



THE JEWISH HERITAGE SOCIETY
OF THE FIVE TOWNS

— The Berkowitz Edition —







Flowers IN THE Desert

The Early History and Growth of
Orthodox Judaism in the Five Towns

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

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The Early History and Growth
of Orthodox Judaism
in the Five Towns

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Flowers in the Desert is based on the research and writing of Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Edited by:
Malka Eisenberg

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The Jewish Heritage Society of the Five Towns

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In memory of

Mrs. Genendel Berkowitz, ז"ל
גינענדל בת ר' שלמה ע"ה

Genendel Berkowitz was a woman who indeed traversed
the history of many eras, worlds and life's experiences.

From a Torah filled life in pre-war Europe,
through the shadows of death in Theresienstadt
through the history of holiness in Eretz Yisrael
to her final travels and a home in a new land called America,
each and every step of her travels was filled with her appreciation of
the thousands of years of Jewish history and traditions that sustained her
while building and rebuilding, faith and hope, vision and accomplishment.

Together with her dear husband, יבלחט"א
Reb Moshe Yehuda Berkowitz, שליט"א

She built a Bayis Ne'eman with children and grandchildren
who follow in her remarkable footsteps as they epitomize Torah values,
rich in ma'asim tovim, tzedakah and chesed.

May her memory be a blessing, and may her legacy
continue to enrich the lives of her progeny.

— Avrohom Pinchos & Mindy Berkowitz —

Foreword: Memories and Tributes

A Preface to the Past

By Avraham P. Berkowitz

In these pages, we will discover how Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky zt"l, as an intrepid leader, illuminated the darkness, transformed the spiritual desert terrain into a blooming Torah metropolis with his passionate vision and mesiras nefesh.

A Tribute to Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky, zt'l

The panoramic array of Jewish institutions of *Torah, Avodah and Gemilas Chasadim* that flourish throughout the Five Towns today are stunning and staggering in their breadth and scope. It is truly the embodiment of a Manifest Destiny of Torah. It is in this tome of tribute that you hold in your hands, that we discover a pioneer of Torah life in the greater Five Towns area. In these pages, we will discover how Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky *zt"l*, as an intrepid leader, illuminated the darkness, transformed the spiritual desert terrain into a blooming Torah metropolis with his passionate vision and *mesiras nefesh*.



Rabbi Yaakov Joseph

With that, let us pause and take a glimpse at the historical development of Orthodox Torah Judaism in America from its embryonic stage through contemporary times.

Kol Hascholos Kashos: All beginnings are difficult

The early years of Jewry in America found Yiddishkeit in a death spiral. To share a personal story expressing the perspective of the *ehrliche Yidden* about Torah Life in America in the 1920s, my grandfather related our family lore – how my great grandfather had come to these shores, to New York, in the 1920s. He was scouting out the possibility of transplanting his family from the poverty stricken *shtetl* to the *Goldene Medina*. A *shochet* and *baal tefilah* by profession, he was assured by the others who were joining him that there were Jewish communities in America who would be happy to hire him and keep his family well-fed with a respectable salary.

He was sorely disappointed in the spiritual landscape. Spending several years here, amassing funds that he mailed off to his family, he reached the conclusion of the utter impossibility of being *mechanech* his children in the *traife medina*. As my grandfather emphatically put it, "my father's fear of assimilation unwittingly drove him back to Europe in the late 1930s which was sadly a trip straight back into the ovens of Auschwitz."

The dire warnings of the prophet Yeshaya (Isaiah 29:14) "*V'avdu chachmas chachamav uvinas nevinav tistater* – And the wisdom of the wise will have vanished, and the insight of the astute shall crumble" unfortunately were realized 75 years ago. Many of the pre-war *tzadikim* and even the greatest Torah minds could not envisage the terrible Holocaust that would befall European Jewry.



Mulberry Street, New York City, circa 1900

My great-grandfather and most of his immediate family, *Hashem yinkom dimaiheim*, were gassed. They had forfeited *chayei sha'ah*, a life in America devoid of Torah, choosing to merit *chayei olam* – eternity in the next world.

The man who is swimming against the stream knows the strength of it

History is further telling of the herculean struggle *Rabbanim* faced in the effort to plant *Yiddishkeit* here in the early years. Allow me to take you on a journey back to the epic chapter of The Chief Rabbi of New York, Rabbi Yaakov Joseph, at the start of the 20th century in New York. Harav Yaakov Joseph, zt"l, *Rav Hakollel* of New York, (1840-1902), was the first and only Chief Rabbi of New York. Born in Krozhe, a province of Kovno, he studied in the famed Volozhin Yeshiva under the leadership of the Netziv, where he was known as Rav Yaakov Charif, owing to his razor sharp intellect. One of the foremost students of Rav Yisrael Salanter, he authored the *sefer* L'Bais Yaakov, published in 1888 in Vilna.

In 1888, HaRav Joseph was invited by the Association of American Orthodox Hebrew Congregations to come to America and lead the fledging group of Eastern European immigrants – a time when America had little infrastructure for Jewish education, kashrus and other keys to Jewish continuity. After much deliberation, the Rav finally agreed to come to New York in late 1888. After a long boat trip, upon arriving in New York, the community was elated, confident that a new era would begin; more than a 100,000 people gathered to welcome him. The New York Times heralded him as an ecclesiastical giant in describing his grand arrival and royal reception. On the first *Shabbos*, the Shul was jammed with an overflow crowd. However, it didn't take long for the enthusiasm to fade.

The new crowd of American Jews did not look with favor upon his intent to raise the standards of *Yiddishkeit* and *Halachah*. Rav Joseph fought

vigorously to uphold Jewish tradition, but it was an uphill battle against a Jewish community that was rapidly assimilating, and against a government that was not yet fully supportive of religious rights. Tragically, Rav Joseph often bore the brunt of mockery and scorn from Jews who saw him as clinging to the "old ways." It reached a point where the organization of *Rabbonim* who had hired him in the first place, stopped receiving enough financial backing from congregants and could no longer pay his salary. The aggravation and humiliation inflicted upon him drove the Rav to illness. Rabbi Joseph suffered a debilitating stroke, and after several years of pain and suffering, passed away.

After Rav Joseph's death, a dispute ensued as to who should be his successor; it went unresolved and the office of Chief Rabbi ended. It marked the end of the attempt to establish a central rabbinical authority over New York's Jewish community.

The tragic story of Rav Yaakov Joseph's all too brief tenure as chief rabbi of New York, and its accompanying travails, have recently become more famous, with the publishing of a number of books that shed light on this painful era in Orthodox American Judaism.

As time marched onward, from 1900 through roughly 1920, there were small pockets of Orthodox Judaism, but none with prominence, nor continuity; for those immigrants who arrived and bravely clung to *Yiddishkeit*. More often than not, the next generation, like quicksand, sank into assimilation.

In the first three decades of the 20th century, slowly, painstakingly Torah-true Judaism began to flower and flourish in New York City, with the founding of the famous yeshivos, in the lower East Side and Williamsburg, many of which still are in existence today: Yeshiva Torah Vodaas, Mesivta Tiferes Yerushalayim, Yeshiva Rabbi Chaim Berlin and Yeshiva Rabbi Jacob Joseph.

A time to tear down, a time to build

Word War II achieved near decimation of European *Yiddishkeit*. Just as the devastation of the Holocaust had utterly defied logic in its depravity, with no other explanation other than that it had been divinely ordained and orchestrated, when the time of rebuilding had arrived, so too would it be by the Hand of Hashem.

Among the war torn refugees, penniless and bedraggled, who made their way to the United States in the aftermath of the War, were some of the greatest, *rabbanim*, *roshei yeshiva* and rebbes of Pre-War Europe. They settled in New York, and helped build *Yiddishkeit* in New York to the vibrancy that we know today.

Long Island, however was a bastion of Conservative and Reform Judaism. A famous newspaper article in the 1950s comparing Reform and Conservative Judaism to Orthodoxy, wrote perniciously, "Orthodox Jewry is a sickly weed which will wither and soon disappear from the American Jewish scene."

Fast forward sixty-five years. This book chronicles, among others, the riveting story of the *Mesiras Nefesh* Jew, who unwaveringly answered to a higher calling as the Founding Father of Torah Education in the Five Towns, beginning in the 1950s. Were anyone to tell you then, that Jewry in the Five Towns would not only be sustained in *Yiddishkeit* but also raise families whom today are the pride of the Torah world, the idea would have been inconceivable.

Were anyone to tell you in the 1950s, that Jewry in the Five Towns would not only be sustained in Yiddishkeit but also raise families whom today are the pride of the Torah world, the idea would have been inconceivable.



The Golden Rule in Kiruv

Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky established the Yeshiva of South Shore in 1956, its founding principle the concept of *V'ahavta lirayacha kamocha*, that we are all deserving of each other's respect.

Indeed, we are all taught early on, the *ma'mar Chazal, "Derech eretz kadma laTorah.* We are also familiar with the famed Talmudic sage, Hillel, who was approached by an impudent gentile demanding to be taught the entire Torah while he balanced himself on one foot. To summarize the entire Torah in a mere 40 seconds? Our humble sage, Hillel, didn't wave him away in anger. He accepted the question, and gave this gently chastising response: *Mah d'alecha sani, lchavercha lo sa'avid*," What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow: this is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn."

Rav Binyamin, in pursuit of his life mission of building Torah in the Five Towns wilderness, clung to the Golden Rule that Hillel endowed us with more than 2200 years ago. Developing spiritual potential, bringing others *Tachas kanfei haShechinah* begins with befriending all, developing a closeness of heart to all. Though slight in size, he was a giant in his love of Jews of every type.

Rav Binyamin exhibited respect and friendship to all his Five Towns neighbors, Jew and non-Jew alike. A vignette that charmingly captures his degree of being *meurav bein habriyos* was the time Rav Binyamin was waiting for his son, Rabbi Mordechai, to give him a lift to Shul one morning. When Rabbi Mordechai pulled up to the house, a bit later than usual, his father was nowhere in sight! Only later, he was astounded to learn that Rav Binyamin had hitched a ride with a sanitation truck driver! The driver, who'd been treated with utmost cordiality and friendship by Rav Binyamin all the years, had thought nothing of giving a ride to the rabbi, his friend!

If you change the belief first, changing the action is easier

Belief and perception, says the Rambam, is the root of our actions, not our external experiences. Thousands of books have been written on this. To this effect, The Rambam authored his *sefer*, *Moreh Nevuchim*, "Guide to The Perplexed."

Indeed, the life story of Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky raises the bar for each of us. As he was internally driven with a vision and a perception of successfully building Torah in a vacuum, so too are we enjoined to pursue our individual journeys of self-discovery, of listening to the positive voices inside us, to trigger our actions. We too can create a paradigm shift in our actions, and accomplishments because each of us has a unique role to fulfill in building a stronger *Am Yisroel*, beginning with ourselves and our families. Let us take heart. Rav Binyamin's story is the how-to guide for each of our respective success stories, so that we too can be defined by what we pass on to our next generations.

In closing, we are indebted to my dear friend, Rav Mordechai Kamenetzky, a gifted *Talmid Chacham, Marbitz Torah* and prolific writer, for allowing us to partner in the amazing spiritual work Rav Binyamin was engaged in for over half a century. *Ashreinu Mah Tov Chelkeinu!* May his illustrious family continue to prosper and lead *mosdos* of Torah until they hear the footsteps of *Mashiach* imminently we hope and pray, where I don't doubt he will be among those at the forefront of his welcoming committee. *Bimheira Viyameinu Amen!*

—Avraham Pinchus Berkowitz
Keren Maasim Tovim

Acknowledgements

The Vision

About 13 years ago, when my father, of blessed memory, began writing the memoirs of the trials and tribulations that he and my mother faced in moving to Woodmere and founding a Torah community, I could never have imagined that those notes would have culminated in a project of such magnitude.

There are so many people to thank and to acknowledge, those who have supplied physical material, information, historical background and, of course, moral support.

First and foremost, I thank the *Ribono Shel Olam* (or God Almighty as He was known, before my uncle, Rabbi Dovid Spiegel, identified Him as such). He has blessed me with parents who not only lived long and fulfilling years, but who nourished and nurtured me with the myriad stories of where I came from and directed me to where I should go.

Under the influence of my parents, every day of my life was a history lesson. They constantly transported me with a perspective into a different world, acknowledging gratefully all of those who got us to where we are today.

Under the influence of my parents, every day of my life was a history lesson. They constantly transported me with a perspective into a different world, acknowledging gratefully all of those who got us to where we are today. Every person had a story and they shared many of them, mostly the good and, when absolutely necessary, the bad and the ugly.

I thank my wonderful wife Sora, who truly bore the burden of my forsaking many responsibilities while writing and researching this book, in addition to the mountains of pictures, documents, letters, and news clippings strewn all over my study, the dining room and everyplace where my impulsive deportment would have me drop them.

My father's notes turned into this magnum opus that I hope to complete one day with an additional volume, beginning with the institutions and rabbis who arrived after 1970 and more of the personalities and heroes who helped build upon the foundations set by the trailblazers in this volume.

The Historians, Archivists, and Storytellers

I thank the historians and the keepers of photographs and artifacts, among them Ms. Geri E. Solomon, Assistant Dean of Special Collections/University Archivist at Hofstra University, and the curators of the Long Island Collection at the Queens Library, as well as Dr. Shnayer Leiman and the Leiman Library which provided valuable pictures and information.

I must thank the wizards at Google and Wikipedia whose almost infinite storehouse of information and visuals helped perfect the pictures we painted by helping verify facts and adding amazing images. I may have reproduced an image that I found, without giving credit to the original artist, because it was plucked from a now anonymous source and dwells in cyberspace.

In addition, I must thank the local papers of the Five Towns. Although they were founded long after the era in this book, many of the articles within had interviews with former or old-time residents that lent information and cast light on events that occurred decades ago.

I thank the administrators of the various shuls and schools, and the unofficial photographers of shul events who found snapshots in their archives, that were used in this book. Among them, Paul Hanau, Rabbi Danny Frankel, and Shlomo Zuller of Young Israel of Woodmere, Milton and Sylvia Kain, Arthur ob"m and Rita Federman, David Schrieber, Norman Dachs, ob"m, and basically anyone who was quoted in the book or whose family was mentioned.

The Photographers and Reporters

Pictures helped make this book and first and foremost, the Jewish Heritage Society acknowledges Arthur Elfenbein of blessed memory, who provided us with a treasure trove of photos. I thank the many families who allowed me to replicate photos from their personal collections; they include the families of almost everyone mentioned in the book, and specifically a number of the progeny who spent inordinate amounts of time helping caption them. Jerry Meyers and Dan Solomon had taken pictures at Yeshiva of South Shore dinners for years and I am grateful for their work.

I thank specifically the Five Towns Jewish Times, The Jewish Home and the Jewish Star. There were articles and information gleaned from the Nassau Herald and South Shore Record, Newsday and the defunct South Shore Spectacle. There are clippings from the New York Times as well as Yiddish newspapers like the Morgan Journal and Forward. I gleaned information and some pictures from books by ArtScroll and Feldheim Publishers, and appreciate their input. Articles by Michael Orbach, and Rabbi Yair Hoffman helped with certain chapters in a more comprehensive way.

Of course, the invaluable help of all the donors is the only reason that this book saw the light of day. I must mention two by name, for if not for them, the project would never have been culminated.

"When my father, of blessed memory, began writing the memoirs of the trials and tribulations that he and my mother faced in moving to Woodmere and founding a Torah community, I could never have imagined that those notes would have culminated in a project of such magnitude."

Misha Rapaport met my father by a *bris* about 15 years ago, and was fascinated by his fount of knowledge about the history of the community. He suggested that a book be written, and Misha put his money where his ideas were. With a magnanimous contribution he founded the Jewish Heritage Society of the Five Towns.

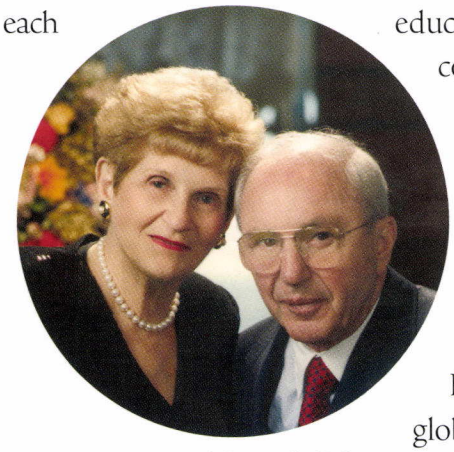
As the project took off, I knew that to create a living document that would not only tell a story in words but in graphic, visual detail, I would need much more. My dear friend Reb Avraham Berkowitz, a partner in pen to every word I have ever published, graciously accepted to support the project generously. I bless him and his wife Mindy and family for all they do and have done to promote the Torah, history, and stories of our people through the innumerable books and *seforim* that they help publish.

From concept to reality is another journey. My dear friend, Yitzchok Saftlas, Founder and CEO of Bottom Line Marketing Group, and his team who produced this volume, worked for more than a decade on it. Foremost in the production was one of the most creative and artistic designers in the industry, Yaakov Gerber. I am unsure if his talent exceeds his patience, or vice versa, as I have yet to work with someone who is so soft spoken and gracious, executing the most difficult designs under the most pressing time frames – all with the calmness of a consummate professional. I would also like to acknowledge Tova Ishakis, for the design and layout on the original preview edition of this book.

A work of this magnitude needs a large staff of curators, secretaries and expediters. I thank Mrs. Tzippy Eckstein and Mrs. Michelle Zimmerman for their invaluable time and input, and Mrs. Renee Feldman for her attendance to the fiduciary concerns of the Jewish Heritage Society of the Five Towns.

There is one person, who without her this book would have been a pile of discombobulated articles, chapters and paragraphs. Malka Eisenberg, a well-known writer with a career that spans decades and a broad spectrum of publications in both the Modern Orthodox, Chareidi, and secular world, was much more than an editor of this huge manuscript. She took it personally.

Realizing the magnitude and impact of such a volume, she painstakingly fact-checked, analyzed, investigated and inspected each paragraph, both for factual errors and sensitivity. She has the unique ability to factor in the rules of *Shmiras HaLashon* with those of Strunk and White's Elements of Style and I thank her for that devotion and commitment on both a spiritual and professional level.



Louis and Gertrude Feil

An Appreciation

Although this volume is expressly focused on the builders and leaders of the Five Towns, and deals largely in part about the influence of Rabbi Binyamin and Rebbetzin Tzirel Kamenetzky, I would be remiss if I were not to include a couple whose support and influence has helped eternalize my parents long after their passing.

Louis and Gertrude Feil moved to Long Island from Brooklyn years ago. Louis had served in Brooklyn as president of the Young Israel of Rugby, led by my father's friend, Rabbi Avigdor Miller, for many years. They did not live in the Five Towns, but their influence and generosity transcended any one particular geographical area.

Louis and Gertrude were renowned philanthropists and extraordinary personalities. They were ardent supporters and benefactors of myriad social, medical, and educational institutions whose focus was to enhance the life and wellbeing of our fellow citizens.

Among their prime concerns was ensuring a solid education for children of the Jewish faith, ensuring their commitment to Jewish education. With a deep sense of concern for the future of our people, Louis Feil endeared himself with affectionate devotion to help perpetuate Jewish education and promulgate the heritage of our people.

But their vision reached past the global level and touched the lives of so many individuals, among them our family and the vision of my parents, and that is why I and my family are so grateful.

The benevolence that Louis and Gertrude Feil afforded my parents and the institutions that they built continues through their children, Jeffrey and Lee, whose friendship and support

Louis and Gertrude Feil were renowned philanthropists and extraordinary personalities. They were ardent supporters and benefactors of myriad social, medical, and educational institutions whose focus was to enhance the life and wellbeing of our fellow citizens.

assured his *menuchas hanefesh*, peace of mind, for the welfare of his body and soul. Not only did their benevolence manifest in the support of the Yeshiva of South Shore, but also through their support of South Nassau Communities Hospital and the Louis and Gertrude Cancer Center where he was treated during his final year.

"First and foremost, I thank the Ribono Shel Olam, Who blessed me with parents who not only lived long and fulfilling years, but who nourished and nurtured me with the myriad stories of where I came from and directed me to where I should go."

Their prescient vision in supporting our community's needs through the continuity of Jewish life and the care and maintenance of all life through their charitable commitment is an incredible gift that our family will always be grateful for. Louis and Gertrude Feil will indelibly live on in the gratitude of our family and the Yeshiva in which we hope to perpetuate Torah ideals eternally.

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Acknowledgements

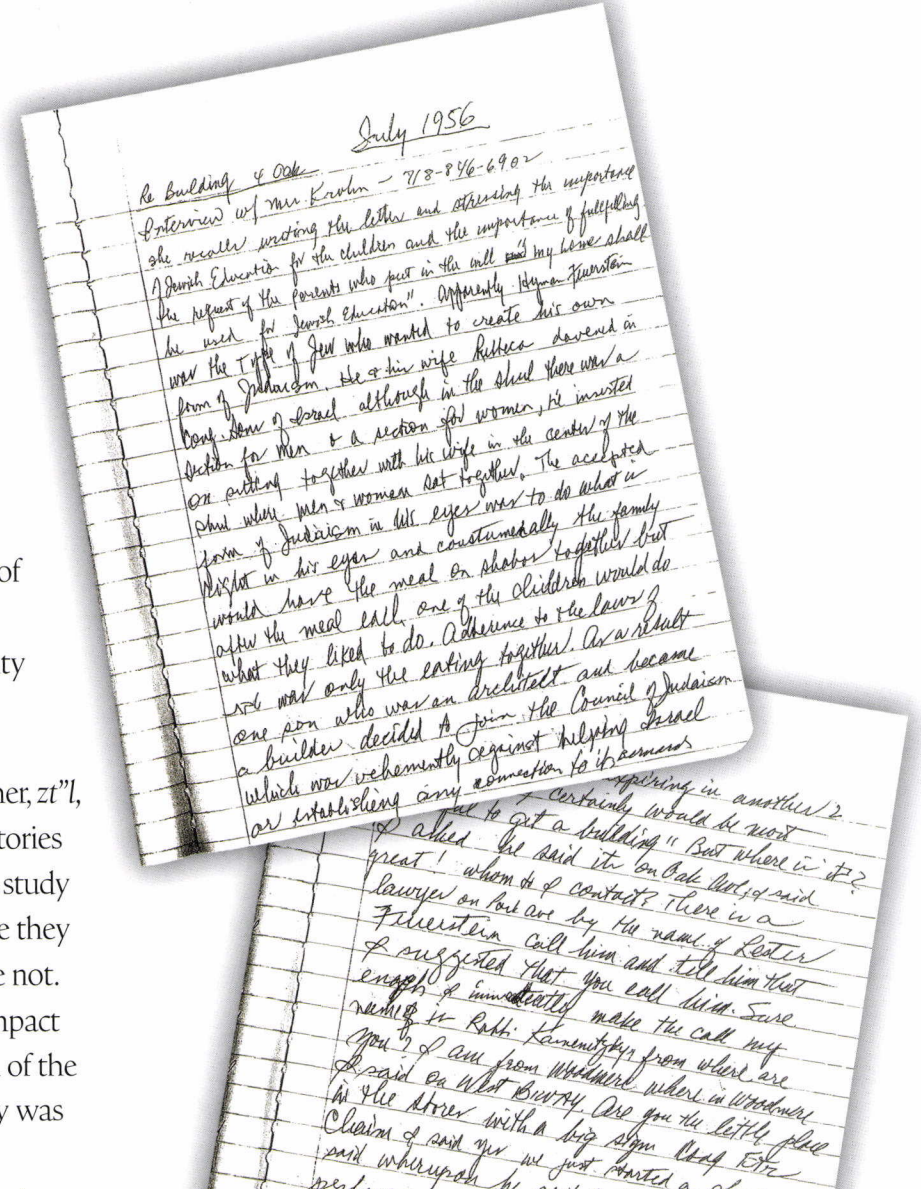






Preface

Right:
Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky left notebooks filled with Torah thoughts and the history of the community's growth



Reliving History

In 2006, in celebration of the Yeshiva of South Shore's 50th Anniversary, my father, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky, *zt"l* founded the **Five Towns Jewish Heritage Society**. Its mission was to record and preserve the fascinating history of the development of the Five Towns community from a desert devoid of Torah institutions into the thriving Jewish community that it is today.

As a native of the Five Towns, I see the story of the magnificent story of the struggles and growth of this community slowly fading from memory.

For the next ten years, I had merited to have my father, *zt"l*, *(who passed away in late April 2017)* share with me stories of the fascinating origins of the institutions of Torah study in the 1950s and 1960s. Although they now seem like they had always been a part of the community, they were not. They began as tiny, struggling, institutions. Their impact and success was not due to the support and growth of the community, but rather the success of the community was due to the growth and success of these institutions.

As a native of the Five Towns, I realize that the histories of the origins, struggles and growth of these now long-standing and well established institutions are slowly fading from memory.



Institutions that were built through blood, sweat and tears are taken for granted as if they had always existed from the beginning of time. My father had collected a treasure trove of stories, pictures and various documents that told many of their stories. Although most of his collection revolved around the jewel of the crown of his accomplishments, the Yeshiva Toras Chaim at South Shore, many of the artifacts, news-clippings and photographs, related to other institutions as well.

He asked me to record some of the history for posterity in a beautiful and dignified manner. I began gathering and organizing hundreds of pictures and documents and interviewing many of the men and women who had helped forge the future of our community.

A Unique Project

This particular project focuses solely on the Orthodox community of the Five Towns. In the course of the work, I had gathered photographs and documents that were beyond that scope and I wanted to share pictures and stories that told the story of Far Rockaway and Long Beach as well. Although they were beyond the focus of this particular volume, they still needed a forum.

