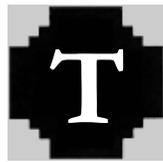




## Vandals Strike Montefiore Cemetery

by Sharon Niederman



The New Mexico Jewish community is saddened to learn of the latest desecration of the Montefiore Cemetery in Las Vegas, New Mexico,

sometime this summer between June 28 and July 1. The cemetery contains the remains of many Jewish pioneers—our extended New Mexico family. At a public forum July 17, Commander Mack Allingham of the Las Vegas Police Department announced that indications point to thrill-seeking juvenile offenders.

About 20 years ago, it was this cemetery’s first desecration which galvanized NMJHS members to take up their rakes and become cemetery caretakers, and prompted Marvin Taichert of the Montefiore Cemetery Association to solidify a formal arrangement for NMJHS to do so. Every year since, NMJHS volunteers, including Hebrew school students, have brought garden tools and willing hands to Las Vegas to

tend the Montefiore Cemetery plots. In a “Día de los Muertos”-style commemoration of those buried there, we have held hands, shared stories, laughed, and been glad to have renewed our identity by caring for this place.

The gravestones are an education in themselves. They bear inscriptions of dates of birth and death, lives lived in places ranging from “Barvaria-New Mexico.” To the patient, interested observer, they tell the immigrant’s story of leaving one’s familiar world behind to establish a home in the New World. In this cemetery, we stand on hallowed ground; with our hands we demonstrate our love and desire to preserve our precious bit of history. Here we learn we are neither the first Jewish residents nor alone.

The annual cemetery cleanup, ably organized by Gunther and Geri Aaron for many years, quickly became a highlight of the NMJHS calendar. The event attracted people and good publicity, and the activity touched many, both young and old.

Sadly, we are now dealing with another desecration. This time, officials do not think the cemetery was targeted because of its sacredness to Jews. Adjacent Ma-

sonic and Catholic cemeteries also suffered from this vandalism. Yet, however terrible this violence is to anyone, Jews carry in our figurative DNA a post-trau-



*Ted Herburger’s nephew, Austin Axtel, and friend, begin cemetery repair work, July, 2011*

matic stress accruing from millennia of desecrations, pogroms, blood libels, and cemetery segregation in the Old World. The Bubonic Plague, the Holocaust, and the centuries in between taught us that being a Jew too often excludes the privilege of peace—in life or in death; our dead were attacked often as a prelude to the murder of our living.

*(continued on p. 3)*

*Legacy is the quarterly newsletter of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society 5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE Albuquerque, NM 87109*

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## Message from President Dorothy Amsden



all is a good time for a stimulating conference, notably the 24th NMJHS Fall Conference at Albuquerque's Double-Tree Hotel on October

22. This major educational and social event of the year for history buffs will explore the Jewish experience in 20th Century New Mexico. (See the article on p. 3) Registration brochures were mailed to NMJHS members in early September. Conference information and a registration form are also available in printable format at [www.nmjhs.org](http://www.nmjhs.org).

Thanks to the Jewish Federation of New Mexico, NMJHS recently received a generous allocation to support educational programs and exhibits pertaining to the Jewish Pioneer Panels that we acquired from the Museum of New Mexico over a year ago. A major effort is under way to prepare the panels for exhibit at the Jewish Community Center in Febru-

ary 2012 and to develop educational programs about the Jewish families who settled in New Mexico after it became a U.S. Territory.

A St. Louis resident and member of NMJHS, Lilo Lang Waxman, recently donated a very special dollhouse to the Holocaust and Intolerance Museum of New Mexico. The treasure of a family that escaped the Holocaust and came to New Mexico in 1936, the dollhouse survived World War II in the attic of a Christian family. Lilo's love of New Mexico and her ties to NMJHS stem from her arrival in Las Vegas as a 16-year-old and her later marriage into a Mora family of Jewish merchants. (Lilo is the bride on the cover of the NMJHS membership brochure.)



NMJHS President Dorothy Amsden

The Holocaust Museum, located in downtown Albuquerque, plans to feature the dollhouse at a special opening reception on November 20. The exhibit will also include some of the Jewish Pioneer panels of the Ilfeld family.

Last but not least, the 2012 Centennial of New Mexico's statehood is just around the corner. To mark the occasion, NMJHS will be offering three-year Centennial memberships for \$100. This is a great inducement for members to show their support and save on annual dues. When you receive a reminder to renew your mem-

bership in early December, I encourage you to take advantage of this offer.

I look forward to seeing you at the Fall conference! ☆

---

## The Rosalia Myers Feinstein Essay Contest For New Mexico Youth, ages 9-14

Do you know a young person who is interested in history? Encourage them to write an essay on any topic relating to the history and culture of Jewish New Mexico; they may be published and win a cash prize!

Submissions must be original unpublished work. The format may include any of the following: first-person essay, research paper, fictional diary, genealogical history of a family or individual histories of ancestors, oral history or PowerPoint presentation. The submissions should total at least 500 words and show evidence of creativity, historical accuracy, and use of available resources. Topics are up to the writer, but may include the history of Jews in New Mexico, the interactions between Jews and other ethnic groups, histories of ancestors or family members with a Jewish New Mexico connection.

