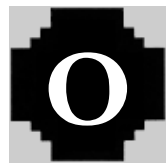




## Albuquerque Holocaust Survivors Honored

by Dianne R. Layden



On December 8, 2016, Holocaust survivors Evy Woods, Riva Wolf, and Asya and Michael Limanovich were honored by the Global Embassy of Activists for Peace in the House of Representatives chambers at the New Mexico State Capitol.

The Global Embassy's Traces to Remember project seeks to foster an awareness of genocide by commemorating the Holocaust, honoring survivors, and keeping alive their testimony. Exhibited for each survivor is a plaque in the shape of the Star of David, with handprints of the survivor and descendants as evidence that Nazism did not annihilate the Jewish people. The survivor's story and a description of the Holocaust accompany each plaque.

The four Albuquerque survivors are from Germany, France, Russia, and Poland. At the ceremony, they described their lives as children fearfully fleeing, hiding, and depending for survival on help from strangers and good fortune. Maya Limanovich, daughter of Asya and Michael, told of her coming to the United States and bringing her family 13 years later.

Regina Turner, founder and executive director of New Mexico Human Rights Projects (NMHRP), located the survivors. Since 1995, over 400,000 students and 600 teachers have participated in NMHRP programs to combat prejudice and violence in many forms. The Anne Frank exhibits NMHRP brought to Albuquerque in 1995, 2000, and 2010 were viewed by over 250,000 visitors from around the state. The exhibits, Regina said, provided a safe venue for

Holocaust survivors to tell their stories. Though the number of survivors has dwindled since 1995, NMHRP continues to bring able survivors to speak to students in middle and high school classrooms.

Three survivors and the Limanovich daughter offered to tell their stories in their own words to *Legacy* readers. Part I of this article will present the Holocaust narratives by Evy Woods and Asya Limanovich, and Maya Limanovich's story of her and her family's immigration to the United States. Part II, in the summer issue of *Legacy*, will present Michael Limanovich's Holocaust narrative.

### Evy Woods

The three of us – my mother, father, and I, Evy Goldstein, aged four-and-a-half – went underground in Berlin the last day of February 1943. A Jewish couple named Lewent had taken us into their attic in a building they had owned. Six weeks later, the Gestapo found us, and we escaped into hiding through the efforts of German rescuers. They kept us separated – my mother and father together, I somewhere else – until in June 1943, my father was grabbed on the street in Berlin; he was taken to Auschwitz, where he was gassed on arrival in August 1943.

I was sent to a hamlet in East Prussia near Königsberg, and was hidden in a small villa by a non-Jewish woman and her three sons, who didn't know anything about me. Pastor Martin Niemöller's church in Berlin supported us, as we learned after the war.

With the approach of the Russian army, German civilians were evacuated westward. We had to find another hiding place with the help of an old woman in the hamlet near Königsberg. This became our last hiding place.



Dianne Layden



Evy Woods

In January 1945, the Russians came. My mother tried to make clear to the soldiers that we were Jews. They said that Hitler killed all the Jews – there are no Jews – you're lying to save yourself. We survived with the soldiers at the front during a six-week battle with the Germans for Königsberg.

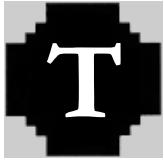
Soon the Russians began to separate people. We wound up in some collective camps with other German civilians and Italian military. We escaped from these camps because typhus epidemics broke out in every one

*(continued on p. 3)*

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## President's Column



The NMJHS Board of Directors held its annual retreat on January 15, not only to review its progress and activities in 2016, but also to develop a strategic plan for the next two to three years. As part of the planning process, the board re-examined and revised our mission statement, developed a vision statement, and assessed our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Finally, we set goals for 2017. In addition to current board members, our retreat included two past presidents who shared their historical knowledge and perspective of NMJHS history, which was an invaluable part of our discussion.



*NMJHS President  
Linda Goff*

After considerable wordsmithing, the board adopted a new mission statement as follows: *"The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society is a secular organization that promotes greater knowledge and understanding of New Mexico's diverse Jewish experiences within a broad cultural context."*

To develop our first ever vision statement, we brainstormed vision statement elements and tentative goals for 2017. Working subgroups of the board were established to craft the vision statement and to identify four goals.

This is our new vision statement: *"The NMJHS's vision is to become a more diverse and visible statewide organization to facilitate an increasingly better understanding and appreciation of New Mexico's Jewish history."*

Assessing our strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities allowed us to recognize our achievements, which include good collective board leadership, as well as organizational structure and innovation along with financial stability. Our programs, including the fall conference, continue to be among our great strengths. They reflect continuity, credibility of NMJHS, and our academic resources, including our current and future publications. The collective "love of Jewish history" is evident throughout our programs and other initiatives.

The board also has identified and begun to undertake new important projects crucial to preserving and disseminating New Mexico Jewish history by digitizing our historical records and making them available on the NMJHS website and similar projects, such as recording more family histories by interviewing descendants. Training opportunities exist for high school and college students to assist in the collections of family histories and written records. To accomplish this, we must look for external funding by way of grants and individual donors.

NMJHS also has existing programs, such as the newly launched Speakers Bureau, that will help us with our outreach to different groups, both Jewish and non-Jewish, as well as schools with interests in New Mexico history. External threats always exist for any organization, and NMJHS is no exception. Concerns include: shrinking external funding opportunities, the overall economy, growing anti-Semitism (although less so in New Mexico), and the potential loss of historical documents if not preserved in the near future.