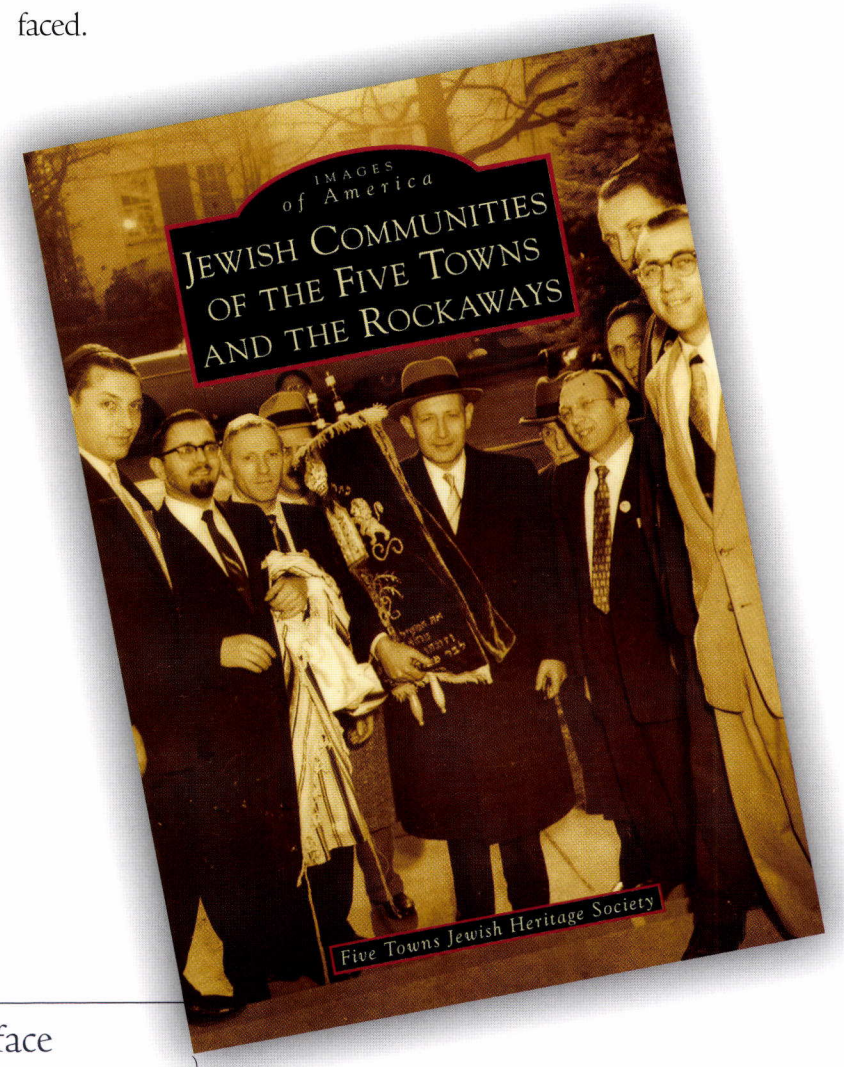
To that end, I contacted Arcadia Publishing and the History Press. They are the largest and most comprehensive publishers of local and regional books in the United States, and they focus on telling the stories, through photographic books that "capture the essence of what gives each American small town, neighborhood, and downtown its unique flavor."

Arcadia had already published many volumes on Jewish life in many towns and cities, and they readily agreed to publish, **"The Jewish Communities of the Five Towns and Rockaways."**

They had specific criteria. They only allowed for black and white photographs from a specific time period. They only allowed limited words for each caption, and insisted that the scope of the book focus on a broader perspective of Jewish life. That book, available in stores and online, includes a broad range of personalities and institutions with limited explanatory captions.

Flowers in the Desert, however, is solely dedicated to the foundations of Orthodox Judaism in the Five Towns. Its expounded narrative and pictures transcend the scope of any other volume published about the early history of Orthodox growth in the Five Towns.

The goal of the book is to educate the members of our community about the struggles and challenges that the rabbis and laymen who built the Torah community of the Five Towns faced.





A yeshiva classroom, circa 1949

This work is solely devoted to institutions that were established in the Five Towns before 1970.

Prior to the 1960s there were, of course, a number of Orthodox institutions in Far Rockaway. Congregation Beth Sholom, an Orthodox synagogue, existed in Lawrence, but the spirit of those institutions can in no way compare to the robust vibrancy and unwavering commitment that we see today.

The Focus and Criteria

Flowers in the Desert is the story of the Orthodox rabbis and the institutions that they established or led that were **within the borders of the Five Towns,** prior to 1970. Institutions were only included if they had, and still have, a continuous physical presence in the Five Towns since that time.

Also included, are a select group of families and personalities who I believe made an impact on Orthodox Jewish Life in the Five Towns, either as rabbinical figures, lay leaders, or political servants. Among them, I included two rabbinic figures in North Woodmere who I felt had a tremendous impact on Orthodox Jewish life in the Five Towns area.

The following Torah institutions that are currently in the Five Towns did not fit the specific criteria and were not included in this particular work.

The Hebrew Academy of Long Beach, was founded in 1955. It began in Long Beach, New York, which is not part of the Five Towns, thus despite its commanding presence in the Hewlett-Woodmere area, its story is not included in this volume. **Yeshiva Ketana of Long Island**, currently in Inwood, was founded in 1995, twenty-five years after the cutoff point of this work. **Yeshiva Gedolah of the Five Towns,** is mentioned as part of the offshoots of the accomplishments of Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky and his family, but it, too, was established long after 1970 and thus its story was not part of this volume.

There was an Orthodox synagogue in Inwood during the 1950s and 1960s, but as they did not have a consistent presence through the time of this writing and they were not included.

The Inwood Jewish Community Center was indeed founded in 1954 under the leadership of Judge Norman Feiden and Rabbi Moshe Talansky, but it burned down years ago, and was no longer an active congregation during the writing of this book.

Torah Academy for Girls was established in 1959 in Woodmere as the girls' division of Yeshiva of South Shore, but it moved to Far Rockaway in 1963. Although it is currently thriving in that location, it is not currently in the Five Towns and only included as part of the story of **Yeshiva of South Shore.**

Congregation Shaaray Tefila is more than 100 years old and **Yeshiva Shor Yoshuv** was established before 1970. Although they are currently located within the borders of the Five Towns, they were established in Far Rockaway.

There are currently many shuls that have transformed the spiritual landscape of the Five Towns and are all worthy of chapters. As they were, however, established after 1970, they not included in this work.

There were a number of other Jewish institutions, Conservative and Reform temples and Hebrew schools that existed in the Five Towns before 1970. However, this book is about the growth of the *Orthodox* community and they were not included. However, included are a number of personalities who contributed to the growth of the Orthodox community, despite their personal religious affiliations or their level of observance.

Indeed, there are scores of families whose impact on the growth of the Five Towns is indelible. There is a section in the book in which I portrayed a sampling of families with whom I was personally familiar. Their descendants were extremely supportive in the creation of this book and the mission of the Jewish Heritage Society. Their inclusion does not exclude any other family or personality, as there were countless heroic families whose efforts during the formative years of this community were invaluable. Because of limited time and financial resources, I was not able to include them all.

Dedication of a Book of Remembrance

The Mishnah in Avos 4:2, teaches us that "The Divine Presence rests among two people who sit together and discuss Torah, as it is said *'Then those who feared the Lord spoke one with another, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for those who feared the Lord and for those who thought upon His Name'"* (*Malachi* 3:16).

Surely every family and institution whose discourse promotes Torah study and mitzvah observance is worthy of being part of a great book. It is one that I am sure is being reviewed and cherished by my parents, Rabbi Binyamin and Tzirel Kamenetzky, *aleihem haSholom*, who are reviewing it in the Yeshiva *shel Ma'alah*, the Heavenly Institute of Study.

I dedicate this volume to their memory, may it be a blessing to their souls.

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky
April 2018





Current location of Sakoff's on Cedarhurst Avenue (circa 1939)

History.

To some it may be boring, to others it may be a springboard
for controversy, but to all of us the history of the past
contains the building blocks of the future.

Sometimes, living in the ever-vibrant present
makes it difficult to remember the past.

I hope that this volume stirs the memories
and teaches the lessons of history.







Above:
Me, standing (right) with my sister Shoshana, (center) and an (l.) unidentified girl in Woodmere, circa 1962.

Let's take a walk

after completing a beautiful Shabbos *davening* at the beautiful *Beis Medrash Ostrov-Kalushin* led by Rav Dovid Spiegel, *shlita*. When the rebbe moved nearly 50 years ago, who could have imagined, that a thriving *Chassidic Bais Medrash* would be housed in a magnificent building in the heart of Cedarhurst?

Walk eastward on West Broadway. You have to dodge the people — men, women and children, baby carriages and strollers – that crowd the sidewalks from Rockaway Boulevard all the way to Trader Joe's, on the edge of the last of the Five Towns, not far from Gibson, a town not yet populated by the Orthodox community. The world has noticed the change that began when this writer was born more than sixty years ago, and has not stopped since.

Right: Me, as a 3-year old in a record store with my father, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky, who was soliciting for Yeshiva of South Shore (circa 1960)

History is a process that is ongoing. Countless deeds that people did come back to reward them or their children decades later.



Cedarhurst Railroad, circa 1940



My brother, Zvi sitting with me on a snow bank, after the "Blizzard of 1969". Taken in front of Bohak's, (current location of Seasons) on Central Avenue.

When I grew up some 60 years ago, Orthodoxy was almost non existent in Woodmere or Cedarhurst. The many homes that crowd the streets today were empty lots. The sight of new construction was exciting.

"Maybe somebody *frum* was going to move in?" I thought.

As an observant youngster, certain times of the year were particularly challenging. Chanukah time, I would search to spot a menorah amongst the many homes that were aglow with multi-color holiday lights. There were a few menorahs, but colored bulbs replaced the traditional candle. In fact, an enormous X-mas tree stood in the backyard of our neighbor, Andy Parise, who lived on Arbuckle Avenue, directly behind my parents' home on Barnard Avenue.

Street scene in the Five Towns in the early 1900s



Right: My father (center) with me (left) and my brother Zvi in the summer of 1968.

Me on lawn of our home at 357 Barnard in Woodmere, 1963.

With my brother, Zvi after blizzard in 1969.

My sisters, Shoshana (left) and Surrie right at side entrance to our home.



Central Theatre, Central Avenue, Cedarhurst, the present location of Cedarhurst Center, circa 1955

When you view history, indeed when you look at the big picture, there are a great many incidents that may seem like coincidences, but actually epitomize amazing *hashgacha*.

It towered above the back of our home and was clearly visible from the front of the house. It was really strange, because if you faced our home you could see both my father's oil menorah in the window and this massive tree all lit up in the background. It appeared as if it was in our backyard!

I am too young to remember when there was no Orthodox *minyan* in Woodmere and Cedarhurst. In fact, there was a time in the late 1950s when a *minyan* was started out of a storefront on 732 West Broadway. You may remember that building as the "Spice of Life," where an old caboose used to stand. I do remember however how hard it was to find a *minyan*. The men would send the youngsters out to the street to poll people if they were Jewish and if they were, the kids would have to *shlep* them in to be counted. Surely it was a far cry from a world where people haggle over seats in shul.

When you view history, indeed when you look at the big picture, you cannot but realize the endless and amazing *hashgacha*, Divine Providence. You can see where the Herculean seeds of *mesiras nefesh* and self-sacrifice have borne spiritual fruit. Superhuman efforts in the face of skeptics and naysayers really did pay off. Surely, the children and grandchildren of people who labored to build this community are now reaping the amazing rewards and *nachas* that their forebears may not have lived to see.



There were many Jews whose first introduction to *Yiddishkeit* was here in the Five Towns. Some came from European descent whose parents dumped the traditions of the old country in the waters of New York Harbor. Others were third generation Yankees who never received a Jewish education — but they wanted something more for their children. They toiled hard and worked to build *shul*s and schools in a place that had been a respite for those who just wanted to shuck it all. Today many of their descendants are Torah scholars, rabbis, teachers and active lay leaders in this community.

History is a process that is ongoing. The countless kindness of so many people comes back to reward them or their children decades later. We are the oldest nation on earth. Events that we see today are now blossoming from actions and deeds that were planted in our past. There may be many stories that we do not know. Some we will never know. Perhaps some go back decades, even centuries, and spawned the success we see today.

Time moves on. And it acts in strange ways. People evolve. The children of people who were once fierce adversaries have now forged heartwarming relationships with the very institutions their parents had fought. Lost souls have reconnected. Feuds have been forgotten and harmony now resides in a land of disunity.

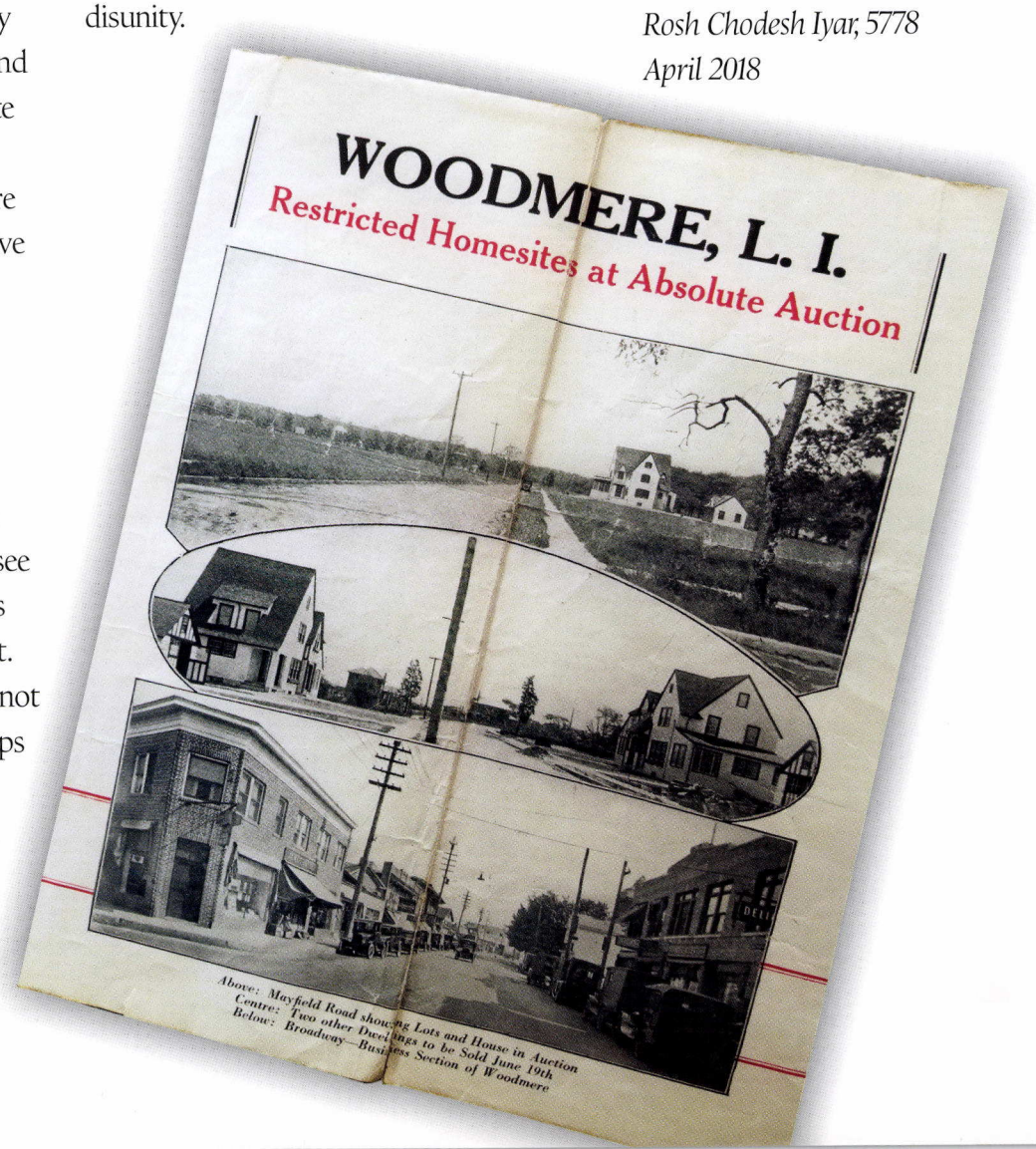
We must not only live for the moment, we must live for the future. After all, today is the future of yesterday's past.

But in my opinion there is always one seminal couple – visionaries who have the leadership ability to inspire others and to build on the dreams that once rested on air. They can develop dreams into reality. They build and bridge, found and forge.

And in my opinion, those visionaries were my parents, Rabbi Binyamin and Rebbetzin Tzirel Kamenetzky, of blessed memory.

And thus, I dedicate this work to theirs and begin our story with their story.

Rabbi Mordechai (Mutty) Kamenetzky
Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 5778
April 2018





RABBI & REBBETZIN BINYAMIN KAMENETZKY

Sowing Seeds of Greatness in a New World

DEDICATED BY MICHAEL AND LISA ARYEH



Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky

you could say had both Lithuania and *mussar* in his DNA. He was born in 1923 in the town of Slabodka, to Itta Ettil and Rav Yaakov Kamenecki, who was then a member of the Kovno Kollel.

Slabodka was situated across a small river that bordered on Kovno. The town was the home of Knesses Yisrael, the famed Slabodka Yeshiva, known for its stress on character development as well as erudite Talmudic knowledge. Rabbi Binyamin's maternal grandfather, Rav Dov Zvi Heller, was the Mashgiach, the Dean of Ethics of the Yeshiva, and his uncle, Rav Avraham Grodzinski who married another daughter of Rav Heller, served afterwards in that same position. His father, Rav Yaakov, and his



Rav Dov Zvi Heller, Mashgiach, the Dean of Ethics of the Yeshiva in Slabodka, Knesses Yisrael, was Rav Binyamin's maternal grandfather.



Rav Yaakov and Itta Ettil Kamenecki at the wedding of their son, Nosson. Behind them are Shulamis (nee Lipschutz) and R' Nosson Kamenetsky, Back row (l-r): R' Shmuel Kamenetsky; Rav Hirsch Diskind, a son-in-law and Rav Avraham Kamenetsky



Rav Avraham Grodzinski

uncle, Rav Avraham Grodzinski, were very close. The relationship continued with Reb Binyamin and Rav Yitzchok Grodzinski, the surviving son of Rav Grodzinski, who currently heads Toras Avraham in Bnei B'rak, a Kollel that bears his father's name. The Kameneckis would spend much time in the Grodzinski home in Kovno, a simple house that is currently occupied by Lithuanians.

Rabbi Binyamin's father, Rav Yaakov Kamenecki (Lithuanian spelling) was an elite student of Slabodka Yeshiva. He was one of the select few chosen to join

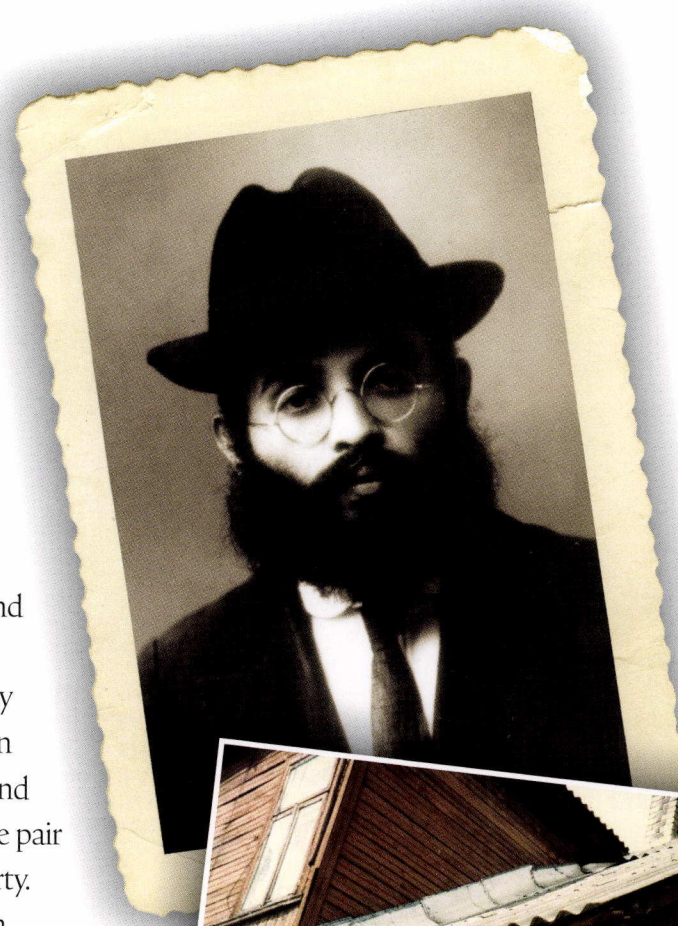


Rav Yaakov Kamenecki as Rav in Tzitivyan c.1928

Right: Rav Yaakov Kamenecki as a member of the Kovno/Slabodka Kollel

the famed Kovno Kollel. Even in pre-war Europe, he had earned a reputation for his broad Torah knowledge and scholarly insights into Torah, human character and life in general.

Not long after the end of World War I, in 1926, Reb Yaakov became the rav of the tiny village of Tzitivyan (Tytuvenai) about 60 miles north of Kovno, Lithuania. He and his *rebbetzin*, Itta Ettil, were endeared by the poor community that could hardly pay their meager salary, a few coins wrapped in a handkerchief each week. Reb Yaakov and his wife were so poor that they shared one pair of boots. Reb Binyamin recalled the poverty. He was once wearing his father's old worn *kapote* that had been fashioned into an overcoat when a Lithuanian photographer snapped a picture of him running with the coat hanging large on his spindly frame. The photo was



Right: The Grodzinski home in Kovno

Below: Slabodka Yeshiva, 1929





Harav Shmuel Kamenetsky shlita at the entrance to the town of Tzitivyan during the Operation Open Curtain Chizuk Mission to Moscow and Lithuania, Summer 2011.

Left to Right: Rabbi Yosef Kamenetsky *(Rosh Kollel Moscow)* Rabbi Shlomo Noach Mandel, Mr. Harry Mayer, Mr. Yankel Herskowitz, Mr. Reuven Dessler, Rabbi Yakov Rajchenbach, Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Klugman, Rabbi Dov Kamenetsky, Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky shlita, Mr. Yankel Schon, Mr. Levi Dessler, Rabbi Eli Dessler, Rav Betzalel Mandel, Rabbi Dovid Kamenetsky, Mr. Naftoli Uhr, Rabbi Reuven Kamenetsky

"The poverty was rampant, my father the Rav had one shirt which he would wash on Friday lekavod Shabbos. Yet as a youngster I don't remember feeling deprived."

placed in the window of the man's studio for all to see, quite embarrassing for the young son of the rabbi. On a trip to Tzitivyan, in the summer of 2011, Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky, the Rosh Yeshiva of Talmudical Yeshiva of Philadelphia, and younger brother of Rabbi Binyamin, recalled the poverty to a group of family members and Torah activists who accompanied him. "The poverty was rampant," he explained. "My father, the Rav had only one shirt which he would wash on Friday in honor of Shabbos. Yet, as a youngster, I don't remember feeling deprived. We ate potatoes with *smetana* (sour cream) and we were very content."

Tzitivyan was a small town, and during Rav Yaakov's tenure, there were only sixty families, but during the summer it was a resort town. Many Torah scholars would come to enjoy the clear air. One of those who visited was Reb Reuven Dov Dessler zt"l. He later wrote to his son, Rav Eliyahu Eliezer *zt"l* who founded the Gateshead *kollel* in 1941 and later became the *mashgiach* (Dean of Ethics) of Ponovez Yeshiva, that since Tzitivyan was a small quiet town, Reb Yaakov had the opportunity to learn day and night and become a *gaon*, a renowned Torah prodigy.



Rav Reuven Dov Dessler



Rav Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler

There was no appropriate *cheder* in Tzitivyan, and without the counterforce of Torah study, Jewish Lithuanian youth often drifted to the forces of secularism. Thus, Rav Yaakov and his wife decided to send their oldest son, Binyamin, almost 100 miles away, to learn in the larger city of Shavel (known today as Šiauliai).



It was very difficult, but he always looked forward to Tuesday, when he ate *teg* at the home of the rabbi of Shavel, Rav Archik (Ahron) Baksht. Rav Archik would *farher* (test) him and then the *rebbetzin* would give Binyamin hot rolls and cakes. From there, he learned a bit in Yeshiva Ketana of Kelm, afterwards he learned in a yeshiva in the city of Rakishok. When he was fourteen, he enrolled in the Telshe yeshiva *ketana*, the equivalent of today's *mesivta* high school, in the city of Telshe, some fifty miles northeast of Tzitivyan. The focus was solely on Torah study and the intensity far surpassed the expectations of today's American youth. Binyamin was still under bar mitzvah and did not live in a dormitory. He slept in the home of a local Jewish family and ate what is known as "*teg*," every day a different meal in a different home.

In Telshe, young Reb Binyamin met an older student, Mordechai Gifter, an American teenager from Baltimore. He had been learning at Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchok Elchonon in New York, and excelled. His *rebbeim* suggested that he study Torah in the famed Telshe Yeshiva in Europe.

As a student in Telshe, Mordechai Gifter took a liking to Binyamin Kamenetzky even though he was in the younger division of the yeshiva and about seven years younger. They maintained a warm relationship after the former became the Rosh Yeshiva of the transplanted Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland.

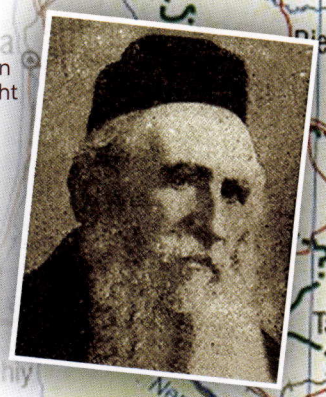
In 1937, the winds of war were swirling, and the clouds of anti-Semitism were darkening the skies. Back in Tzitivyan, the dire straits of Rav Yaakov and his family forced Rav Binyamin's father to seek employment in America. He left his family in Europe in 1937, and traveled to America as a fund-raiser for the Kovno Kollel. He was unsuccessful, but heavenly

A Beit Sefer in Tzitivyan 1933





Rabbi Mordechai Gifter



Rav Ahron Baksht

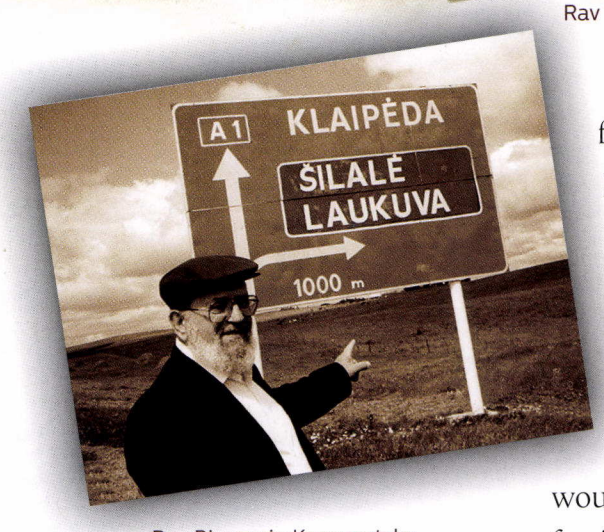
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JEWISH MORNING JOURNAL — 8 —

דער גאון קאמענעצקי וועלכער איז
געקומען איז שליחות פון כולל קאוונע

Announcement of Rav Yaakov's arrival in America in the Tag Morgen Journal

Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky with the young men he learned with in Toronto. (Left to right standing) Unknown, Identified as the principal in Newark who wrote books on Dikduk, Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky, Moshe Goldberg, Moshe Nobel (Chicago), L. Terrebello (sitting) Joe Horowitz, Abie Liebtag, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, David Wohlgelenter, the executive Director of Eitz Chaim Toronto, Norman Horowitz



Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky on a visit to Lithuania (circa 1995)

fate interceded. He was offered a one-year position as a rabbi in Seattle, Washington. A year later he was appointed as the rabbi of the Torah Emes Shul in Toronto, Canada, a position that had opened due the passing of the rabbi, Rav Yehuda Leib Graubart.

Rav Yaakov was convinced that Europe would soon be a bloodbath and sent for his family to join him in North America. Despite the protestations of his brother-in-law, Rav Avraham Grodzinski, who felt that America would destroy any spiritual hope for the children, Rav Yaakov was adamant and insisted that they join him in Canada. Rav Avraham was later murdered by the Nazis in the Kovno Ghetto, together with many other rabbis and distinguished Lithuanian Jews.