The deadline for submissions is 5:00 p.m. on February 1, 2012. Essays will be judged anonymously by a panel of NMJHS judges. Essay winners (1, 2 & 3) will win cash prizes and essays will be published in the *Legacy*.

To submit an entry, send the following form with your essay to:

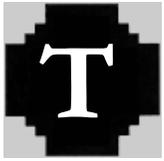
Essay Contest, New Mexico Jewish Historical Society, 5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87109. For more information, contact Naomi Sandweiss at  
[sashisand@aol.com](mailto:sashisand@aol.com).

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## NMJHS 2011 Fall Conference



The 2011 Fall Conference of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society will take place on Saturday, October 22, in Albuquerque. The theme of this year's conference is "The Jewish Experience in Twentieth Century New Mexico and the Institutions that Made it Possible."

This conference opens a yearlong series of programs on Jewish Life as part of the New Mexico Centennial celebration. In this conference leading figures in Jewish Life in New Mexico will speak about the impact of the University of New Mexico and the Medical School, Sandia and Los Alamos national laboratories, government and private enterprise, and the development of Albuquerque as an important Jewish center. The conference will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel in downtown Albuquerque.

Dorothy Amsden, president of the NMJHS, will open the conference followed by an introductory session by Noel Pugach, Henry Tobias, and Shlomo Karni, who will talk about the continuities and changes in the New

Mexico Jewish community with attention to the development of the community after World War II. In the following session Stan Hordes, Janice Paster, James J. Wechsler, and Isabelle Medina-Sandoval will talk about being Jewish in government and how government has affected the community.

Luncheon speaker Sam Sokolove, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of New Mexico, will talk about "Jewish New Mexico 2011: Where Are We and Where Are We Going?", giving a vision of the future. Janet Saiers will bring a greeting from the Albuquerque Historical Society.

In the afternoon Naomi Sandweiss will lead a session on the Jewish community in Albuquerque with the participation of Michael Sutin, Leba Freed, and Helen Grevey, who have had important roles in the development of the community. The final session will focus on the national research labs, Sandia and Los Alamos. Jack Schlacter, Mort Lieberman, and Robert Benjamin will examine Jewish involvement in these institutions and how that has contributed to Judaism in New Mexico.

A wine-and-cheese reception will honor Naomi Sandweiss and her recent book, *Jewish Albuquerque*.

The dinner speaker will be Sharon Niederman, winner of the 2011 Hurst Award and president of the New Mexico Press Women's Association. Her talk is entitled "Reading Sholem Aleichem in Raton: My Life in the New Mexico Diaspora."

This is another one of those wonderful conferences that NMJHS has been offering for the past twenty-three years. You don't want to miss it. Send in your conference registrations to our administrator Ruth Carter postmarked no later than October 10. If you did not receive a conference brochure, you can request one from Ruth (505-348-4471 or [admin@nmjhs.org](mailto:admin@nmjhs.org)). Conference information and a registration form are posted on the NMJHS website at [www.nmjhs.org](http://www.nmjhs.org). ✧

**Seeking conference volunteers:  
If you can provide assistance before or on the day of the conference, please contact  
Ruth Carter at (505) 348-4471  
or [admin@nmjhs.org](mailto:admin@nmjhs.org)**

### Vandals Strike Montefiore Cemetery *(continued from p. 1)*

An important question has been raised as the Las Vegas community tries to deal with this act: was the vandalism fueled by the inflammatory words of Chicano hero and land-grant heir Reies López Tijerina at the ceremony in which he received the key to the City of Las Vegas, just before the violence? To its credit, the community is meeting to try to understand what has happened. After all, the vandalism affects not only families whose loved ones' burial sites were harmed, but also tarnishes Las Vegas's reputation as a civil and civilized town.

Among the headstones that were broken and toppled were those of the Taichert

family. Milton Taichert bequeathed his papers, photos, and artifacts to the NMJHS archives. These gifts formed the nucleus of NMJHS archives, now housed in the Garry Carruthers State Library in Santa Fe. Milton was the "keeper of the keys" to Temple Montefiore, the first synagogue constructed in New Mexico (in 1884). Although this building now houses the Newman Center at New Mexico Highlands University, it is again a focal point for the Las Vegas Jewish community, where they say prayers on Shabbat and the High Holidays.

Yes, Jewish prayers continue in Las Vegas, New Mexico; Jewish funerals

and burials continue in the Montefiore Cemetery. We will do as we have always done: repair, rebuild, and continue our *tikkun* in this broken world. ✧

*Sharon Niederman is an author, photographer, novelist and NMJHS past president. In June, Niederman won the Society's Dr. Allan and Leona Hurst award. Visit Sharon at <http://www.sharonniederman.com/>.*

**WANTED**  
**Treasurer to serve on NMJHS  
Board of Directors**  
**Contact [president@nmjhs.org](mailto:president@nmjhs.org)**

# Eulogy For Claire Grossman

*This eulogy was delivered at the June 26 Annual Meeting*

by Stan Hordes



What can we say about Claire?