Finally, the board identified four goals for 2017:

1. Add new members, including intergenerational families in New Mexico;
2. Hold one fundraising program per year in addition to the fall conference;
3. Implement the Speakers Bureau, focusing on targeted audiences, Jewish and non-Jewish;
4. Ensure southern New Mexico Jewish communities are included in all of our outreach efforts.

We welcome your feedback and thoughts on this year's board retreat discussions and planning. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or suggestions! ☆

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### Mission Statement

The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society is a secular organization that promotes greater knowledge and understanding of New Mexico's diverse Jewish experiences within a broad cultural context.

**Albuquerque Holocaust Survivors Honored** *(continued from p. 1)*

of them, and the NKVD (later called the KGB) latched onto Mom because she spoke several languages. If you had brains and schooling, they would try to force you into service as a spy. If you refused, Siberia awaited you. To avoid that fate, we repeatedly dug our way out under camp fences.

We arrived a second time in Königsberg to find a way back to Berlin. Fate and walking took us to Vilna, the capital of Lithuania. There my mother encountered helpful Russian Jews, who spoke some German. When I was in the Jewish orphanage there, my

mother found work as a housekeeper for Russian Jewish families of means. Eventually, she kidnapped me from the orphanage, saying we had to get back to Germany – the opportunity was at hand. That trek ultimately led us back to Berlin in 1948. From Berlin, in 1949, I was sent to a child recovery program for Holocaust survivors in Stockholm, Sweden, where I stayed for nearly a year. My mother and I came to the United States in 1951, as Displaced Persons. At age 13, I finally enrolled in school in San Francisco, and life could begin.

**Asya Limanovich**

The war began suddenly on June 22, 1941, in the night – on the shortest night of the year. I was eight years old. We lived in Minsk. My older sister, 12 years old, was at a countryside summer camp.

Our father was called to the war front. My mother left my younger sister and me at the neighbors' house to run to

the train – run to save our older sister Maniu at summer camp, but the train had already been destroyed. My mother was in despair: what to do? Her dilemma needed to be resolved immediately, minutes deciding fates.

My mother ran out and asked the first soldier she saw:



*Plaque for Asya, Michael, and Maya Limanovich  
Global Assembly of Activists for Peace*

“What should I do, search for the oldest daughter in the summer camp, or save the younger daughters and take them away from the city?” The soldier did not hesitate to answer: “Grab your small children and get out of the city immediately; the caregivers will take care of the older daughter in the camp.”

Chaos, panic, aircraft bombs, screaming, crying children, exploding bombs, the city in flames. My mother, my younger sister, and I walked to the town of Mogilev, and there we were put into freight boxcars and began our long evacuation journey, which lasted for about two weeks, often interrupted by unforeseen stops caused by bombings. The train would stop, we would flee and hide in the woods, and when the bombings would stop, we would go back to the train and continue on our way. One day, after yet another bombing, we did not make it to our boxcar in time.

The train suddenly started moving and we were forced to jump into the moving boxcar. My sister and I jumped into the car. I looked around and was horrified to find that my mother was not there. Only at the next stop were we relieved to find out my mother jumped into a different boxcar. Finally, we arrived at

our evacuation destination – Kazakhstan.

From 1941 to 1945, we lived in an evacuation camp. I went to school during the day and after school worked in the fields. My mother worked on the farm. We all lived in the same tiny room, a hard and tiring life, but appreciated the peaceful sky over our heads, without roaring planes and flying bombshells.

Mom wrote incessantly to anyone she could think of, worrying about the fate of our dear older sister. Finally, tragically, we received news she was killed. The teachers and caregivers at her camp did not bother saving the children and instead let them go to find their own fates. The image of our poor teenage sister running from the soldiers and destroyed camp, only to arrive at an empty city, an empty home, haunts us until today.

In 1945, we returned to Minsk. The city was in ruins. We again lived in a tiny room without water, electricity, or a toilet. The challenges and horrors of war forced us to grow up very early. My childhood ended in June 1941 at the age of eight. We learned early to appreciate life and to distinguish the important from the mundane. Just think about the number six million. Just think about a young girl, lost and alone, running to her death. Just think about a mother deciding which of her children's lives she must save.

**Maya Limamovich**

I am the daughter of Holocaust survivors Asya and Michael Limanovich. After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1989, I was able to come to the United States – I arrived in 1990, following six months in an Italian refugee camp. My parents, my sister and brother, and their families, moved to Israel in 1991, near Tel Aviv.

In Albuquerque, I was sponsored by  
*(continued on p. 5)*

# In the Beginning: Inception of NMJHS

*Editor's note: This year the membership of NMJHS reached an all-time high of 316. This fact caused us to reflect on how the organization got started. We asked Jim Mafchir, one of the original movers and shakers, to share his reflections.*

by James Mafchir



In 1986, Stan Hordes asked me to attend an organizational meeting at Dr. Allan Hurst's house to form a Jewish historical society. By the end of

the meeting, the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society came into existence, complete with its first set of officers. I became the Society's first president and Stan Hordes the first vice-president. The minutes were signed by Rabbi Leonard A. Helman, Peter Hess, Stan Hordes, Walter S. Kahn, M. J. Rodríguez, Jerry Wertheim, Michelle Zackheim, A. David Scholder and myself.

