Thursday, May 9th at 7 pm, John Kenrick will speak of “Jews in the American Theater.” Patricia Pongracz will present a program “Tiffany & American Synagogues” on June 27 at 7 pm.

Two programs are scheduled for next fall. The first, to be presented by Bud Livingston, titled “American Jews and the Civil War” on September 8th at 2 pm, and the second, our Veterans Day Program on November 11 at 7 pm, led by Raymond Schwartz, a first lieutenant who served on General McArthur’s staff in Manila.

The digitization of nearly 70 years of The Jewish News is coming closer to completion. The program is word searchable and user friendly. Visit our website and take a look: jhs-nj.org.

We need your support!

Please help by becoming a member of the Society.

The above logos for our traveling exhibits were designed by Marvin Slatkin.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT
By Linda Forgosh

Much is known about United States Associate Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and her life-long struggle to gain parity for women in the legal profession. But did you know that Newark had its own lady lawyer” and her name was Elizabeth Blume Silverstein?

Born in Newark in 1892, to Selig and Goldie (Aranowitz) Blume, Elizabeth distinguished herself by becoming the first or among the first to graduate from law school, much less set foot in a courtroom as an attorney. A member of the first graduating class of the New Jersey Law School (later to become the Rutgers School of Law–Newark) Blume was admitted to the New Jersey Bar in 1913.

Blume and Ginsburg had a great deal in common. Both graduated at the top of their law school class and both met resistance from their male counterparts. Ginsberg was asked “why are you at Harvard taking the place of a man?” While Blume was told by a potential employer “I want a boy not a girl.” Neither, as history proves, was daunted by such rejections.

On the lighter side was Ginsburg’s reason for marrying her husband, Martin, “who was the only young man I dated who cared that I had a brain.” Describing the two women as “lady lawyers” not only referred to their sex, but also their overall demeanor as stylish dressers.

Blume with her trademark hats, hair in a traditional bun, and tailored suits and Ginsburg in her white lace and sometimes bejeweled collars that she wore over her judge’s robe surprised onlookers and fellow judges alike. Neither, it was said, had to raise a voice to make a point of law. Both were at home in the courtroom.

Eventually curiosity surrounding their roles as female attorneys diminished as they made it possible for thousands of women to follow their lead to become everyday practitioners. Ginsburg’s influence was such that in the late 1960’s Rutgers Law School students asked her to lead a seminar on women and the law. She became one of two female law professors and handful in the country to teach the class. Her reputation for fair treatment and equal opportunity for all prompted President Clinton to appoint her to the United States Supreme Court in 1993. She has become the face of today’s “We Too Movement.”

Blume had multiple causes. She worked in criminal law, including trying and winning a murder case, was into real estate management, and active in Jewish life. These were areas dominated by men. Noteworthy is her being elected (in 1916) to the American Jewish Congress, serving on the Essex County draft board as legal advisor during World War I, and serving as a delegate from the 12th Congressional District to the Republican National Convention in 1937, where she helped to draft the item on the party platform urging the repeal of Prohibition. All of which were traditionally men’s roles.

Only through extensive research did I learn that Elizabeth Blume felt a strong obligation toward our Jewish heritage and future of Zionism. As a member of the American Jewish Congress she helped draft the language used in the World War I Balfour Declaration, which pledged the British government’s support for a Jewish Homeland in Palestine. Together with Rabbi Stephen Wise, she and husband Max Silverstein, helped found the World Jewish Congress in 1936.

As part of the JHS’ celebration of Women’s History Month and the impending 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment giving women the right to vote, I feel that there is much, much more to know about Mrs. Blume. Therefore, I will put on my research hat and just like the recent publication of my recent biography of Louis Bamberger, (“Louis Bamberger, Department Store Innovator and Philanthropist”) I will make every effort to bring Elizabeth Blume’s remarkable career to life.

