



SCATTERED SEEDS

PUBLISHED FOUR TIMES PER YEAR BY THE JEWISH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, INC.

VOLUME XIV NO. 4

WINTER 2007

There's Still Time!! But Hurry!

Reservations are still available for the **December 16, 2007 Annual Luncheon at Benvenuto's** I-95 to Boynton Beach Blvd. Go East to Federal Highway (Route 1). Turn left on Federal Highway and go North about 1 mile. Restaurant is on the EAST side of the road.

Our guest speaker is **RAFAEL GUBER** who will present the *JEWISH GENEALOGY ROADSHOW*. He is looking for YOUR "Chotchkes and Ephemera" such as old prayer books, Bibles, Talmud editions, Hagadahs, Kiddish cups, etc. for the ROAD SHOW.

CONTACT Chairperson **Cindy Taylor** at 561-742-2337, or e-mail her at knife-princess@att.net for further information on how to have YOUR Judaica evaluated, or if you have any questions about the luncheon or our speaker. *(Continued on Page 2)*



RAFAEL GUBER

OUR ANNUAL MINI-CONFERENCE IS COMING! WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH

This eagerly awaited annual event will be at the Sandler Center for Jewish Life Enhancement on the Levis Jewish Community Center Campus at Glades Road and 95th Avenue South in Boca Raton. This lovely building provides ample parking space right in front.

The one-day mini-conference features a series of seven lectures in all areas of genealogy plus individualized assistance both in our fully staffed Resource Room and in our impressive library which this year will be set up with an Internet hookup. Every attendee will be given a delicious Kosher box lunch at no additional charge.

Members who sign up early will only be charged \$30.00. Tickets at the door are \$35.00. See Page 5 for more information and a registration form.

OUR 17TH ANNUAL LUNCHEON
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2007 at 11:30 am
BENVENUTO RESTAURANT
1730 North Federal Highway, Boynton Beach, FL, 561-364-0600

Guest Speaker: **Rafael Guber**, *Jewish Genealogy Roadshow, Chotchkes & Ephemera*, and he will share his experiences as researcher & contributing narrator for the History Channel’s “*ELLIS ISLAND.*”

LUNCHEON MENU

Smoked Salmon and Dill Spread on each table with Benvenuto’s famous onion roll!
Salad of Organic Mixed Greens, Gorgonzola, Granny Smith Apples and Toasted Pecans

ENTRÉE

CHOOSE ONE

- 1 - Filet of Tilapia Sautéed in White Wine-Golden and Dark Raisins, Sweet Onions, Peppers, Pine Nuts
- 2 – Veal Scaloppini with Marsala Sauce
- 3 – Vegetable Quiche, Fresh Fruit Timbale and Penne Salad

DESSERT

CHOOSE ONE

- 1 – Profiteroles with Coffee Ice Cream and Bittersweet Chocolate Sauce
 - 2 – Key Lime Pie with a Coconut, Macadamia Nut, Graham Cracker Crust
- Coffee, tea, iced tea and complimentary plate of petit fours

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\$35.00 per Paid Up 2007 member, spouse or significant other  
\$39.00 per non-member guest

Questions: Joan Sarasky 561-738-8186 or Cindy Taylor 561-742-2337

Print and clip reservation form with your name, address, phone # and choice of entrée.  
Reservations MUST be received NO later than December 10, 2007

.....  
Make check payable to JGSPBC Inc. and mail to:

**Cindy Taylor Box 741279 Boynton Beach, FL 33474**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ENTREE # \_\_\_\_\_ DESSERT # \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ENTREE # \_\_\_\_\_ DESSERT # \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Please note any specific DIETARY requests and SEATING arrangements.\*\*  
For additional comments etc. use the back of this sheet.

**ANNUAL LUNCHEON** (Continued from Page 1)

Rafael Guber serves as president of the SEPIA GUILD INC. and is consulting genealogist to the SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER/MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE in Los Angeles. He has been a regular contributor to ANCESTRY magazine as well as senior researcher and contributing narrator for the HISTORY CHANNEL'S *ELLIS ISLAND* starring Mandy Patinkin.

Mr. Guber was honored in Los Angeles for his work in making public, along with interpretation of documents stolen by the Nazis.

As a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, Rafael Guber has traveled worldwide compiling genealogical reconstructions of family stories based on documents, images and social history. He has lectured both in the US as well as Canada. His work was presented in a "one-man" show at Ellis Island in 1997. Estimated viewers numbered 100,000.

He is Co-Creator of the exhibit, ***FINDING OUR FAMILIES-FINDING OURSELVES*** which explores the family histories of Billy Crystal, Maya Angelou, Joe Torre and Carlos Santana, as well as others which are currently on display at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. His personal discoveries about his own family were documented in the fourth episode of the ten part PBS series, ***ANCESTORS***.

The luncheon committee has assembled an exciting array of door prizes and "freebies" including three one-year subscriptions to [findmypast.com](http://findmypast.com), a British genealogical website. If your ancestors passed through the UK, you just might locate them with [findmypast.com](http://findmypast.com). In addition, findmypast has been good enough to afford our members the opportunity to take advantage of a 20% discount off any pay-per-view unit package or any subscription on their website until December 31, 2007. E-mail Cindy at [knife-princess@att.net](mailto:knife-princess@att.net) to obtain the needed promotional codes which you must enter on the relevant payment page of the website.