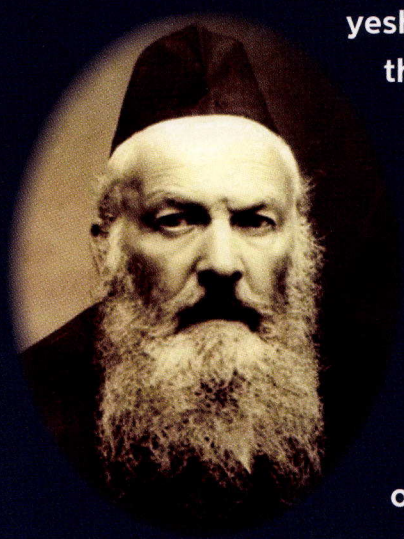
In 1938, Rav Yaakov's wife Itta Ettil and their six children, traveled from Lithuania to America on one of the last boats out of Gdansk, Poland. Rav Binyamin recalled the trauma of having rocks thrown at him and being chased by Polish ruffians on the way to board the ship in Gdansk.

OCTOBER 4, 1941:

When World War II broke out, the Soviets conquered Eastern Poland, annexing it to Lithuania. The occupation caused a flow of Jewish refugees to leave Poland and go to Vilna in the hope of being saved. Many arrived in Kaunas (Kovno), the capital city of Lithuania, where they tried to organize a way to flee by sea. Although he was quite ill, Rav Avraham Grodzinski helped the refugees. His house became a center for rabbis and students. He was in close contact with Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski of Vilna. Together they saved as many Jews as possible. At the same time, he took care of yeshiva students and other Torah scholars who ended up in Kaunas and were in serious financial straits. On June 22, 1941, Lithuania was captured by the Germans. Despite the deteriorating situation, Rav Avraham Grodzinski continued to study together with rabbis and well-known roshei yeshiva who hid in his home. It was from his house that Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman together with twelve other rabbis were taken to their deaths at the Ninth Fort. Rav Grodzinski was saved because he was in the attic. On other occasions he was saved because the Jews of Kaunas risked their lives in order to save their rabbi.



Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski

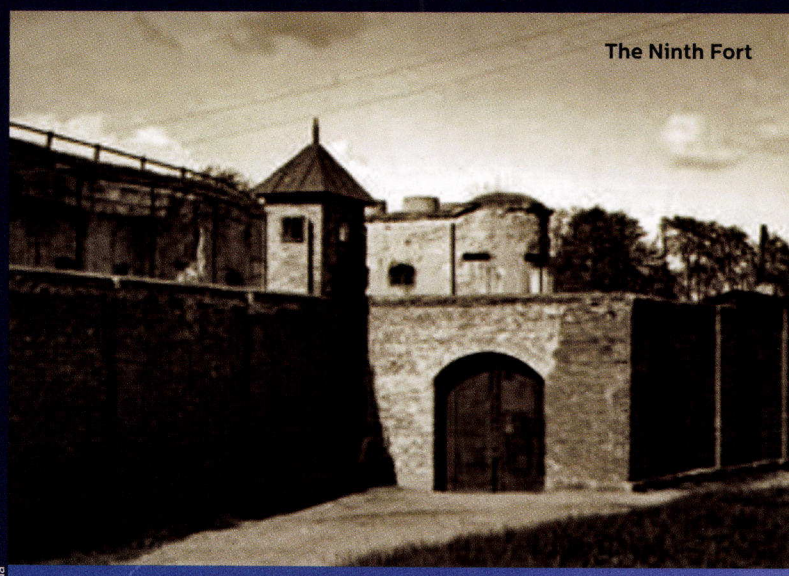


Rav Elchonon Wasserman

On July 8, 1944 the Germans transferred those who survived to a concentration camp located outside of the city. Rav Grodzinski, who was 60-years-old and ill, was sent to the hospital, and after five days, on 27 Tammuz 5604 (July 13, 1944), the Germans set fire to the hospital building with all of the patients inside. Rav Avraham, together with several hundred sick Jews, including children, were burned alive, dying through Kiddush Hashem. He was the last of the leaders of the Torah and *Mussar* of the Slabodka Yeshiva.



Above: Rav Avraham Grodzinski, after the Nazis shaved his beard.
(See page 27, top left)



The Ninth Fort



The Ninth Fort Memorial

Photo: FCIT/University of South Florida

During his years at Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim, my father forged lifelong relationships with many of the students and administration members of that yeshiva.

Below: Purim at Yeshivas Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaCohen



Despite the poverty and anti-Semitism in his birthplace, Rabbi Kamenetzky still had warm memories of life in Tzitivyan, Lithuania. After the fall of the Soviet Union, he visited the ruins of his birthplace and the various towns in which he studied Torah. However, he was forever grateful to his father for having the foresight to get his immediate family out of the cauldron of hate and destruction.



Rav Dovid Lebowitz

Together with his mother, his older sister Malka and younger siblings, Shmuel, Rivka, Nosson and Avraham, Binyamin arrived in Halifax on September 12, 1938 less than a year before World War II began. But the first stop in his new home in Toronto was quite short-lived. Almost immediately the young 15-year-old who hardly knew a word of English, was put on a train and headed to New York to study at the newly formed Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. The yeshiva was founded by Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky's dear friend, Rav Dovid Lebowitz, who had also once been a member of the Kovno Kollel. Rav Yaakov had felt that Rav Dovid was one of the greatest Torah minds of the generation. "If I were a wealthy man in Europe," Rav Yaakov wrote to his son, "I would have sent you overseas to study by Rav Dovid. Now that I am on the continent, should I have held you back?"

During his years at Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim, Binyamin forged lifelong relationships with many of the students and administration members of that yeshiva, among them; Rav Dovid Singer, Rav Herschel Zimmerman, Rav Nota Greenblatt, and Rav Henoch Leibowitz.



Rav Henoch Leibowitz, son of Rav Dovid



Left to Right:
Top: (Rav) Dovid Singer, (Rav) Herschel Zimmerman,
Bottom: (Rav) Nota Greenblatt, (Rav) Binyamin Kamenetzky, (Rav) Henoch Leibowitz on the steps of Yeshivas Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaCohen, South 9th Street in Williamsburg

Rabbi Kamenetzky recalls the love that his rebbe, Rav Dovid, had for every student. Once a fellow student came to complain about a young man who was using a razor to shave. "Does he keep *Shabbbos*?" asked Rav Dovid. "*Kashrus*?" "Is he learning?" When the complainer answered in the affirmative, Rav Dovid responded, "Do you want me to throw him on the street? We must teach him the *halacha*!"

Right to Left:
Friends from Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim. Moshe Chait, Binyamin Kamenetzky, Yochanan Chait





Rav Binyamin's Lithuanian Passport



Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim

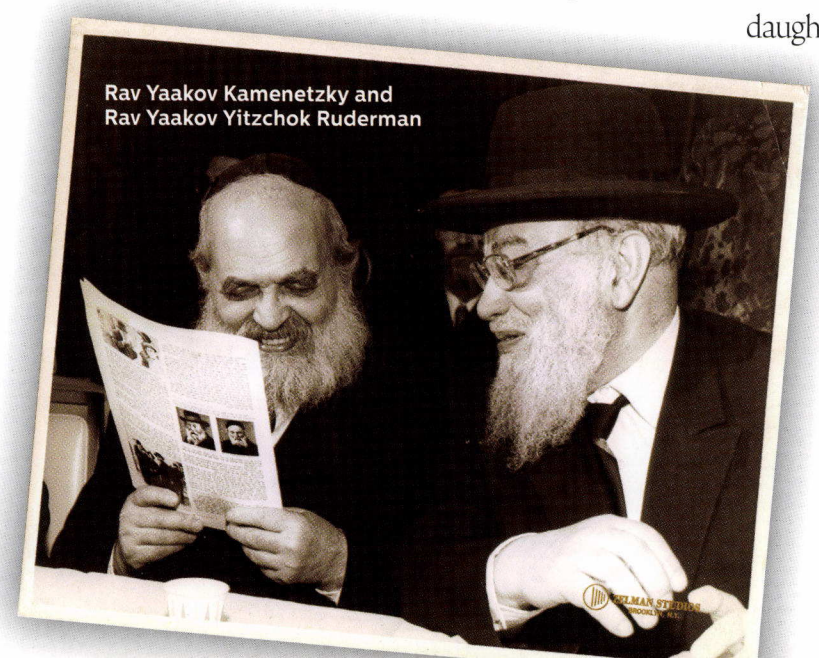
Top Row (L–R): **A.** R' Dovid Singer, **B.** Harry Hirsch, **D.**R' Gewirtz, **E.** R' Pineman, **F.** Meshulach, **G.** R' Bergstein **H.** R' Teichman, **I.** Mr. Teichman, **J.** R' Reinetz, **K.** R' Gewirtz

Middle Row (L–R): **L.** R' Leon Chait, **M.** R' Popack, **N.** R' Binyamin Kamenetzky, **O.** R' Wachtfogel, **P.** R' Rosenberg, **Q.** R' Gersherny

Bottom Row (L–R): **R.** Mr. Simon, **S.** Unknown, **T.** R' Fink, **U.** R' Krainberg

On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, Rabbi Kamenetzky recalled two great blows. His *rebbe*, Rav Dovid had passed away on the previous Friday. After the burial in Beth Judah Cemetery in Cypress Hills, not far from the section where Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky would be buried some 45 years later, he received more devastating news. "Japan had attacked the United States. We were going to war."

With Rav Dovid gone, Binyamin left Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim and went to study under the tutelage of his father's cousin Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, *zt"l*, in Yeshivas Ner Yisrael of Baltimore. He studied there diligently, mastering many tractates of the Talmud and honing his oratory skills as well as acquiring a broad depth of knowledge in *agadah*.



Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky and Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman

In 1946, Eli Kaplan, a friend from Ner Israel, suggested Tzirel, the sister of Moshe Spiegel, a friend he knew from Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, as a potential match. Tzirel was the daughter of the Ostrove-Kalushiner Rebbe, Rav Pinchus Eliyahu Spiegel. Eli knew that it was an anomaly for the son of a Lithuanian Rosh Yeshiva to court the daughter of a Chassidic Rebbe, but there was a paucity of young men and women who shared values that entailed the self-sacrifice to continue Torah study after marriage, or even to enter the field of Jewish education.

TELL ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE...

AS A NEWLY ARRIVED IMMIGRANT, young Binyamin Kamenetzky was not able to speak much English. Someone arranged a tutor, a young boy, Yaakov, the son of the distinguished Rabbi Ahron Maza, ob"m. Yaakov Maza was a second grader in Mesifta Tifereth Jerusalem. He taught English to the teenage European immigrant known as Benny.

Benny and Yaakov kept up now and then, until the early 1960s. Yaakov, who had begun his career as a rabbi, left the rabbinate, changed Yaakov to Jackie, and Maza to Mason and began making jokes instead of speeches.

Ben became Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky, founder of many Torah institutions in the Five Towns, but he was forever grateful for the skills he learned from Jackie Mason.



Yaakov Maza (Jackie Mason)



Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky
at Ner Israel, circa 1946



Top (L–R): Meir Hettlemen, Zalman Swiatcky, Aba Liff, Shmuel Mandelbaum, Shmaryahu Schulman
Bottom (L–R): Yosef Schechter, Shmuel Yosef (Texas) Lapkovsky, Abe Leibtag, Binyamin Kamenetzky



Rav Binyamin and
Tzirel Kamenetzky
at their wedding

The match was made in heaven and on November 11, 1946, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky married Tzirel Spiegel, the daughter of the Ostrove-Kalushiner Rebbe. Their marriage was a partnership for nearly seventy years until the *rebbetzin's* passing on October 31, 2015.

Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky received his *smicha* from Ner Israel not long after his marriage, and he began his career in September of that year, teaching a Talmud Torah in his father-in-law's small *shteeble* Congregation Tiferes Eliyahu, on Arnow Avenue in the Bronx.

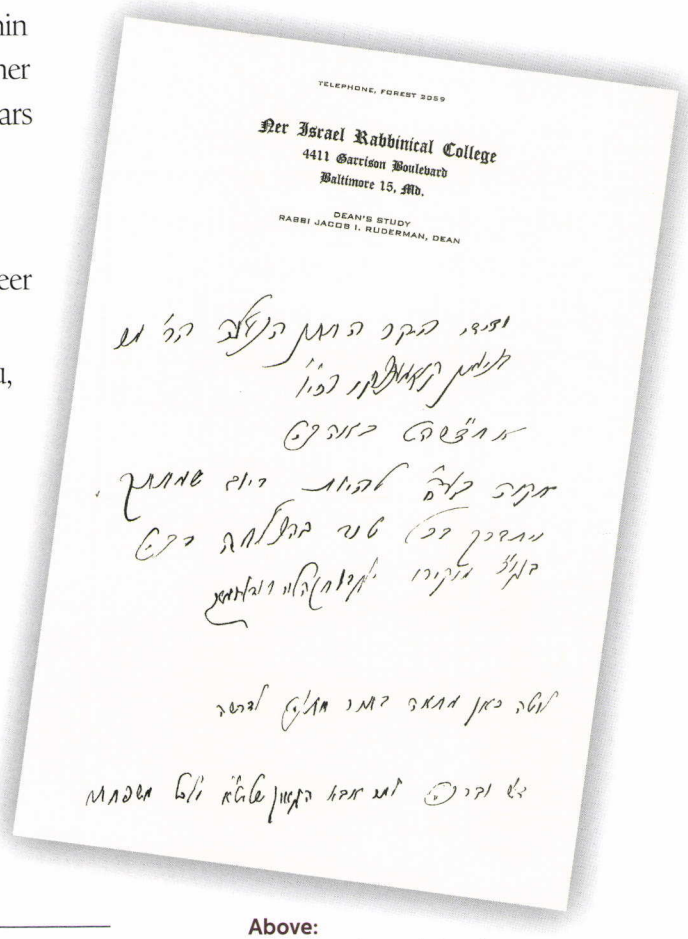
But that was not enough to sustain the newly married couple. With the help of his brother-in-law, Rabbi Yisrael Shurin, Rabbi of Congregation Magen Avraham in East New York, he was offered two positions: one as a second-grade rebbe at Yeshiva Toras Chaim of East New York and an additional position as rabbi of the Chevra B'nai Jacob Anshei S'fard on 276 Pennsylvania Avenue in East New York.





Above:
Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky flanked by his father (right) and father in law, Rav Pinchus Eliyahu Spiegel at his engagement.

Left: Rabbi Kamenetzky and his kallah (fiancee)



TELEPHONE, FOREST 3059

Ner Israel Rabbinical College
4411 Garrison Boulevard
Baltimore 15, Md.

DEAN'S STUDY
RABBI JACOB I. RUDERMAN, DEAN

Above:
A congratulatory letter from Rav Ruderman to his student, Rabbi Kamenetzky's upon his upcoming wedding.



Yeshiva Toras Chaim in East New York



A Siyum Mishnayos at Chevra Bnei Jacob
(L-R): Rabbi Yisrael Shurin, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky,
Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky, Wolf Rappaport, circa 1949



Rav Yitzchok Shmidman with class at YTC, circa 1930



Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky (far right) at a
Lag B'Omer trip with staff members of YTC, circa 1955



Rabbi Kamenetzky teaching at Yeshiva Toras Chaim
in East New York with Rabbi Shmidman supervising, c. 1955

Yeshiva Toras Chaim, founded by Rav Yitzchok Shmidman in 1927, was the sixth yeshiva in America. Rabbi Shmidman worked extremely hard to try to educate as many children as possible for little or no money, and as dean of Yeshiva Toras Chaim he served as a mentor to Reb Binyamin in pedagogic principles. Little did he know that years later, the young second grade rebbe that he had hired, would perpetuate the yeshiva through the school that he would found on Long Island.

Rabbi Kamenetzky was well liked as a rabbi and teacher, but destiny had other plans. With three daughters, a budding career as an educator and rabbi, a conversation with a second grader changed his life forever.

As he puts it, "It was in September 1955, when on the first day of school I was taking the roll call of the students, that the address of the first boy on the list seemed strange to me. His name was Jeffrey Bienenfeld." In an interview in 2015, Rabbi Kamenetzky recalled:

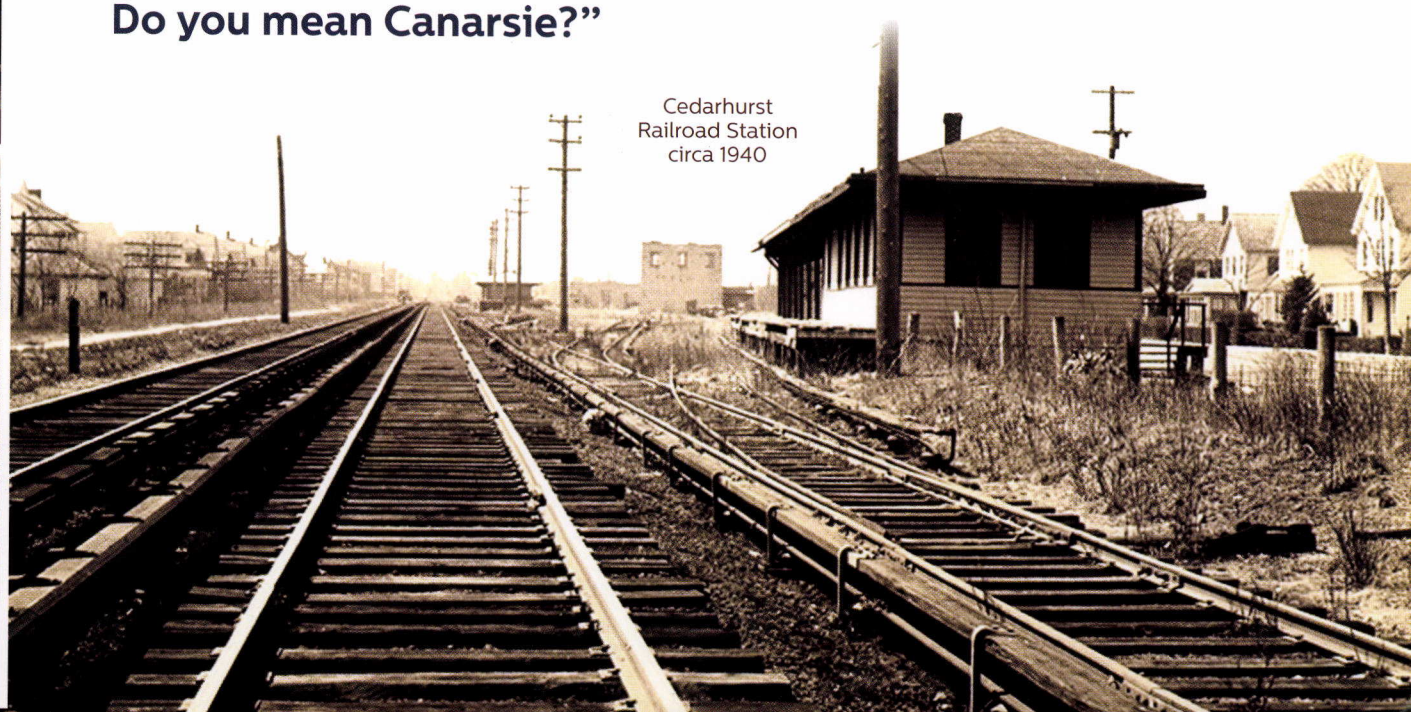
"I asked him, 'In which part of the world do you live?'"

'In Cedarhurst,' came the unexpected response.

"Where is Cedarhurst? I wanted to know. "Do you mean Canarsie?"

"When Jeffery told me that it was in the Five Towns, Long Island, another place I'd never heard of, I prodded him as to why he needed to travel to Brooklyn every day.

**"Where is Cedarhurst?' I wanted to know.
Do you mean Canarsie?"**



Cedarhurst
Railroad Station
circa 1940



Thursday, June 21, 1956

Etz Chaim, New Temple, Holds Third Service

Rabbi Benj. Kamentzky

A new Jewish congregation, Etz Chaim, will hold its third service this Saturday morning under the direction of Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetsky. The temporary temple is a store at 732 West Broadway, Woodmere.

Etz Chaim, an orthodox congregation, is composed, at present of about 40 families. It met, without organization, in the late months of 1955. It became formally organized in Jan. of this year with Samuel Zuckerberg, Manfred Lehman, Myron Bienenfeld, Joseph Herman and Meyer Greenberg among the founders.

Rabbi Kamenetsky, whose father is dean of Torah Vordath in New York, is a graduate of the Rabbinical College of Baltimore. He comes to Woodmere from Congregation Sons of Jacob in Brooklyn.

The new congregation is in the midst of registration for the Hebrew School which it intends opening this year.

He Counts to 10

Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kamenetzky with their three daughters Sarah, Esther and Shoshana

"Couldn't he attend a local Long Island *cheder*?

"And he told me, 'No, because there is no *cheder* there.'"

"And where do you *daven*?"

"'We walk across the tracks and there's a shul there,' he replied."

Rabbi Kamenetzky was a bit confused because the only tracks he knew of was the subway or the elevated railway known as "The El." "How does one walk across a set of tracks to get to a shul?" he thought.

The very next day Rabbi Kamenetzky received a phone call from Jeffrey's father, Myron Bienefeld. He said, "Rabbi, my wife and I would very much like that you come to see our new home in Cedarhurst."

"It was before the *Yomim Noraim*, and as a rabbi in East New York, I was simply too busy to venture out to this foreign countryside."

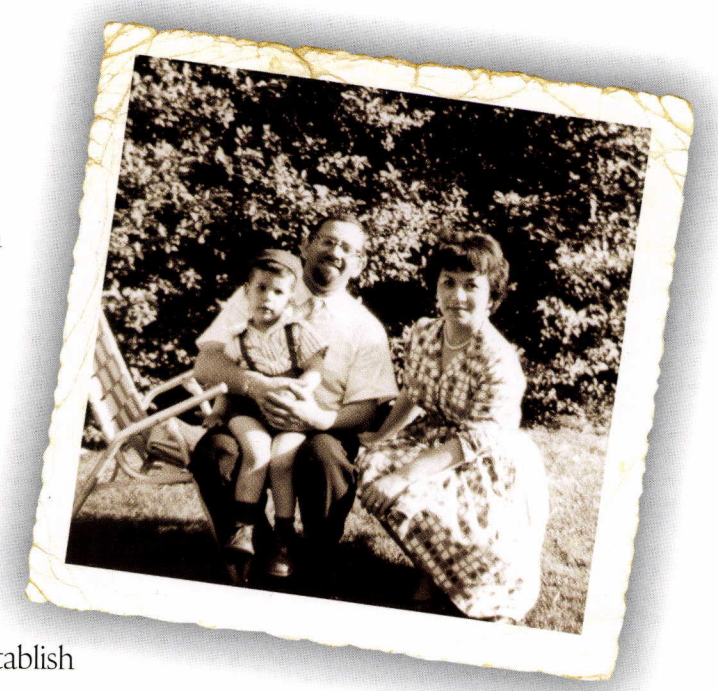
He made a commitment, though, to trek out there on *Chol Hamoed* Sukkos.

"On a Wednesday, the third day of *Chol Hamoed*, 1955, along with my wife and three children, I took a trip to Long Island."

The groundwork was being laid for the future.

The question however, was, could a sufficient number of Orthodox men be found in Cedarhurst, Long Island, to establish a *minyan*? "Myron began drawing up a list of people from his side of town who would, as a rule, walk across the tracks to the existing Orthodox synagogue, Beth Sholom. Perhaps they'd agree to participate. In addition, there was also a small core of congregants who were not Shabbos-observant. They felt it was important to support a new Orthodox shul in the community."

The small group persevered. The roving *minyan* soon began to grow, and though Rabbi Kamenetzky still lived in East New York, he was instrumental in making the *minyan* in Cedarhurst a success.



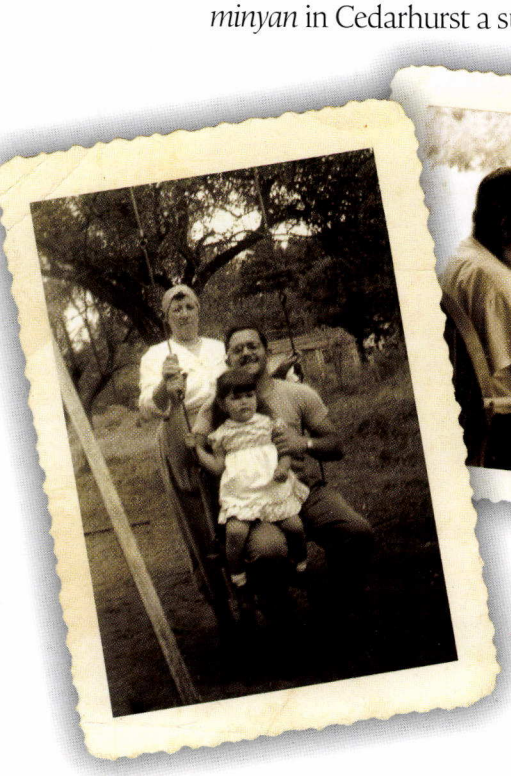
Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kamenetzky with their oldest son, Mordechai on the lawn of their home in Woodmere

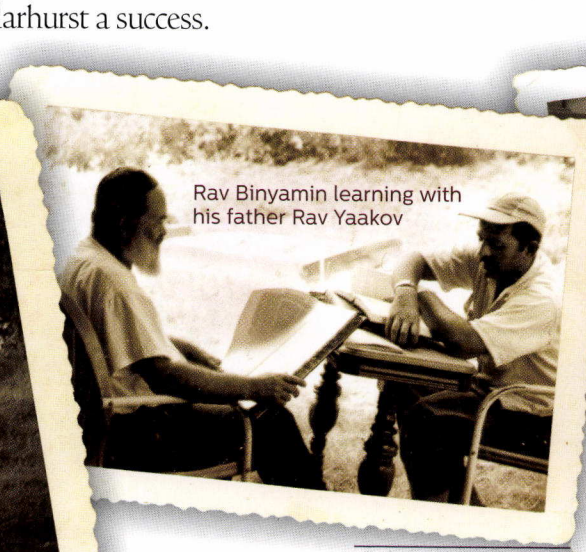
By Chanukah of 1955, two of Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky's friends from his days at Yeshivas Ner Yisrael in Baltimore, who happened to live in the neighborhood, asked Rabbi Kamenetzky to meet with them at the home of a veteran businessman, to formulate plans for a permanent *minyan* on the north side of Long Island's South Shore. Eight people attended the meeting. It was at this juncture that they formally asked Rabbi Kamenetzky to serve as their rabbi.

After accepting, Rabbi Kamenetzky worked long and hard on attracting new members. Jews interested in an Orthodox shul were few and far between, but people from the neighborhood would occasionally stop in to the home *minyan*im out of curiosity, and some would stay on, returning for the next week's services. In a bid to attract new residents to the area, Rabbi Kamenetzky prepared press releases announcing adult education classes, plans for a Talmud Torah and Hebrew School, and plans for a new shul building on Peninsula Boulevard.

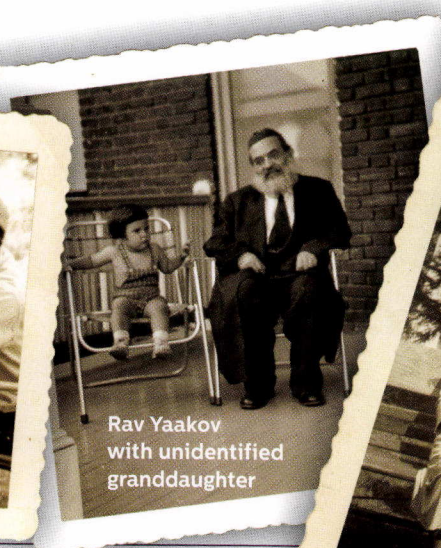
Yet in Cedarhurst, Long Island, could a sufficient number of Orthodox men be found to establish a minyan?