I welcome any information you may have about Elizabeth Blume. Please call 973-929-2994 or e-mail lforgosh@jfedgmw.org

Sincere regards,
Linda

WOMEN’S HISTORY — Hands raised in celebration of Women’s History Month, Jewish Historical Society of NJ staff, from left, Linda Forgosh, Irene Segal, and Jill Hershon have installed a showcase featuring photographs of women whose roots are in Greater MetroWest. Additional photographs are welcome; contact Forgosh at 973-929-2994 or lforgosh@jfedgmw.org.
By Jill Hershorin, JHSNJ Archivist

Collections

Materials from B’nai Ahavath Shalom, Union, NJ were donated to JHSNJ by Mark Kaplowitz – items include: ad Journals, membership lists, Mt. Lebanon Cemetery records and a publicity booklet.

Some interesting items were given to JHSNJ by Alan Weill. These items include a Newark Private Hospital “Mascot Uniform”; Nurse’s Cap; Correspondence between Edwin Steiner and Julia Linderman and a photo of a Testimonial Dinner of the Progress Club, 1932.

Our new member Marsha Eisen contributed materials from Beth Torah Synagogue (East Orange) materials; Y Women’s Basketball patches; and a few photographs including Jerry Lewis and ice skaters at Weequahic Park.

Don Karp added wonderful selections of Newark Related materials to his collection. Some items include: Postcard of Bamberger’s Department Store, Newark, NJ; Bronze Statue - Replica of Abraham Lincoln statue created by Gutzon Borglum located on the steps of the Newark courthouse, 1911; Wall Plaque of the Newark Public Library; Cigar Box from the Newark Athletic Club, Newark, NJ; Bank Box – Made for L.S. Plaut & Co., Newark, NJ.

We received items from George Schindel Beck - 1 Medallion from Newark Beth Israel Medical Center and 1 Medallion from the Newark Museum of Art (the building is in relief on one side, Louis Bamberger’s profile on other)

Stewart Manheim generously donated correspondence between him and Philip Roth.

Thank you to our donors!

Research and Visitors

Many researchers have stopped by or called our offices for research help. Here’s a sample of some of the topics that were examined:

♦ Phillip Roth materials were looked at by HBO for an upcoming series based on “The Plot Against America.” The materials were also looked at by the NY Times for an obituary on Roth.
♦ Warren Grover’s Newark Minutemen materials were examined by two separate researchers – one working on a dissertation and another working on a story/audible recording.
♦ A student has used our collections in the archive to research a few topics - immigration; the effects of synagogues moving to the suburbs and the Anti-Nazi effort.
♦ The New Jersey Jewish News was looking for a photo or information on Gerald Cantor.
♦ Jackie Levine’s biographer has been examining records from her collection.

Genealogy questions come on a regular basis and we do our best to help. Once the digitization project is complete, it will make researching so much easier.

Here at the JHS of NJ, we pride ourselves on great customer service. If we cannot find information for a researcher, we provide resources for them to search.

Other

Our showcases change each month – In January we featured an exhibit featuring Philip Roth and in February we featured our salute to Black History Month. Our showcase honored Women’s History Month in March and in April the showcase highlighted photos from our archive focused around families as we acknowledged Passover. Finally, in May we will exhibit materials in honor of Jewish American Heritage Month.

Please visit our website. It changes often and there’s a new “spotlight on collections” page where we look at one particular collection in the archive.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH – Jewish Historical Society of NJ archivist Jill Hershorin, left, relied on the JHS archives to provide artifacts and photos for the society’s tribute to Black History Month. Among the items acquired by JHS curator Linda Forgosh (right) are “Dolls for Democracy,” including Jackie Robinson, Marian Anderson, George Washington Carver, and Ralph Bunch, and a photograph of the late Rabbi Joachim Prinz of Temple B’nai Abraham and Martin Luther King, Jr. taken in 1963.
In Memory of ...

Remembering Bob Wiener of the NJ Jewish News

By Andrew Silow-Carroll

When I edited the New Jersey Jewish News from 2003 through 2015, the staff and I made a commitment to creating a true local paper, one that reflected not some generic version of “Jewish” but a distinct chronicle of the particulars New Jersey communities that we covered.

If we succeeded, much of the credit goes to Robert Wiener, who joined the paper shortly before I did and, at an age when other journalists were enjoying a well-deserved retirement, reported the hell out of the towns and institutions that he loved (even if he would never admit that).

Because Bob had the dogged reporter’s knack for seeming to be everywhere at once, he was the face of the Jewish News. If there was a community event to be covered, a veteran to be interviewed, a Holocaust survivor whose story needed to be told, Bob was there. Tall, white-haired, and Falstaffian, Bob was a walking billboard for the heimishe institution we tried to be.