Jerry Wertheim and M.J. (Manny) Rodríguez, both of the Jones Law Firm in Santa Fe, drafted articles of incorporation, and Stan Hordes drafted a mission statement and statement of purpose.

I called for our first of a number of board meetings, which were held at the Jones firm. At the meeting, Stan proposed a field trip to Las Vegas to evaluate the Montefiore Cemetery and what would be necessary to restore this important cultural monument. Around 1989, Marvin Taichart, son of Las Vegas Jewish pioneer, Milton Taichart, called me to say he heard that the Jewish section of the cemetery had been vandalized. The next day, walking through the cemetery with Marvin, we stopped in front of the Taichart family plot. Marvin noticed for the first time a gravestone that was smashed in half. Plaintively Marvin said, "That's my mother's stone." Those words echo in my mind to this day.

Perhaps 25 gravestones inside and a few outside the Jewish section were toppled or smashed. Vandalism of the Las Vegas Jewish cemetery was repeated in 2011. An article appeared

in the September 2011 issue of *Legacy*, available on the NMJHS website. Thrill-seeking juveniles, as the Las Vegas police concluded, or anti-Semitic acts or both, these instances resonate strongly with the recent Jewish cemetery desecrations in St. Louis, Missouri. The annual clean-up of the Montefiore Cemetery remains a priority for the NMJHS and the Jewish communities of New Mexico.



James Mafchir

Those first board meetings were as much fun as they were interesting. We had an eclectic mix of board members: Lynn Gottlieb of Nahalat Shalom of Albuquerque, pioneering woman rabbi, sitting with Rabbi Leonard Helman. We even had a board member who was a member of the Jewish Defense League. Meetings could be lively, but they were always productive.

The secret to the success of the Historical Society was the deliberate absence of political content in its programming. We all checked our politics at the door: Republican/Democrat, liberal/conservative, Zionist, non-Zionist. That tightrope act became more difficult when the Society decided to affiliate closely with the Jewish Federation of New Mexico many years ago.

During my terms as president, I wore many hats, as did most of the board of directors. Meetings were held at the Jones Law Firm at first, and then at board members' homes. All of the members pitched in to accomplish what needed to be done to make the NMJHS viable, to grow, and serve its members.

*(continued on p. 5)*

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**In the Beginning** *(continued from p. 4)*

I was the editor of the first, basic news-letter, which I continued doing for 10 years. Among my lasting achievements as president was the Annual Conference. Stan, a historian, offered a trove of conference themes. I also proposed the Annual Membership Meeting, which wrapped around the requirement that we have an annual meeting of the board to hold elections. When I proposed the establishment of an archives for the purpose of preserving and making available to scholars and the public material and documents of New Mexico's Jewish pioneers (as well as family records, photographs, and papers of notable New Mexicans, and the Society's administrative records), the board was surprised since we literally had nothing to archive.

Stan Hordes arranged for the Society's future records to be stored at the New Mexico Records Center and Archives. In a case of "if you build it, they will come," within two weeks of setting this up, Stan received a call from a family asking to

donate material to the Society if we had a way to care for the collections. And we now did.

Always looking for another member activity that promoted NMJHS programs, I proposed an archives gathering. As odd as that seemed, the first one was complete with refreshments as a number of us crammed into the basement of the State Archives and Records Center on Montezuma Street in Santa Fe. Suzan Campbell, a member and future president of the NMJHS, put in copious hours organizing the archives. When money ran out, she continued to work on a volunteer basis.

During my tenure and Stan's those first years, various standing committees were created, including programs, archives, publications, and genealogy, headed by Steve Gitomer. The duties of the various officers were defined. Membership grew to more than 150. I presided over

three annual conferences, each held in different New Mexico cities. Stan Hordes provided many of the themes and guest speakers.

After five terms as president, I continued on the board of directors for an additional five years, a total of 10 years of service to the NMJHS, and was responsible for designing and producing its newsletter and conference brochures.✧

*Author's note: Much of the information for this article came from an essay written by Patricia Westlake and can be found on <http://newmexicohistory.org/people/treasures-and-tombstones-jewish-history-through-archives-and-commemoration>. I supplemented it with my own recollection of events, and asked Stan Hordes, state historian until 1985, to review it.*

*Jim Mafchir is a book publisher and owner of Western Edge Press and Sherman Asher Publishing. He resides in Santa Fe.*

**Albuquerque Holocaust Survivors Honored** *(continued from p. 3)*

Jewish Family Services. I couldn't get work in my field of accounting because I didn't speak English. I had to work with my hands and for eight to nine months did laundry at the Hilton on University NE. I was doing clerical work at an insurance company when my employer moved me to the finance department, and I currently work as an accountant for United Way of Central New Mexico.

I became a citizen in 1995. For recreation, I sang in Svirka, the women's Balkan chorus, which disbanded in 2006.