Moshe Hochman the first youth director of Young Israel of Woodmere, recalled when he and his wife, Sherry, were driving on Peninsula Boulevard, to meet a realtor to look at homes.





Rav Binyamin learning with his father Rav Yaakov



Rav Yaakov with unidentified granddaughter



Rav Yaakov sitting next to Rebbetzin Itta Ettil, his son Rav Binyamin holding daughter Surrie behind them

Left: Rav Binyamin and his mother Itta Ettil, with his oldest daughter Surrie

L-R: Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky, Rabbi David Hollander, Rabbi Israel Miller and Eli Gut at the Hachnassah of the Gut Sefer Torah at Yeshiva of South Shore on Oak Street, Woodmere (circa 1957)





Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky with his father Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky at the Yeshiva Toras Chaim of South Shore.

"The Torah was given in a Midbar," Rav Yaakov told him. "You will see nachas there."

"I stopped the car when I saw a young man, wearing a suit, tie and fedora hat, hanging up a sign on a telephone pole," he said. The sign read, "Looking to start Orthodox *minyan*. Contact B. Kamenetzky." Underneath was the rabbi's phone number CE (darhurst) 9-0534."

Moshe got out and began talking to the young man who was hanging the sign. A short while later he came back to the car and exclaimed, "Sherry, we're moving to Woodmere!"

A while later after the shul was established the small group of members were *schmoozing* during *kiddush* about what had brought them to Woodmere. A number shared the same story, of seeing the young man hanging up a sign in various locations. The young rabbi had assured them "they would be the tenth" and make the *minyan*. Rabbi Kamenetzky had told the same story to all of them, when, he needed more than one, but thankfully his ploy worked.



Rabbi Dr. Joseph Kaminetsky, national director of Torah Umesorah, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools

Soon enough, a group of lay leaders from Far Rockaway approached him, saying that they heard he was moving to the area, and they wanted him to open a boys' yeshiva. There was an established co-ed day school, Hebrew Institute of Long Island. It was doing fine in Far Rockaway and was not going to move to Woodmere. In addition, this group wanted an all-boys' yeshiva and a separate girls' school as well. Through the arduous efforts of a distant cousin, Rabbi Dr. Joseph Kaminetsky, who was the national director of Torah Umesorah, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools, a building on Oak Street and two years later one on the adjacent Pine Street was located for the establishment of two new yeshivas in Woodmere. (*See chapter on Yeshiva of South Shore*).



Grade 1-3 at HILI (Hebrew institute of Long Island 1957-58.
Girl at far left is Reb. Shoshana Lefkowitz, nee Kamenetzky)



Jewish life in East New York, and other nearby areas through the 1950's was a lively, rich and varied environment. Over the next few decades it dissipated greatly. As Jews moved to other areas, they left behind their synagogues. Many became churches whose facades still have Jewish symbols.

But the young Rabbi Kamenetzky was juggling many responsibilities. He still held his rabbinical and teaching positions in East New York. He had a fledgling *minyan* starting in Woodmere and now was contemplating opening a yeshiva in Woodmere.

His plan was to serve as an administrator in the South Shore Yeshiva, and become a pulpit rabbi in Woodmere where, with the help of Moshe Katz and other lay-leaders from the area, he had purchased a home. But, he was not willing to abandon his other responsibilities; he planned to juggle his various roles, commuting daily to East New York to serve as a rebbe of Toras Chaim, while simultaneously administrating a brand-new yeshiva in Long Island. Soon enough, he was forced to choose. When asked to serve as a full-time administrator of Yeshiva South Shore, Rabbi Kamenetzky consulted his father, who encouraged him to accept the permanent position at the new yeshiva. "The Torah was given in a *midbar*, (a desert)" Rav Yaakov told him. "If you plant and water, even in a desert it will grow. You will see *nachas* there." With that he put his heart and soul into the development of the yeshiva.



(L-R): Torah Umesorah President, Samuel Feurstein, Moshe Katz, Rabbi Kamenetzky at the Yeshiva of South Shore's accreditation by Torah Umesorah, the National Society for Jewish Day Schools.

Meanwhile, Congregation Eitz Chaim, as it was originally named, was slowly growing. What began as a storefront on West Broadway soon became too small and the congregation moved from place to place. They ultimately bought a house on Forest Avenue. Eventually a proper synagogue was built on Peninsula Boulevard which became affiliated with the Young Israel Movement and became known as Young Israel of Woodmere. *(See chapter on Young Israel of Woodmere).*

During the years of transition from a house to a proper building, Rabbi Binyamin ceded his rabbinic position to Rabbi Shaya Lebor, whose full-time leadership propelled it to emerge as a powerful force in the Jewish community. *(See chapter on Rabbi Shya Lebor).*



In front of the Feurstein Building (The girls' school was later established in a different building one block away)



The original logo of Yeshiva of South Shore, 1956

By 1960, the burden of a growing yeshiva in a dilapidated building became onerous. The pressure of maintaining a girls and boys school became too much to bear. Woodmere was not growing fast enough, and most of the students came from the Rockaways. The board of directors wanted to move both schools to Far Rockaway and take control of the yeshiva. Rabbi Kamenetzky wanted to be in control and keep them in Woodmere. After a period of negotiations, he ceded the girls school to the board of directors, and it moved to Far Rockaway and was renamed Torah Academy for Girls. Rabbi Moshe Weitman, who was serving as the rabbi of Monticello was appointed dean, a position he held until his passing in late February of 2009.

Yeshiva of South Shore for boys remained in Woodmere, but the building on Oak Street was in terrible disrepair. There was no choice but to build. On a plot of land in Hewlett, under terrible financial strain, he erected a new building in 1964.

At the time, Yeshiva Toras Chaim of East New York, the school at which Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky had begun his career in education, was in distress. East New York had become rampant with crime and the demographics were changing rapidly. The Jewish population was fleeing to the suburbs. Rabbi Isaac

Schmidman sold the building and used a portion of the proceeds helped to fund the new building of the Yeshiva of South Shore. The two schools merged and Yeshiva of South Shore became known officially as Yeshiva and Mesivta Toras Chaim of Greater New York at South Shore. (The remaining monies were used to establish Yeshiva Toras Chaim, Pri Yitzchok in Israel.)

Meanwhile, Rabbi Kamenetzky continued to impact the greater community through various other projects, from the establishment of a Young Israel on the border of Cedarhurst and Lawrence, to the creation of a *shteeble* in Cedarhurst.

All the while, Yeshiva and Mesivta Toras Chaim of Greater New York at South Shore continued to grow.

The yeshiva faced many challenges over the next decade, but Rabbi Kamenetzky not only persevered, but created new community initiatives and projects. The Yeshiva grew exponentially during the last two decades of Rabbi Kamenetzky's life, with additional buildings that currently house a Middle School Division, and an Early Childhood Center with an elementary school student population approaching 700.

Hundreds upon hundreds of alumni across the entire spectrum of Jewish life, from rabbinic leaders to Torah committed professional lay leaders, bear testimony to the undying efforts that Rabbi Kamenetzky invested in Jewish education and communal endeavors. Even after Rabbi Kamenetzky was no longer involved in the day to day running of the yeshiva, his daily presence, until only a few months before his passing, impacted every rebbe, teacher, faculty member and student from youngest to oldest.

Below: The 8th grade and alumni of Yeshiva of South Shore, in front of the newly built building at 1170 William Street, Hewlett.

Far left: Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky and Rav Yitzchock Schmidman
Far right: Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky (circa 1965)







Rabbi Yitzhok Knobel with the first students of the Yeshiva Gedolah Ateres Yaakov. (1985)



Cong. Beis Medrash

A GLOBAL IMPACT

Rabbi Binyamin and Rebbetzin Tzirel Kamenetzky's desire to grow Torah life in the Five Towns did not stop with their establishment of the Young Israel of Woodmere and the Yeshiva of South Shore.. Their imprint is stamped upon many more institutions they either founded or helped establish.

In addition to the boys' school, Yeshiva of South Shore, Rabbi Kamenetzky is responsible for a thriving girls' school as well. Yeshiva of South Shore's girls' division was the forerunner of Torah Academy for Girls in Far Rockaway. When the school moved in 1963, it began with a relatively large group of Yeshiva of South Shore students. With an enrollment of more than 1000, it is one of the largest girls' schools in America.



Torah Academy for Girls

In addition to Young Israel of Woodmere, in 1964, Rabbi Kamenetzky helped found the Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst, together with his dear friend from Yeshiva Ner Israel, Dr. Manfred (Menashe) Lehmann. He attended services there on a weekly basis during its formative years, and served as the *chazzan* for the Yomim Noraim. *(See chapter on Young Israel of Lawrence Cedarhurst).*

In late 1969, he encouraged his brother-in-law, Rabbi Dovid Spiegel, to move from Lakewood, New Jersey, purchase a home in Cedarhurst and establish Congregation Bais Medrash, a *chassidishe shteeble*, the first of its kind in the Five Towns. *(See chapter on Rabbi Spiegel and Congregation Beis Medrash of Cedarhurst).*

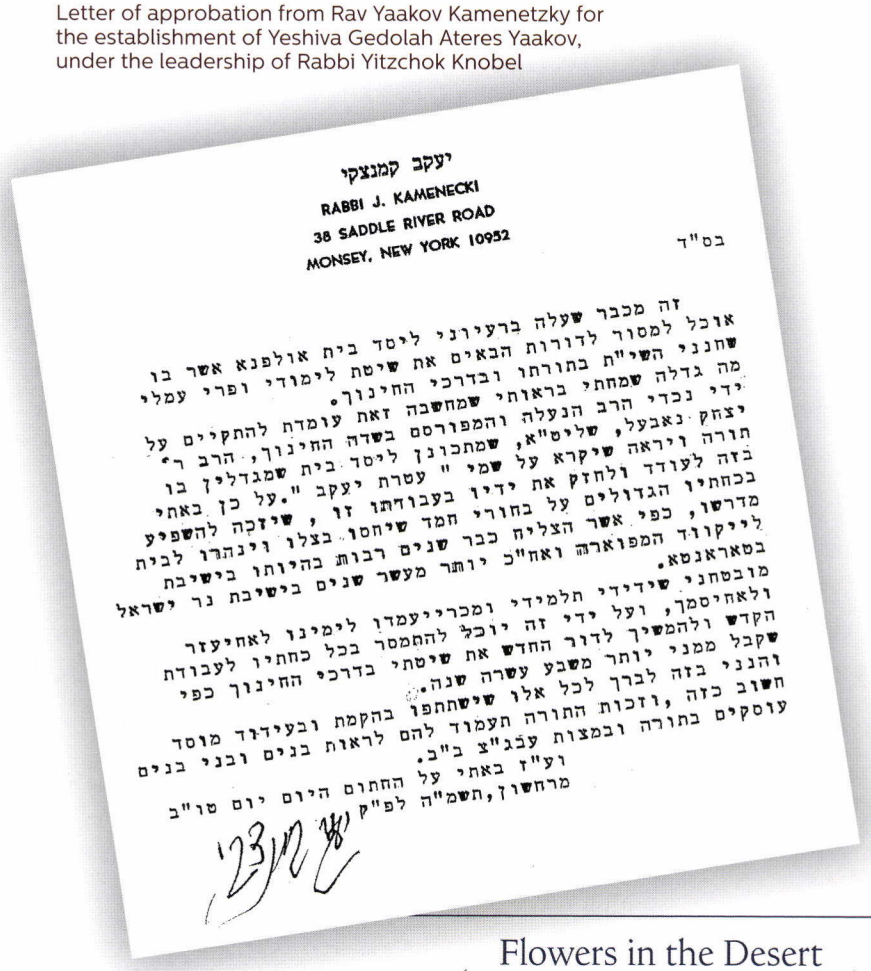


Rav Kamenetzky standing in front of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov

Rabbi Kamenetzky was also instrumental in helping Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld, *zt"l*, establish Shor Yoshuv Institute in Far Rockaway. He encouraged parents of his school, as well as members of the Young Israel of Woodmere, to support the fledgling yeshiva, some becoming ardent supporters.

In the early 1970s, Rabbi Kamenetzky felt the need to establish yet another congregation on the eastern border of the Five Towns. Under the leadership of Moshe and Mimi Soshtain, Drs. Peter and Laurel Steinherz, Abraham and Trudy Spector **a**nd other members of the Hewlett neighborhood, Congregation Toras Chaim opened in the Yeshiva of South Shore's lunchroom. It was originally led by his children, Rabbi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Surrie Knobel, who travelled every week from Lakewood. In 1973, Rabbi Kamenetzky's son-in-law and daughter, Rabbi Simcha and Rebbetzin Shoshana Lefkowitz moved from Los Angeles to lead the *kehillah* and community, a position that continues to this day.

Letter of approbation from Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky for the establishment of Yeshiva Gedolah Ateres Yaakov, under the leadership of Rabbi Yitzchok Knobel



יעקב קמנצקי
RABBI J. KAMENECKI
38 SADDLE RIVER ROAD
MONSEY, NEW YORK 10952

בס"ד

זה מכבר שעלה ברעיוני ליסד בית אולפנא אשר בו
אוכל למסור לדורות הבאים את שיטת לימודי ופרי עמלי
שחננני השי"ת בתורתו ובדרכי החינוך.
מה גדלה שמחתי בראותי שמחשבה זאת עומדת להתקיים על
ידי נכדי הרב הנעלה והמפורסם בשדה החינוך, הרב ר'
יצחק נאבעל, שליט"א, שמתכונן ליסד בית שמגדלין בו
תורה ויראה שיקרא על שמי " עטרת יעקב ".על כן באתי
בזה לעודד ולחזק את ידיו בעבודתו זו , שיזכה להשפיע
בכחותיו הגדולים על בחורי חמד שיחסו בצלו וינהרו לבית
מדרשו, כפי אשר הצליח כבר שנים רבות בהיותו בישיבת
לייקווד המפוארה ואח"כ יותר מעשר שנים בישיבת נר ישראל
במאראנסא.
מובטחני שידידי תלמידי ומכרי יעמדו לימיני לאחיעזר
ולאחיסמך, ועל ידי זה יוכל להתמסר בכל כחותיו לעבודת
הקדש ולהמשיך לדור החדש את שיטתי בדרכי החינוך כפי
שקבל ממני יותר משבע עשרה שנה.
והנני בזה לברך לכל אלו שישתתפו בהקמת ובעידוד מוסד
חשוב כזה, וזכות התורה תעמוד להם לראות בנים ובני בנים
עוסקים בתורה ובמצות עכ"צ ב"ב.
וע"ז באתי על החתום היום יום טו"ב
מרחשון, תשמ"ה לפ"ק

In 1985, Rabbi Kamenetzky invited his daughter and son-in-law, Rabbi and Rebbetzin Knobel to establish the first community-centered, all day post-high school Bais Medrash program, named Ateres Yaakov in honor of his father, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky. It was the first institution of its kind in the Five Towns. The Yeshiva under Rabbi Knobel's leadership as Rosh Kollel and the direction of the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Moshe Katzenstein, who originally had come to Woodmere as a rebbe at the Yeshiva of South Shore's Mesivta Ateres Yaakov, is a thriving center of Torah study known as the Yeshiva Gedolah of the Five Towns.

In the early 1970s Rabbi Kamenetzky felt the need to establish yet another congregation on the eastern border of the Five Towns.

In 1986, he established the first all-boys yeshiva high school in the Five Towns. It, too, bore the name of his father who had passed away earlier that year. Mesivta Ateres Yaakov – The Ruth and Hyman Simon High School, continues to flourish as a separate institution in Lawrence, New York. Under the leadership of Rabbi Mordechai Yaffe, it expanded to create a post-high school, college-level Bais Medrash and has emerged as a leader in Torah education for hundreds of high school age students and beyond.

Rabbi Kamenetzky's involvement in the establishment of myriad institutions of Torah and prayer, was legendary. There was hardly an institution or project that he did not help either financially or politically, by arranging funding or using political connections to assist in the completion of a project. Until the last months of his life, there was nary an event that Rabbi Kamenetzky did not attend nor a cause that he did not support.

Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kamenetzky with Hyman and Ruth Simon





Rav Binyamin at age 92, with students of YOSS



Rabbi SImcha Lefkowitz



Daughters: Shoshana Lefkowitz, RBK, Esther Wilhelm, Surrie Knobel



Rabbi Yitzchok Knobel at Yeshiva Gedolah



RBK and R' Mordechai Kamenetzky



A Family Legacy

Rabbi Kamenetzky's children have made a powerful impact on the Torah education and communal life whether it be the Five Towns or elsewhere.

Rabbi Kamenetzky's oldest son-in-law, Rabbi Yitzchok Knobel,is a renowned *talmid chochom* and a virtual wellspring of Torah knowledge. His sage counsel is sought by hundreds of students and lay leaders in the community on practically every aspect of Torah life. His relationships with the gedolei Torah of the past generation, among them his wife's grandfather, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, Rav Moshe Feinstien and both Rav Ahron and Rav Shneur Kotler, makes him one of the unique Torah scholars in the Five Towns community. In 1967, he married the oldest Kamenetzky daughter, Sarah. Rabbi Knobel was a rebbe in Ner Israel in Toronto for close to ten years. In 1985 they moved to Woodmere, and founded Yeshiva Gedolah Ateres Yaakov.. The yeshiva, a post-high school *bais medrash*, is based on the philosophy of his revered grandfather-in-law, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, *zt"l*. The yeshiva now includes a kollel and continues to thrive as the Yeshiva Gedolah of the Five Towns. It also serves as a Torah center for college students and lay leaders alike.

Rabbi Simcha Lefkowitz, married to the youngest daughter, Shoshana, served for close to twenty years as associate dean of Yeshiva Toras Chaim. Under his leadership, the yeshiva grew exponentially, doubling in size. He oversaw the design and construction for the multi-million dollar expansion of the campus facilities, with the construction of the Hollander Early Childhood Center and the Ostreicher building, housing the junior high school, *mechina* division and Congregation Anshei Chessed where Rabbi Lefkowitz, together with his wife, Shoshana, serve as the Rabbi and Rebbetzin. In addition to daily and Shabbos services and myriad Torah classes, Rabbi and Rebbetzin Lefkowitz have established and spearheaded many of the Five Towns Community's charitable endeavors. In 1984, Rabbi Lefkowitz co-founded Labor & Industry For Education, Inc. (LIFE), a not-for-profit, full-service social services agency which runs many programs for the citizens of New York City and Nassau County. Leading among them is the Leon Mayer Fund, which distributes hundreds of thousands of dollars in monetary aid and food packages to families, single parents and aging community members throughout the year, and provides scholarships for summer camps. He has served as a departmental chaplain for the Nassau County Police Department for more than two decades.

Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kamenetzky's daughter Esther married Rabbi Shlomo Wilhelm, a scion of early American Torah pioneers, among them the founder of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, Reb Binyamin Wilhelm.

Bottom Left:
R' Zvi Kamenetzky, RBK, Chaim Kamenetzky, Rabbi Yehuda Oelbaum, (unidentified) Rabbi Yitzchok Knobel

In the early 1970s, the Wilhelms moved to Cedarhurst where Rabbi Wilhelm served as a rebbe at Yeshiva of South Shore and Esther taking a very active role in the growth of the *chinuch* of the children and the community. They were instrumental in the birth and growth of the *shteeble*, led by their uncle, Rav Dovid Spiegel and many other Torah institutions in the community. A number of years ago they moved to Monsey where they currently reside.

The oldest son, Mordechai, married Sora Lipschutz. After serving a kollel fellowship and as a pulpit rabbi in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, they moved back to Woodmere in 1986. R' Mordechai first served as a rebbe in the Yeshiva Gedolah and then in Mesivta Ateres Yaakov. After a 20-year tenure as assistant to his father at the Yeshiva of South Shore, he was appointed dean of the Yeshiva of South Shore, upon his father's "official" retirement.

Their youngest son, Rav Zvi, is a nationally known Torah educator who served many years as a *rebbe*, and later as the *mashgiach*, Dean of Ethics of Beth Medrash L'Torah in Skokie, Illinois. He is a nationally known speaker and pedagogue, training teachers across the continent in various methodologies. He currently serves as *menahel* (principal) of the Joe Dwek Ohr Haemet Sephardic School in Toronto, Canada.

Right: RBK giving a lunch and learn class in the office of Michael Aryeh, Heritage Realty at age 90

Perseverance & Tenacity

By Rabbi Berel Wein

Throughout his sixty-plus year tenure in the Five Towns community, Rabbi Kamenetzky's perseverance and tenacity became the hallmark of his very being. To the last days of his life, every worthy project or endeavor sought and received his blessings and participation. His enthusiastic embrace of all Torah institutions was palpable until his passing in late April of 2017, at the age of 93.

But the jewel in Rav Binyamin's crown will always be the Yeshiva Toras Chaim at South Shore, currently with a student population approaching 700 boys. It continues to be a thriving Torah institution whose impact on the greater community at large reverberates with distinction.

Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky was the eldest son of the great Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky and was a distant relative of our family in previous generations. Presently, a niece of mine is married to one of his sons. But this familial relationship was not the basis of my connection with him and my admiration of his great accomplishments of a long lifetime.

He was a member of a generation of pioneers in Jewish education that operated after World War II and reshaped and revitalized Orthodox Jewry in the United States. Driven by faith in the past and a vision for the future, reviled and ridiculed by the then Jewish establishment and Federations, these Torah scholars established Jewish day schools with scant financial backing. Going against the tuition free schooling offered from a then excellent public school educational system, this cadre of dedicated young men founded schools in then unlikely places, schools that changed the face of American Jewry until today.

A leading figure in that revolution in American Jewish life was Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky. He headed a school in Nassau County, the Yeshiva of the South Shore. Today this area has a very strong and large Orthodox community.



But many decades ago Nassau County was alien territory – perhaps even enemy territory – as far as meaningful Jewish education was concerned.

Many Jewish leaders of the time called the Day School movement un-American! And in that area and environment, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky, over many decades of toil and talent, built an empire of Jewish education and Torah observance.

But perhaps just as importantly, Rabbi Kamenetzky was a force for good in all areas of Jewish life in the Five Towns area of Nassau County. Every individual and every Jewish institution could rely on his counsel, influence, and personal and political connections for help in times of need and crisis.

His vision was wider than just his school and its needs. In a world that sometimes defined itself by turf and exclusivity, he saw beyond narrow parochial borders and envisaged the Jewish community as a whole. The Five Towns and Far Rockaway areas of greater New York today contain many and varied institutions of Jewish learning. But that is only because of the pioneering labor of that generation after the war that undertook the daunting task of rebuilding the Jewish world after its near destruction seventy years ago.

It was a generation of unsung and unknown heroes and Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky was representative of those brave visionaries and dedicated educators. Because the Lord gifted him with a long life span in practical terms, he outlived his generation and never really received his due. He was a symbol of past greatness but his very presence amongst us still had influence and lessons to learn.

This scion of a great rabbinic family, born in the heartland of Jewish life in prewar Lithuania, succeeded in America, undaunted by its strangeness and completely different culture. This ability was a hallmark of his public and private persona. They don't make them this way any longer.

A unique personality whose lifespan covered a radically and rapidly changing society, his perspective and counsel will be sorely missed.

He was a very creative person. He founded a lunch and learn program in Manhattan long before that type of program became regular and normal in American Jewish life. I spoke for his group a number of times many decades ago and I always marveled as to his ability to bring together so many disparate Jews of various backgrounds for an hour of Torah study in the midst of a busy business day.

Lunch and Learn programs now exist everywhere in the Jewish world today and are important in the never-ending battle to keep Jews Jewish. My first experience with this type of program was when Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky invited me to speak. It was an experience I have never forgotten and I still cherish.

Aside from the thousands of young people who received their Jewish education through his school there are many others, young and old, that have benefited from his initiatives, programs and personal guidance and interest. Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky was a throwback to a world that once was and will never be again, he saw a world that would rebuild Jewish life and reward all of those that kept faith with Torah and observance.

A unique personality whose lifespan covered a radically and rapidly changing society, his perspective and counsel will be sorely missed. May his memory be a blessing to his family and all who were privileged to know him.

YESHIVA AND MESIVTA TORAS CHAIM
AT
SOUTH SHORE
FOUNDED 1927 RABBI ISAAC SHMIDMAN

Fifty Years
of
Jewish Education
on
Long Island

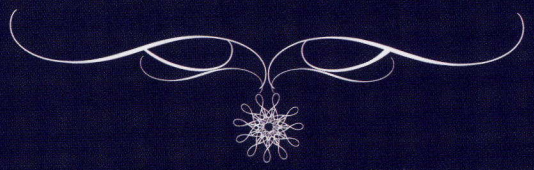
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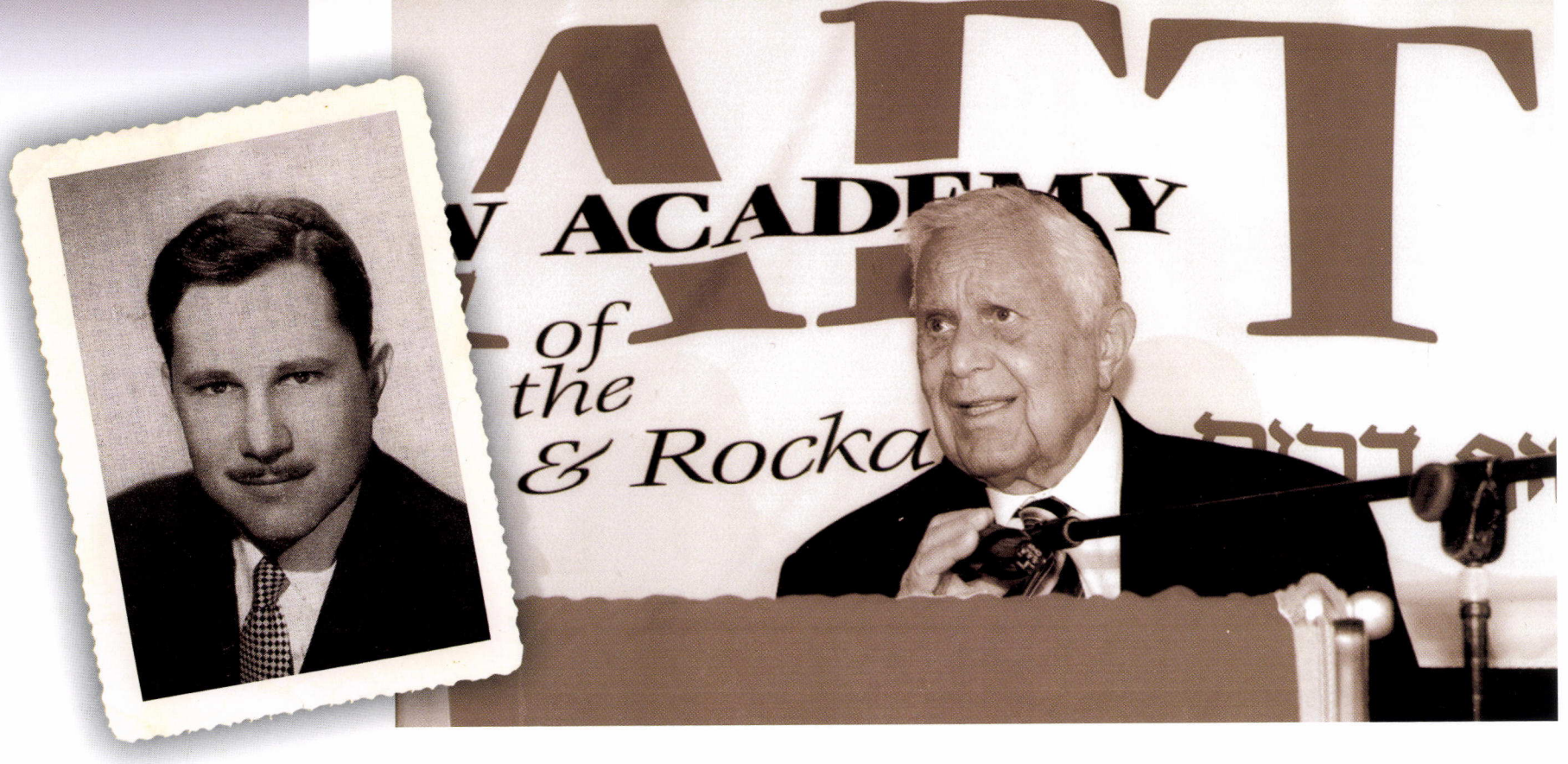
THE ABRAHAM AND FANNIE WERMAN WIN



RABBI
GILBERT
KLAPERMAN

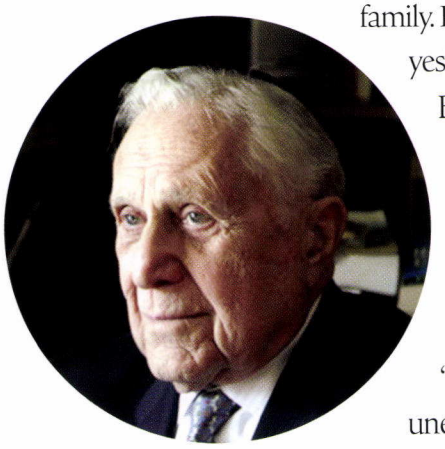
Congregation Beth Sholom





Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman

Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, was the Five Towns' pioneering Orthodox rabbi who served as spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Sholom from 1950 to 1988.



Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman was already a practicing rabbi even before World War II, and served in an emeritus rabbinical position, well into the 21st century.

Rabbi Klaperman was already a practicing rabbi before World War II. He continued his career throughout the war years, and served in an emeritus rabbinical position, well into the 21st century.

Where it all began

A first-generation American, Rabbi Klaperman was born in Harlem in 1921 to Polish immigrant parents who had emigrated to the United States 10 years before his birth. His father was a well-regarded Talmudic scholar who worked in the garment district to provide for his family. He made sure that his son attended yeshiva, first in Harlem and then in the Bronx when the family moved to Brownsville.

It was that type of devotion that propelled him into the rabbinate.

"My mother was very bright, but uneducated (in Torah knowledge)," the rabbi explained in a 2011 interview for the Five Towns Jewish Times. When the George Washington Bridge was built, we were living in Washington Heights. The minute it was ready, my mom took me and we walked across it. She wanted to expose me to various learning experiences. When the city subway system was built, she took me on the train, and pointed out different architectural nuances in each station. She alerted me to minor details."



Left: Hillel executive board, 1942

Back row, left to right: Jacqueline Lax, Bernard Wand, Ephraim Diamond and Maurice Schwartz

Front row, left to right: Abe Rabinowitz, Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman and Lillian Feldman.
— Ontario Jewish Archives



Bais Medrash Hagadol of Harlem



Rabbi Klaperman protesting Iraq's hanging of 14 people, including nine Jews 1969

On afternoons in the mid 1920s, his mother would walk with him from their home in Harlem down through Central Park and to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, ready to explore, ready to learn something new.

"What's this?" his mother would ask, pointing to a work of art. She was unable to read English. Bright-eyed, brown-haired Gilbert Klaperman would do his best to figure out some words in the description and read them aloud. When it would rain, his mother would take him to the local library, and ask the librarian for a book for him to read.

He attended Yeshiva Rabbi Israel Salanter of Harlem and his mother cherished his learning in yeshiva. He would take the subway. "When it rained, my mother met me at the station with a raincoat and took me home," Rabbi Klaperman said. "I loved every day of it."

His family kept a close relationship with Rav Moshe Soleveitchick, the revered son of Rav Chaim Soleveitchik of Brisk, who arrived in America five years before Gilbert's bar mitzvah. Rav Soleveitchik was invited to the bar mitzvah and sat next to him.

"I recited a Rambam during my bar mitzvah speech and, can you imagine, after I finished, Rav Soloveitchik started



Rebbetzin Libby Klaperman and Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, 1943
— Ontario Jewish Archives

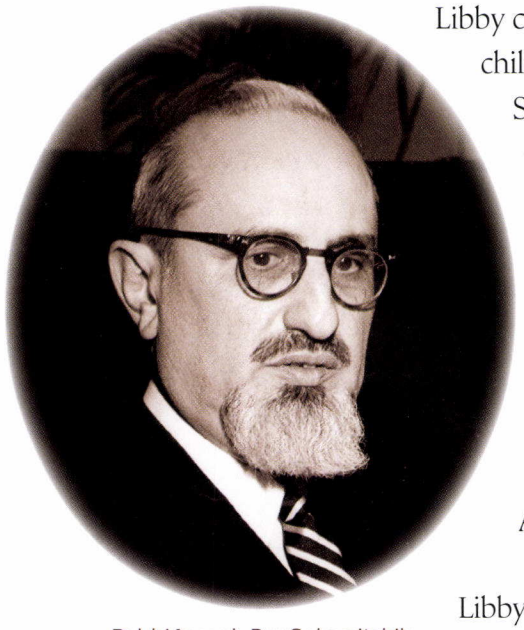
Years later Rabbi Klaperman would study under Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik and later under Rabbi Moshe's son, Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik, whom he considered his mentor.



Rabbi Klaperman as chaplain in the Canadian military

asking me questions on my *pilpul* discourse! I did not know how to answer him because he was talking to me as if I was a Talmudic scholar!"

Years later Rabbi Klaperman would study in Rabbi Isaac Elchonon Theological Seminary under Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik and later under Rabbi Moshe's son, Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik, whom he considered his mentor.



Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveitchik

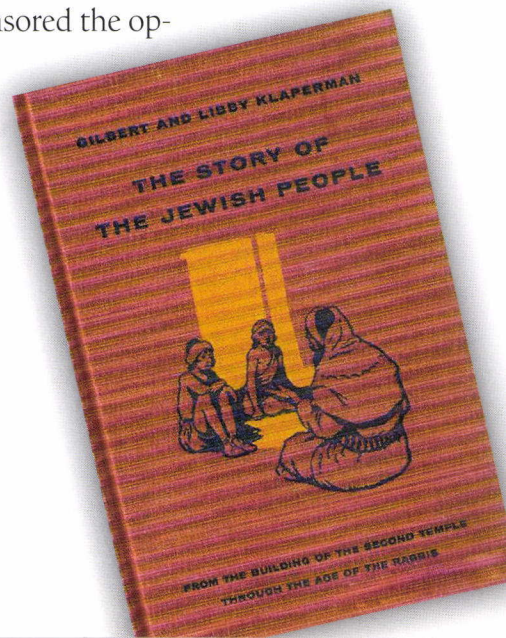
At age 16, at an event sponsored by *Shomer Hadati*, a religious Zionist group where boys and girls would get together every Friday night, Rabbi Klaperman met his first wife, Libby Mindlin. According to the rabbi in an interview with the South Shore Standard, a now defunct periodical, "We had a group of fellows and formed a religious Zionist group. On Friday nights we'd all get together. We'd dance and sing Hebrew songs. It was very inspiring. We made lifelong friends. The girls used to come, too. There was a young girl around my age. She was very sweet and very smart. I used to walk her home on Friday nights. I'd go up and sit with her and have a cup of tea. We became very close. It was love at first sight."

Libby came to the United States as a young child from her native Minsk, in Russia. She later became a professor of religious studies at Stern College and a member of the humanities faculty at Far Rockaway High School. She was active in American Mizrachi Women and served as national education chairman of the women's branch of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America for more than 20 years.

Libby was also an author, writer and educator on Jewish history and religion. She wrote a number of children's books, including novels and books on religious subjects. She was the author of a four-volume history, "The Story of the Jewish People," published in collaboration with her husband.

Libby passed away in 1982 at the age of 60 from a cardiac defect. "She was born with a hole in the chamber of her heart," Rabbi Klaperman noted. "She was lovely and wonderful, always fighting the weakness…we were inseparable."

In a forum transcribed in the Fall 2008 edition of Jewish Action Magazine, Rabbi Klaperman lamented about the dissolution of similar types of social events that led him to meet his wife, Libby. "The fact is that I met my wife in an organization that sponsored the opportunity for Jewish boys to meet Jewish girls. "It is a shame that we don't have that anymore."



Rabbi Klaperman's most formative years were as a student in Yeshiva University, studying under the tutelage of Rabbi Samuel Belkin and Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik.

"I loved Yeshiva, I never had as much enjoyment in any undertaking as my years in Yeshiva (University). Rabbi Belkin – he was my *rebbe*, my friend, and my mentor."

He received *smichah* and set off to try to emulate the rabbinical figures that inspired him. "I always tried to be like them," he said. "Of course, I couldn't be like them."

Although he did not plan to become a rabbi, Yeshiva University sent him to become the spiritual leader of a Hillel organization in Queens University in Canada. There he met several Jewish soldiers and they asked him to become a chaplain. After getting permission from the State Department, Rabbi Klaperman joined the Canadian army as a chaplain.

"I was close to the students. A truck pulled up in front of the synagogue with soldiers in it. They were going overseas and wanted a blessing. I was maybe 23 years old. I did the best I could," Rabbi Klaperman recalled. The boys were part of the railroad battalion in the military and that morning was the last time he got to see them. "As it turned out, they were the first troops that went across with the French Army to Dieppe, a German stronghold," Klaperman recalled. "Almost all of them were killed. It was quite a tragic experience. It really made me sick. By the end of the year, I was ready to leave the Canadian army. I had other experiences with Jewish aviators. Some of them crashed. I just couldn't take it anymore."

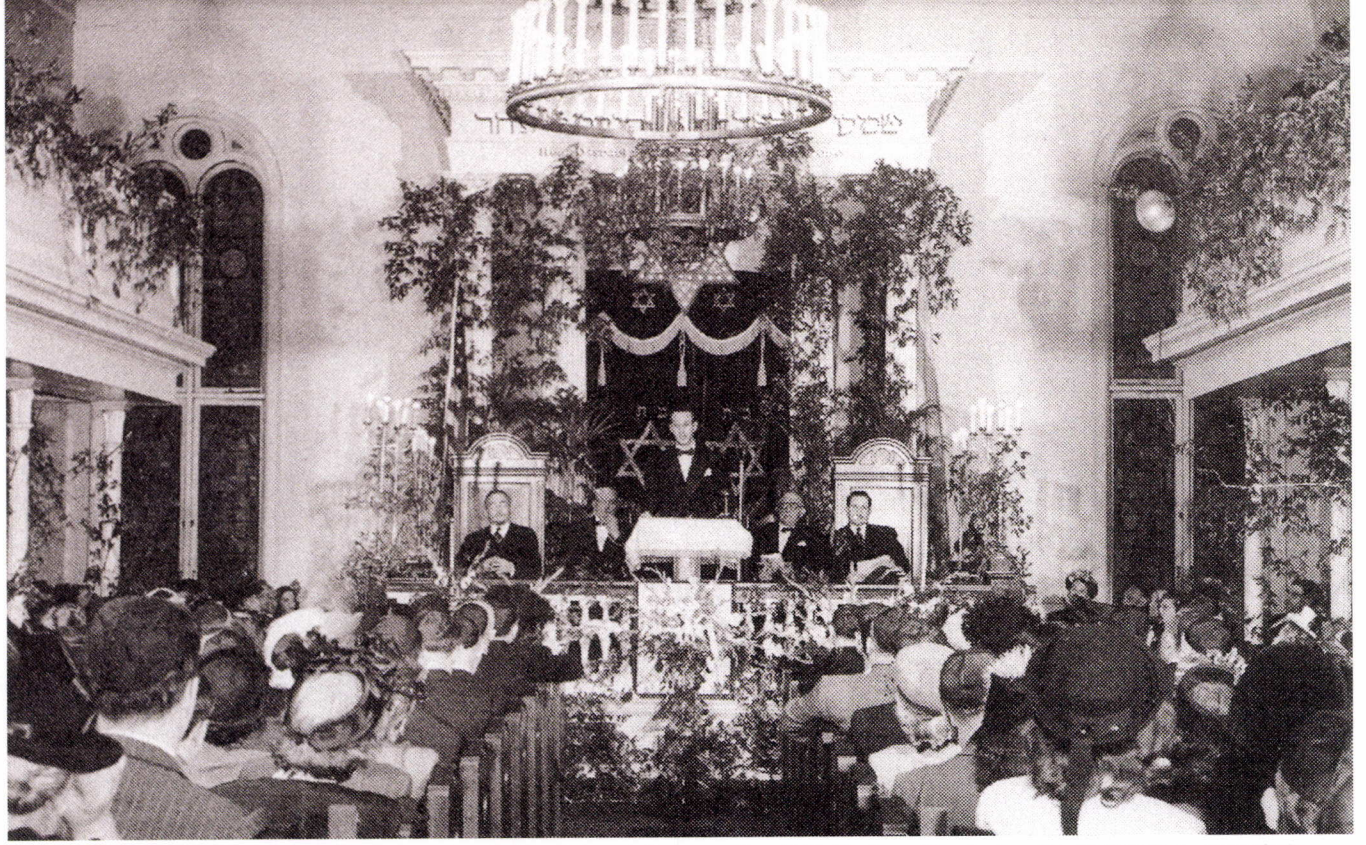


Pictured above:
Rabbi Gilbert and Libby with their children:
Judy, of blessed memory, Joel; Frieda, and Carol

After three years, he accepted a professorship at the University of Iowa teaching Jewish studies. From there he received another call from Yeshiva University about a synagogue, Congregation Brith Sholom, in Charleston, South Carolina. "The Yeshiva kept on moving me from place to place," he said. "They wanted me to fill the holes."



Rabbi Klaperman in hat, talking with Senator Ted Kennedy



At the instillation of Rabbi Klaperman (seated far right) at Congregation Brith Shalom, Charleston, South Carolina, circa 1947

Life In South Carolina

According to Jeffrey Gurock, the author of "Orthodox Jews in America," South Carolina was the focus of a pitched battle between Conservative and Orthodox Judaism. "This was an era of tremendous struggle between Orthodoxy and Conservatism and Gil was one of Yeshiva's bright young men," said Gurock.

"He understood the big picture in terms of American Jewry. Not everyone is going to be as Orthodox or observant as the next fellow."

His synagogue, Brith Sholom, was established in 1852, by Jewish immigrants from Poland, Lithuania and Prussia, and is the oldest Ashkenazi Orthodox synagogue in continuous existence in the United States.

It was not easy. In 1947, the members of Brith Sholom were presented with a proposal that would have paved the way for the congregation to abandon Orthodoxy and affiliate with Conservative Judaism. Although under Rabbi Klaperman's leadership the proposal was defeated, a significant portion of the membership left the congregation to create a new Conservative synagogue, Emanu-El.

As a rabbi in Charleston, Rabbi Klaperman made every effort to maintain and attract congregants to join his Orthodox congregation. He held late Friday evening events to attract people to shul who might not make an earlier *davening* service.

He made a wonderful impact on many of his congregants. On a visit to Charleston, some fifty years after he had left Congregation Brith Sholom, a woman Rabbi Klaperman didn't recognize stopped by to say hello to him. The woman said that Rabbi Klaperman had officiated at her wedding in Charleston in 1949.

In 1950, after four years in Charleston, Rabbi Klaperman received another phone call from Rabbi Belkin. This time the offer was much closer to home. There was a small town in New York with a small Jewish community, but very few Orthodox Jews that was looking for a rabbi.

Indeed, there were a few Orthodox synagogues in the Rockaways, west of the Nassau border, but Rabbi Belkin had other plans. He sent Rabbi Klaperman to a town called Lawrence, in New York, where he was offered the position of rabbi in a synagogue called Beth Sholom.

Lawrence and The Five Towns

"It was a nice little *goyish* town," Rabbi Klaperman recalled. "We were the first and only synagogue. Today there's a *shteeble* on every corner."

At the time of his arrival, Congregation Beth Sholom had 70 members. The shul was located in a private house after spending its first few years in a storefront. It was under Rabbi Klaperman's guidance that the synagogue built the magnificent edifice that serves the community to this day. *(See chapter on Beth Sholom)*

Under Rabbi Klaperman's influence, the community began to grow. His daughter Frieda attended HILI but Rabbi Klaperman wanted to create an institution similar to Yeshiva of Flatbush in the Five Towns. With the staunch support of his congregational members, he helped found The Hillel School, one of the first day schools in Nassau County. His daughter Carol, was among the students of its first graduating class, before It would merge with HILI, and become the Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Far Rockaway. He was instrumental in its birth and graciously allowed the school to use the facilities of the newly built Beth Sholom for classes. *(See chapter on Hillel and HAFTR)*

Joel Shiff, ob"m, a past president of Beth Sholom marveled at the rabbi's tenacity. "Despite his retirement, he still is friendly with many people. It's fascinating to see the amount of members who come by to shake his hand, and how many he still knows by their name."

Involvement with World Leaders

While serving as chairman of the New York Conference on Soviet Jewry in the late 1950s, Rabbi Klaperman met with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. "We were in constant battle with the Soviets," Klaperman said. "I was arguing the case of the Jews with Khrushchev. Finally, he said in Russian, 'okay.' He was a tough nut. I was really at daggers end with him." During those years, Rabbi Klaperman traveled through the Soviet Union. While in Romania, Klaperman met Nobel Peace Prize recipient Elie Wiesel, ob"m. "We traveled together, addressed congregations and synagogues," he related.



With President John F. Kennedy



"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

New York: Today, sunny, clouds later. High 70-75. Tonight, showers likely. Low 53-61. Tomorrow, mostly sunny. High 70-74. Yesterday: High 76, low 60. Details on page C18.

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New Type of Drug for Cholesterol Approved and Hailed as Effective

Product Is Expected to Revolutionize Treatment and to Cut Risks of Coronary Heart Disease

By JANE E. BRODY

The Food and Drug Administration yesterday approved for marketing a new type of drug that experts have hailed as the most effective remedy yet devised for lowering cholesterol in the blood.

The drug, lovastatin, is expected to revolutionize treatment of high cholesterol levels, which heart specialists regard as the most important underlying cause of atherosclerosis and coronary heart disease.

About 20 million American adults have cholesterol levels that put them at very high risk of developing coronary heart disease, and experts predict that lovastatin will be prescribed for many of these people, as well as millions of others whose risk is not quite as high.

But the treatment, which should be available in two to three weeks, will be costly. At a news conference yesterday, representatives of the developer, Merck & Company, said that the price of lovastatin to the pharmacist would be $1.25 for a 20-milligram dose, and that some patients would need four 20-milligram tablets a day. Thus, with the retail markup, the annual cost for patients at highest risk could exceed $3,000.

Lovastatin, which will be sold by prescription under the trade name Mevacor, is expected to become a pharmaceutical gold mine for Merck, perhaps reaching sales of more than $1 billion a year. In heavy trading yesterday, Merck stock jumped as much as four points, then settled down to close at 205, a gain of just one point above Monday's closing.

Adjunct to Dietary Changes

Experts cautioned yesterday that lovastatin should not be considered an alternative to a cholesterol-lowering diet but rather an adjunct to dietary changes. In many people, they said, diet alone is effective in bringing cholesterol down to desirable levels. The drug agency approved the drug for use only when diet and exercise alone have not achieved the desired reduction in

Gene Scientist Freed Germs In 1984 Tests

By KEITH SCHNEIDER
Special to The New York Times

BOZEMAN, Mont., Sept. 1 — A Montana scientist, reprimanded last week for injecting genetically altered bacteria into American elms in June, developed another genetically engineered microbe three years ago and released it into fields in four states without notifying his university or formally applying to the Government for permission.

The tests of the altered bacteria, developed by Dr. Gary Strobel, a plant pathologist at Montana State University, were conducted in late May or early

Associated Press

Pope John Paul II with Rabbis Mordecai Waxman and Gilbert Klaperman, right, at Castel Gandolfo, Italy.

Jews and Pope Discuss Concerns; No Real Shifts, but Discord Eases

By ROBERTO SURO
Special to The New York Times

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy, Sept. 1 — Pope John Paul II sat face to face with Jewish leaders today to discuss their concerns over his audience with Kurt Waldheim and other issues, and discussions with other Catholic officials that preceded it.

Still, the Jewish leaders indicated that their anger over the Waldheim issue — which led to these meetings as

The Healing Of a Breach

Jews and the Vatican Protect Relationship

By JOSEPH BERGER
Special to The New York Times

FILIPINO GENERAL WARNS PRESIDENT OF UNREST IN ARMY

AQUINO POLICY ASSAILED

Growing Factionalism Said to Weaken Military in Fight Against Communists

By SETH MYDANS
Special to The New York Times

MANILA, Sept. 1 — The armed forces Chief of Staff said today that the mutiny last week had worsened factionalism in the armed forces and warned that further uprisings were possible unless the Government acts to resolve military grievances.

The Chief of Staff, Gen. Fidel V. Ramos, also warned that the discord in the armed forces had further reduced their ability to fight Communist insurgents.

As the effects of the revolt continued to be felt, officials and cadets at the Philippine Military Academy confirmed that cadets signed a statement of support for the mutineers and refused to march in formation, in effect going on strike for a while. But they said the extent of the protest had been overstated. [Page A6.]

Veiled Criticism of Aquino

Speaking at a news conference, General Ramos said the time had come to address the problems that lay behind the mutiny.

He did not criticize President Cora-

"It's interesting to see the amount of members who come by to shake his hand, and how many he still knows by their name."

In September of 1987, Rabbi Klaperman met with Pope John Paul II about Jewish-Catholic relations at Castel Gandolfo, Italy. It was there that he negotiated the Vatican's recognition of the State of Israel. During that visit he openly expressed his dismay at the pope for having granted an audience to Austrian president Kurt Waldheim, who had participated in the persecution of Jews while serving with German forces in Greece and Yugoslavia.

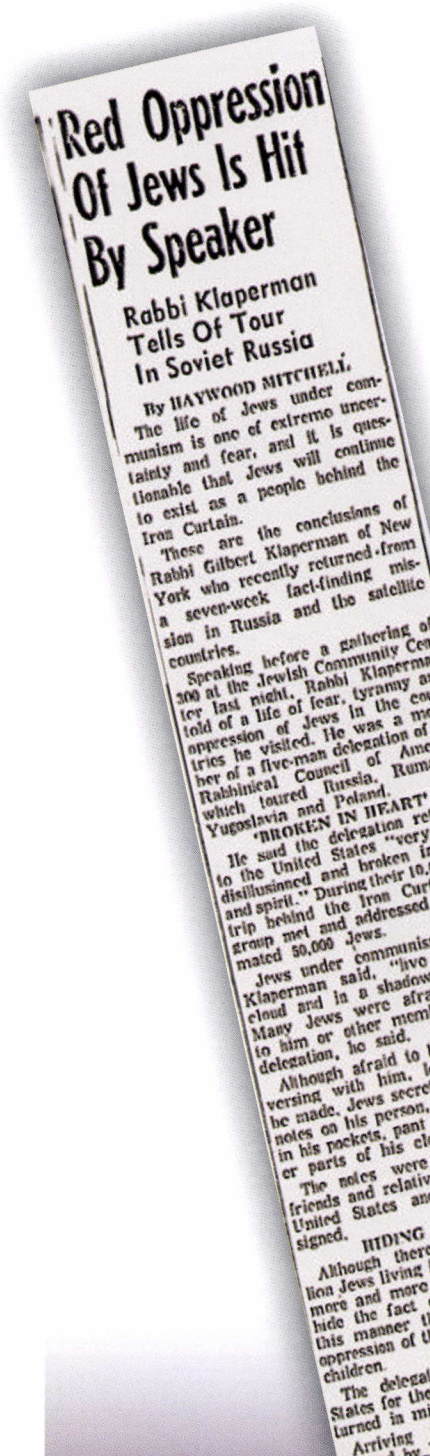
Rabbi Klaperman was not satisfied with the responses from the Vatican and according to an article in the New York Times of September, 1987, "*Of the discussions about Mr. Waldheim – who denies any part in the Nazi wartime atrocities – Rabbi Waxman said, "There were attempts to be responsive to the problem." But then Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, the president of the Synagogue Council of America, rose from the audience at a news conference this afternoon to add, "I want to make it perfectly clear that we do not agree with the validity of the response."*

The meeting with Waldheim prompted Rabbi Klaperman to refuse to officially address the pope on his visit to Miami later that month, a task he deferred to Conservative rabbi, Mordechai Waxman.

Rabbi Klaperman was also widely involved in taking on the teachers' union and combating anti-Semitism in the public school system in the late 1960s. Jewish teachers in African-American school districts were summarily fired, and rabble rousers like Sonny Carson and his ilk, incited violence. Rabbi Klaperman was at the forefront of the battle against the anti-Semitic injustices.

A Consummate Rabbi

Rabbi Klaperman's cosmopolitan approach to Judaism transcended the pulpit and activism. In addition to being a rabbi, he earned masters, doctorate, and law degrees. He taught for many years at Yeshiva University, was a professor at Hofstra University's law school, a professor at the School of Religion at the State University of Iowa, and taught at Lehman College.


Red Oppression Of Jews Is Hit By Speaker

Rabbi Klaperman Tells Of Tour In Soviet Russia

By HAYWOOD MITCHELL

The life of Jews under communism is one of extreme uncertainty and fear, and it is questionable that Jews will continue to exist as a people behind the Iron Curtain.

These are the conclusions of Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman of New York who recently returned from a seven-week fact-finding mission in Russia and the satellite countries.

Speaking before a gathering of 300 at the Jewish Community Center last night, Rabbi Klaperman told of a life of fear, tyranny and oppression of Jews in the countries he visited. He was a member of a five-man delegation of the Rabbinical Council of America which toured Russia, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Poland.

'BROKEN IN HEART'

He said the delegation returned to the United States "very much disillusioned and broken in heart and spirit." During their 10,000-mile trip behind the Iron Curtain the group met and addressed an estimated 50,000 Jews.

Jews under communism, Rabbi Klaperman said, "live under a cloud and in a shadow of fear." Many Jews were afraid to talk to him or other members of the delegation, he said.

Although afraid to be seen conversing with him, lest reprisals be made, Jews secreted over 1,000 notes on his person, placing them in his pockets, pant cuffs, and other parts of his clothing.

The notes were addressed to friends and relatives living in the United States and were all unsigned.

HIDING ORIGIN

Although there are three million Jews living in Russia, he said, more and more are attempting to hide the fact of their origin. In this manner they hope to avoid oppression of themselves and their children.