Bob died Sept. 15 at age 78, after an illness that was simultaneously swift and, for the family and friends who watched him suffer, way too prolonged. A 1961 graduate of Rutgers University, Bob came to the Jewish News after a career as a TV producer and broadcast journalist. He worked at WCBS, WABC, NBC, Court TV, and numerous other stations. Among his first jobs was a stint as a young reporter at the Newark Star-Ledger.

For five years he was a producer at News 4 New York for the legendary street reporter Gabe Pressman. They shared a number of local Emmys, including an award for Outstanding Issues Reporting for a 1989 series called “The Lost Children,” a harrowing account of infant mortality, foster care, and homelessness in New York.

Raised in Maplewood, Bob was also a link to the Newark roots of the Jewish communities we covered. He had an especial fondness for the Jewish Historical Society of New Jersey, and loved to cover its exhibitions. I remember the glee with which he wrote about a two-day tribute to Newark native son Philip Roth, which included a tour of the old Weequahic neighborhood and a talk by the novelist himself at the Newark Public Library.

As for his Jewish roots, Bob liked to pretend that he was less literate and more alienated than he was, although I think he came to his distaste for organized religion honestly. Bob privileged action over prayer, and he could talk for hours about his involvement in the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement.

Bob was, at heart, a crooner. Each year he would invite the office to his cabaret performances in the city, where he’d sing from the Great American Songbook and perform his own parodies - a skill honed over years of writing and performing for The Inner Circle Show, the annual roast put on by New York’s journalism community.

Above all, Bob was a role model for anyone who hopes to age with defiance and dignity. He had the energy of a kid, never hesitating to rush out to cover breaking news, or give up a Sunday or a weeknight. I used to joke that he was the world’s oldest cub reporter.

Bob was proud of his son, Daniel, who followed his dad into the TV production business. In recent years Bob and his companion, Roni Berger, saw much of the world on regular trips abroad.

Bob was still contributing to NJJN when he fell ill, and his death landed hard among his colleagues past and present. A few remembered his frequent cat naps at his desk - a habit I never begrudged him since it didn’t seem to dent his productivity.

Bob being Bob, no funeral was planned; his family said a memorial event is in the works - produced, of course, by Bob. “Rest well, my friend. You made all of us proud.”

Hal Braff: Remembered as civic leader, mentor, and ‘mensch’

By Robert Wiener, NJJN

Hal Braff learned early in life that being Jewish means more than religious observance. “Make the world a better place, that is your responsibility,” was his mantra, according to his family. Braff of North Caldwell, 84, died Dec. 1, 2018, after a long illness.

Braff was a community leader, visionary, and humanitarian who was passionate about his family, career, and volunteer endeavors such as aiding the students of Weequahic High School.

Braff graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1956 and remained a Badger football fan. He received his law degree in 1959 from Rutgers Law School. He practiced for 59 years, first at Braff, Harris and Sukoneck, and then as counsel to Margulies Wind, where he was a mediator.

Braff served as counsel for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in the early 1960s. He was also an adjunct professor of negotiations at Rutgers Law and in other graduate programs. He is credited with expanding in New Jersey the American Inns of Court movement, an organization dedicated to teaching ethics, civility, and professionalism to young

(Continued on page 5)
lawyers. He received the organization’s highest honor, which was presented to him in 1994 in the U.S. Supreme Court. “Hal lived his daily life helping all comers,” said Bob Margulies. “He was selfless. He was the ultimate professional and the consummate mensch, a man for all seasons.”

In 1997, Braff and Sheldon Bross established the Weequahic High School Alumni Association. The organization grew to be one of the largest and most successful high school alumni groups in New Jersey; it raised more than one-half-million dollars for scholarships and student activities, according to Bross. Braff served as co-president for 18 years.

Phil Yourish, founding director of the association, described Braff as “a kind, generous, thoughtful, and dynamic individual. ‘He was a ‘doer,’ not afraid to take on challenging situations, and always addressed difficult issues creatively with enthusiasm and optimism,” said Yourish. “As a mentor, adviser, and friend, he impacted the lives of others in so many wonderful and meaningful ways.”