First and foremost, she was absolutely devoted to her family and her friends. Our conversations were dominated by stories of her Mom (to whom she referred as “The Queen”), as well as the latest accomplishments of her children, their spouses and, of course, her beloved grandchildren. We could never hear enough of the latest grandmother-grandchild trip to some far-off destination. And, in order to be closer to her family, she chose to uproot herself from Santa Fe to spend the final six years of her life in Nashua, New Hampshire.

During her all-too-brief fifteen years in Santa Fe, she maintained so many wonderful friendships. Helen and I were privileged to be counted among her circle of close friends. Claire never forgot a birthday, and never failed to follow up on the progress of our children through high school, college, and their professional lives.

But it was our collaborations in the activities of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society that I most fondly remember. For more than ten years, Claire made a tremendously meaningful contribution to the cause of New Mexico Jewish History. Having grown up in Cincinnati (birthplace of the Reform Jewish movement in America, and home of the Hebrew Union College and the American Jewish Archives), Claire was steeped in the family tradition of participating in Jewish cultural and historical causes.

Immediately upon her arrival in Santa Fe in 1990, she joined the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society, and participated enthusiastically in the organization and activities of the group for

years to come. Claire was the glue that held the Society together. She served three terms as President, three more as Vice-President, and chaired several key committees. When the Museum of New Mexico’s Palace of the Governors decided to embark on their major exhibit, “Jewish Pioneers of New Mexico,” they asked Claire to sit on both the Fundraising and Academic Advisory Committees, which she did with distinction.



*Claire Grossman*

For many years, Claire played an instrumental role in ensuring the success of the Society’s Annual Conferences and Annual Memorial Day Field Trips by overseeing the logistical details and making certain that all the participants were fed well and lodged comfortably.

To be certain, the contributions of Claire to the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society have been mammoth. Claire’s unselfish devotion to the promotion and preservation of New Mexico Jewish history through the contribution of her labor, her largess, her wisdom, and her vision, led the Society in 2002 to bestow upon her the Dr. Allan Hurst Award, which recog-

nized the person who contributed to New Mexico Jewish history, culture and community for a substantial period of time.

Through all these activities, Claire was my partner, comrade-in-arms, and very close friend. In many ways she was the older sister I never had. I will always treasure the times we had together.

Claire lived 80 wonderful years, and she passed away peacefully, without pain, and with her family at her bedside in her last days. What more could one ask of life?

We will all miss Claire very much. But she will live on in the memories of all of the many, many lives that she touched. ✧

*Stan Hordes is a past President of NMJHS and author of 'To the End of the Earth: A History of the Crypto Jews.'*

**We are proud to announce that the NMJHS Annual Meeting, which is held in June each year, will henceforth be called the Claire Grossman Memorial Annual Meeting, in honor of our past president, who recently passed away. Claire was a treasure. She was devoted to the growth and success of the Society. The Annual Meeting provides an opportunity to note NMJHS achievements and pass the baton on to new leaders. Funding for this yearly event has been generously provided by Marjorie Weinberg-Berman.**

# Fire Season: An Enforced Vacation

by Dorothy Corner Amsden

*Note: The Las Conchas Fire was the largest in New Mexico history, ultimately burning 156,593 acres.*

**O**n June 26, while returning home to Los Alamos from the NMJHS Annual Meeting in Santa Fe, my husband Tony, a friend, and I were startled to see a huge smoke plume billowing ominously skyward from the southern flank of the Jémez Mountains. Oh no, not another fire, we thought. En route to Santa Fe that morning, we had watched the Pacheco Fire eat into the Sangre de Cristos to the north. Now we had a fire to contend with closer to home.

A radio report confirmed that a major fire was threatening nearby Bandelier National Monument and Cochiti Pueblo. People were urged to leave Los Alamos if they had respiratory problems or large animals to move out of harm's way. What had started as a festive day ended on a sobering note. Surely they would get the fire under control, we thought, and we won't have to evacuate as we had done 11 years ago. Still in denial the next morning, we heard that the Las Conchas Fire, as it was now called, was encroaching on Los Alamos National Laboratory and the town.

Over breakfast on Monday, June 27, we drew up a list of important things to take in case we had to evacuate—including recipes, based on the regrets of women whose Los Alamos homes had burned in 2000. I took photos of everything in the house and shop. Then we went about our normal Monday morning tasks. At 3 p.m. I turned on the radio and learned that evacuation had just been ordered for the 12,000 residents of Los Alamos. Tony and I scrambled to pack clothing, important documents, and irreplaceable items, checking the list to make sure we had not forgotten anything. After

reserving a hotel room in Santa Fe, we left home at 5:30 in two vehicles.

Since most townspeople had already left, there was little traffic heading off The Hill, but Santa Fe was congested with evacuees and normal rush-hour traffic. Our hotel offered evacuees a discounted rate of \$99 per night, breakfast buffet included. Our room was cramped with our belongings, but we were grateful to have privacy instead of sleeping in a huge open hall at a shelter, as we saw on television. Before we had left home, former NMJHS president and El Dorado resident Harold Melnick thoughtfully offered us a place to stay. But I declined, knowing we would not be good company. We did appreciate dinner with Harold and his wife, aj, at their home Wednesday.

