	<p>New Mexico Jewish Historical Society</p>	<p>Volume 17, No. 1 January 2003</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------

A Review of the 15th Annual NMJHS Conference "Havurot, Hippies and the Hollywood Ten: Jewish Life in New Mexico, 1950-2000"

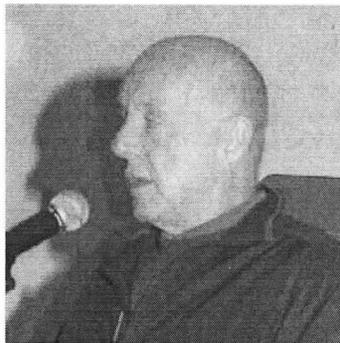
by Harvey Buchalter

Imagine blue-gray mountains capped with fresh snow, eternal vistas of russet-brown mesa's and cold, exhilarating air and you have the setting for the NMJHS 15th Annual Conference, held at the Sagebrush Inn in Taos, November 8 - 10, 2002. The Topic: "Havurot, Hippies and the Hollywood Ten - Jewish Life in New Mexico, 1950-2000."

Eighty-one Society members attended from all parts of the state: Carlsbad, Las Cruces, Las Vegas Santa Fe and Albuquerque of course and about a dozen Taos enthusiasts plus a sprinkling of folks from Virginia, New York, Texas and California.

The highlight of the conference was the Saturday screening of the acclaimed film "Salt of the Earth," filmed in New Mexico and soon to be celebrating its 50th anniversary. Karl Francis, an authority on Herbert Biberman, the film's Jewish director, led a very lively discussion concerning the events in Silver City more

than half a century ago, which changed the face of labor relations in the New Mexico mining industry. Director Biberman's political stance, his desire to give working women an authentic voice in determining the course of their lives, his longing for justice for the oppressed miners, and the climate of fear that infected Hollywood in the 1950s provided topics for a give-and-take that lasted well into the night.



Director Karl Francis addressing conference attendees

On Friday night, members of the Historical Society viewed Karl Francis' movie "One of the Hollywood Ten," starring Jeff Goldblum. The film is the story of Herbert Biberman's struggle to make "Salt of the Earth." Mr. Francis pointed out that the "Red Menace" years in Hollywood are definitely not a topic that current film-makers wish to bring to the attention of the public. The courage that Herbert Biberman showed was indeed in short supply in those years. Society members were truly fortunate to have had

the opportunity to view the Francis film. Francis believes that film distributors would rather not have the public reminded of the frightening era of censorship and intimidation that the Hollywood Ten endured. Director Francis is looking for wider distribution.

"Havurot," small communities of generally non-affiliated Jews, was another theme of the Conference. The newly established Taos Jewish Center hosted our visit and all came away impressed with its vitality and commitment to maintain Jewish identity within the larger community. Life in the small Jewish communities of Las Vegas, Las Cruces and Carlsbad was also examined in two panel discussions. Jeanette Wertheim Sparks and Admiral Robert H. Wertheim, brother and sister, natives of Carlsbad, whose family has deep New Mexico roots, spoke about growing up Jewish in the 1930s in the truly isolated town of Carlsbad. Henry Tobias provided the larger context of New Mexico Jewish life in the past 50 years in the Conference's introductory talk. Henry offered a scholar's research with an easy-to-listen-to manner that engaged everyone present.

Iris Keltz, author of "Scrapbook of a Taos Hippie", gave a fascinating account of her

continued on p.3

Address:	Albuquerque Jewish Community Center 5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE Albuquerque, NM 87109
Telephone:	(505) 348-4471
Toll Free Voicemail:	(877) 665-3974
Fax:	(505) 821-3351
web site:	www.nmjewishhistory.org
Administrator:	Julie Gordon
Office Hours:	Tuesday and Wednesday 1-3:30pm

If you have any news or announcements of interest to our membership, please send it to the above address. Thank you.

INSIDE	
2002 Conference.....	1 & 3
Learning About First Jews in NM.....	2
Membership Registration / Renewal.....	3
Marvin Taichert Memorial.....	4
Upcoming Events.....	4

[Home](#) | [Membership](#) | [Current Events](#) | [Comments](#) | [Archive](#) | [Genealogy](#)
[Mission Statement](#) | [Links](#) | [Newsletter](#)