The delegation left the United States for the trip in June and returned in mid-August.

Arriving in Moscow, it was greeted by U. S. Ambassador Be-

Board Is Asked to Oust Teacher Over Poem Called Anti-Semitic

By LEONARD BUDER

Mrs. Rose Shapiro, a member of the Board of Education, called yesterday for the dismissal of Leslie R. Campbell, a Negro teacher who recently read an anti-Semitic poem over a radio station.

"To expose New York City's public school children to a teacher with such anti-Semitic attitudes is unconscionable," Mrs. Shapiro said in a memorandum to John M. Doar, the president of the city board.

Mrs. Shapiro urged the board, which she formerly headed, to request Superintendent of Schools Bernard E. Donovan "to take immediate action against Mr. Campbell," who is a teacher at Junior High School 271 in the Ocean Hill-Brownsville demonstration school district in Brooklyn.

She said later that she felt that Mr. Campbell should be dismissed because "there should be no room in our school system for a person with racist attitudes."

Mr. Doar said last night that he would discuss the matter with Dr. Donovan next week. Mr. Campbell said the poem was written by a 15-year-old negro student and was dedicated to Albert Shanker, president of the United Federation of Teachers. Its opening lines were: "Hey, Jew boy, with that yarmulka on your head/You long-faced Jew boy—I wish you were dead."

The Council of Supervisory Associations yesterday urged James E. Allen Jr., the State Commissioner of Education, and Mayor Rockefeller to speak out about the Campbell matter.

The Ocean Hill-Brownsville district, which was involved in a dispute with the teachers' union that led to last fall's month of teachers' strikes, is now operating under a state trusteeship arrangement.

Telegrams to the two officials from the school supervisors' group declared in part: "We therefore find it incomprehensible that the Commissioner of Education and his trustee for the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district remain indifferent to Leslie Campbell's continuing use of his classroom and other forums to spew forth anti-white and anti-Semitic venom."

An aide to the Commissioner said Dr. Allen was out of the state and had not seen the telegram. He added that many other telegrams of protest had been received. A spokesman for the Governor said that he was not sure whether the telegram had been received.

Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, president of the New York Board of Rabbis, also called yesterday for the dismissal of Mr. Campbell. Rabbi Klaperman said in a telegram to Mr. Doar:

"Time has come for the Board of Education to fulfill its obligation to entire city by discharging Campbell . . . thus taking one step in arresting the cancerous evil he represents."

Mr. Campbell was recently reinstated in his teaching post by Dr. Wilbur Nordos, the acting state trustee of the demonstration district.

The 29-year-old teacher had originally been suspended on charges of harassing union teachers. A state panel then looked into the charges found the evidence against Mr. Campbell "insufficient to warrant disciplinary proceedings."

Last month a Brooklyn grand jury indicted Mr. Campbell and eight other persons for allegedly obstructing governmental administration in connection with the school dispute.

Mr. Campbell read the poem Dec. 26 during an appearance on the "Julius Lester Program" over WBAI-FM, a listener-sponsored station owned by the Pacifica Foundation of Berkeley, Calif.

On Wednesday, the teachers' union sent a complaint about the poem to the Federal Communications Commission. A commission spokesman said in Washington yesterday that the complaint had not yet been received.

burgh Press

AL NEWS

A13

Jews rap pope-Waldheim meeting

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Pope John Paul II's decision to grant an audience to Austrian President Kurt Waldheim "casts a dark cloud" over the pope's September meeting with American Jews and could jeopardize Jewish officials said.

These developments cast a dark d on Jewish-Vatican relations on the scheduled meeting of the with leaders of the American community in Miami on Sept. Synagogue Council of Amerd yesterday.

tatement, from the umbrella tion of the major rabbinic regational arms of Orthorvative and Reform Jews, stood to be a consensus the Jewish leadership. Orthodox Rabbi Gilbert newly elected presiuncil, said the Vatican announcement of the Waldheim-John Paul meeting "might endanger our visit (with the pope) in Miami."

U.S. Catholic Conference officials coordinating the papal visit to the United States had no immediate comment on either the Waldheim meeting or the Jewish concerns.

John Paul is to meet with a delegation of major U.S. Jewish leaders in Miami on Sept. 11, the day after his arrival in the United States for his 10-day, nine-city pastoral visit. Klapperman is to head the Jewish delegation.

"I've been talking all morning with other Jewish leaders," said Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, director of international relations for the American Jewish Committee. "The reaction ranges from deep upset to outright outrage."

Phil Baum, associate executive director of the American Jewish Congress, urged the Vatican to reconsider the Waldheim meeting.

Seymour Reich, international president of the B'nai B'rith, said his organization "deeply regrets" the Waldheim-pope meeting.

The Vatican announced that Waldheim will have an official audience with John Paul on June 25. The official nature of the visit means Waldheim will be received in the Vatican with full state honors.

Waldheim, 67, has been under intense international criticism for the past year over his alleged Nazi activities during World War II and has been barred by the Justice Department from entering the United States. Most Western nations have refused to receive Waldheim, the former secretary-general of the United Nations.



Rabbi Klaperman with his second wife, Susan Alter



Town of Hempstead Councilman, Anthony Santino; Avi and Miriam Kestenbaum; Michelle and Scott Sulzberger; Rabbi Klaperman; TOH Councilman, Jim D'arcy, unidentified

He authored, The How and Why of the Old Testament; God, the Bible and Jewish Values, and The History of Yeshiva University, among others. He also collaborated with Libby on a four-volume work on Jewish history.

Rabbi Klaperman attributes his success to his parents and the rabbis from the Rabbi Isaac Elchonon Theological Seminary where he was ordained. "Rabbi Belkin was a genius. I learned from his gentility and sweetness. He calmed me down. I learned much from Rabbi Soloveitchik, too. They made my life."

"In 1950, I came to Lawrence and found a very interesting congregation – patrician, aristocratic people. They were very fine Jews, but they knew very little about the religious requirements of Judaism. They helped build the synagogue. Together, we built Hillel, we built the first *eiruv* in the county. We had a great community. But we did not have *talmidei chachamim*. We have them today in our congregation – I think that's a significant change."

Together with Rabbi Lebor and the financial support of a few Conservative Rabbis, Rabbi Klaperman created a Vaad HaKashrus, that today has become a standard bearer in the community.

Noted attorney, Ben Brafman recounted the battle that Rabbi Klaperman led to create an *eruv* in Lawrence. The town was giving us a hard time. Although I was a criminal attorney and had no clue about zoning or structural ordinances, Rabbi Klaperman brought me to Village Hall for backup. We plead our case. When they turned us down, he said, 'We are bringing this to the courts!' We did and we won."

Rabbi Klaperman considered Herbert Tenzer, who represented the Five Towns as a congressman during the 1960s, as his mentor and very dear friend. "He taught me about leadership. Everybody wants to do the right thing, but 90 percent of those who want to do the right thing wait for somebody else to do it. Tenzer was a man who never waited for somebody else to do anything. He was a great doer, and ended up in Washington, DC, as a congressman. "He was a man who gave his life for *Yiddishkeit*, for charity, for service and for true *kiruv*. And he did it without the desire for either credit or respect."
(See chapter on Herbert Tenzer)

In 1985, after many years as a widower, Rabbi Klaperman married New York City Councilwoman Susan Alter. Rabbi Klaperman always referred to her fondly as a "tower of strength," and a "powerhouse."

Rabbi Klaperman passed away in February of 2018 at the age of 96. His funeral was held at Congregation Beth Sholom, the synagogue he built and led for decades.



RABBI & REBBETZIN
NUCHIM ZVI
KORNMEHL

Rav, Young Israel of
Lawrence-Cedarhurst



Rav Nuchim Zvi Kornmehl testing boys at the Yeshiva of South Shore (circa 1964)

Rabbi Nuchim Zvi

Kornmehl, o"bm, the Rav and *posek* of the Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst from 1964 until just a few years before his passing in 1992, was a quiet, yet powerful force in the American Torah community, particularly in the Five Towns.

He served as a Torah leader in pre-World War II Vienna, and escaped to the United States just as the Nazi threat closed in on European Jewry. Rabbi Kornmehl was recognized as an architect of kashrus standards in the United States, and was responsible for strengthening Orthodox Jewish observance in upstate New York and western Long Island.

Born in Riglitz, Poland, Rav Kornmehl moved to Vienna in 1914 when his father, Rav Mordechai Kornmehl became one of Vienna's three *dayanim*, judges on the religious court. He attended yeshiva in Husiatin and learned with his father until his father's sudden death when Nuchim Zvi was 19.

A year later, he received *smicha* from the Altsdater Rav and assumed his father's position as the rav and *moreh tzedek* of the *kehillah* of the Prater section of Vienna. He attended to the spiritual welfare of five smaller communities in Vienna and published his first work, Ma'amar Mordechai, in 1935. It included *chiddushim* (novella) of his own, as well as those of his late father.

Rav Kornmehl was a recognized architect of kashrus standards in the United States and responsible for strengthening Orthodox Jewish observance in upstate New York and western Long Island.



In 1934, Rav Kornmehl married Rose Klein, sister of the renowned Jewish philanthropist and askan, Stephen Klein, ob'm.

In 1934, Rav Kornmehl married Rose Klein, the sister of two renowned Jewish philanthropists and *askanim*, Martin and Stephen Klein, ob'm. In 1939, as the storm clouds of war in Europe began to swell Rav Kornmehl, and his wife made plans to leave Europe. After a brief stay in Belgium, the Rav and Rebbetzin and their daughter, secured passage to the United States.

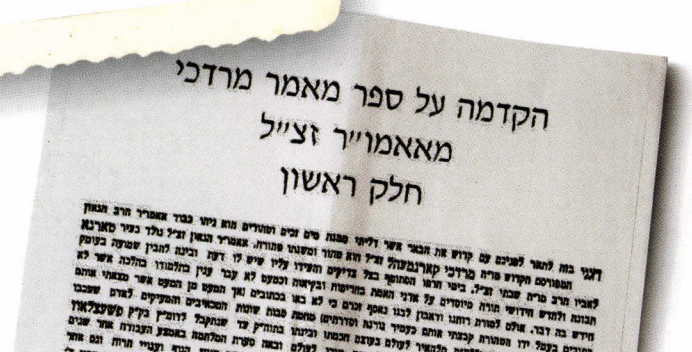
Soon after his arrival, Rav Kornmehl was appointed the rabbi of Congregation Agudas Achim Synagogue in Albany, New York. He held this position for nearly a quarter century and achieved numerous, hard-fought successes, including the creation of a Vaad HaKashruth (a kosher certification organization) and a yeshiva. Yet, the constant demands on his time and energies, particularly traveling to outlying cities across upstate New York such as Troy, Rochester and Buffalo, for kashruth inspections and teaching Torah, began to take a toll on the Rav's health.

In 1964, a small group of families from the Five Towns (the Lehmann, Faye, Kohler, Federman, Farber, and Leiman families, among others) invited Rav Kornmehl to serve as the rabbi of the newly formed Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst.



Left to Right:
Rav Kornmehl,
Rav Yonasan Shteif;
The Satmar Dayan of London;
and Rav Ahron Kotler (c. 1955)

Below:
The Hakdama of
Sefer Ma'amar Mordechai,
a collection of his and his
father's Torah novellae,
published by
Rav Kornmehl in 1935


הקדמה על ספר מאמר מרדכי
מאמו"ר זצ"ל
חלק ראשון

Rav Kornmehl's gentle demeanor, able leadership and considerable knowledge of Torah, Halacha, kashrus led to his quick acceptance and high regard by his new *kehillah*. He was particularly noted for his pioneering role pertaining to kashrus. In the 1960s, Barton's Confections, owned by Herbert Tenzer and Stephen Klein, Rabbi Kornmehl's brother-in-law, was the only Shabbos observing company of its kind in the United States. Barton's upheld the highest standards of kashruth, and when the company's owners sought a method to manufacture kosher marshmallows (animal derived gelatin, the key ingredient in marshmallows, was always the obstacle) they turned to



Right to Left: Rabbi Englander, Rabbi Kornmehl, Rabbi Moshe Chait and Rabbi Shaya Lebor at a shaimos burial. c. 1965



With his rebbetzin and the children of his student Rabbi Pinchos Chatzinoff



Rav Kornmehl inspecting kashrut at Barton's chocolate

Despite Rav Kornmehl's rigorous schedule of kashrus supervision, learning through Shas every two years and Shulchan Aruch every year, he remained wholly devoted to the Young Israel throughout the nearly twenty-five years he served as its Moreh d'Asra.

its Rav *ha'machshir*, Rav Kornmehl.

Rabbi Kornmehl consulted with three of the preeminent Torah authorities in the United States, Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, Rav Aharon Kotler, zt"l, and Rav Yosef Eliyahu Henkin, zt"l, and *gedolim* in Israel. Together they formulated a method to produce truly kosher gelatin. This method remains in use to this very day.

Despite Rav Kornmehl's rigorous schedule of kashrus supervision, learning through Shas every two years and Shulchan Aruch every year, he remained wholly devoted to the Young Israel throughout the nearly twenty-five years he served as its *Moreh d'Asra*. He was often described as a living Sefer Torah. He memorized volumes of various responsa including R' Yosef Shaul Natansohn's *Shoel u'Meishiv*, and significant portions of the Talmud.

Throughout this period, Rav Kornmehl maintained close relationships with Torah giants, including a special friendship with Rav Aharon Kotler and Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l. He also published three volumes of responsa entitled *Tifereth Zvi*. His collected *drashos* (homilies) on Sefer Bereishis were published in English in 2002 by his talmid, Rabbi Pinchas Chatzinoff, as *Origins and Destiny*.

Rav Kornmehl was especially devoted to the children in the community. He encouraged their growth in Torah, and often invited boys and girls to learn with him during classes he organized. When he traveled to Eretz Yisroel, Rav Kornmehl would always visit the



Young Israel of Lawrence Cedarhurst, circa 1965

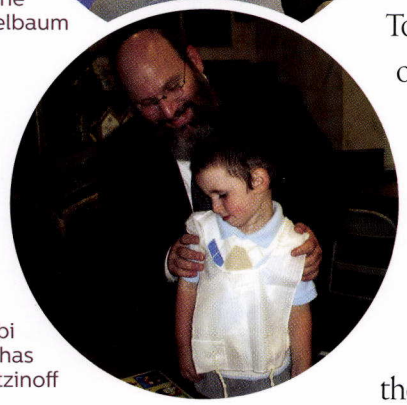


Young Israel of Lawrence Cedarhurst, circa 1985

yeshivas where youngsters from the Five Towns were learning. He said he had to visit his "other children." Rabbi Kornmehl was always available to answer *halachic* questions, doing so with wisdom, patience, and dignity. He gave the same level of attention to simple questions asked by small children as he did adults seeking his counsel. He embodied *middos tovos*, extremely refined character, always empathizing with the troubles of others as if they were his own. Even in his advanced age, he would struggle to attend every bar mitzvah and wedding, regardless of the family's ability to provide financial standing or support of the shul. When he was hospitalized, he insisted on receiving treatment at local hospitals to spare family and friends the burden of extra travel.



Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum



Rabbi Pinchas Chatzinoff

Rav Kornmehl 's legacy lives on in the Five Towns through its continued growth of Torah observance. Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst under the leadership of Rav Moshe Teitelbaum has grown into one of the most prominent shuls in the United States.

Rabbi Kornmehl's home and the site of the original congregation, currently houses the the Tifereth Zvi *minyan*, named in honor of Rabbi Kornmehl, zt"l. It is led by his close *talmid*, a long time student and protégé, Rabbi Pinchas Chatzinoff.



לקוטי תפארת צבי

קונטרס בענין דושעלאטין

"דושעלאטין" שפעולתו להעמיד, בגלידה, קעגדי, זשעלי ועוד מיני מאכלים, נעשה ממינים שונים, מעורות ומעצמות, מכשרות ומטרפות, מחזיר ושרצים. וכדי להסיר מכשול אמרתי לברר הענין. וזה ברור כי דושעלאטין הנעשה מעורות חזיר שלא נתייבשו שהוא אסור מדאורייתא, ובדושעלאטין הנעשה מעורות יבשות ועצמות גבילות וטרפות יש לעיין הרבה, וזאת לדעת כי כתבתי רק לפלפולא ולא הלכה למעשה.

א) דושעלאטין הנעשה מעורות חזירים שלא נתייבשו שנוטלים העורות ומבשלים אותם יום אחד עד שנמוחה העור ואח"כ נקרש ונקפה ונותנים אותו על דפים ומייבשים אותו בתנור ונטחן אח"כ, כל העיבוד מתחלת הבישול עד הגמר נעשה בשני ימים ובתחלת הבישול נותנים סמים שונים — דבר פשוט הוא שהדושעלאטין הזה הוא אסור מדאורייתא — דהא עור חזיר דינו כבשר כדאיתא במשנה חולין קכ"ב ע"א והרמב"ם מביאה בפ"ד מה' מ"א הל' כ"ד שכל זמן שהוא רך דינו כבשר (ועי"ש בלח"מ לאפוקי אם עבדו.) והגם שנמחה לגמרי ואין ניכר העור בהלת, וגם אח"כ נשתנה לגמרי, הא קי"ל בחלב או גבלה שנמחה ואית בי' הממש שיש בו חיוב או איסור מדאורייתא כדאיתא בחולין ק"כ ע"א ע"ש כל הסוגיא. ואין לומר דהעור יבטל במים בבישול דלפעמים יש ששים במים כנגד עור החזיר, חדא דמעמיד המים ועוד דמה ביטול שייך בענין שנעשה שיעבד באופן זה כמ"ש הרשב"א ושאר פוסקים (ע' מג"א סי' תמ"ב ובמחה"ש סי' תמ"ז וע' שד"ח מערכת חו"מ סי' ג' ס"ק כ"ג.) ועוד הממש נשאר במים ונתהפכו המים כמשמו וטעמו (גם יש לדמותו למ"ש ביו"ד סי' ק"ד בשרץ שא"א לבררו ע"ש) ולא שייך לומר ביטול אלא בענין שהאיסור נתבטל טעמו אבל עור חזיר זה נתבשל כדי שהמים יקבלו טעמו ויתערבו בממשו. וגם אין לדמותו לדבר העביד לטעמא, דהרבה פוסקים סוברים דהוא איסור מדרבנן בעלמא (ע' יור"ד סי' צ"ח ובדרכי תשובה שם אות ק"ד) דזה שייך רק באם נפל איסור ליותר מששים ובטל מה"ת רק שנשאר טעם קלוש שנרגש משום שעביד לטעמא מש"ה סוברים דאסור רק מדרבנן אבל בעור חזיר הניתן במים כדי שהמים יקבלו טעמו כממש וגם הבעין נמחה בודאי כממשו יחשב — ועוד שבהרבה פעמים אין ששים במים כנגד עור החזיר.

וכן אין לומר שהדושעלאטין אינו ראוי לאכילה, הא גם חלב בעין אינו ראוי לאכילה, ואפ"ה יש בו כרת אפילו אם נמחה. ועוד מי יוכל לשער אם ראוי לאכילה. וכן מצינו בשאור הגם שאינו ראוי לאכילה יש בו חיוב מפני שנעשה לאופן זה שיתחלק בעיסות אחרות (וע' בשד"ח ח"ם סי' ח' אות כ"ח). וכן אין לדמותו למ"ש בש"ס חולין ק"כ ופסחים כ"ד במשקין

Rav Kornmehl published three volumes of responsa entitled Sefer Shaalos U'Tshuvos Tifereth Zvi



RABBI & REBBETZIN
SHYA LEBOR

Rabbi, Young Israel
of Woodmere



Rav Avraham Yehuda Lebor





Vilna marketplace, circa 1920

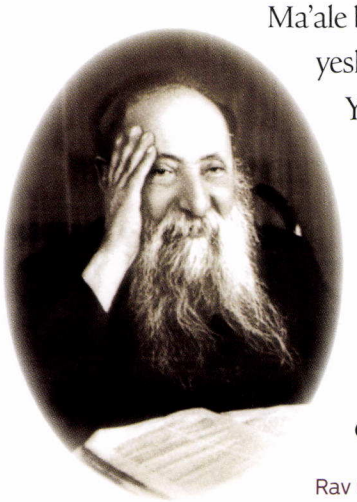
HaRav Shya Lebor,

ob"m, was born in London on November 7 (3 Kislev) 1918, to his parents, R' Yisrael and Yehudis Lebor, four days before the end of World War I.

Hailing from a prestigious Lithuanian family that epitomized the symbiosis of Torah and prominence, he would eventually lead and grow a young *kehillah* to develop into one of the most thriving Torah communities in the United States.

Rabbi Lebor would eventually lead and grow a young *kehillah* to develop into one of the most thriving Torah communities in the United States.

His grandfather, Rav Avraham Yehuda Lebor, had been a *melamed* who taught Torah to children in a suburb of Vilna. Rav Avraham Yehuda knew Rav Yisroel Salanter, o"bm, the founder of the *mussar* movement quite well, and thus named his son, Yisrael, after him, as he was born not long after Rabbi Salanter's passing in 1863.

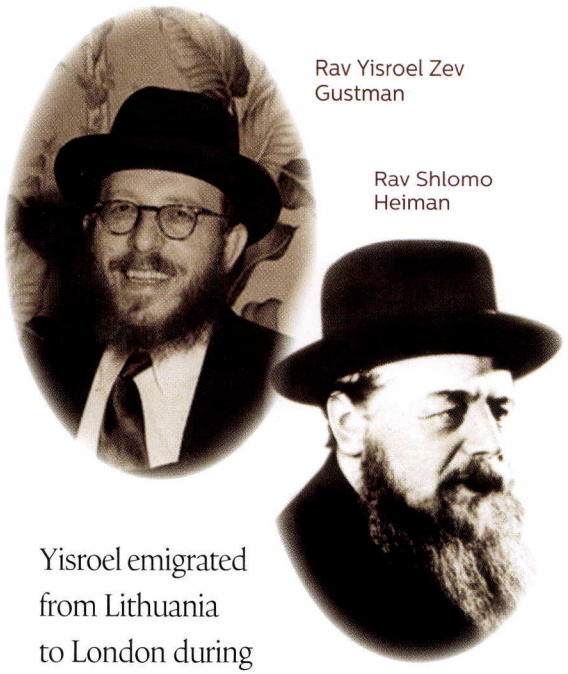


Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski

Yisroel Lebor grew up and learned in the great Rameiles Yeshiva of Vilna, named after its benefactor whose name was Ma'ale. In Lithuanian Yiddish, Ma'ale became Meila and thus R' Ma'ale's yeshiva became Rameiles Yeshiva. The Rosh Yeshiva of the yeshiva was the rav of Vilna, Rav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski. The roshei yeshiva in later years were Rav Shlomo Heiman and subsequently Rav Yisroel Zev Gustman, ob"m, who miraculously survived the Nazis and moved the Yeshiva to Brooklyn and eventually to Jerusalem in 1961.



Above: Vilna today



Rav Yisroel Zev Gustman

Rav Shlomo Heiman

Yisroel emigrated from Lithuania to London during the mass exodus of Jews from that part of the world that took place during the end of the 19th century. He soon after went into the dry goods business and, after marrying Henrietta (Rachel Yehudis) Tanenbaum, his business thrived. The family became wealthy by all standards. A maid, a butler, a chauffeur and a gardener lived on the family premises.

Unlike many Jews who left Eastern Europe during that period, young Yisroel learned Torah regularly, was stringent with mitzvah observance and wherever he resided, became an active community leader whether as a shul sexton or *kehillah* lay leader.

The family's wealth and rise in stature spurred them to move out of the East End of London (the Jewish Ghetto in those days, similar to the Lower East Side of New York of the same time period) to the much roomier and fancier section of Croydon in South London.

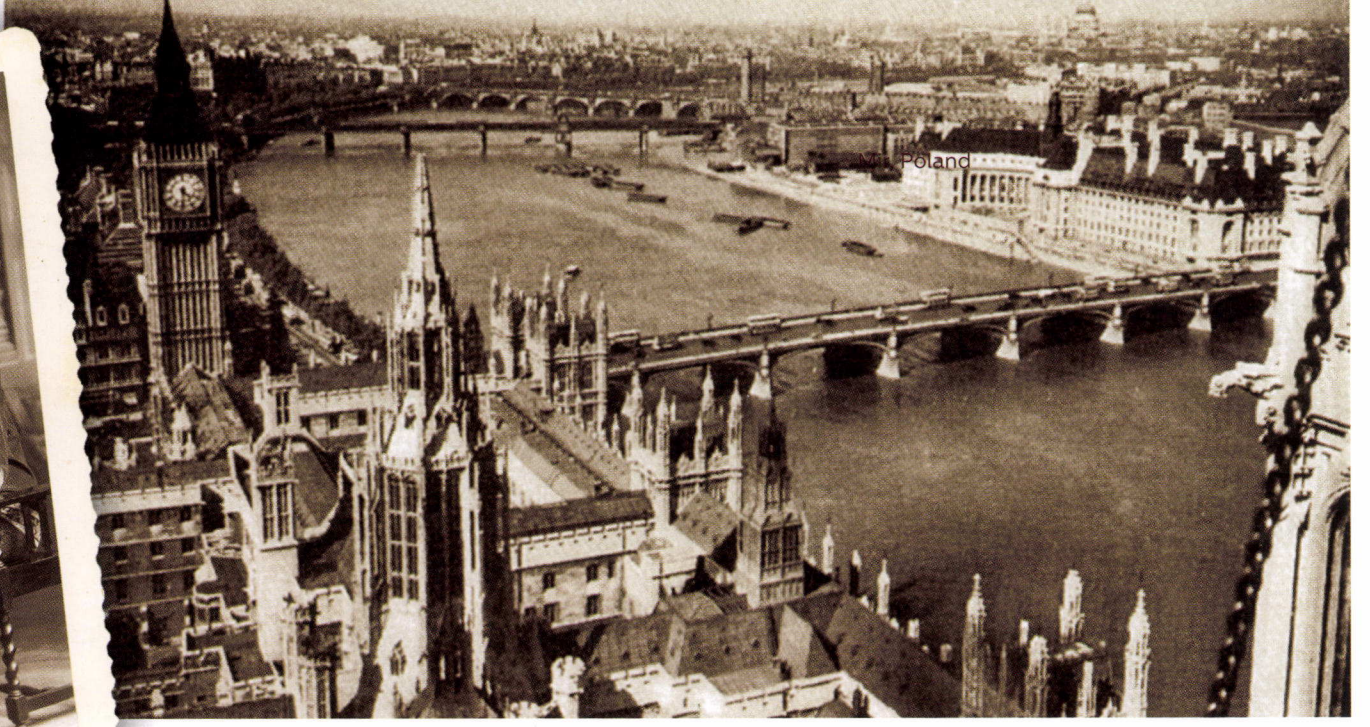
During those years there were no Jewish Day Schools in England. Young Shya had private tutors to teach him Torah after school hours when he was younger and in an afternoon Talmud Torah when he was older. One of his private tutors was the *mussar* giant, Rav Eliyahu Lopian, author of Lev Eliyahu, who later was the *mashgiach* of Kfar Chasidim in Israel. At the age of ten, young Shya enrolled in the Whitgift School, a high class English private school, founded in 1596. The school, which is still in existence today currently has close to 1500 students. In those days the school numbered more than 600 and Shya was the only Jewish student.