Normally we love going to Santa Fe, but not when we can't go home. For two people who seldom watch television, we were glued to the local news. It was not very helpful, as it was aimed at a statewide audience rather than evacuees desperate for specific updates. The most informative TV broadcast was the daily noon briefing by Los Alamos fire officials. Other broadcasts added little until the next noon briefing.

What was happening? Did the fire approach the town? Would it travel down Pueblo Canyon, where our house and many others perch on the rim? The facts came in too slowly. Staff at our local radio station, KRSN-AM (the only other source of useful information) told us it was terribly smoky there, that a few people had remained in town, and that the National Guard was patrolling every neighborhood to prevent break-ins.

*(continued on p. 6)*





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**Mission Statement**

The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society is a secular organization that welcomes all interested people, regardless of religious affiliation. Its mission is to promote greater understanding and knowledge of New Mexico's Jewish history within a broad cultural context.

**Fire Season: An Enforced Vacation** *(continued from p. 5)*

Although I had started the adventure with a good attitude, I became more impatient as the days of exile went on. I had brought some good books but couldn't concentrate. Tony was uptight from the outset. A man who normally can't live without his crossword puzzles, he put them aside. We got out of the room every day to do an errand, take a walk, go somewhere for a nice meal. I remembered an ad in *Legacy* for Joe's Diner, near our hotel; the food was so good we went back several times. They too offered a discount to evacuees.

We learned that the Los Alamos Post Office had set up shop at the Pojoaque Valley High School gymnasium, and went on Wednesday and Friday to pick up our mail. The staff was well organized on Wednesday, but by Friday the mail had piled up and chaos reigned. We got most of our important mail several days after returning home.

One day, we drove to a police post on the edge of town in hopes of being allowed to go home briefly to water houseplants. No luck. Fortunately, the garden was on drip irrigation set to water every other day. I was getting low on a prescription I'd renewed in Los Alamos but not taken the time to pick up before we left town. It was too complicated to get it elsewhere, so I decided to make do for a few days and hope for the best.

Because I depend on my computer (for correspondence, news, and NMJHS business) and it wasn't possible to set up the CPU we'd brought, I experienced online withdrawal symptoms. So many evacuees used the hotel computer that I didn't get a chance to check my email until Saturday. There were messages from family and friends all over the country as well as overseas.

The best news was that the fire line on State Route 4 had held, preventing the

fire from entering Lab property. Trees there had been thinned after the Cerro Grande fire in 2000, and that area now served as a buffer. Prevailing southwest winds would have driven the fire right into the Lab and town if not for that firebreak and previous thinning. Though the fire had climbed the ridge above Los Alamos and sent spot fires onto lower slopes, fire crews were able to contain them. We began to hope that the town would be spared. The Cerro Grande fire, which had invaded the western edge of town, had burnt more than 400 homes. This fire did not destroy any Los Alamos homes, though it did burn others in the Jémez Mountains.

By Friday the danger had passed, and the evacuees were itching to go home. We were impatient with the police chief's announcement that the County would first have to staff up and our only grocery store be restocked. He also was concerned about traffic jams on the return, so he was cagey about when the evacuation would be lifted.

Finally, at 7 Sunday morning, July 3, we heard on television that we could go home starting at 8 a.m. Hurrah! An end to our enforced six-night vacation. We took our time packing the two vehicles, then went to Joe's for breakfast. Tony made a beeline home; the first thing he did when he arrived was water the wilting container plants on the deck, 14 watering cans in all. I made it home an hour later, after hitting a grocery store in Santa Fe to stock up on perishables. I crossed the Rio Grande, passed the exit to Española, and saw an aid station set up with bottled water for the anticipated traffic jam that never materialized because people returned at their own pace. At 10:45 that morning there were hardly any cars going my direction. Still, it was heartwarming to see the National

*(continued on p. 9)*

## GENEALOGY CORNER

### It's In Your Genes!

by Schelly Talalay Dardashti



And we don't mean Levis or other denim varieties.

We're talking genetic genealogy, the use of DNA to solve genealogy puzzles.

As administrator or co-administrator of several projects at FamilyTreeDNA.com, I'm frequently amazed at the number of researchers who have still not used this newest technological tool in their search for long-lost relatives.

There are researchers out there who either don't believe in DNA (some people need to be dragged kicking and screaming into the 21st century) or don't believe newcomers should fool around with it because it is "too complicated."

As a researcher of more than 20 years, with a background including both Sephardic and Ashkenazi origins, I know that my research would be much harder without DNA testing.

However, let's learn what such testing can and can't do:

It can confirm if two men are genetically related, even if the surnames are different (many European surnames, especially Jewish ones, are relatively recent). The number of markers tested and matching determines the time frame of the Most Recent Common Ancestor of the two men.