Be sure to contact **Cindy Taylor** today so your *chotchkes* can be included in our JEWISH GENEALOGY ROADSHOW.



### **SOME OF OUR CEMETERY COMMITTEE AT WORK**

Meet **ENID SEMPEN** our new Cemetery Program Chair. On her left is **Myron Slotsky**, our cemetery photographer and to her right is **Don Hirschhorn**, a faithful volunteer.

Thanks to all the JGS members who have helped us at one time or another.

**STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP**

*Scattered Seeds* is the publication of the JGSPBC, Inc., a not-for-profit educational organization. The newsletter is issued four times per year. It is a free publication distributed to all paid-up members and Jewish Genealogical Societies throughout the world in a courtesy exchange program. Back issues may be available at \$3.50 (US) an issue.

Contributions of articles of interest including book reviews are encouraged. Material must be submitted at least thirty days prior to the next publication date in order to be considered. Material should be double-spaced and typewritten. If submission is by disk, please use an IBM formatted disk written in MS WORD. All contributions are subject to editing. The Editor can be contacted by phone at 561.883.8566 or via e-mail at: [sandy2121@bellsouth.net](mailto:sandy2121@bellsouth.net). If e-mail is not available, comments or articles should be sent to:

Sandra Hirschhorn, Editor,  
 "Scattered Seeds"  
 P.O. Box 7796,  
 Delray Beach, FL 33482-7796

Permission is granted to print all or part of any original article printed in *Scattered Seeds* in the newsletter/journal of any other JGS, providing acknowledgment is given. Acknowledgment should include title, issuing society and volume number. Please e-mail to inform us that the article is being used.

We encourage readers to submit articles to the Editor for possible inclusion in *Scattered Seeds*. They should be e-mailed to the Editor who retains the right to accept, reject or publish in revised form. Please use Microsoft Word when preparing articles which are submitted at the sender's risk. Photographs are welcome. Please retain copies as returns are not possible.

**MEMBERSHIP DUES PAYABLE 1/1 EACH YEAR**

|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Individual Membership      | \$25.00  |
| Family Membership          | \$36.00  |
| Donor Membership           | \$50.00  |
| Patron Membership          | \$100.00 |
| Life Membership Individual | \$200.00 |
| Life Membership Family     | \$300.00 |

Send dues to: JGS of Palm Beach County  
 Attention: Treasurer  
 P.O. Box 7796  
 Delray Beach, FL 33482-7796

**Jewish Genealogical Society of  
 Palm Beach County, Inc.**

Elected Officers

- DENNIS RICE (President)**  
**MARVIN LOPATIN (Vice President)**  
**SANDRA HIRSCHHORN (Vice President)**  
**ARNOLD SARASKY (Treasurer)**  
**MARK JACOBSON (Secretary)**

Board of Directors And Committee Assignments

- |                                     |                                                             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
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| Cemetery Program. . . . .           | Enid Shemper                                                |
| Directory /Membership. . . . .      | Arnold Davidson                                             |
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| 2008 Mini-Conference. . . . .       | Joel Sisitsky                                               |
| Website/E-mail Coordinator. . . . . | Jacqueline Fineblit                                         |
| Webmaster . . . . .                 | Gerald Naditch                                              |
| Yad Vashem Coordinator. . . . .     | Don Hirschhorn                                              |

- Past Presidents  
 Mona Freedman Morris  
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 Alfred B. Leeds (Of Blessed Memory)  
 Dr. Marvin Hamburg

Honorary Members Mary Bordman, Miriam Weiner  
 Website <http://www.jgspalmbeachcounty.org>

**MEETING INFORMATION FOR 2007-2008**

*'Brick Wall' sessions begin at 12:30PM. Meetings begin at 1:00PM at the South County Civic Center, 16700 Jog Rd., Delray Beach. Occasional exceptions will be noted. SIG sessions are at 11:30AM. Contact Vice President Marvin Lopatin for further information on SIGs.*

## ANNUAL MINI-CONFERENCE/WORKSHOP

Wednesday, February 20, 2008  
8:30 A.M. Registration, Lectures 9:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Sandler Center for Jewish Life Enhancement  
Levis Jewish Community Center Campus  
Glades Road & 95th Avenue South, Boca Raton

Featuring a full day of:  
Lectures presented by experts in all areas of genealogy  
Special attention to Beginners  
Fully staffed Resource Room  
Use of the JGSPBCI Library Collection

All fees include: Everything mentioned above *plus* a Kosher box lunch

\$30.00 MEMBERS \$35.000 NON-MEMBERS

\$35.00 IF YOU REGISTER AT THE DOOR

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Enclosed please find my check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to register for the Jewish Genealogical Society of Palm Beach County Inc.'s (JGSPBCI, Inc.) ANNUAL GENEALOGICAL MINI-CONFERENCE/WORKSHOP, Wednesday, February 20, 2008.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form along with your check made out to JGSPBCI before February 10, 2008, to:

Joel Sisitsky  
22918 Sterling Lakes Drive  
Boca Raton, FL 33433  
561-477-9246

## After Finding a Testimony in the Yad Vashem Database \*

### The Next Step

*Rose Feldman*

In August 1953, the Israeli Knesset passed an act which established Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority. This was the culmination of an idea first proposed in September 1942 by Mordecai Shenhavi, a member of Kibbutz Mishmar Ha'emek at a board meeting of the Jewish National Fund, to establish a memorial in Palestine for the Jews who had fallen victim to the Holocaust.