After 13 years, I brought my whole family here in 2003 – Russian families are close. In January 2017, at the invitation of the Global Embassy of Activists for Peace, I told the story of my family in Boston at another event for Holocaust survivors.✧

*Part II of "Albuquerque Holocaust Survivors Honored" will appear in the Summer 2017 issue of Legacy.*

*Dianne Layden is a retired college professor and writer in Albuquerque.*

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Details to follow

# Conducting Archival Research into the Jewish Communities of the Caribbean

by Paula Amar Schwartz

**R**ob Martínez, assistant state historian of New Mexico, was the presenter at the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society's third Annual Visiting Scholars Program on February 26. He spoke about his experiences over an eight-year period conducting archival research in the Spanish Caribbean, assisting Dr. Stanley Hordes in his ongoing search for Jewish communities in remote places. Stan's groundbreaking book, *To the End of the Earth*, documenting the crypto Jews of New Mexico, opened the door for many to reclaim their history and identity.

In 2008, Rob and Stan launched their project, searching for documentation of Jewish migration in the Caribbean. They began with the extensive church and civil records housed in Mexico City, looking for documents relating to the islands of Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and Cuba, all under Spanish Colonial control. By searching the records of the Inquisition in Mexico, housed in the National Archives in Mexico City, they could identify individuals accused of "Judaizing." Their search then took them to each island, culminating in Havana, following the families of individuals identified as Jews. The process required a lengthy vetting by the Cubans for a visa permitting them entry, even though Cuba was closed to American tourism in 2008.

Cuba is not an easy place for American scholars to conduct research. When they returned in 2016, the island nation had opened to tourism, but it was still a challenge for visiting scholars, who could obtain tourist visas, but not work visas, which were required to access materials in the national archives. In Cuba, the documents are housed in civil archives as well as in church records. Gaining access to each presented unique and different challenges. For those of us

enthralled by the process of historiography, this was an especially gripping tale.

Cuba has had successive waves of Jews arriving in search of sanctuary. The first such wave, the *Conversos* or *Anusim*, arrived soon after Columbus, seeking a safe harbor from the Inquisition sweeping the worlds of Spain and Portugal.



*Rob Martínez, assistant state historian of New Mexico*

This is the focus of the research Dr. Hordes has spent his academic life researching in New Mexico, and now in Cuba. It is worth noting that anthropologist Adela Dworin, a native Cuban, wrote in her book, *An Island Called Home: Returning to Jewish Cuba*, that Fidel Castro told journalists that he has Jewish roots dating back to the Spanish Inquisition. This may be one of the sources of the protected status of religious minorities in modern Cuba.

The modern Jewish community, which built synagogues and even a Jewish hotel in Havana, arrived in the period from 1900 through the years leading up to the Holocaust. Cuba provided shelter for Jews unable to gain access to refuge in the United States during World War II. An exception to this protective role was the *S.S. St. Louis*, which docked in Havana in 1940. The Cuban authorities

at the time refused to allow the several hundred Jews on board to leave the ship. They were sent back to Europe. It is of interest to us that the aunt and grandparents of Stan's wife, Helen Hordes, were among those on board. They were placed in concentration camps in France, but eventually made it to the United States in 1941.



*Paula Amar Schwartz*

Some of those who found shelter in Cuba remained, some moved on, leaving behind institutions and organized communities. These communities, like all Cubans, suffered the deprivations of a country isolated by embargo and tightly controlled. But despite that, they enjoyed the freedom to be Jewish and were a protected community, as were other minority faith traditions, such as the *Santaria*, who the church considered to be devil worshippers.

Dr. Martínez's talk left us eager for Dr. Hordes's new book, and ready to learn more about the rigors of conducting historical research. The afternoon ended with an interlude of Cuban guitar music played by Rob Martínez, accompanied by a spread of Cuban desserts made by Savory Fare and presented by NMJHS Board member Leona Rubin.✧

*Paula Amar Schwartz is the Immediate Past President of New Mexico Jewish Historical Society.*

**IN MEMORIAM**

Our heartfelt condolences go out to the family of **Robert J. Nurock, who died on February 17, 2017.**

# The Jews of Albuquerque—Part II

by Noel Pugach

*This is the second part of Noel Pugach's address at the opening of the exhibit on Albuquerque Jewry at the Albuquerque Museum of History and Art on November 20, 2016. Part I appeared in the Winter 2017 issue of Legacy.*

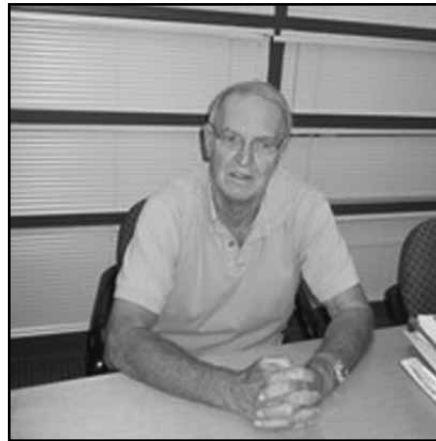
**I**n the first part of my talk I indicated that Jews had flourished in New Mexico's friendly hub city of Albuquerque. From the very beginning, Albuquerque Jews were completely integrated into the rest of the population. There was never a Jewish neighborhood. There was a joke that went around in the 1970s and 1980s concerning the "Jewish ghetto" in the near Northeast Heights, where four Jewish families lived on one block. Of all streets, it was named Notre Dame Drive NE.