Genetic genealogists use the term "marker" – what does it mean? A marker is merely a location on the chromosome. There are many terms used in genetic genealogy. For a list, click here <http://www.familytreedna.com/faq/answers.aspx?id=21#703>.

DNA testing cannot be used for forensic testing (e.g., did a particular individual commit a specific crime?). The closest it might come is to say that someone in that particular direct paternal lineage might have had something to do with a certain case.

It can confirm or disprove family stories, such as the now-proven Sephardic origin of my Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazi family. This legend was passed down to every generation but no one believed it and generally laughed at it. Now however, the closest matches to the TALALAY – other than us - are NOGUEROS SANTOS, COSTA and TAFOYA.

It has been suggested that my theme song should be "We love DNA" (to the tune of "We love Rock and Roll!").

Before we get into the nitty gritty, let's see why I am so enamored of the process and the results.

I often recommend that complete newcomers start with a DNA test from FamilyTreeDNA.com. The simplest reason is that FTDNA has the largest database of samples to test against – it is larger than all the other companies in the field combined.

No matter what anyone else tells you, size (of the database) does matter. Why would you want to test against a small database limiting the possibilities of genetic matches? For those researching Jewish ancestry, FTDNA is most important as its database includes the largest Jewish DNA sample database.

That's where to test. But why should all researchers consider testing, regardless of their ethnic or religious origins?

My favorite reason prompting newcomers to test even before they've recorded their own names in a genealogy software program is that the person or persons to whom they match genetically may have already done major research on that particular family.

You could spend 20 years dealing with real-time archives and repositories or diligently searching every online source. But with a DNA test, you might find a genetic cousin who has already done much of the work. You can then share and collaborate with your genetic cousin and advance your family research together.

However there is always a caveat: If you don't want the answer, don't ask the question!

One must go into genetic testing with a very open mind. We don't know what interesting results might be revealed. To some, these might be fascinating; to others, long-held family secrets may come to light contradictory to what the family believes. An open mind is essential.

Two types of DNA may be tested: Y-DNA for males and mtDNA for females. Y-DNA is passed down virtually unchanged from father to son for hundreds of generations or thousands of years, although there might be some small naturally-occurring mutations. mtDNA is passed down virtually unchanged from mother to daughter from the beginnings of history.

Y-DNA has faster-changing markers, which facilitates sorting families into branches, a very useful method. mtDNA is much slower-changing, meaning a

*(continued on p. 8)*

**Genealogy Corner** (continued from p. 7)

testee may have a huge number of genetic matches. There are two tests for mtDNA, HVR 1 and HVR 2. HVR 2 refines geographically the results from the HVR 1 test, so it is recommended to do both mtDNA tests, which will cut down on the number of matches and make those matches more genealogically relevant.

Who to test? A male inherits Y-DNA from his father and mtDNA from his mother. He can pass on Y-DNA to his male children, but not the mtDNA. A female inherits only mtDNA from her mother and passes that on to her children of both genders (but only her daughters can pass it on to their children).

It is generally considered better to test the oldest living generation in a family, which will give clues to that person's parents and perhaps enable jumping back to an earlier generation or two. Therefore, a grandfather can be tested for his father's Y-DNA and his mother's mtDNA. The grandfather's sister can only be tested for mtDNA. So it makes more sense to test the males who carry both samples if both people are the offspring of the same set of parents.

FamilyTreeDNA now offers the Family Finder test. This newer test will find among the database samples, those – back to five or six generations ago – who share paternal and maternal snippets of DNA. Genealogists who have

used this test receive results indicating many interesting family connections that need to be followed up among those listed as fourth or fifth cousins.

Traditional genealogy is not dead and will never be, but DNA genetic genealogy will help your research. While documents may be wrong, family trees may be in error (even quite famous ones), and family stories may be false, blood doesn't lie. Two men who match really do match, regardless of what the paper trail reveals. It is also useful – and the only option – when the paper trail has disappeared.

For the science behind genetic genealogy, please check out the familytreedna.com website, which holds a wealth of information. Do check the database at the site to see if there are groups already for your surnames of interest, or geographic origin (such as the New Mexico Project, Sicily Project and others).

Several times a year, FamilyTreeDNA holds deep discounted sales. One just ended offered \$100 off the Family Finder test, as well as deep discounts for those wishing to upgrade from the basic 12 markers to 25, 37, 67 or 110 markers.

If you are planning to attend a major genealogy conference, check to see the DNA offerings. If either FTDNA CEO/founder Bennett Greenspan is speaking, or the brilliant Stephen Morse

or others, do try to attend their talks. Those with questions on DNA are invited to contact me as well.

For more information (technical, as well as warm and fuzzy), read the wealth of material offered at Family Tree DNA. com: <http://familytreedna.com>. Check out the free DNA/genetics webinars at Elise Friedman's Relative Roots <http://relativeroots.net>. See Dr. Morse's DNA offerings at <http://stevemorse.org/#genetic>. If you attend genealogy conferences, make sure to attend the DNA sessions, often presented by Bennett Greenspan of FamilyTreeDNA or Steve Morse and others.