On November 22, 2004, Yad Vashem went online with a search engine of the *Pages of Testimony* in English and Hebrew. The immediate response of the online searcher was "How do we contact the person who submitted a specific page of testimony, I think the victim and the submitter are related to me?" Postings started appearing on the JewishGen discussion group and the SIGs discussion groups with requests for help in finding the submitters of these POTs or their families. As of March, 2006, Yad Vashem has computerized 3.2 million names of Holocaust victims, compiled from approximately 2 million Pages of Testimony and various other lists. At the end of July 2006, an addition to its website called "Shoah Related Lists Database" was brought to the attention of Jewish genealogy researchers in Avotaynu's *Nu? What's New?* Its "list of lists" includes the digitization of lists from various sources, thereby enlarging the database based on *pages of testimony* (POT) with additional lists of Holocaust victims.

Upon turning to Yad Vashem, (the source of this material), it was explained that due to the legal questions involved in privacy it is not the mandate of Yad Vashem to help the "searchers" contact possible members of their families. In fact, you will now find a pointer on the Yad Vashem website to the *Israel Genealogy Society* (IGS) website, for those looking for help.

Since a substantial number of the POTs were submitted in Israel in Hebrew, the IGS offered its help in locating submitters of POTs from Israel. It was also hoped that IGS, as a registered non-profit organization, would be able to present these requests to government offices on the behalf of the submitters of the request. To our great regret the Ministry of Interior has not been forthcoming in co-operating with IGS.

As of the end of July 2006, there have been 806 requests to IGS dealing with submitters from Israel: 196 (24%) received information enabling them to contact the submitters, 110 (14%) received information that might possibly enable them to contact the submitters, and to our greatest regret IGS was unable to supply information to 501 (62%) requests. Most of the requests are for information about people who submitted POTs in the 1950s.

Distribution of the Submission Years of the POTs for which help was requested from IGS

| Decade                   | 1950s | 1960s | 1970s | 1980s | 1990s | 2000s |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Number of POTs requested | 456   | 1     | 33    | 42    | 214   | 33    |

(Continued on Page 7)

**After Finding a Testimony in the Yad Vashem Database***(Continued from Page 6)*

Over 50% of the requests have been for submitters who filed POTs for Holocaust victims from Poland.

Distribution of the Victims' Countries in requests sent to IGS

| Country            | # of requests | Country     | # of requests |
|--------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| Poland             | 489           | Russia      | 6             |
| Lithuania          | 94            | Belgium     | 4             |
| Ukraine            | 45            | Bukovina    | 3             |
| Czech              | 27            | Yugoslavia  | 3             |
| Germany            | 24            | Holland     | 2             |
| Belarus            | 27            | France      | 1             |
| Romania-Bessarabia | 32            | Greece      | 1             |
| Hungary            | 17            | Netherlands | 1             |
| Austria            | 12            | Uzbekistan  | 1             |
| Slovakia           | 9             | Unknown     | 2             |
| Latvia             | 6             | Total       | 806           |

**The Evolution of the POT:** Why is there sometimes insufficient information to locate a person?

The first format of the POT you find on the database is from 1955. At that time in Israel there were few telephones and maybe that is the reason why such a field does not appear on the original form. In addition, it is probable that the building of a database was not taken into consideration at that time, the instructions for filling out the fields were not explicit, and the submitters did not realize the importance of filling in all the information. One person would write his relationship as "son" while another would state "father" when it was actually "son", because he did not think of himself but of the person the POT was about. It was also hard to imagine at that time that Israel would grow into a state of over 5 million citizens with metropolitan cities. People often gave names of housing projects or neighborhoods without stating what town they were in and many neighborhoods or housing projects did not have street names and house numbers. Rented apartments are listed under the owner not the renter and cell-phones are not listed. These only came later.

*(Continued on Page 8)*

**After Finding a Testimony in the Yad Vashem Database***(Continued from Page 7)*

Below you will find a comparison of the fields in various versions of the POTs, IGS helped with.

| <u>Year of POT</u>     | 1955 | 1968 | 1988                | 1995                 | 2000                                                     | 2000 Russian Version |
|------------------------|------|------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Name of Field          |      |      | German Ver-<br>sion | Russian Ver-<br>sion |                                                          |                      |
| Original (Family) Name | X    |      |                     |                      |                                                          |                      |
| Name                   |      | X    | X                   | X                    | X                                                        | X                    |
| Previous Name          |      |      |                     |                      | X                                                        |                      |
| In town                | X    |      |                     |                      |                                                          |                      |
| Address                | X    | X    |                     | X                    |                                                          | X                    |
| Street                 |      |      | X                   |                      | X                                                        |                      |
| City                   |      |      | X                   |                      | X                                                        |                      |
| ZIP Code               |      |      |                     |                      | X                                                        |                      |
| Relationship           | X    | X    |                     |                      |                                                          |                      |
| Relationship To Victim |      |      |                     |                      | X                                                        |                      |
| Phone Number           |      | X    |                     |                      | X area code<br>(which has<br>changed in the<br>meantime) |                      |

**What can be done to track down a submitter?**

There are three places that a person can look for information on a submitter who was living in Israel at the time of submission of the POT: the online telephone directory, the *Hevra Kadisha* (burial societies), and the Ministry of Interior. IGS has prepared a page of instructions on its website as a resource tool for finding people in Israel. The resource tool is a pdf file in both Hebrew and in English.