In addition to the Weequahic Alumni Association, Braff was on the boards of other organizations, including the Jewish Historical Society of New Jersey (JHS) and the Mental Health Association of Essex and Morris Counties.

JHSNJ honored him in 2017 at their Lasting Impressions Gala for his commitment to Newark and the students of Weequahic. “Hal understood that to make an impact on a youngster that you just couldn’t throw money at a project or event,” said JHS executive director Linda Forgosh. “You had to do a hands-on approach.” Forgosh said he took students to their first dental appointments and aided them with college applications. “He was a rare kind of guy,” she said. “Nothing was too much for him.”

Braff was a former president of the Reform Temple Sha’arey Shalom in Springfield. In 1978 his family joined the Conservative Oheb Shalom Congregation in South Orange.

In addition to logging countless volunteer hours, Braff enjoyed a variety of interests, including community theater, opera, and the N.Y. Mets.

Rita Horowitz: Community leader and volunteer

Rita Tepper Horowitz, 89, of Livingston died Feb. 24, 2019. She was born in Newark.

Mrs. Horowitz was a realtor in Millburn for over 50 years.

She graduated from Columbia High School in Maplewood and earned a bachelor’s degree in Spanish from Syracuse University.

She welcomed and supported recent Russian immigrants in the community, and participated in a host of community organizations, including the Essex County Soup Kitchen, the Bobrow Kosher Food Pantry, National Council of Jewish Women, New Eyes for the Needy, Daughters of Israel, and Friends of the Millburn Library.

Her service to synagogue life at both Congregation B’nai Israel in Millburn and Oheb Shalom Congregation in South Orange spanned more than 50 years and was instrumental in the success of programs for all ages. She also became an active member of the Inglemoor Care Center community.

For 64 years, Rita was married to Jerome (deceased), a former President of the Jewish Historical Society of New Jersey.

JHS launches NJJN digitization project

THE JEWISH HISTORICAL Society of New Jersey (JHS) launched its NJJN digitization project. Back issues of the newspaper, from 1947 to September 2016, will be available on the JHS website at jhs-nj.org.

This project will provide easy, online access to over 200,000 pages of the weekly newspaper. Content is being uploaded and the entire project is expected to be complete by the end of 2018.

The Jewish News, as the newspaper was previously known, began publishing on Jan. 3, 1947. For nearly 70 years it was published in-house by the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest and its predecessors; the Jewish Week Media Group purchased NJJN and published its first issue Sept. 22, 2016. NJJN remains the newspaper of record for the Jewish community and maintains its commitment to covering the area’s evolving religious, social, and political landscape.

Funding for the digitization of the paper was made possible by the generous support of the Gottesman family, Friends of the Jewish News, and members of the JHS Board. Visit jhs-nj.org to view this collection of the community’s history.
COMING EVENTS

Alex Aidekman JCC, 901 Rout 10, Whippany, NJ
Free Admission / $5 donation suggested
RSVP Requested (973) 929-2703

Thursday, May 9th, 7 pm
Jews in the American Theater
Speaker: John Kenrick

Thursday, June 27th, 7 pm
Tiffany & American Synagogues
Speaker: Dr. Patricia Pongracz

Sunday, September 8th, 2 to 4 pm
American Jews and the Civil War
Speaker: Bud Livingston

Monday, November 11th, 7 to 9 pm
Veteran’s Day Program
Speaker: First Lieutenant, Raymond Schwartz
Served on Gen. McArthur’s staff and was stationed in Manila.

OUR 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.

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Letter to the Editor of the NJ Jewish News

Newark’s Yiddish theater
Lisa Segelman’s “Lernen, laughing, and kibitzing in the mama loshen” (March 7) was a wonderful read. Her story brings to mind that Newark was home to New Jersey’s only successful Yiddish theater, Elving’s Metropolitan Yiddish Theater, open from 1921-47.

The theater was located across the street from Montgomery Street’s City Bath or what was called the “shvitz.” It was customary for its bathers to buy a 5-cent bar of soap, rent a towel, get dressed, and then prepare to cross the street to attend the shows at Elving’s. Yiddish, at this time, was the language heard on the street suggesting that theater founder Bernard Elving had a built-in audience.