Don't you want to know your genetic cousins? How did your family get here from there? How is everyone related, or are they related at all?

DNA technology is the best tool that family history researchers have now. Unless you start looking, you won't find what you want to know. ✧

*Schelby Talalay Dardashti focuses on Jewish genealogy as a journalist, genealogist, instructor and international speaker. In addition to launching Tracing the Tribe: The Jewish Genealogy Blog under the auspices of the JTA in August 2006, she also serves as the US Genealogy Advisor for MyHeritage.com, the largest family social networking site. She's a native New Yorker who, with her family, has lived in Iran, Israel, California, Nevada and in New Mexico since November 2010.*

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## From the Archives - Sir Moses Montefiore, Statesman and Philanthropist

by Patricia A. Carlton

**T**he name Montefiore is well known throughout the modern world, kept alive by the many Jewish institutions named in honor of Sir Moses Montefiore. New Mexico's own Montefiore Cemetery in Las Vegas opened in 1886, a year after the death of Sir Moses. It is hardly the only cemetery named for Montefiore, as witness the Montefiore cemeteries in New York State, in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and elsewhere. The Montefiore hospitals in New York and Pittsburgh are famous nationwide, not to mention the Montefiore Hotel in Jerusalem and the Montefiore libraries and colleges in England. But how many people have investigated the namesake of these venerable institutions?

Sir Moses Montefiore was born in Livorno, Italy, in 1784, but within a few months was taken to London where his grandfather had emigrated. There, young Moses received a rudimentary Jewish education in addition to a secular education. He established a good early reputation as a stockbroker, and by the

age of 20 founded the Montefiore Bros. company, joined by his brother Abraham. While a captain in the English militia, he met and married Judith Cohen, wealthy in her own right and also sister-in-law to Nathan Mayer Rothschild. Partly through his connections as stockbroker to his brother-in-law, Moses Montefiore built a considerable fortune and retired from business in



*Sir Moses Montefiore*

1824 at age 40, to devote his energies to pursuing the defense and rights of Jews throughout the world, and to assist in social and philanthropic work to benefit not only Jews but those of all creeds. He traveled to Egypt, Morocco, Russia and Romania and consulted with the Sultan in Constantinople.

After they married, both Moses and Judith Montefiore became strictly Orthodox Jews. On his many trips abroad he took along his personal Shochat (ritual slaughterer), and brought his own kosher dishes and food to banquets. In 1827, the couple traveled together to Israel for the first time, a nine-day trip that marked a turning point in their lives. Altogether, Moses made seven trips to Israel during his lifetime. He acquired land to help Jews

become self-sufficient, introduced a printing press and a textile factory to Palestine, and inspired the founding of several agricultural settlements, as well as Yemin Moshe, the first Jewish living quarters outside the Old City walls.

In England, Montefiore was elected Sheriff of London for 1837-38, and was knighted by Queen Victoria. In 1846 he became a Baron in recognition of his humanitarian efforts, and served as president of the British Board of Deputies from 1835-1874, with one brief interruption. Sir Montefiore's physical stature (he was 6'3" tall), together with his background and his philanthropy, made him highly respected and admired in England and abroad. His 100th birthday was a public holiday in Jewish communities around the world. He died at 101 in 1885.

Although only a few of his accomplishments can be listed here, anyone interested in learning more about this famous benefactor of the Jewish people should read the 2010 book *Moses Montefiore: Jewish Liberator, Imperial Hero*, by his descendant Abigail Green. ✧

*Patricia Carlton is the NMJHS Archivist. This article was researched and composed from material supplied online by the Jewish Virtual Library and the Jewish Magazine.*

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### Fire Season: An Enforced Vacation *(continued from p. 6)*

Guard waving to welcome me home, and I waved back.

Electricity had been maintained during the entire evacuation, so we didn't have to throw out food in our freezer and refrigerator as we had done eleven years ago. It was so good to be in our own house, which, having been sealed, suffered no smoke damage. But the air was so smoky the next two weeks that we couldn't open windows or spend much

time outdoors. Fortunately, our house has refrigerated air conditioning.

As we got resettled, ash continued to fall. Flames flared on the ridges at night just three miles west of our house, and reddish smoke plumes exploded during the daytime. Helicopters roared over our house, carrying water to dump on the fire. After a terribly dry winter and spring, conditions had been ripe

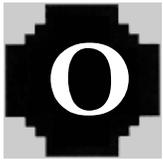
for a major fire. There just isn't much one can do when the jetstream steers moisture to our north. I kept thinking about Chaco Canyon and how nearly 1,000 years ago, its inhabitants had to abandon it when their water dried up.

While it won't be in my lifetime that the spruce, firs, and ponderosa pines grow back on the bare slopes, already the grasses are beginning to sprout and the aspens will be back before long. ✧

# PEEK INTO THE PAST

## Like It Was Yesterday: Remembering Magidson's

by Mark Yellin



One of the (many) delights of running the AbqJew.com website is meeting (at least virtually) a whole bunch of interesting people. Here

is a wonderful letter that I received from Sam B:

Even at my advanced age (I am a WWII vet), I've considered a trip (back) to Albuquerque. My late wife & I spent three delightful summers and an academic year at UNM in the early and mid 1960s, where I completed work for an advanced degree.