<http://www.isragen.org.il/NROS/Research/Aides?resources-Available-in-Israel.pdf>

<http://www.isragen.org.il?NROS/Research/Search-Israel-Hebrew-1.pdf>

*(Continued on Page 9)*

**After Finding a Testimony in the Yad Vashem Database** *(Continued from Page 8)***Online Telephone Directory**

The online telephone directory is in Hebrew and it is not up-to-date. For those not knowing Hebrew, they can try accessing it through Steve Morse's website.

<http://www.stevemorse.org/hebrew/bezeq.html>

<http://www.stevemorse.org/hebrew/bezeqhebrew.html>

As mentioned before, when the POTs forms were first designed in the 1950s, few people in Israel had telephones. As more people had telephones, the numbers went from 5 to 6 to 7 digits. In addition the country has been divided into areas with codes and just recently some of those areas have been combined. But if you have an old phone number you can always call *Bezeq* (phone company) and get help with finding the new number.

**Ministry of Interior**

The Ministry of Interior has a website in Hebrew, with a form which enables you to request information as to changes in address of a person, when you give the last known address you have. The form has to be filled out in Hebrew, with the person requesting the information, giving his Israeli ID number. I don't know of requests being answered from outside of Israel

***Hevra Kadisha***

Religious burials in Israel are done through the *Hevra Kadisha*. Most towns have one *Hevra Kadisha*, but Haifa has two, and Jerusalem has about fifteen, whereas the greater Tel-Aviv area has one. Haifa, Petach Tikvah and Tel-Aviv already have computerized databases in Hebrew that can be accessed by internet. A number of cemetery databases have been translated to English and posted on JewishGen Online Worldwide Burial Registry (JOWBR). The *Hevra Kadisha* will probably have information about the family members who took care of the burial. This means that just because someone has passed away, you are not at a dead end. In addition, on the tombstone of the deceased you might find information that will help you verify the relationship of the deceased to yourself. There are a number of secular cemeteries and their burials together with the cemeteries in the various agricultural settlements are not handled by the *Hevra Kadisha*.

**Family Name Changes**

At various stages in the last one hundred years, many people coming to live in Israel have changed their family name. Sometimes it was for idealistic reasons, beginning with David Ben Gurion, and at other times those serving in the armed forces, and in high ranking government jobs in Israel and abroad who were asked to take "Israeli" sounding names. Some of these changes were published during the British Mandate in the Palestine Post. But more often than not, they were not published. Only in the POT form that came into use around the year 2000 do we see a specific request for family name and previous family name. As to the name changing pattern of married women, there isn't any. The woman decides what she wants to do: take her husband's family name, keep her own, or use a combination of the two names. If the family name is not a common name, then it is possible to try contacting all those with that name appearing in the telephone directory.

*(Continued on Page 10)*

**After Finding a Testimony in the Yad Vashem Database***(Continued from Page 9)***Problems with Addresses**

As was mentioned before, the first forms did not specifically request complete information about the submitter, and at that time Israel had a relatively small population as compared to today. There were housing projects and small settlements and Israel was in the midst of absorbing many immigrants. Since then, housing projects have been given street names and numbers. Neighborhood projects may have been incorporated into nearby towns, and street names may have changed. In addition, people moved as their economic situation improved, their family grew, their job forced them to move to a different part of the country, or maybe they decided to move into senior citizens' housing. That is one of the reasons that IGS suggests you use a friend or family member living in Israel to fill out the form of inquiry to the Ministry of Interior. But there are still some who live at the same address as listed on the POT, or their children are living at the same address.

**What's special about IGS's offer?**

In addition to helping people, IGS keeps a list of all the requests we have received. This enables us and others to help and possibly find connections between the people requesting help even at a later date. IGS hopes, that at some time there may be a change in the policy of the Ministry of Interior and IGS will be able to submit the list of all those that IGS was unable to find.

What do you say if you are trying to contact the submitter? IGS does not contact the submitter since it believes that this is an emotional contact that must be kept at a personal level. Though a translator may be needed, it has to be handled by the person seeking the connection. The contact may be by telephone or letter, each with its advantages and disadvantages. When writing a letter, you can collect your thoughts and explain things, it is easier to translate, and there are no problems with accents. Even if the letter is written in English, it might be easier for the person in Israel to read and understand and he or she may also get help from a relative or friend. The letter should be written in short and simple sentences, explaining for whom one is looking and why. On the other hand, the telephone call allows questions to be asked and answered with further explanations if needed. The same preparation should go into preparing for the telephone call as for writing the letter. Once the contact has been made, it's sometimes possible to continue the connection via email.

IGS has had a number of thank-you notes that bring tears to one's eyes when reading of families reunited after 60 or more years. We only wish that we could help more.

\* The article is based on a lecture given at the IAJGS 26<sup>th</sup> Conference, August 2006, New York. (NOTE: It is printed here with the permission of the author and of *Sharsheret Hadorot: Journal of Jewish Genealogy*, 21, (1), 27-31 with thanks. <http://www.isragen.org.il/NROS/BIB/SHD/SH-21-1-E.html>)

*Rose Feldman is the Head of the Computer Staff at the Yolanda & David Katz Faculty of the Arts at Tel-Aviv University. She is a member of the Israel Genealogical Society and has been keeper of her family tree since 1985, which includes descendants and spouses from 4 continents.*

**FROM: Nu? What's New?**  
**The E-zine of Jewish Genealogy From Avotaynu**  
Gary Mokotoff, Editor  
**Volume 8, Number 21 | November 4, 2007**  
Special Edition- WITH THANKS

**France and Greece Ratify Public Access to ITS Records**

Peter Landé reports that the French and Greek parliaments have ratified the agreement that will allow public access to the records of the International Tracing Service. They were the last two of the eleven countries who had to ratify the agreement. There are still some administrative actions required for formal approval, but for practical purposes, ratification is completed.