Initially, Jewish families tended to reside in the area north of Central and between Ninth and Thirteenth Streets NW. It was close to the Downtown Business District and the new synagogue on Seventh and Gold SE; it was also one of the first solidly middle-class areas. But as the city expanded, Jews moved with the flow into the Country Club and University of New Mexico areas, and then throughout the exploding Northeast Heights and North Valley. They socialized with non-Jewish friends at the Albuquerque Country Club (there was never a Jewish country club in New Mexico), at the Elks Club, and in their homes.

## Reform Judaism Predominates

However, Albuquerque Jewry was slow to develop a meaningful Jewish way of life. Compared to Santa Fe, the oldest Jewish settlement in New Mexico, Albuquerque Jewry did establish several basic Jewish institutions within its first two decades. A B'nai Brith lodge, the most important Jewish fraternal society in the United States, was created in 1884, and it purchased land for a cemetery in 1893. In 1897, the largely German Jewish population founded Congregation Albert, the second synagogue in the New Mexico territory. And in 1901, Congregation Albert opened its doors at Seventh and Gold SW.

The congregation affiliated with the American Reform movement, the dominant form of organized Jewish life in the American West. The major contributors and all of the officers came from the budding German Jewish mercantile community. Many of them had been raised in Orthodox homes, but they shed traditional Judaism as they modernized and



*Harold Albert, former president of the Jewish Federation of New Mexico and a founder of the Jewish Community Center*

crossed the Atlantic Ocean to America. They adapted to the "radical" version of Reform Judaism that prevailed in most of the nation, which adopted the superficialities of the Protestant churches. One consequence for Reform was to center Judaism in the synagogue while minimizing observances and rituals in the home. However, many of the German Jews were raised in traditional Jewish homes, and they still lit Shabbat candles, had traditional Friday family dinners, and held family-oriented seders at home.

For many years, Congregation Albert was the only Jewish religious game in town. However, by 1920, a sizable number of East European Jews had made Albuquerque their

home. Not surprisingly, there was tension and conflict between the traditionalist-oriented East European Jews who felt estranged from the radical Reform service at Congregation Albert, the minimal use of Hebrew, and the elimination of many rituals. Even in Albuquerque, German Jews tended to look down on their East European brethren. In 1920, traditionally-oriented Jews incorporated Congregation B'nai Israel which affiliated with the burgeoning Conservative branch of Judaism. For many years, they held services in rented facilities; in 1941 they moved into their new synagogue at Coal and Cedar SE.



*Noel Pugach*

## The Impact of Zionism and the Holocaust

The two congregations competed for members, and a certain antagonism lingered. Zionism, the support for a Jewish state, also divided the congregations: Reform Jewry opposed the movement to create a Jewish state, while Conservative Judaism in America was very sympathetic. Jane Weiller Thompson was one of the few Congregation Albert members to join Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America. The Holocaust, the creation of the State of Israel, and the emergence of a more positive attitude toward Zionism by the American Reform movement in the 1930s changed the equation. New Mexico Jewry



*Shlomo Karni, a founder of Chavurah and first editor of The Link, the Federation's newspaper.*

*(continued on p. 8)*

**The Jews of Albuquerque** *(continued from p. 7)*

generally rallied behind the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Kristallnacht, the shocking and ugly Nazi pogrom in November 1938, unified Albuquerque Jewry, and they raised funds to support the victims and the refugees. New Mexico Jewry exerted great efforts to sponsor and rescue their German relatives and brought a number of them to New Mexico before World War II. But as was true throughout the war, American Jews muted their protests against Nazi persecution and failed to understand the extent of the Jewish Holocaust.

Albuquerque Jews had identified strongly with their congregations. That was one major factor for the slow development of community-wide institutions and community spirit until the 1970s. The Jewish Welfare Fund, led by the tireless Rana Adler, raised small amounts of money, using most of it to help transients pay for a night's stay at a motel and their bus or train fare, mainly to California. A few Jews, among them the Cooper family (as Roberta Cooper Ramo tells us in her interview), invited transients, some of them Holocaust survivors, for dinner and gave them a spare bedroom for the night.

Why did this pattern hold on for so long? Albuquerque Jewry was small in number and divided on congregational and ideological lines; it lacked a critical mass and necessary leadership. The social consciousness that pervaded Reform Judaism in the East and Midwest did not reach New Mexico, and when it percolated through on a few occasions, businessmen generally suppressed it. Few major personalities and scholars came to Albuquerque; it was relatively isolated. Nor did a strong philanthropic culture exist in New Mexico. Above all, the original German Jewish settlers, who were so comfortably integrated in Albuquerque, feared that involvement in Jewish activities outside the synagogues would foster hostility and lead to separation from their Christian neighbors.

**Turning Points for Albuquerque**

However, in the 1960s and 1970s, major changes occurred within the Jewish community. It was inspired and led by the newcomers who sought to replicate the Jewish communities they knew in the East, Midwest, and Far West. They wanted Jewish kindergartens, summer camps, lecture series, a day school, and a Jewish community center. The latter bitterly divided the Jewish community for many years, especially because the small congregations were worried it would rob them of funding and membership. Most important, the old Jewish community, which was so comfortably integrated in Albuquerque, feared that involvement in Jewish activities outside the synagogues would offend their Christian friends and neighbors and lead to separation from them. They could continue exercising at the YMCAs, send their children to Y camps and clubs, and socialize within the general community.