In '61, I wanted to see the D.H. Lawrence ranch in Taos. On that occasion I suffered a bad case

of hyperacidity. None of the restaurants in Taos or Santa Fe had anything kind on my stomach. Some time later, we found ourselves on Central Avenue, not far from the then Santa Fe /Alvarado station hotel complex. Across the street I caught sight of a sign that read Magidson's Delicatessen. No more beautiful vision ever met my eyes. My wife and I reveled in the Barley Lima Bean soup and of course the corned beef on rye. After that meal, my hyperacidity went away.

As a newcomer to Albuquerque, I went searching for the fabled Magidson's—not on Central Avenue, but on Google. I found several warm accounts of the restaurant that served as the gathering place for Jewish and non-Jewish residents of Albuquerque.

My first find was an article in the *Albuquerque Journal* dated August 15, 2004. Written by Toby Smith and headlined "Domenici's Name Will Be Etched in Stone," it begins:

When it opened in the 1940s, Magidson's Restaurant quickly became the Downtown place to go. Located on Central Avenue near Second Street, Magidson's served some of the first pastrami sandwiches in Albuquerque.

High-ranking cops, real estate agents, loan officers – they all showed up at Magidson's to sip coffee each morning or shoot the breeze at lunch.

One regular was a young, crewcut lawyer in Buddy Holly eyeglasses.

Pete, everybody called him. "Hey, Pete," the older guys at Magidson's kidded, "save

anybody from the gas chamber today?"

If you mattered, you sat at the big table near the entrance. It was called the Captain's Table by Al Magidson, the bow-tie wearing owner, a Chicago native who often joined in the gabfest.

Happy to be part of the bantering, Pete nonetheless seemed to be looking elsewhere, toward the horizon.

Magidson's is gone now, but Pete is still around, of course, a U.S. senator in his sixth term.

Yes, the article is about the former U.S. Senator from New Mexico – but Magidson's plays a major role.

My next find was Helen Horwitz's mention of Magidson's in her front page article, "The Jewish Albuquerque That I Remember: 1940 - 1955," in the March 2008 *Legacy*.

Magidson's Delicatessen, which was the lunchtime magnet for Jews and Gentiles alike... Magidson's fragrant, juicy corned beef and pastrami sandwiches often drew everyone together, if just for lunch.

Morris Freedman's seminal article, "The Jews of Albuquerque: A Southwestern Community," published in the July 1959 *Commentary*, also took note of the establishment.

Social mixing seems as complete as business and professional integration. Magidson's, a downtown restaurant which features traditional Jewish dishes (as well as shrimp and fish on Friday), is

*(continued on p. 11)*

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**Peek Into the Past** *(continued from p. 10)*

regarded by many as a non-sectarian luncheon club.

While everyone who was in Albuquerque at the time had fond memories of the restaurant, I wanted to learn more.

I learned that Susan Morrison Citrin is the granddaughter of Albert Magidson, the owner of Magidson's. She shared the history of the establishment and their family.

Albert Magidson was born in 1885 in Russia, but came to America as an infant. In the 1910s and 1920s, he owned five upscale women's clothing stores in Chicago. However, the Depression years were unkind and his business folded. Magidson joined his brothers for a few years in the cigar trade – the source of the many fine cigars available at Magidson's Deli.

By the late 1930s, Albert opened a restaurant on Chicago's West Side. Shortly thereafter, the interstate came through, and the property was lost to Eminent Domain.

Luckily, Albert had a friend – Sam Stützberg – who had migrated to Albuquerque, then a city of about 10,000. In 1939, Sam advised Albert, "Come to Albuquerque. We need a Jewish delicatessen." Albert uprooted his family from Chicago and came. The rest is history.

Albert opened Magidson's Restaurant and Delicatessen on the north side of Central Avenue, between First Street and Second Street in 1939. Magidson's was never a truly kosher eating place. But it was known as "Jewish style." Magidson's Hispanic cooks were trained to prepare brisket, *kasha varnishkes* – all the traditionally European Jewish foods – but never any pork. Sarah was a great baker, supplying all the *challah* and *rugelach* Albuquerque's Jews could eat.

In Magidson's heyday – 1939 through the early 1960s – Albert, his son Irwin,

and, later, Albert's son-in-law Marty Morrison were all in the business together. And yes, every day at 10 a.m., the Captain's Table was the place to be.

Who was there? Pete Domenici, of course. And also Simon Goldman, Mel Rueckhaus, Jack Kleinfeld, Harold Gardenswartz, Jay Rothman, Saul Taylor, David Spector and Alan Greenfeld.