The holdings of the International Tracing Service, located in Bad Arolsen, Germany, are one of the most valuable sources of information about the fate of people, both victims and survivors, caught up in the Holocaust. Their records place an individual at a specific place and time during the Holocaust period. Their sources, to name a few, are deportation lists, concentration camp death lists, ghetto records and post-war refugee records.

**The Treasure Trove in Bad Arolsen**

I tell people, "I know I am getting old because I am getting wise." For the first 50 years of my life, when I had a gut feeling about something, I kept it to myself. Lately, I have been speaking out about my gut feelings because I have found I am invariably right.

As an example, some years ago, there was the Benjamin Wilkomirski incident. Wilkomerski wrote a book in which he claimed he was a child survivor of the Holocaust. The book was so well written that it won awards, and Wilkomerski was idolized within the Jewish community. I read the book a few weeks after he was given the Outstanding Memoir Book Award of the National Jewish Book Council and, after putting it down, I wrote a letter to the president of the Book Council that stated in part "Put this letter in your Hold file. I must tell you that after reading Wilkomirski's book, the facts surrounding his survival do not add up; the book might be historical fiction rather than fact." That was in 1996. Two years later, the book was declared a fraud.

Nu? What's New? readers. Put this edition in your Hold file. I predict that public access to the records at the International Tracing Service (ITS) will disclose substantial documentation previously unknown to the world about what happened to individuals during the Holocaust. I will further predict that the principal discoverers of the scope of the Bad Arolsen records will be the genealogical community.

*(Continued on Page 11)*

**Nu? What's New?** *(Continued from Page 11)*

Think about how ITS has operated in the past. Their methodology has been, “We will not tell records are being made public, thousands of people will descend on the facilities that have these records—currently U.S. Holocaust Museum, Yad Vashem and ITS itself—to find out the fate of relatives. I predict that the principal users of these records will be genealogists. Virtually all Jewish genealogists have had members of their family murdered in the Holocaust. Genealogists feel an obligation to document who these people were, what lives they led, and their fate. An attempt was made to eradicate the fact that they ever existed. Family histories that contain these names are memorials to the victims, demonstrating that they once lived.

Three attributes of genealogists are:

- \* They will leave no stone unturned in their quest to find documentation of their family.
- \* They are compulsive browsers. They think nothing about cranking microfilms for hours in the hope of discovering a scrap of evidence about their families.
- \* When they discover something unusual, they share it with other genealogists.

As genealogists use the ITS records and discover documentation previously unknown to the world, they will share it with other genealogists and members of the public.

Sallyann Sack and I feel so strongly about the value of public access to the ITS records that we plan to visit Bad Arolsen, probably in December, to rummage around and see exactly what is there. We will report back to AVOTAYNU readers what we find.

### YOUR EOC HELP LINE GENEALOGY MENTORING ASSISTANCE

Our “Experts-On-Call” Help Line is available to assist and mentor beginners and “not yet experts” with the expertise of our most knowledgeable and experienced genealogists on a one-on-one basis. Those member-experts who volunteered for the EOC Help Line are:

|                        |              |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Arthur Fentin          | 561-732-8527 |
| Mitch Heide            | 561-988-9966 |
| Hal Maggied            | 954-725-6442 |
| Karen Pratt            | 305-598-2881 |
| Dennis Rice, President | 561-738-7477 |
| Alfred M. Silberfeld   | 561-495-9839 |

It is suggested that check your Membership Directory to ascertain the mentor nearest to you in case you need to meet. Four of the mentors are in Palm Beach County, one



## My Father's Journal-Synopsized

By Irv Skorka

My father was born on December 25th, 1896 in a Shtetl called Konskie, located about 100 miles southwest of Warsaw in Poland's Kielce Gubernia. He was one of 7 children, 5 brothers and 1 sister. Dad was the second child. His father was a bookbinder, as was my father and one of his brothers. His mother, Bayla, was a simple housewife, but in reality the matriarch of the family.

Dad left home when he was 15 and traveled through several countries in Europe until he was 25. At that time, he immigrated to America. He started writing his journal at about the age of 14 and ended it when he was 26 years old. The journal was written in Yiddish in a most clear, cursive handwriting. A friend, Ben Barlas, translated the journal. My sister, Anne Muchnik, edited the translated journal.

My father, Herman (Shlomo or Shloima) Skorka, was a rambunctious and free-spirited young man who could not deal with the narrow views of his father Moshe who was very religious and insisted that his children study the Jewish liturgy in Chaider. While the family was poor, my Grandfather managed to earn a living as a bookbinder. As the children grew older and were able to find jobs, they helped support the family.

When my father was in his early teens he was forced to attend Chaider. He was always at odds with the Rabbi who tried very hard to corral my father so he could be taught, but never succeeded. He would cajole and even beat him to force him to learn. At one point the Rabbi gave up and told my grandfather that he would have to instruct him. My grandfather used all the techniques the Rabbi used and some additional ones he could use as his father. It was then that my father decided to leave home.