He did well in his studies and, after finishing high school, he joined the family merchandising business. The Lebors employed an army of peddlers who sold drapery fabrics and anything else that you wanted out of a catalogue. Shya worked in the business for one year. He despised it. When a close friend, Alex Weisfogel, came home for the summer after spending a year at the Mir Yeshiva in Poland, it was



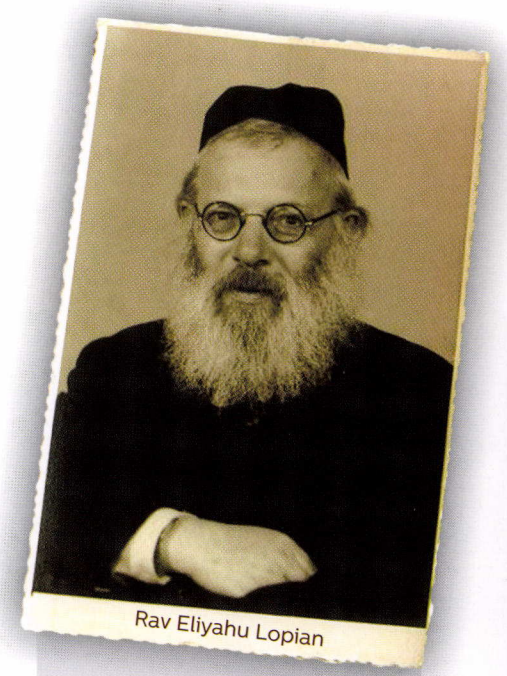


R' Yisrael and Yehudis Lebor



London in the 1930's

One of Shya's private tutors was the Mussar Giant, Rav Eliyahu Lopian, (the Lev Eliyahu), who later was the Mashgiach of Kfar Chasidim.



Rav Eliyahu Lopian

only natural that Shya would join Alex when he returned to the Mir the following year. (These two young men would take similar paths and stayed very close friends and colleagues for their entire lives. They later left the Mir together, immigrated to the United States on the same boat, learned in Yeshiva Torah Voda'ath together and became shul and communal rabbis at the same time. During the war years, Rabbi Weisfogel became the assistant to Rabbi Avraham Kalmanovitz in his tireless rescue efforts and later was appointed rabbi of Springfield, Massachusetts for decades. He died in 2007 at the age of 89.)

In those days Mir was a small town of 4,800 people, about half of them Jews. The Mir Yeshiva numbered between 350 and 400 students. Mir had no paved roads and no running water in the houses. Going to the bathhouse was a once a week excursion for town residents. Shya's mother, a proper English lady, was not very keen on her son leaving home to go to such a backward place but she eventually relented and said goodbye. It would be close to ten years before she would see him again.

The journey to Poland in the summer of 1936 went through Berlin. In the central train station of Berlin, while the two young students were waiting for

At age 10, Shya attended the Whitgift School, a very high class English private school, which was founded in 1596.







Students of the Mir Yeshiva, circa 1935

Below:
Shaya Lebor in England before leaving to Mir



their train, a speech from a madman, the new chancellor of Germany, was being broadcast. Little did they know what effect this madman, a former painter named Adolph Hitler, would soon have on their lives, the lives of the Jewish nation and the entire world.



Rav Chatzkel Levenstein

At the age of 18, a few days before Elul of 1936, young Shya arrived in the yeshiva fondly known as "The Mir." The mood in the Mir during those summer weeks was a sad one. The beloved *mashgiach*, Rav Yerucham Levovitz, ob"m, had just passed away, less than a month prior, on the 18th of Sivan.

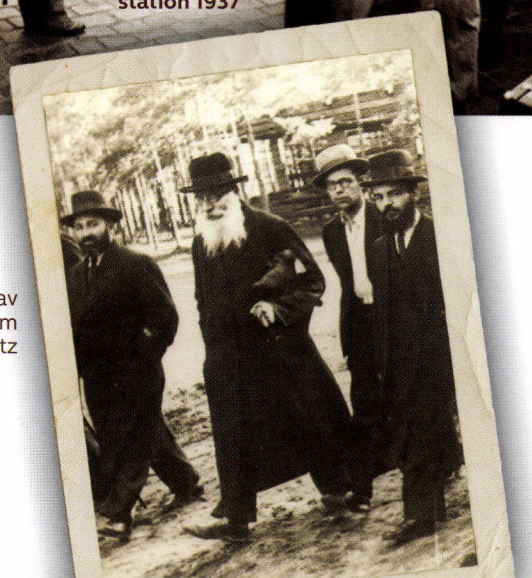
He was succeeded by Rav Yechezkel Levenstein, ob"m. Rav Levenstein escaped with the yeshiva to Shanghai during the war and later became the *mashgiach* of the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak.

Indeed, young Shya had arrived at the Harvard of European yeshivot but he was a tenderfoot, not extremely skilled in learning at that time. Mir was very different from the yeshivos of today.

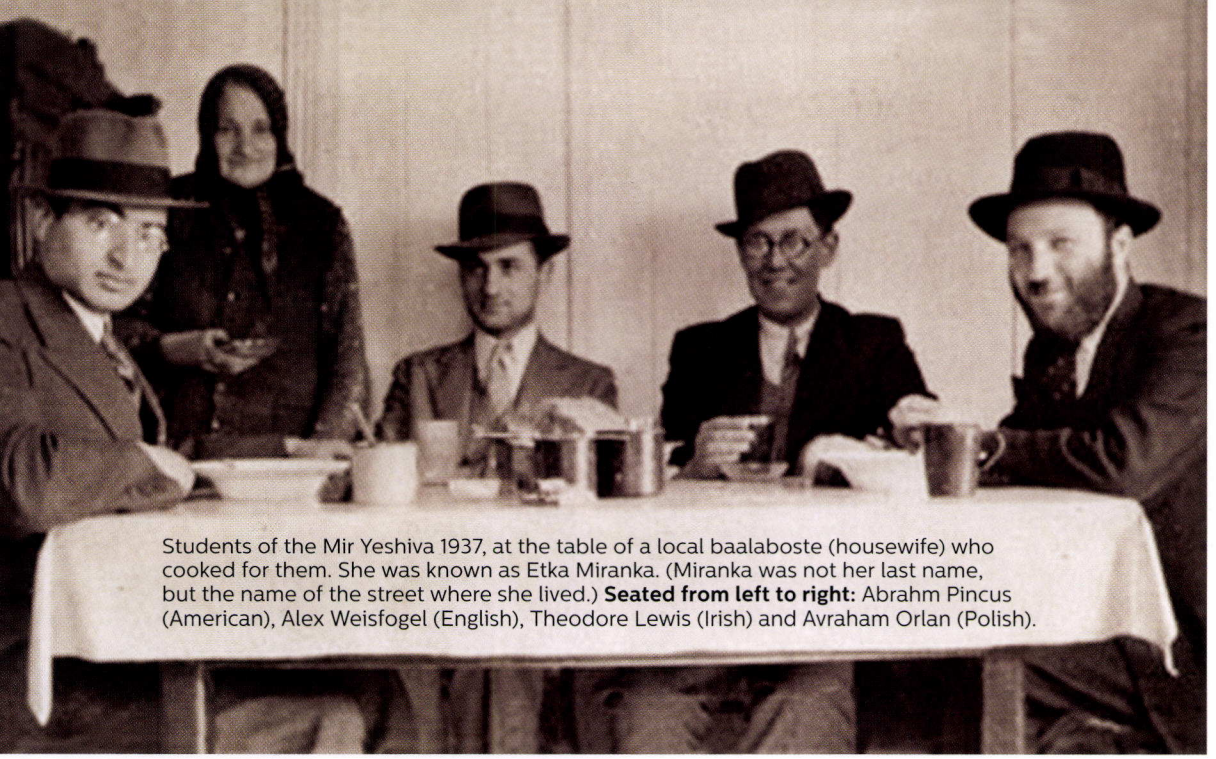
There was no dormitory nor was there a dining room. The students lived and ate with families, which were called a *stantzya*. Usually a few students had a room together in a family's home and this was a major source of livelihood for many of the town's residents. More often than not a *stantzya* included an '*auslander*' (a western European or even an American) who paid the bill for himself and a couple of poorer Polish students. The Mir had boys from Germany, England and even the United States who were all significantly wealthier



Nazi officers at a train station 1937



Rav Yerucham Levovitz



Students of the Mir Yeshiva 1937, at the table of a local baalaboste (housewife) who cooked for them. She was known as Etka Miranka. (Miranka was not her last name, but the name of the street where she lived.) **Seated from left to right:** Abrahm Pincus (American), Alex Weisfogel (English), Theodore Lewis (Irish) and Avraham Orlan (Polish).

Little did the pair know what effect this madman, a former painter named Adolph Hitler, would have on their lives, the lives of the Jewish people and the entire world in the coming few years.

Rav Dovid Kronglass

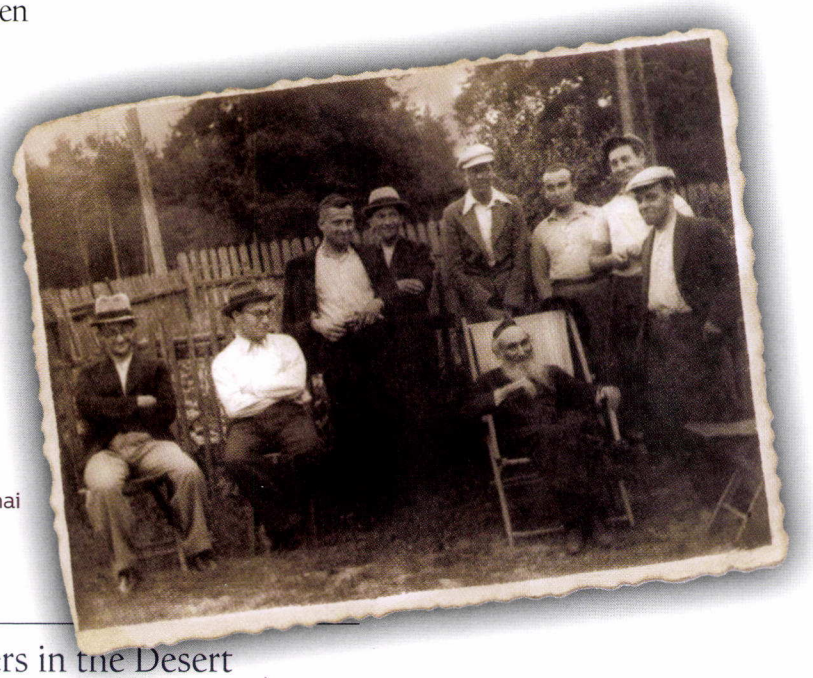


than the students from Poland. In the event that the *stantzya* did not have a wealthy student who could foot the bill, the yeshiva would cover the cost. Thus when Shya Lebor arrived, it was obvious that he would be the benefactor of his stanzya. He joined the stanzya of Rav Dovid Kronglass, ob"m, who later became the famous *mashgiach* of Yeshivas Ner Yisroel in Baltimore.

The Mir was known for an elderly student body, some of them very familiar with intense Torah study on a high level. It was not unheard of for young men to study in the Mir for 15 to 20 years before they were married. Due to a lack of eligible young women in Lithuania at that time, especially those who would marry a yeshiva student, the students married very late. Therefore the average age of the students in the Yeshiva was significantly older than Shya's 18 years.

As was the norm for many of the foreigners, Shya's parents hired someone to learn with him. The reason for this was twofold: Shya needed help in getting started in the yeshiva system and there were no daily *shiurim* (lectures) in the Mir before the war. There were only two regular *shiurim* in the Mir, both given on a weekly basis. One was the *shiur* of the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, ob"m, known as R' Laizer Yudel. The other shiur was given by the rav of the town of Mir, Rav Avraham Zvi Kamai, ob"m. The only other discourse in the Mir was given by a young member of the kollel at that time, Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, ob"m, the son-in-law of Rav Laizer Yudel, who later would become the renown Mir Rosh Yeshiva in Jerusalem. This wasn't really a shiur per se but a thought, a '*he'ara*'. When R' Chaim felt he had something to say, he would bang on his *shtender* and some of the better students would gather round him to hear what he had to say.

Shya learned with one of these older *bachurim* and during his time there, became one of the stalwarts of the yeshiva. While on a fund-raising trip to England,



Rav Avraham Zvi Kamai and Mirrer Talmidim





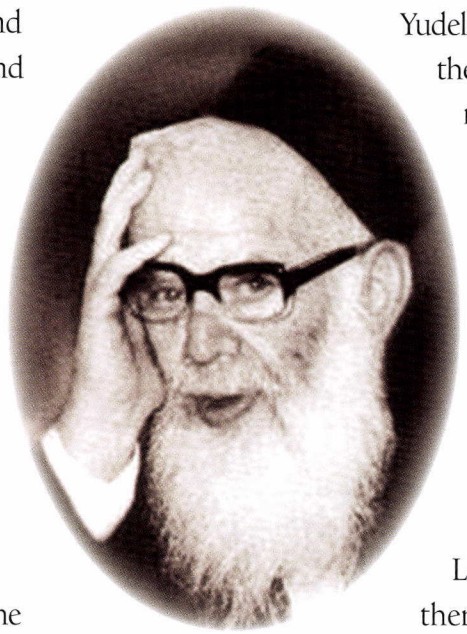
Rabbi Yeshayahu Lebor relaxing on Summer break



L-R: Mrs. Mottel Jaffe, R' Benziger, Mottel Jaffe, Shlomo Yosef Chill, Pesach Cohen, Yeshayahu Lebor, Owner of Dacha and his niece, Joshua Chinn, family of owner, Shmuel Scheinberg, Shroit, Family of owner, Yisroel Spinner

the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Leizer Yudel, actually told Shya's father that his son Shya was the most diligent student, the biggest *masmid*, in the yeshiva. "He is the first one there in the morning and the last one to leave at night."

Shya learned in the Mirrer Yeshiva for three years, until September 1, 1939. On that infamous day, German forces invaded Poland. In the course of one month Poland was conquered and carved up by Germany and the Soviet Union. On that day in September, the *Rosh Hayeshiva*, Rav Leizer Yudel Finkel, summoned Shya into his office to discuss his leaving the yeshiva. Reports of the invasion and the war and the fighting were very sketchy, and in the days before real-time broadcasts, Shya could hardly understand why the Rosh Yeshiva was telling him to leave. After the initial shock, the discussion moved on to where Shya could go. It was clear that returning to England would mean being exposed to the turmoil that would face the English continent. The *Rosh Yeshiva* wanted R' Shya to continue his learning in a calmer atmosphere, and thus suggested that he go to America where some excellent yeshivos had started. Rav Laizer Yudel insisted that time was of the essence and that Shaya must leave Poland immediately.



Rav Chaim Shmulevitz

He had just taken his test for *smicha* (rabbinic ordination), and he had not received his official letter of ordination. But Rav Laizer Yudel said that there was no time to complete it.



L-R: Moshe Freedman, Simcha Weissman, Yeshayahu Lebor, R' Ehrlanger, Polish, Pinchas Berliner



Mir Yeshiva, Poland

In 1943 Rabbi Lebor Sarah Heller a scion of an illustrious family and a native of Jerusalem who moved at a young age to the U.S.





Alex Weisfogel



So he, and his English friend, Alex Weisfogel, left the Mir, and traveled to the United States. Alex ended up serving in the United States Army, and taught pilots. Shya was able to attend yeshiva.

In a twist of fate, upon arrival in the United States, Rabbi Lebor stayed at the home of Manfred Lehmann. Originally from Sweden, the well-known philanthropist would eventually be the driving force and benefactor behind the establishment of the Young Israel of Woodmere, the shul in which Rabbi Lebor would serve for two decades.

In the US, Rabbi Lebor attended Yeshiva Torah Voda'ath where he received smicha in 1943. In addition, Rabbi Lebor received numerous degrees in education and pedagogy from the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies of Yeshiva University and a degree from Teachers College at Columbia University.

In 1943 he married Sarah Heller, a scion of an illustrious family and a native of Jerusalem who had moved to the United States at a young age. She served as a loyal and devoted rebbetzin to her husband and the community.



Rav Laizer Yudel Finkel

Rabbi Lebor served in small congregations in Pennsylvania for a brief period, but was beckoned back to Europe right after World War II, by the Chief Rabbi of England, Rabbi Joseph Hertz to serve as a chaplain in the DP (displaced persons) camps housing the survivors of the Nazi concentration camps. He answered the call and was one of the first rabbis to enter Bergen Belsen after the war.

After his service in the DP camps, Rabbi Lebor served briefly as a rabbi in northeastern Pennsylvania and later as a teacher at the Hebrew Institute of Middle Village, a synagogue and rabbinical seminary, from 1948 to 1951.

During his tenure there he received a very amazing phone call.

His beloved Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Laizer Yehuda Finkel, had miraculously escaped Europe through Kobe, Japan along with the Mirrer Yeshiva in Shanghai, through the efforts of Japanese diplomat, Chiune (Sempo) Sugihara. After the war, some of his colleagues went to the United States, while he, and his brother-in-law, Rabbi Shmuelevitz, emigrated to Israel where they established the Mirrer Yeshiva in Jerusalem.



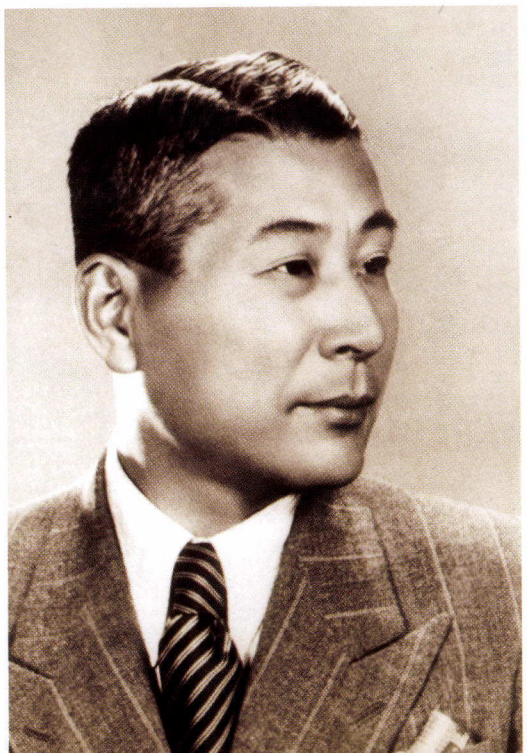
Rabbi Joseph Hertz



Rabbi Lebor was one of the first Rabbis to enter Bergen Belsen after the war.

Not long after the war, Rabbi Finkel came to the United States to collect funds on behalf of the Mirrer Yeshiva in Jerusalem. At the time, Rabbi Lebor was a young rabbi, not well known. When he received a call from the Rosh Yeshiva, he was both honored and surprised. Rabbi Finkel told his student that he was in New York and would like to see him.

Japanese diplomat, Chiune Sempo Sugihara



After a warm greeting, Rabbi Finkel sat down and told Rabbi Lebor, "I came here because I owe you something." Rabbi Lebor looked puzzled, but Rabbi Finkel took out an envelope. It had a hand written document inside.

"When you left the Mir, you had already taken your *bechina* (exam) for *smicha* (ordination). Because of the outbreak of the war, you never received the document. I came here to present it to you."

In January 1951 Rabbi Lebor became the first rabbi of a newly formed shul, Congregation Bikur Cholim Sheveth Achim Synagogue in New Haven, Connecticut.

The shul was the result of the merger of the Bikur Cholim Synagogue, founded in the late 1800s by an Ashkenazic group and Sheveth Achim Synagogue which was founded in 1889 by a group of Chassidic followers of Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, the Tzemach Tzedek, a descendant of the founder of Chabad, Rav Schneur Zalman of Liadi. Rabbi Lebor served as rabbi of the new congregation until 1960. During his tenure, he established a Talmud Torah (religious school) which served the children on a five-day a week schedule.



In 1943 Shya married Sarah Heller

In 1959, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky who was the rabbi of the newly formed, Young Israel of Woodmere, was busy balancing two full time jobs. He was consumed with the day-to-day management and fund-raising for his newly established Yeshiva of South Shore while trying to grow the young community and newly

Cemetery of Cong. Bikur Cholim, New Haven, CT





Bikur Cholim Sheveth Achim Synagogue, New Haven, CT

Rabbi Lebor brought an erudite presence to the Young Israel. His English accent and demeanor as well as his proficiency in Talmud and halacha were exactly what the congregation needed at the time.

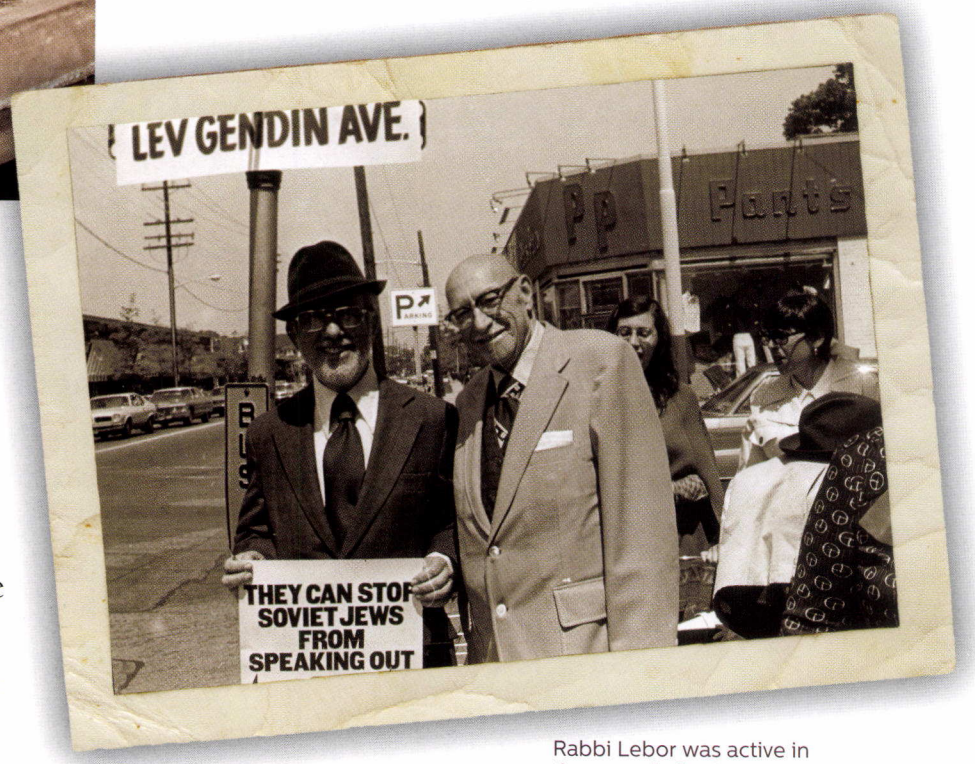


Jacob Heller

established synagogue. It was becoming too difficult to do both, and the board of the synagogue gave him an ultimatum: "Either it will be the yeshiva or the shul." He chose the yeshiva, and thus the leadership of the shul began a search for a new rabbi.

During Rabbi Lebor's tenure in New Haven, he was involved with young religious students at Yale University. One of them Jacob Heller, was thinking of moving to Woodmere and suggested that Rabbi Lebor become the new rabbi. In 1960, Rabbi Lebor was appointed as the rabbi of the Young Israel of Woodmere where he served for twenty years until his retirement in 1980.

Rabbi Lebor brought an erudite presence to the Young Israel. His English accent and demeanor as well as his proficiency in Talmud and *halacha* were exactly what the congregation needed at the time. He organized groups for the youth of the community, hosting question and answer sessions in his home on Shabbos afternoons and introduced shiurim in a wide array of topics which endeared him to his burgeoning *kehillah*. He was active in the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry and was a staunch supporter of the State of Israel. He avoided the limelight and was fully devoted to the Five Towns community. His efforts helped create the Five Towns *Mikvah* and Vaad HaKashrus to supervise the few stores that were selling kosher meat and other products.



Rabbi Lebor was active in the struggle for Soviet Jewry



Rabbi Lebor and Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel

Each one of these efforts was met with opposition and hurdles and a paucity of support and funds. Despite the challenges, Rabbi Lebor was able to form coalitions of diverse neighboring communities, synagogues and rabbis to create what are now thriving institutions.

Upon his retirement, Rabbi Lebor looked for no honors. He came to shul in a simple sports jacket and sat inconspicuously in the back. The newly appointed Rabbi Hershel Billet insisted that Rabbi Lebor sit up front, and refused to sit up front himself, unless Rabbi Lebor would join him on the podium.

In 1982 Rabbi Lebor moved to Israel where he would live out his final years studying daily in his beloved Mirrer Yeshiva, this time in Jerusalem. He studied Torah there every day until his passing in 1996.

In 1982 Rabbi Lebor moved to Israel where he would live out his final years studying daily in his beloved Mirrer Yeshiva, this time in Jerusalem. He studied Torah there every day until his passing in 1996.

The cornerstone of the Young Israel of Woodmere was dedicated in his memory.



An Amazing Story

Adapted from:

Mitzvos Make the World Go Round

By Rebbetzin Sarah Heller Lebor

ESTHER LEBOR and Rebbetzin Schneider were first cousins. Both Reb Yisrael Chaim (Isadore) Lebor, Rabbi Shaya Lebor's father, and Reb Moshe Schneider, husband of Rebbetzin Schneider were born around 1885. They learned together as youngsters in the Talmud Torah, and later in a Yeshiva in or near Vilna.

At the beginning of the 19th century my father-in-law, Reb Yisrael (Isadore), immigrated to London, England at the age of 17. R' Yisrael (Isadore) married Rae (Rachel) Tanenbaum, from London's East End, and they had four children: Naomi, Sydney (Shaya-who became my husband), Miriam and Philip.

Reb Moshe Schneider, on the other hand, settled in Frankfurt am Main and established a famous Yeshiva there.

As close as Reb Yisrael (Isadore) Lebor and Moshe Schneider were; once separated, they lost touch with one another, each going his own way.

But as it happened, Reb Moshe Schneider's brother-in-law, Reb Yehuda Yudelevitch, lived across the road from R' Yisrael Lebor and his family in London, and was a frequent and welcome visitor in the Lebor home. The Lebors hired Rabbi Yudelevitch to teach their two sons Sidney (Shaya) and Philip, Hebrew and Sifrei Kodesh.

In 1937, Reb Moshe Schneider's son Gedalia, who lived in London, became engaged to be married, and the Schneiders came in from Frankfurt for the happy occasion.

So after 40 years, Rabbi Lebor's father-in-law R' Yisrael (Isadore) Lebor and his cousin and classmate Reb Moshe Schneider, were happily reunited. When Reb Moshe Schneider and his wife were ready to go home to Frankfurt, though, his cousin R' Yisrael pleaded with them not to go back to Germany.

Reb Schneider replied that there was no way that he could stay in London and abandon his children and the talmidim of his yeshiva. So they returned to Frankfurt.

On the night between Wednesday and Thursday, November 9th-10th, 1938, "Kristallnacht" (The Night of Broken Glass) erupted all over Germany and Austria. Using the assassination of a German diplomat named Ernst Eduard vom Rath by Herschel Grynszpan, a German-born Polish Jew in Paris, as their excuse, the Nazis unleashed ferocious pogroms and riots against Jews throughout Germany and Austria on that terrible night, and they continued for several days. Jewish homes, stores, and synagogues were destroyed, ransacked and burned to the ground. The endless piles of shattered glass littered every street. Even more ominous was that some 30,000 Jewish men were rounded up, arrested and taken to the first concentration camps only to be released months later, with at least 10,000 dying in captivity under torture.