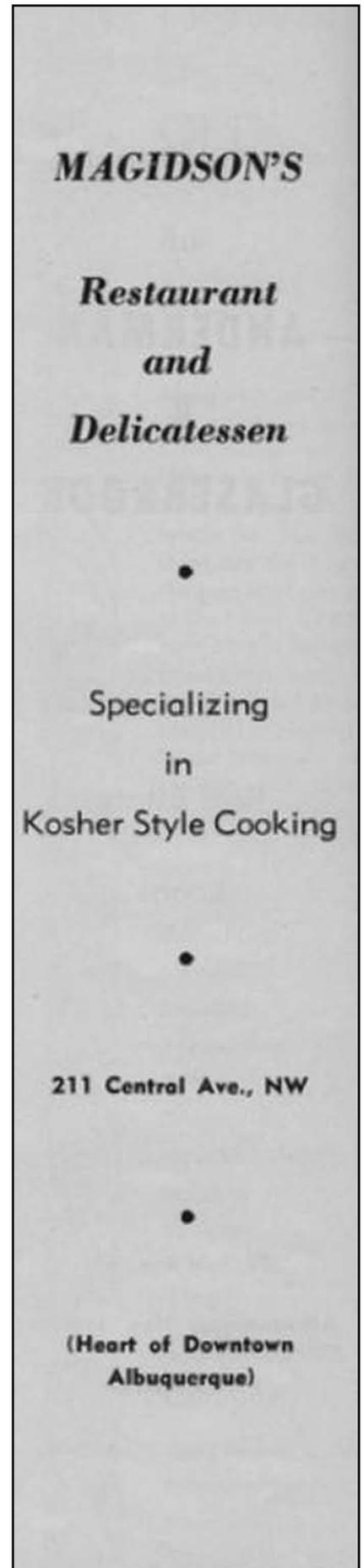
Susan says she always wondered how all these busy businesspeople could take off for an hour or two in the middle of the day just to sit and schmooze. But Magidson's was the Jewish community center before there was a Jewish Community Center.

As Albuquerque's commercial center moved east – following the opening of the new Winrock shopping center – business people spent less time downtown. Sometime in the 1960s, Irwin downsized Magidson's, moved it to a grocery store/deli at Fair Plaza in the Northeast Heights and in the mid 1980s, sold the delicatessen to a Greek restaurateur. Magidson's – the name, anyway – later moved to the Smith's supermarket at Central and San Pedro, and eventually closed.

Albert died in 1974, and is buried in Albuquerque's Fairview Memorial Park, next to his beloved Sarah (1888-1983).

Magidson's may be gone, but the delicious corned beef, the big cigar case, the Captain's Table, and – most importantly – the warmth, generosity and kindness of Albert and Sarah remain forever in the memories of those who were privileged to know them. ☆

*A July 2010 arrival to the Land of Enchantment, Marc Yellin (aka AbqJew) is a graduate of UCLA (Engineering) and the Jewish Theological Seminary (Education), an experienced Torah and Haftorah reader, a klezmer musician and a big fan of almost all aspects of Jewish civilization. He can be reached at [AbqJew.com](http://AbqJew.com) or [AbqJew.net](http://AbqJew.net).*



## NMJHS Annual Dues

*New members who join during the last four months of a year will have their membership extended through the end of the following year.*

- Renewal  New
- Individual \$40
- Individual Senior (+55) \$35
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## Calendar of NMJHS Upcoming Events

*Check for future events at [www.nmjhs.org](http://www.nmjhs.org)*

The NMJHS program activities for Fall 2011 range from the Fall Conference to talks by local authors about Sephardic stories and Crypto-Jewish experiences. For further information on these events contact the institution involved or contact Program Chair Ron Duncan Hart at [hart.gaon@gmail.com](mailto:hart.gaon@gmail.com) or 505-820-0550.

**NMJHS 2011 Fall Conference: New Mexico Jewish Experience in the Twentieth Century.** Saturday, October 22, Albuquerque, DoubleTree Hotel. See article on page 3 in this issue. For more information and registration form, go to the NMJHS website.

**¡Celebrate! The Jewish Experience in Spanish-Speaking Countries.** November 9, 2011 - November 16, 2011. Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico

¡Celebrate!, organized by the New Mexico Anti-Defamation League, is an unprecedented week of film, music, exhibits and lectures highlighting the extraordinary historic and contemporary journey of the Jewish people after their expulsion from Spain in 1492.

A film documenting a “Mexican Shindler” opens the 3rd year of ¡Celebrate! The Mexican film, *Visa al Paraiso*, (Visa to Paradise), is the little known story of Mexican diplomat Gilberto Bosques who saved 45,000 Jews during the Holocaust.

Highlights of this year’s festival include the films *Nora’s Will*, a Mexican film-award winner, and a first screening in Santa Fe of the very popular *The Last Sephardic Jew*.

Participants will hear from author Sandra Toro on the Spanish Jews of 16th Century Europe and enjoy lectures from Enrique Lubinsky, Director of Content from the Museum of Memory and Tolerance in Mexico City on “Mexico and the Holocaust.” Violinist Guillermo Figueroa and his pianist sister will regale us with a concert. There will be exhibits and more! For a complete schedule, please access [www.adl.org/celebratefestival](http://www.adl.org/celebratefestival).

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NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW MEXICO JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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