One day, my grandfather gave my father 33 Groshen to purchase a bookcase. This was the day to leave. He had the money and could be away from home for enough time to get to the railroad station. His desire was to go to Warsaw where his brother lived, but the fare to Warsaw was 3 Rubles. He boarded the train and hid under a seat and decided to take his chances to reach Warsaw. Unfortunately, part of the space was occupied by live chickens on one side and eggs on the other side. He managed to find a free spot and lay on his back for the trip.

Herman heard the conductor as he entered the car to collect tickets. The nearby passengers took pity on my father thinking he would be thrown off the train. They were able to collect a sufficient amount so he could ride the train as a normal passenger to a destination part way to Warsaw. Unfortunately, he still had to travel to Warsaw, so back he went under the seat with the chickens and the eggs.

Once in Warsaw, he still needed a ticket to leave the station. A man on the train offered him a ticket for 5 Kopeks, which he bought. Now his problem was to reach his brother Shmuel's house on Gensha Street. This proved difficult since he was not familiar with Warsaw. After wandering the better part of a day, and questioning people on the street, he finally reached his brother's house quite late. He knocked on the door and was greeted by 2 women, one his brother's wife and the second, her mother. He must have presented quite a sight with his dusty boots, his swollen eyes and unwashed face, not to mention carrying three bags of clothes. He was not recognized and they asked him who he was. *(Continued on P.14)*

### My Father's Journal-Synopsized *(Continued from Page 13)*

He told them that he was Herman, Shmuel's brother. At first they told him that his brother was not at home and to come back later. Then realizing who he was, they invited him in to wait. Shmuel returned home and greeted my father. My father lived with his brother for a long time, but was eager to leave because his sister-in-law had taken it upon herself to use my father as a servant. He chopped wood, cleaned the house and took care of the children. He had gone to Warsaw to work and was subjected to a slave's (my father's word) life. He soon tired of this and left to find work.

From Warsaw he traveled to Lodz, arriving in 1914. He became a member of the Bund, and joined a branch called "Halbe". The Bund was a socialist political movement founded in Vilnius in 1897 by a small group of workers and intellectuals from the Jewish Pale of Tsarist Russia. The Bund called for the abolition of discrimination against Jews and the reconstitution of Russia along federal lines (1). In Lodz, he spent his time working, but also desired to improve his understanding of complex subjects, such as, politics and economics. He looked to the Bund and his friends for this education.

Rumors were rampant at this time of a possible war between Austria, Serbia and Russia. He had little interest in this, because he was waiting for a letter from his brother David to leave Poland and journey to America. The letter came at an inopportune time. Germany had declared war on Russia and travel was impossible. The Germans were approaching Lodz and fought a successful three-week battle.

The population became aware of the German's success and panicked. A general mobilization was initiated, and as a result, he lost his job. A new wave of suffering began for the people of Lodz. With the Germans in charge, they demanded that a work detail be formed. Young men were roused from their beds and forced into the work detail. My father was one of 3,000 youths who were taken. On a day in August 1914, they were packed into boxcars and traveled under strong security. They traveled to Upper Silesia in Germany. There we were released from the boxcars and given food, bread, a packet of marmalade and a pack of cigarettes. After eating, they were boarded into the boxcars and traveled for nine days, arriving in Bialystok.

They disembarked from at 5:00 AM, At that point the youth were separated in smaller groups and given shovels and other implements, walked 8 kilometers to another railroad station and were told to perform various kinds of dirty work. When they completed their tasks they were marched back carrying the tools they were given. Many of the youth suffered greatly and some became ill. When they arrived back they were told to occupy a barracks with broken windows, no furniture and no heat. Strong winds and heavy rains blew in. They were so exhausted that they simply lay down, placed their packs under their heads and tried to sleep. They were closely guarded so that any thoughts of escaping were put out of their heads.

They slept through the night as best they could and were awakened early by a whistle blast. The group was asked for volunteers for blacksmiths and carpenters work. My father chose to volunteer as a carpenter. The different groups were herded together and some were marched 8 kilometers back to

*(Continued on Page 15)*

## My Father's Journal-Synopsized *(Continued from Page 14)*

the railroad station he occupied the previous day. They boarded a train and for 2 days, arriving at a forest, where for several days they cut down trees. They and the trees were transported to another area, the Berezine Swamp, where they built bridges over the swamp.

A small group of Jewish youths, my father included, made the decision to escape. They managed to sneak out and ran to the woods where they walked for several days, eventually finding a Jewish family who would take them in. They found themselves in Russia. The youths were fed and given a place to sleep. They were exhausted from the hike and their feet were swollen. As a result of the difficult hike and their health they decided to give themselves up. They dared not mention they had stayed with a family.



They told the military commander of the town that they somehow were separated from their unit. They presented their papers, issued by the German authorities, which were passports from Lodz. The commander accepted their story and sent them to an officer in charge of construction. They were examined by a doctor and given a week's rest. When the rest was over, they were assigned to a road-building group. They were given the task of breaking up rock, with sledgehammers, for the road. It was exhausting work.

The group lived with 200 other men and was treated well. Conditions were better and they received a salary of 3 Marks per day plus meals for their work. They worked for a year building a road between 2 towns, Zelvani and Volkovisk. They were free to wander after work and decided to spend their time in Volkovitz, where they found a teahouse, a worker's kitchen and other youths with whom to socialize. They lived a very good life in the town, very relaxed and in a good mood.