But the forces for change were too strong, and Albuquerque started to fall in line with trends in the general American Jewish community. While the older generation was dying, the media and modern communications brought Albuquerque Jewry into the mainstream of American Jewish life. The Albuquerque Gan, a nursery school, opened; Jewish summer camps appeared, a grant was obtained from HUD to construct a non-denominational Senior Citizens housing, named Shalom House, and Dr. Alexander Kisch launched a superb Jewish lecture series, lasting 20 years, that brought leading scholars and personalities to Albuquerque.

Finally, thanks to untiring efforts of Harold Albert and several other individuals, a Jewish community center, that included a nursery and day school, opened in 2000 to the applause of many in the community. It also began to offer an array of cultural programs. Meanwhile, a Jewish community council headed by an executive director was formed to better

serve Albuquerque Jewry. It raised funds to support growing local needs, rescue Soviet Jewry, and provide social services in the State of Israel, especially after the Six-Day and Yom Kippur wars. Later on, it was transformed into the Jewish Federation of New Mexico. The creation of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society in 1986 also signaled growing Jewish identification and consciousness.

**Diversity in Jewish Life**

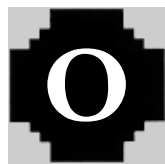
Meanwhile, the religious needs of the growing Jewish population were met by the founding of several new congregations that reflected the birth of new movements in the American landscape and the growing diversity of American Jewry. The first, Chavurat Hamidbar (the Fellowship of the Desert), was founded in 1973 as an independent, experimental, but largely traditional and Zionist congregation, entirely lay led and having no building of its own. It rents facilities or uses member homes for services and celebrations. It was influenced by the national Chavura movement, which sought an alternative to the formal, impersonal, status-conscious, large mainstream synagogues. It is still in existence with over 100 members. Others congregations include Nahalat Shalom, founded in the 1980s and identified with the Renewal movement; the Rio Rancho Jewish Community Center, serving the needs of Jews living on the west side of town; and Chabad, a Hasidic synagogue and center.

When we reflect on the past 100 years and more, Albuquerque Jewry can take much pride and satisfaction in its growth, progress, achievements, and contributions to the general community. The Jewish community has made its presence known in the economy, culture and arts, philanthropy, politics, and civic involvement. Albuquerque Jewry has recognized the warm welcome it has received from the city's citizens over a period of almost 150 years. In the Albuquerque Museum exhibit, we celebrate this fruitful and dynamic collaboration.✡



# Lifetime Achievement Award to Robert D. Sacks

by Ron Duncan Hart



On December 3, 2016, the Santa Fe Jewish Book Council honored Robert D. Sacks for a lifetime of achievement in the area of Biblical scholarship.

This award was given at Congregation Beit Tikva in Santa Fe as a part of the celebration of National Jewish Book Month. As “People of the Book,” we honor those who produce the knowledge in books that enlighten us and lead us to more understanding of our world and spirituality. Dr. Sacks is a person with an incredible range of knowledge and scholarship from the Bible to Socrates, from Shakespeare to Newton.

Robert Sacks was born 1931 in Akron, Ohio, where he would spend Saturdays with his grandfather in an old synagogue that stood on grounds now occupied by the United Disability Service. His family wanted him to attend Brandeis, the newly established Jewish university, but it did not have the capacity for a person with cerebral palsy, so his choice was to attend St. John’s College, Annapolis, where he received his B.A. in 1954. From there, he attended The Johns Hopkins University, completing his Ph.D. in 1961.

In the intervening years, he studied with Leo Strauss, first at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and later at the University of Chicago. In 1957 he enrolled at the Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes in Paris, where he admits to spending many of his days at the Café de la Rue Tournould. Sacks has taught at St. John’s College since 1960, at both the Annapolis and the Santa Fe campuses. He has been a visiting faculty member at Middlebury College in Vermont and St. Mary’s College in California. He is the author of *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1990) and *The Book of Job with Commentary: A Translation for Our Time* (Scholars Press, 1999,

reprinted 2016 by Green Lion Press), and *Beginning Biblical Hebrew: Intentionality and Grammar*.

Warren Zev Harvey, chair of the Department of Jewish Thought at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, says of Sacks’s book on the Hebrew language, “The most delightfully eccentric and daringly philosophic Hebrew grammar since Spinoza’s *Compendium of the Hebrew Language*.” Leon R. Kass, professor in the Committee on Social Thought at



Ron Duncan Hart (left) giving award to Bob Sacks

the University of Chicago, says, “Robert Sacks has produced a truly remarkable exploration of Hebrew grammar, not only illuminating for students of the Hebrew language but wonderfully suggestive for students of language and logos as such. An outstanding achievement.”

In *The Book of Job*, Sacks writes: “God had seemed to make each thing in nature, including Job himself, with such perfection, love, and care. For the most part everything seemed to him to be so full of love and life, and yet in this case everything had gone so wrong. It was all so crazy and mixed up.

“This is, perhaps, Job’s deepest insight into the nature of his own feelings and thoughts. Job knows that like all men he has surely made some mistakes in his life, and perhaps more than most men, he knows that he has always been the one to suffer on account of them. But the present situation is different and

beyond such reasonable bounds.

“Job feels that he is beginning to lose his struggle with the outside world, the world of Eliphaz and the rest of them, as well as with the world of pain. In order to come to terms with the noise of all of these accusations, and remain part of that outer world, his only source of human relationship, he finds himself beginning to believe in his own guilt even though he knows that he is not guilty. He lives with this contradiction only by taking his mind away from that which is best in him and seeing only his own frailties.”