The Jewish Historical Society has a remarkable collection of photographs and artifacts that document Elving’s history. Its exhibit “One More Night at Elving’s Metropolitan Yiddish Theater” will be featured at the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Mass. For more information about Elving’s and the Yiddish stars who appeared on the stage, contact 973-929-2994 or lforgosh@jfedgmv.org.

Linda Forgosh
Executive director
Jewish Historical Society of NJ
Whippany

Thank you JHS
I read “JHS launches NJJN digitization project” (Sept. 20) and want to thank the Jewish Historical Society of NJ. I am a genealogist doing my family tree and since NJJN is now digitized there’s history of my family available.

Harold Kravis

ABI GEZUNT — Local resident and Jewish Historical Society of NJ member Alice Goldfarb, right, made arrangements to donate this rare Yiddish typewriter to the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Mass. Those who lived in households were Yiddish was spoken may contact Linda Forgosh at lforgosh@jfedgmv.org.

The Jewish Museum of New Jersey
Presents
The Synagogues of Newark
an exhibit chronicling more than 170 years of Jewish life in NJ’s largest city

Sunday, June 2, 2019, 11 am
Opening Reception and Program

JCC MetroWest, Gaelen Gallery East
760 Northfield Road, West Orange, NJ
“You Oughta Be In Pictures”

SEEKING TALLIT OWNER — Montville resident Ellie Wasserman is a volunteer at Habitat for Humanity’s Re Store in Randolph. Upon opening the cabinet of a wooden server, she discovered two tallitot in velvet bags, a set of tefillin, a Kiddush cup, and prayer book. One tallit belonged to Scott Levine and the other belonged to Michael Levine, both of whom were b’nei mitzvah at the former Temple Emanu-El in Livingston; Michael’s bar mitzvah was Oct. 30, 1971. Wasserman is seeking to find the brothers to return the items; contact Linda Forgosh at 973-929-2994 or lforgosh@jfedgmvw.org.

TRANSLATION HELP — Through the efforts of the Jewish Historical Society of NJ, local resident Linda Millet learned that Sylvia Goodman, pictured, who works at Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest NJ, could translate Hungarian documents that came from family whose relatives perished during the Holocaust. Contact Linda Forgosh at 973-929-2994 or lforgosh@jfedgmvw.org.

120TH ANNIVERSARY — Morristown Jewish Center Beit Yisrael kicked off its 120th-year celebrations with a talk by Linda Forgosh, community historian and executive director of the Jewish Historical Society of New Jersey. With Forgosh are Morristown Mayor Timothy Dougherty, far left; Morris Township Mayor Jeff Grayzel, far right; and Rabbi David Nesson of MJCBY.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS — Jewish Historical Society of New Jersey gala committee members, from left, seated, Bob Rose, Robert Kuchner, Robert Cowen, Jr., and Susan Lubow; and, standing, James Shrager and Carol Marcus are making plans for the JHS’s 29th annual Lasting Impressions gala to be held May 21 at Crystal Plaza in Livingston. Kuchner and his wife, Phyllis Bernstein, are gala honorees. To be listed as a sustainer of the event, contact Linda Forgosh at 973-929-2994 or lforgosh@jfedgmvw.org.

LESS IS MORE — Dr. Steven Less, recently retired from the Max Planck Institute of International Law in Heidelberg, Germany, is a frequent visitor to the Jewish Historical Society of NJ. The JHS helped preserve documents that reflect the history of the Less family and their experience on three continents. With him are, from left, JHS volunteer Marjorie Franzel, daughter Leah Simons-Less, and his wife, Veronique Simons-Less.
The tale of the mystery tallitot

By Johanna R. Ginsberg, NJJN

This is a story about a reunion - not of people but of a cache of Jewish ritual items found in a Christian thrift shop in Randolph, with family members amazed at the discovery of their precious treasures.

When Ellie Wasserman of Montville and her fellow volunteers at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Randolph finally found a skeleton key that opened a locked drawer in the ornate dining room buffet server that was on the floor, she was surprised by its contents.

Inside were: two tallit bags containing tallitot with the names Michael Levine and Scott Levine embroidered on them, a Kiddush cup with “Scott Levine” engraved on it, a velvet bag with tefillin inside, a siddur inscribed to Michael Levine, and a letter to Scott from his grandparents on the occasion of his bar mitzvah. (The drawer also contained some table linens and a silver-plated serving bowl.)