The Commander relieved them of their passports and they were given passes to Bialystok for a furlough. My father tried to get permission to travel to his home in Konskie, but was refused. They traveled on a military train and were there for 8 days. The thought of escaping again was far from their minds. They knew the punishment for escaping was death. They boarded another military train to be returned to continue their roadwork. In the interim, the Germans captured their work area. Eventually the Germans devastated the Russian Army. Russia declared a cease-fire because of the October Revolution of 1917, when Trotsky declared an armistice. All the men were freed and given identification papers and told to go wherever they wanted. My father decided to return home, since he had been away for several years. He was nervous and tense, but looking forward to seeing his family again.

(1) Encyclopedia Britannica online, under definition of Bund  
To be continued in the next issue of "Scattered Seeds"/

## A HEARTY WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!!

Aaronson, Deanna - dmaaron1@comcast.net Miller, Joan - jrm8520@yahoo.com  
 Corbett, Michael - oculusmc@hotmail.com  
 Herbst, Jeff - jeffrph2@aol.com  
 Piwovar, Neil & Janyce - npiwovar@yahoo.com  
 Schindelman, Lorri - lorschindelman@aol.com  
 Friedman, Lois - bubylu@aol.com

## MEMBER INFO - NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Joan Alman - aunttbugsie@comcast.net  
 Michael Abramson - ma36@comcast.net  
 Bernie Berger - berjan1952@yahoo.com  
 Ethel & Norman Berman - nberman@comcast.net  
 Toby Bey - tthey@comcast.net  
 Bob & Barbara Bileniker - rbilenker@comcast.net  
 Roberta Carol - roberta123@comcast.net  
 Seymour Cohen - seyphyl@aol.com  
 Beatrice Colman - bco100@comcast.net  
 Barbara Evedon - NurseBoo7@comcast.net  
 Ted Gerrig - teddyg34@comcast.net  
 Judi Glueck - ani@tellurian.net  
 Lenore & Bill Gunther - lenore2265@comcast.net  
 Mitch Heide - mrmitch52@comcast.net  
 Jean Innerfeld - nrvanavi@comcast.net  
 Miriam J; Klepper - bubbie04-06@comcast.net  
 Hanna Klingsberg - bananahbk@comcast.net  
 Lois G. Kahn - loisgk@comcast.net  
 Ruth Kravette - itisruth@comcast.net  
 Mona Morris - mona\_morris2@comcast.net  
 William Pickholtz - billbonus@comcast.net  
 Gerald & Doris Rosenblatt - grosenbl@comcast.net  
 Martin & Susan Rothblum - ami637@comcast.net  
 Lawrence Sanders - las7711@comcast.net  
 Helene and Ben Seaman - hseaman9@comcast.net  
 Eugene & Elaine Starn - genes17@comcast.net  
 Maurine Starr - maurine5@comcast.net  
 Mel Waxman - addisondemocrats@comcast.net  
 Michael Weiss - micmar@comcast.net



Ed. Note - Please forgive any errors. Watch for future changes in our new directory.



## President's Remarks

I can't believe that 4 years have passed by so swiftly since I assumed the Presidency of this wonderful organization in January 2004. In the past 4 years as President, we have continued to make sure we presented the finest genealogical personnel available at our meetings. Thanks to our Program Chair, Harvey Brown, for a wonderful job the past 31/2 years. Harvey who through doctor's visits and all, still managed to put together a wonderful line-up of presenters. And now Sandra Zahn-Oreck has taken over the task and this year's program promises to be one of the best.

We have presented the likes of: Steven Morse, Miriam Weiner, Ron Arons, Bennett Greenspan, Warren Blatt, Mark Halpern, Michael Goldstein, Lucille Gudis of blessed memory, Linda Cantor, Dr Harold Rhodes, and Arthur Kurzweil. We are also blessed from our own organization to have Helene Schwartz Kenvin, Phyllis Kramer, President Emeritus Alfred M Silberfeld, and Immediate Past President Dr. Marvin Hamburg among a number of excellent presenters. Phyllis Kramer also serves as the moderator and resident expert for our Brick Wall sessions. We are fortunate to have her keen genealogical mind to answer the myriad of questions our members pose at these sessions.

We expanded our Workshops to all day Mini-Conferences thanks to our President Emerita Sylvia Nusinov, who also continually updates our award-winning workbook, our President Emeritus Alfred M. Silberfeld, who began the workshop concept, and those who chaired recent Mini-Conferences; Sylvia Nusinov, and Joel Sisitsky. Our attendance has averaged over 65 participants. The 2008 Mini-Conference is chaired once again by Joel Sisitsky. Our Lunch and Learn sessions have attracted the finest names in Genealogy including, Steven Morse, Miriam Weiner and Harold Rhodes, with attendance exceeding 200 at each Luncheon. This concept was begun to afford members and guests who work during the week to be exposed to the finest Jewish Genealogical lectures around. These Luncheons have been chaired and co-chaired by Sylvia Nusinov, Natalie Hamburg, Phyllis Frank, Jackie Fineblit, Marilyn Newman, Joan Sarasky, Betty Perloe and Cindy Taylor. This year Cindy Taylor is our able chair. A president cannot run an organization as successful as ours alone. It takes a team of passionate people who give of themselves for the betterment of the Society.