In this insightful study of Job, the classical story of suffering and regaining strength, Robert Sacks gives to each of us thoughts for understanding our own frailties and weaknesses and the strength that we can find within ourselves.

Howard Fisher, a colleague from St. John’s, who has known Dr. Sacks since the 1960s in Annapolis, and Janet Dougherty, another colleague of many years at St. John’s, spoke about his scholarship and ideas.

(continued on p. 11)

## Stefanie Beninato

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## The Tribe Learns about Jewish Mobsters

by Sarah Winger

**O**n Thursday, February 16, the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society hosted an evening for The Tribe, a social organization of young Jewish professionals of New Mexico, at the home of Elliot and Leba Pierce. The Prohibition Era-themed evening included a presentation made possible by the NMJHS Speakers Bureau. Over 15 young Jewish professionals attended. Past NMJHS president Naomi Sandweiss delivered the presentation, entitled “A Mobster in the Family: Jewish Outlaws, Gangsters, and Bandits.” Her talk was followed by an in-depth discussion about the religious and ethical consequences of organized crime, the similarities and differences among Jews participating in organized crime as compared to other cultures and religions, and the larger

society’s tendency to glamorize and even demonize Jewish participation in organized crime.

Ms. Sandweiss’s presentation shed light on infamous Jewish mobsters including Meyer Lansky, Bugsy Siegel, Meyer (Mickey) Cohen and Ms. Sandweiss’s very own relative by marriage, Sammy the Mustache. Ms. Sandweiss outlined the differences between Jewish participation in organized crime as compared to more well-known organized crime cultures, and explained that although Jews participated in organized crime, it was typically on an individual basis. Organized crime was not a profession that was passed down to future generations. Ms. Sandweiss also explained the often-known but rarely acknowledged lifestyles of the Jews who participated in organized crime and discussed the

geographical locations and cities most populated by Jewish mobsters.

Ms. Sandweiss delivered her presentation via power point and facilitated an engaging discussion following her talk. Prohibition era cocktails and noshes were provided, and the event proved to be wonderful evening for all in attendance. For more information on booking a speaker through the NMJHS Speakers Bureau, please visit [NMJHS.org](http://NMJHS.org). For more information about The Tribe, search “ABQ Tribe” on Facebook.✪



*Sarah Winger*

## NMJHS Revives Memorial Day Weekend Field Trips

by Linda Goff

**N**MJHS is “on the road again” thanks to its Program Committee. It’s been several years since our last adventure initiated by Stan Hordes and others, but mark your calendars for May 28 and 29.

This year’s road trip will take us to Montefiore Cemetery in Las Vegas on Sunday morning, May 28 at 10:30 a.m. The visit will focus on a Remembrance Program to honor the founding families as well as the cemetery’s historical role in New Mexico as its first Jewish cemetery.

A ritual burial of Siddurim (prayer books) from Temple Aaron in Trinidad, Colorado will also occur. As many of you know, Temple Aaron had to close its doors within the last year because the Jewish community of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado has

dwindled. The Rubin family had been longtime sustainers of the temple, but were no longer able to raise the funds.

For those who wish to hit the road after the cemetery program, we will carpool up to Clayton, New Mexico and visit both historic Jewish and Clayton/Union County secular sites. Our Clayton visit will include a Sunday evening chuck wagon dinner and star gazing, followed by a Monday morning visit to the Hertzstein Memorial Museum and lunch. The Hertzstein family was among the early settlers in northeast New Mexico who established a very successful ranching business. Descendants Albert and Ethel Hertzstein then moved on to Houston where Albert founded an oil machinery business and later, a real estate company.

The secular tour will include the Luna Theatre (built by the Hertzsteins in 1916), and other historic buildings along Main Street, and finally, Union

County Court House, the site of the trial and later hanging of “Black Jack” Ketchum, a famous territorial outlaw. (The Luna Theatre still shows movies!)

Sign up and pre-payment for the chuck wagon dinner (\$15) and museum luncheon (\$10) is required no later than May 18 to facilitate on-site planning. Please contact our administrator, Anne McCormick, to sign up at 505-348-4471 or by e-mail at [admin@nmjhs.org](mailto:admin@nmjhs.org). Additional information is available on our website, [www.nmjhs.org](http://www.nmjhs.org).

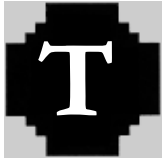
Join the fun with other intrepid NMJHS roadsters!✪



*Linda Goff*

# NMJHS Receives Grant from the Albert and Ethel Hertzstein Foundation

by Linda Goff



The Albert and Ethel Hertzstein Foundation awarded NMJHS a \$5,000 grant in support of the 2017 Fall Conference: “Making a Dif-

ference: 20th Century Jews and Their Legacy,” November 4 and 5 in Las Vegas, New Mexico, as well as programs, special projects, and general operations.

The Society is grateful to the Foundation for its generosity to help grow and

sustain our organization. Previously, the Hertzstein Foundation lent its support for the Pioneer Family pamphlets project and New Mexico Jewish family interviews.

Founders Albert and Ethel Hertzstein were both children of pioneers. Albert’s parents immigrated from the German region of Westphalia. His parents owned a prosperous mercantile store and ranch near Clayton in northeast New Mexico. The Hertzsteins also

established the first cinema in town.