After three months of searching, it was a photo and item in NJJN that led to the connection with the objects’ owners. Wasserman, the only Jew among the half-dozen volunteers and staff that day at the Habitat for Humanity shop, explained to the others what the ritual items were. It was just before Rosh HaShanah, and she took it upon herself to try to find the family whose treasures had been inadvertently donated to the thrift store.

The synagogue mentioned in the siddur inscription, Temple Emanu-El in Livingston, closed its doors in 2017. Wasserman contacted the congregation it merged with, Temple Sinai in Summit, but they had no record of a Michael or Scott Levine.

Wasserman put the word out to friends who had graduated from Livingston High School, to people in an art class she takes, to anyone she could think of who might have known these two Levines, but to no avail. She also tried Google, but, she said, “Michael and Scott Levine are pretty common names.”

Finally, in late November, someone suggested she take the items to Linda Forgosh, executive director of the Jewish Historical Society of New Jersey. Forgosh knew exactly what to do. She submitted a photo of Wasserman with a description of the items to NJJN.

Within days of publication in the Nov. 29 issue, word had spread. Larry Horwitz of Hillside, Michael Levine’s best friend, received two messages about the photo. By the time he called Forgosh and NJJN, the family had already made contact.

Someone in Florida - a friend of the family of Michael Levine’s son’s girlfriend - saw the photo in the paper and alerted the girlfriend’s father, who quickly texted the item to her. When Michael’s son, Sam, saw the text, he told NJJN in a phone call, he was “amazed.”

As he recalled, he was hanging out in his apartment with his girlfriend when she got the text. “It was pretty weird seeing it in the New Jersey Jewish News,” he said. And also thought it was “pretty weird” that his father and his uncle Scott would have left those items in a drawer in a piece of furniture, unremembered.

The opportunity to retrieve the items was made more poignant because Michael Levine, who lived in Morristown, passed away in February 2017 at 58 after a long illness. “That it’s from my dad’s bar mitzvah - that’s cool,” said Sam. “It’s a cool thing to have, and I feel lucky they found it.” Scott, whom NJJN reached in Sarasota, Fla., where he now lives, was equally surprised - he thought he had his tallit. “It’s wonderful,” he said. “It’s terrific it was found.”

Scott graduated from Livingston High School in 1975, his brother in 1976. They became bar mitzvah at Temple Emanu-El, Scott with Rabbi Kenneth Rivkin, Michael with Rabbi Peter Kasdan.

The family has deep roots in Morristown, on both sides: one set of Scott and Michael’s grandparents owned a candy store opposite the Morristown train station, the other founded and owned Epstein’s department store on the Morristown Green, which Michael later owned and which closed in 2004 after 90 years. Epstein family members were among the founders of both Morristown Jewish Center Beit Yisrael, as it is now known, and Temple B’nai Or in the town.

In their letter to Scott that was found among the treasures in the locked drawer, his paternal grandparents wrote, in part, “As our first Grandson we give with pride and gratefulness this Talis which is so rich in tradition & heritage.” It continues, “Cherish this Talis daily, for you are one of God’s chosen children. May it become alive and meaningful your whole life and may it always protect you.”

Reached by phone in Sarasota, where he now lives, Bill
Levine, 86, the brothers’ father, also called the turn of events “amazing.” He remembered the server, which was a fixture in the family home first in Livingston and later in Morristown. He called it “a beautiful old antique, but very heavy.

We could never open that drawer,” he claimed. “We had locked it and lost the keys and forgot about it.” He mused, “We must have put all the Judaica stuff in that drawer and [later] not realized it was there.”

The server eventually made its way to the Morristown home of Bill’s daughter Abby Blaustein, when he and his wife, Carol, moved to Florida. Abby was the one who ultimately donated the furniture to the Habitat for Humanity store earlier this year. She will retrieve the items for the family.

Bill and Carol still get NJJN in Florida. “My wife reads it cover to cover,” he said. But she missed the ad looking for her sons. In the meantime, the furniture sold, but not before Ellie Wasserman snapped a photo. “It’s so exciting,” she said of finally tracking down the owners. “I’m really delighted.”