In addition to those I just named, I have had the pleasure and good fortune to work with a board that goes beyond those attributes. They attend meetings regularly, give constructive input and are more than willing to get down to the nitty-gritty and serve on committees. I hope I don't leave anyone out of my thanks and praise, if so it's unintentional. Let me continue by thanking my Vice Presidents, Marvin Lopatin, who has done a fabulous job in putting together and scheduling our SIGs (Special Interest Groups). We now have a SIG meeting before each regular meeting. The response has been terrific.

*(Continued on Page 18)*

**PRESIDENT'S REMARKS** cont'd.

Thanks to Phyllis Frank our other Vice President, who due to illness had to resign. She did a wonderful job in everything she was asked to do in addition to being the best Sunshine Chair you could possibly ask for; she is such a beautiful and caring individual. To Sandy Hirschhorn, for taking over when Phyllis resigned and helping me in many ways, while writing our wonderful Newsletter and coordinating its mailing. She now does it by electronic e-mail, which has given her the opportunity to enhance the material we are now receiving. It is one of the best newsletters in the country. She and her husband Don also took on the Cemetery Index project and have indexed and sent JOWBR their findings. A great job!!! Enid Shemper has now taken the cemetery project chair and we look for her to continue the fine work of the committee.

Don Hirschhorn took on the Yad Vashem "Pages of Testimony" project for the Florida region under our auspices and has further elicited about 40 other societies around the world to join the task. He has sent in about 1000 pages since he took over the project about a year ago. He received a special award at the IAJGS conference this past July in Salt Lake City. A job well done.

Our Treasurer Arnold Sarasky has kept us well informed of our finances, and has monitored our spending. He is ably assisted by his wife Joan who is our financial secretary. Thanks, Arnold Jr. and Joan for all your help. Our secretary Mark Jacobson has given us the most concise and relevant minutes any organization can ask for. Keep up the wonderful hand.

Our Membership chairman Dr. Arnold Davidson has continued for the umpteenth year to monitor our membership which hit new heights 2 years ago and since tailed off a little, mostly due to the Florida economy. He once again put together our member directory which included not only names and addresses, but the names and towns we were researching. Arnold did this after going through major surgery. . Our kudos to Arnold Sr. Arnold was also at the front door greeting and registering our members at each meeting along with our board member, Bernard Berger. Our Welcoming desks are well managed with Helene and Ben Seaman heading up the guest table along with Arnold and Bernie at the member table. They all sit there with smiles and a welcoming hand.

Our Membership Liaison and Retention chair, Marilyn Newman follows up on each and every guest who attends our meetings to elicit them for membership. She almost single handedly follows up on each individual who hasn't paid their dues, and encourages them to rejoin. She also has been a wonderful advisor to me, with her 20 years of experience in the Pittsburgh JGS.

Our e-mail and website coordinator Jackie Fineblit sends out the finest notices for meetings I have ever seen. She has also been our website coordinator for many years. *(Continued on Page 19)*

**PRESIDENT'S REMARKS** Cont'd.

She has worked with 2 webmasters, Andi Jacoby who coordinated our wonderful website for almost 4 years. And now our member Jerry Naditch who has taken it over and is remodeling it. Those members who do not have Internet access receive a call from our telephone committee headed up by the lovely Dorothy Bernstein.

A special thank you is due to Sylvia Nusinov, Jackie Fineblit and Marilyn Newman who took on the Publicity committee responsibilities when Ruthe Forkush moved up north. They made sure that each of our meetings and programs had adequate press coverage. We are indebted to these 3 wonderful ladies. We have the best archives of any Society, thanks to Gail Haymovitz, who took it over from Jackie Fineblit who set a very high standard to maintain.

This past year we decided to put together a "making a difference committee", under the able leadership of Natalie Hamburg. The committee is looking to reach out to Jewish youth in schools and scouting to help them learn more about their ancestors. Natalie has been there whenever needed during my four years as president like so many of our board members.

Our library is one of the finest in the country. thanks to Irv Skorka and our Librarian Emeritus Ben Karliner. Irv has taken over and has not missed a beat. He is currently working on bringing the Internet to our library. He is also constantly looking for books to enhance our collection. We are also fortunate to have members who donate wonderful genealogical books to our library. This year our member Ann Rabinowitz donated 10 boxes of genealogical books to our library. Special nameplates indicating the Ann Rabinowitz Collection will be inserted into those books.

A president needs the past leadership involved to mesh the past with the present and future. Let me once again thank past presidents Alfred M. Silberfeld, Sylvia Nusinov and Marvin Hamburg for their counsel.

To you the membership, thanks for a wonderful four years. I promise to continue and help the future leaders of this fabulous Society.

*Dennis Rice*

**SAVE THE DATE!!**

2008 IAJGS CONFERENCE  
THE CHICAGO MARRIOTT (DOWNTOWN MAGNIFICENT MILE)  
SUNDAY, AUGUST 17 – FRIDAY AUGUST 22, 2008

*Sandy's Soapbox*

It's time to say good-bye to **Dennis Rice** and to offer many, many thanks for his hard work, as his term of office as President is over at the end of this year. But don't worry - Dennis isn't leaving us. He's just going to sit down so the rest of us can see the wonderful upcoming events. Please give him a big kiss and a hearty thank you at the Luncheon or the January meeting.



*Sandy*

**IN MEMORIAM**

**LOUIS ROBBINS**

A long time member - He will be missed

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