The Hertzstein Charitable Foundation was established in 1965 and has supported more than 1,000 organizations since its inception. The foundation has contributed to a wide variety of social and cultural groups as well as individuals in need. Since 1965, it has distributed more than \$71,000,000 for more than 3,900 requests.✡

## Lifetime Achievement Award to Robert D. Sacks *(continued from p. 9)*

The members of the Santa Fe Jewish Book Council thought the most appropriate recognition for Bob would be a circle of trees planted in his name in Israel that would live and grow and benefit the generations to come, as Bob Sacks does with his life.

Sacks had written a statement about his life’s work, which Steven Ovitsky, the Executive Director of the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, read.

The organizing members of the Santa Fe Jewish Book Council—Gloria Abella

Ballen, Camilla Mandler, Nurit Patt, Pat Shapiro, and Ron D. Hart—thank Mr. Sacks (in the mode of St. John’s faculty, not Dr., not Professor, but Mr. Sacks) for giving voice to compelling stories, creating beautiful word images, and providing information to enlighten our thoughts.✡

*Editor’s note: The award ceremony can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAcfi843NaQ>*

## Welcome New Members

### New Members

Leonard and Susan Feiner  
 Rabbi Berel Levertov  
 Rene Cobos  
 Victoria Baker, Union County  
 Historical Society  
 Edward Borins  
 Penina Ballen  
 Dianna and Robert Lachman  
 Ana R Klenicki  
 Bonnie Korman

### Life Members

Dr. Jessica Herzstein and Elliot Gerson  
 Sheila Gershen and Sy Baldwin  
 Brian Ilfeld  
 Sandra Levine

## Many Thanks for Your Contributions

### Pioneer

Stephen and Renee Klein  
 Phyllis Arlow  
 Stan Biderman and Kathryn Minette  
 Joyce and Jerry Levine  
 Erika Rimson and David Bernstein  
 Leonard Pritikin  
 Patricia Carlton  
 George Donoho Bayless  
 Penina Ballen  
 Dianna and Robert Lachman  
 Rita Siegel  
 Albert Brettner

Linda and Ed Goff  
 Carol and Dan Pava

### Friend

Temple Beth Shalom  
 Lisa Witt  
 Barbara LaMont to wish Michael Linder  
 and Julia Linder Bell Happy Birthday

### Sponsor

Stuart Feen and Carol Sonnenschein for  
 Visiting Scholars Program

### Guardian

Murray Tucker for Research Fellowship  
 Fund  
 Art Gardenswartz

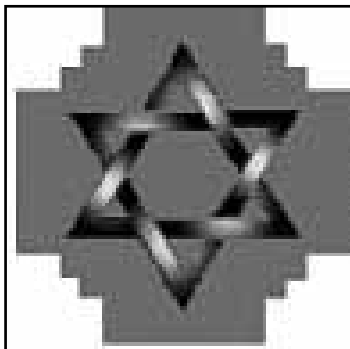
### Sponsor

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### Membership in NMJHS

For information contact the NMJHS office at 505-348-4471 or [admin@nmjhs.org](mailto:admin@nmjhs.org) to request a membership brochure. Alternatively, you can download a membership application from the NMJHS website [www.nmjhs.org](http://www.nmjhs.org)



### Calendar of NMJHS Upcoming Events

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

**May 28 and 29.** Memorial Day Weekend Field Trip. Montefiore Cemetery Remembrance Program and ritual burial of Siddurim from Temple Aaron in Trinidad, CO at 10:30 a.m. Drive to Clayton for Sunday evening chuck wagon dinner and star gazing. Monday visit to Hertzstein Memorial Museum, lunch and several secular sites. For more information and to sign up, call administrator Anne McCormick at 505-348-4471. See article on page 10 for details.

**June 4.** Annual spring business meeting at 10:30 a.m. This includes the presentation of Hurst Award to Kathryn Rubin at 11:30 a.m. Program speaker, Marcia Torobin, is open to all: "Through the Lens: The Jew in American Film." Suggested donation of \$10 for the program only will help support Temple Beth Shalom Adult Education and NMJHS. Temple Beth Shalom, Santa Fe.

**June 18.** Second Annual Jewish Genetics Conference. Local and national speakers, physicians, and authors as well as DNA testing. This conference is held in conjunction with the Jewish Genealogical Society of New Mexico, the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society, and the Jewish Federation of New Mexico. 9:30am - 4:30pm. Jewish Community Center, Albuquerque.

**June 24.** Albuquerque grand opening/screening of "Challah Rising in the Desert." Film will be shown in the Dynamax Theatre of the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science. Reception to follow in the atrium. 7 p.m. For information and tickets: 800-838-3006 or [challahrising.brownpapertickets.com](http://challahrising.brownpapertickets.com)

**June 25.** Santa Fe grand opening/screening of "Challah Rising in the Desert." Film will be shown in the Theatre of the New Mexico History Museum/Palace of Governors. Reception to follow in the atrium. 2 p.m. For information and tickets: 800-838-3006 or [challahrising.brownpapertickets.com](http://challahrising.brownpapertickets.com)

**November 4 and 5.** 2017 Fall Conference entitled "Making a Difference: 20th Century Jews and Their Legacies" to be held in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Details in summer issue of *Legacy*.