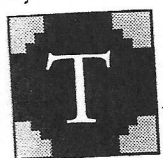


NMJHS Annual Archives Reception

by Sheila Gershen



The new Albuquerque Jewish Community Center was the setting for the NMJHS' Annual Archive Reception on May 10th. The highlight this year was a stimulating discussion on "New Mexico Jewish Artists and Writers -or- New Mexico Artists and Writers Who are Jewish." The panel was moderated by Stuart Ashman, former director of the New Mexico Fine Arts Museum and current head of the new Santa Fe Museum of Spanish Colonial Art. Ashman, who grew up in Cuba, charmed the audience with his amusing and insightful introductions of the participants.

The panelists were internationally known feminist writer and activist, Margaret Randall, New Mexico Fine Arts Museum curator of Contemporary Art, Aline

Brandauer, artist and Santa Fe notable, Jo Basiste/Eli Levin, and historian Henry Tobias. Their backgrounds and individual stories were as fascinating as the participants themselves.

Randall read moving passages from "Coming Up for Air," her latest book of memoirs, poetry, essays and photographs. Tobias, author of the classic "The History of the Jews of New Mexico," and co-author of the new "Santa Fe: A Modern History, 1880-1990," gave an historical overview. Basiste/Levin gave a lively description of the Santa Fe art scene drawing on his many years of experience and Aline Brandauer offered intriguing insights from both her personal and professional perspectives.

The fascinating discussion ranged from the belief that Jewishness is only apparent when it's consciously invoked to the

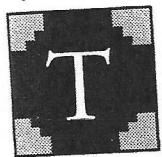
idea that it subconsciously infuses everything the artist/writer creates. During the question and answer session, members of the audience furthered the dialogue with their own reminiscences and excellent queries.

The afternoon event, that was free and open to the public, began at noon with a delicious buffet luncheon. There was time to socialize while looking over the many books on display and for sale. Margaret Randall had graciously donated five of her books to the NMJHS. Also on display and for sale were beautiful artworks by Ira Moskowitz on Jewish and southwestern themes. Richard Lampert of Zaplin-Lampert Gallery, Santa Fe, generously donated 25 percent of all sales to the NMJHS.

Heartfelt appreciation to Shirley Jacobson for expertly coordinating the entire event.

Las Vegas Museum Director Receives 2001 Dr. Allan Hurst Award

by Stanley Hordes



The NMJHS presented the Fourth Annual Dr. Allan Hurst Award to Melanie LaBorwit, Director of the Las Vegas City Museum, as its Annual Meeting on June 10. The award, named for one of the Society's founders, was established in 1998 to recognize the efforts of individuals who contribute significantly to New Mexico Jewish history and culture.

Since her arrival in New Mexico five years ago, Melanie LaBorwit has worked tirelessly to preserve the history of the Jews of Las Vegas, which was once the largest and most active Jewish community in New Mexico. In addition to her efforts to collect documenta-

tion and cultural materials for the City Museum, she also gathered objects to be considered for inclusion in the Museum of New Mexico's exhibit, "Jewish Pioneers of New Mexico," which opened last year. Moreover, she has researched and prepared presentations on the history of the Jews of Las Vegas and New Mexico.

She has played a pivotal role in the re-formation of the Jewish community of Las Vegas organizing observance of Jewish holidays, and leading religious services. Thanks largely to her efforts, Shabbat services are held on a regular basis, once a month, at the old Congregation Montefiore synagogue, on the corner of Eighth and Columbia. In addition, she has

been active in the Congregation Montefiore Cemetery Association.

Melanie served as Chair of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society's 2000 Annual Conference, where she presented a paper.

Melanie is currently Director of the Las Vegas City Museum, in Las Vegas, NM. She holds a Masters degree in Folklore from Indiana University, and has successfully completed all coursework and examinations toward her Ph.D. from the same institution. Prior to her tenure at the Las Vegas City Museum, she performed museum work in South Dakota, worked at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC and taught at the University of Maryland.



New Mexico
Jewish Historical Society

Albuquerque Jewish
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