Because it was winter, Shabbos in London at that time began as early as 3:15 PM. Soon after that hour, however, the telephone in the Lebor household would not stop ringing, but since Philip and his father R' Yisrael (Isadore), had already left for shul, no one was there to hear it. Nonetheless, when they did arrive home, the phone continued to ring. Though trying to ignore it at first, assuming it was a wrong number, the persistent and incessant ringing just

wouldn't stop. It rang and rang until R' Yisrael Lebor could no longer tolerate it.

Assuming at this point that something had to be terribly wrong for the telephone to ring so long on Shabbos, R' Yisrael finally allowed Terry, one the family's servant girls, to pick up the phone. After several tense seconds, he heard her say "I don't care whose dying, Mr. Lebor does not answer the phone on Shabbos!" Apparently, however, the other party was very insistent, claiming it was none other than Dayan Abramski, the head of the London Beis Din and one of the foremost Torah Scholars in the world. The maidservant returned to R' Yisrael saying, "Excuse me, there is a Rabbi on the phone who insists on talking to you." She misunderstood what the Rabbi said, and declared, "He sounds desperate, he said he is dying."

When Reb Yisrael heard the word dying, he finally picked up the phone himself, but was shocked to hear Dayan Abramski on the other end of the line. Terry had misunderstood-nobody was dying, but rather Dayan Abramski said it was urgent that he speak with him.

Daddy said to Dayan Abramski, "It's Shabbos!"

Dayan Abramski replied, "I know its Shabbos. But this is an inyan of 'pikuach nefesh' (matter of life and death). Listen, ten minutes after the Shabbos candles were lit, we received a telegram from Frankfurt saying simply, 'HELP! SCHNEIDER'."

Reb Schneider had apparently sent his telegram to Dayan Abramski, because he knew that the Dayan and Reb Yisrael (Isadore) Lebor had a close relationship.



Dayan Abramski

Dayan Abramski gave a regular Torah shiur four nights a week which Reb Yisrael (Isadore) Lebor attended. At the end of each shiur, Reb Yisrael (Isadore) Lebor instructed his chauffeur to first take Dayan Abramski home to James Street in the East End, and then go to the Lebor residence.

Dayan Abramski insisted that Reb Yisrael go to the Home Office to arrange for Reb Schneider's papers, so that the family could travel to London.

Mr. Lebor pleaded, "Can't it wait until Monday?"

Dayan Abramski said again, "Shabbos or no Shabbos, you have to go now." Dayan Abramski even told Reb Yisrael to take a taxi or a car if necessary, since the matter was so urgent. Though he did obey Dayan Abramski's urgent order, Reb Yisrael decided that since it was Shabbos, he could still walk to the Foreign Ministry, and make it in time to accomplish his assignment. And thanks to this immediate action, the family and several Frankfurt yeshiva boys were saved, with everyone arriving safely in London by Tuesday.

But the scope of the miracle and Hashem's chessed only really sunk in when Reb Schneider told a sort of epilogue to this amazing story about the campaign to rescue him, his family and some of his students. Apparently, no one had known till then how really close a call it was that they even got out of their building alive, let alone Germany. As Reb Schneider related, upon hearing the news that some of the Yeshiva boys were leaving Germany, everyone became noisy and hysterical out of both happiness and fear, wailing and crying as they hugged and kissed one another as they said their final good byes. Apparently, one of the Nazi patrols rounding up Jews, building by building and house by house had heard the commotion, but assumed the ruckus they heard was caused by the fact that a different unit was already inside rounding up the yeshiva boys and other Jews, so they didn't bother to check out the noise and commotion! It was only after the fact, of course, that everyone realized just how narrow and miraculous was their escape from the horrors of Hitler and Nazi Germany.

YOSS 3rd Grade in 1963
David Lebor is middle student
in second row from bottom



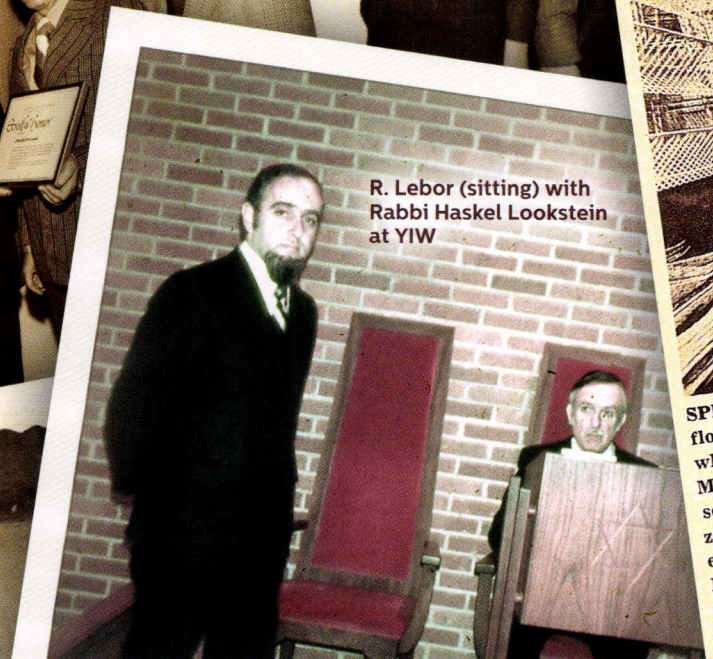
R' Lebor speaking
to Amshinov Rebbe



Gelilah at
Kosel Maaravi



At a YIW
Awards dinner
L-R:
Ira Herenstien,
Sam Weil,
R'Lebor,
Joseph Peterseil,
Walter David



R. Lebor (sitting) with
Rabbi Haskel Lookstein
at YIW



The Jewish Chronicle — April 9, 1965 Friday Nisan 7, 5725

SPECIAL SESSION — There's more to baking matzohs than just flour and water. There are literally hundreds of strict regulations which must be observed from start to finish. The Horowitz Bros. and Margareten Matzoh Bakery in Long Island City, New York, has special sessions when Rabbis, educators, and students come to see how matzohs are baked. Two information-seeking youngsters, Jacob Margareten and David Lebor, are shown having their curiosity satisfied by Harry Margareten, David's father. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik is in the foreground; Rabbi Sidney Lebor, the other proud parent directly behind the boys; with Rabbi Daniel Mahlman alongside.

Chef Volunteers

L-R: Joe Peterseil, Irving Wishinsky, Selwyn Karp, Herb Bodek, Sam Weil, Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, R' Lebor, Nathan Farber, unidentified and Israeli Artist, Zvi Raphaeli at a YIW Awards Banquet, 1965

Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky Rabbi Emanuel Rackman, unidentified, Rabbi S. Lebor testing students at YOSS

with Rav Moshe Feinstein at YIW

R'Lebor learning in Israel

Right: At a convocation at YOSS, Rav Lebor, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky, Joe and Faye Tanenbaum, Rebbetzin Tzirel Kamenetzky



RABBI & REBBETZIN
DOVID SPIEGEL

Rav, "The Shteeble"

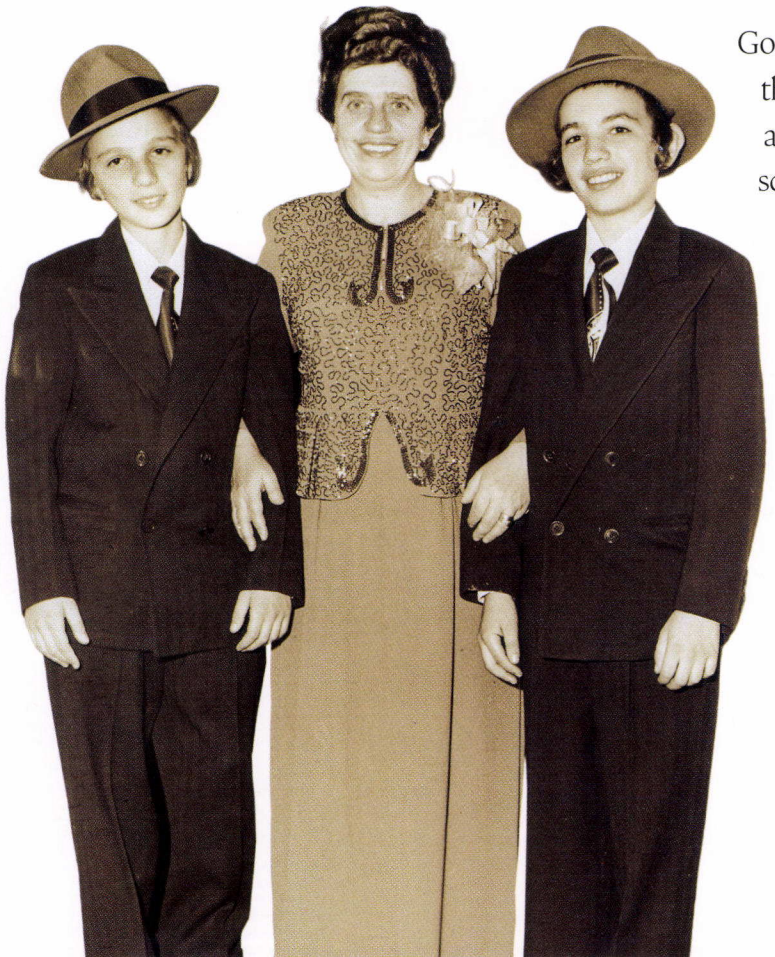




At the wedding of his sister Tzirel (Spiegel) Kamenetzky.
Rav Pinchus Eliyahu is in background

Like the word Shteeble itself,

Yiddish for small house, the story of the *Shteeble*, began in a house. But it did not begin as you may have thought, in the house that originally housed the *Shteeble*, on the corner of West Broadway and Cedarhurst Avenue. Instead, it began in the house of Rabbi Dovid Spiegel's sister and brother in law, Rabbi Binyamin and Rebbetzin Tzirel Kamenetzky.



At their Bar Mitzvah.
L to R. Dovid Spiegel,
Rebbetzin
Basha Spiegel,
Chuni Spiegel

Go back even further, and explore the tenacity of a Chassidic couple, a rav and rebbetzin who were scions of Chassidic dynasties, who opted to leave the comfortable confines of the Torah community of Lakewood, New Jersey and resettle in Cedarhurst, and succeeded in raising twelve children in a path of chassidus in a manner that would be a glory to their traditions.

Rav Dovid Spiegel was born in May of 1936, in the Bronx, the youngest of seven children of Harav Pinchus Eliyahu Spiegel, the Ostrove-Kalushiner Rebbe and his Rebbetzin Basha (nee Burstein). He was the older twin to his brother, Reb Chuni Spiegel who was tragically killed in a car crash in 1976.

Rav Dovid's grandfather Rav Naftali Aryeh Spiegel, had arrived in America in the late 1920s and was joined in the early 1930s by his three sons, Reb Moshe, Reb Elchonon Yochanan and Reb Pinchus Eliyahu, Rav Dovid's father. They were descendants of a long line of Torah and Chassidic leaders: Rav Naftali Aryeh

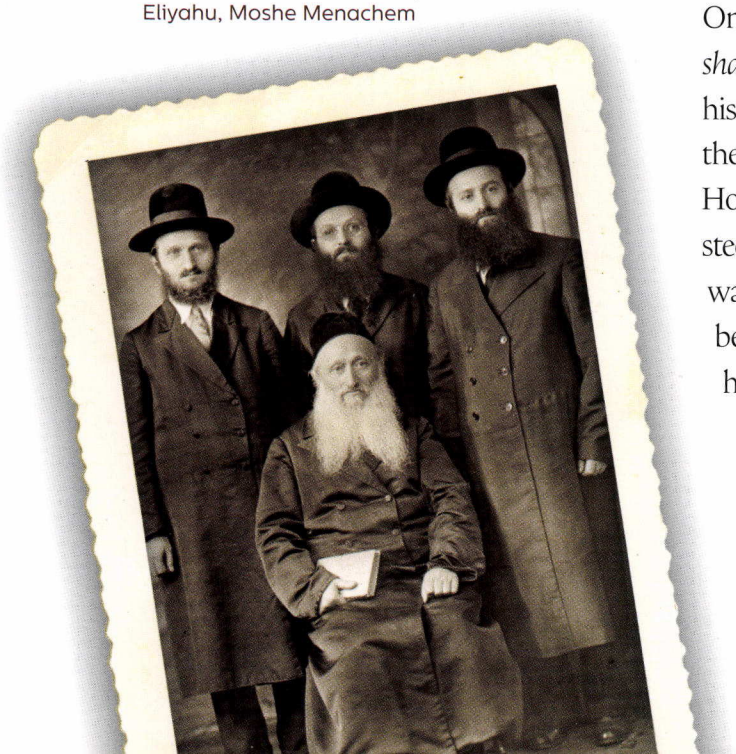
was the son-in-law of Reb Yaakov Yitzchok Unger and a grandson of Reb Avraham Elchonon Unger for whom his twin brother, Avraham Elchonon, or Reb Chuni was named. Dovid, the older twin, was named for his great-grandfather, HaGaon HaTzadik Reb Mordechai Dovid Dombrover z"tl. As is the destiny of many intertwined Chassidic dynasties, Rav Dovid's grandson would marry the daughter of another grandson of that great *tzaddik*, Rav Mordechai Dovid Unger, the "Bobov-45" Rebbe.



Rav Pinchus Eliyahu Spiegel

Despite being an era when so many immigrants had abandoned *Yiddishkeit*, let alone *chassidus*, the Spiegels remained steadfast in the traditions that they had received from their great forebears, going back to the holy *Chozeh* (Seer) of Lublin.

Rav Naftali Aryeh Spiegel, the Ostrove – Kalushiner Rebbe with his three Sons, **L to R:** Elchonon Yochonon, Pinchus Eliyahu, Moshe Menachem



It was this atmosphere that helped raise Dovid in a home that was steeped in Torah, *chassidus* and the fear of heaven, *yiras shamayim*. Rav Dovid's father, Rav Pinchus Eliyahu Spiegel, was a Jew who never compromised on the slightest stringency in Judaism, despite being surrounded by a community that was quickly assimilating into American culture.

"Despite the winds of change when so many immigrants had abandoned Yiddishkeit, let alone chassidus, the Spiegels remained steadfast to the traditions that they had received from their great zaides, going back to the Chozeh of Lublin."

Rav Pinchus Eliyahu had never eaten meat in America and his own father, Rav Naftali Aryeh, was so removed from this world that he did not even know what his own house looked like. Once Reb Naftali Aryeh's *shammas* left him outside his home and expected the Rebbe to just enter. However, the Rebbe was steeped in thought, and walked a few yards away, before he realized that he might have strayed from the place that the gabbai had left him. An hour later the gabbai returned and noticed that the Rebbe was searching to find his home.



Rabbi Avraham Elchonon, (Chuni) Spiegel, *zt"l*

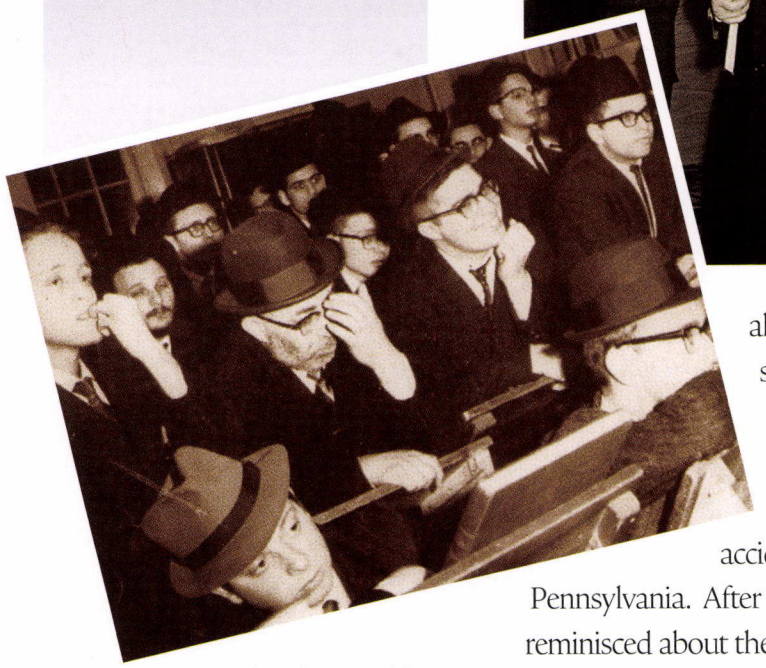
As with all of their children, Rav Pinchus Eliyahu and his Rebbetzin, Basha, made sure that their children went only to the best yeshivos. Together with his brother and twin, young Dovid would travel by subway from the Bronx to the Lower East Side, to Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yaakov Yosef, (RJJ). His mother was wary of the influence of many of the neighborhood boys who often were lured away from learning Torah by the appeal of American life. She asked the corner police officer to make sure that every day the boys would get on the subway and go to yeshiva.

Their years there were filled with success in Torah study and diligence; they also showed remarkable care and concern for all Jews even at a young age.

He loved his twin brother, Avraham Elchonon, known as Chuni, dearly. Reb Chuni was a Torah scholar who



Left to right: R' Dovid Spiegel, Rav Ahron Kotler and Rabbi David Hollander, unidentified



Listening to a shiur (second from left) by Rav Ahron Kotler, zt"l

Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky who had married Rabbi Spiegel's oldest sister, would eventually be responsible for Reb Duvid's move to the Five Towns and his establishment of a shteeble there.

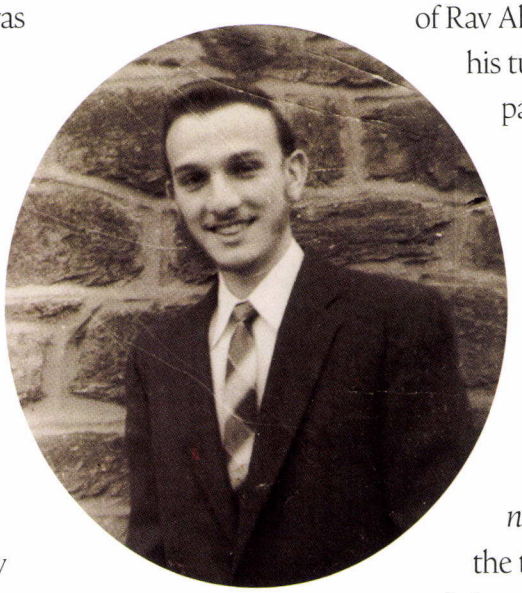
also served as a *shochet,* a ritual slaughterer, for Empire Chicken Corporation. On Chanukah in 1976, Chuni was killed with four other *shochtim* in a tragic car accident on an icy road in Coatesville, Pennsylvania. After the untimely passing, R' Dovid reminisced about their childhood. "We once went on a *Chol HaMoed* outing to a park where there was a nearby fair. Our parents gave us just enough money for the trip, as of course, being Pesach we were not allowed to eat anything – not even drink water from a fountain. On the way home, my brother, Chuni, noticed a Jewish boy from the neighborhood who was eating some candy that he thought was not kosher for Passover. Chuni was shocked and approached the kid. "It's *chametz*! We are not allowed to eat this on Pesach!" The youngster replied that he would throw it away but wanted Chuni to pay him for the loss – five cents – the exact amount of carfare home. Without hesitation, Chuni gave him the nickel and proudly watched the boy throw the candy into the garbage.

At this young age, Chuni did not care if he had to walk a few miles to get home, so long as a Jewish child would not eat chametz on Pesach."

After graduating elementary school, and a short stay in high school in RJJ, the brothers parted to different yeshivos. Chuni left to go to the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland, while R' Dovid went to learn in the newly established Philadelphia Yeshiva which had been started by Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky and Rav Dov Schwartzman, the son-in-law of Rav Aharon Kotler.

Rav Shmuel, in addition to being a brilliant Torah scholar, was also the younger brother of Rabbi Spiegel's brother-in-law, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky, who had married Rabbi Spiegel's oldest sister, Tzirel. The Kamenetzky's would eventually be responsible for Reb Dovid's move to the Five Towns and his establishment of a *shteeble* there.

R' Dovid learned in Philadelphia for a number of years and then joined Rav Aharon Kotler in Beth Medrash Govoha of Lakewood. He became a devoted student of Rav Aharon, learning closely under his tutelage until the Rosh Yeshiva's passing in December of 1962.



R' Dovid as a talmid in the Philadelphia Yeshiva

Rav Dovid would, however return to the Philadelphia Yeshiva for the Yomim Noraim, the High Holy Days. For many years he would lead the services at the yeshiva. His beautiful voice and unique *nusach,* which combined many of the tunes that he had heard from his father with the austere and hallowed

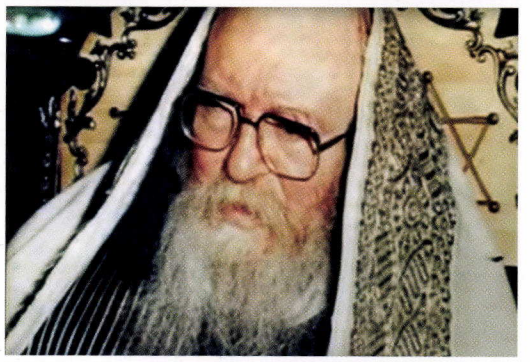
melodies of the Lithuanian Yeshiva world, has become a hallmarked *nusach hatefilah,* a liturgical standard, often emulated by many yeshivos throughout America.

In 1964 he married Devorah Leifer, the daughter of Rabbi Avraham Abba Leifer whose father, Rav Yosef, is renown for his magnum opus, the Tzidkas Yosef. Rav Yosef was a descendant of the Nadverna family of *Chassidus* and started the dynastic Pittsburgh *Chassidus* in that Western Pennsylvanian city in 1924. He had come to America to raise funds for orphaned nieces and nephews, and when he came to Pittsburgh, a group of Chassidic immigrants pleaded with him to stay there and lead them.

The Rebbetzin was no stranger to small Jewish communities. After escaping Communist Romania, her father served as a rebbe in Newark, where he raised his family. He had moved to Pittsburgh in 1966 after the passing of her grandfather, Rav Yosef Leifer, *zt"l,* to assume his father's role as the Pittsburgher Rebbe. In 1970, Rav Avraham Abba moved to Ashdod, Israel with his Chassidim and became world renown for bringing hundreds of Jews closer to Hashem through love and joy. With the passing of Rav Avraham Abba in 1990, Rebbetzin Spiegel's brother, Rav Mordechai Yissochor Ber Leifer, assumed the mantle of leadership. The *Chassidus* continues to thrive in Ashdod, under his direction.

Deeply rooted in love for all Jews, the Rebbetzin would be the pillar of support for her husband to become a major force of *chassidus* and kiruv in the Five Towns.









From Top to Bottom:

Rav Yosef Leifer, the Tzidkas Yosef (1891–1966)

Rav Avraham Abba Leifer, Pittsburgher Rebbe (1918–1990)

Rav Mordechai Yissachar Ber Leifer (l)
(current Pittsburgher Rebbe, (Ashdod)
with Rav Dovid Spiegel)

Rav Dovid Spiegel (c) speaking to his two brothers-in-laws Rav Dov Kreisworth (l) and Rav Mordechai Yissachar Ber Leifer at the bar mitzvah of his nephew, Mordechai Kamenetzky in 1970

With his father Rav Pinchus Eliyahu Spiegel at the wedding of Rabbi and Mrs. Yitzchok Knobel

Below:

Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky and Rav Pinchus Eliyahu Spiegel dancing at the wedding of their grandaughter, Surrie Kamenetzky to Rabbi Yitzchok Knobel (sitting with boy on lap)







Above: With Rebbetzin and daughters upon moving to Cedarhurst



Below:
Rav Dovid Spiegel (r) talking to Rav Shmuel Dishon (l) at Bar Mitzvah of Mordechai Kamenetzky, circa 1970

The people did not come ONLY for his Divrei Torah. The Rebbetzin's weekly cholent and the warmth of the family atmosphere, filled the living room turned synagogue with new families every week.

After a number of years studying intently in the Lakewood Kollel, Rabbi Spiegel began what would become an illustrious career in *chinuch*, Jewish education.

He would travel every day from southern New Jersey to the Yeshiva of Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, where he first served as a *rebbe* and later as a *menahel*. But the long drive was arduous and he would spend two nights a week or more sleeping on a couch in the living room of his sister, Rebbetzin Tzirel Kamenetzky who had moved to the Five Towns, almost 13 years prior.

In 1968, a year after the Six Day War, Rav Binyamin and his wife went to Israel for the summer and asked Rav Dovid and his family to spend the summer in their home in Woodmere while they were away.

Rabbi Spiegel and his wife actually enjoyed their stay in the Five Towns which led to the Kamenetzkys reinforcing the idea that life was not so terrible there. They exhorted and cajoled them, explaining to the Spiegels that if they could manage to last that summer, they could surely move to the neighborhood and contribute to its growth.

All they needed was a house. Joel Gewanter was one of the Village of Cedarhurst trustees. His mother had recently passed away and her suitable home, whose living room was large enough to fit a *minyan*, was available for sale. With the help of a distant relative and a dear friend of Rabbi Kamenetzky, George Blumenthal, together with a number of other wonderful community members, enough money was raised to help Rabbi Spiegel purchase the house at 504 West Broadway, in Cedarhurst. It would serve as both a home for his family, his wife and then seven daughters, as well as a small house shul, known until this day by its Yiddish sobriquet, *"The Shteeble."*



The original home and shteeble on the corner of Cedarhurst Avenue and West Broadway

A rabbi with a *shtreimel*, and surely the double sized version worn by Rabbi Spiegel as a descendant of Polish chassidim, known as a *spudik*, was certainly an anomaly in Cedarhurst. It made no difference. Slowly but surely, Rav Dovid's ebullient spirit and warm personality attracted both the committed and the curious.

Hearing constant quotes from "The Rosh Yeshiva, *zichrono livracha*," a reference to Rav Aharon Kotler, *zt"l*, was new to the ears of some of the members, as was the reference to God as the *Riboino Shel Oilam*, was certainly a new expression for many of the members. Although Rabbi Shaya Lebor, the erudite spiritual leader of the Young Israel of Woodmere, was schooled in Poland's Mirrer Yeshiva and had received *smicha* from the illustrious Rav Leizer Yehuda Finkel, he was college educated and understood how to speak to a modern crowd. Having hailed from the British Empire, he spoke the Queen's English and in his sermons, he often referred to the Creator as the Lord Almighty.

Rabbi Spiegel had not attended more than a few years of high school, and although he spoke a perfect English, his speeches were peppered with Yiddish and Aramaic. Most certainly his references to the Almighty were clearly different from his cross-town counterpart. The joke around town was that in addition to Rabbi Spiegel and his family, the *Riboino Shel Oilam* had also moved to the Five Towns.

But the people did not come only for his brilliant Torah insights. The Rebbetzin's weekly cholent and the warmth of the family atmosphere filled the living room-turned-synagogue with new families every week.

The congregants were a very diverse group. Some were graduates from Yeshiva University, others from Torah Vodaath. Some had no formal Yeshiva education. Some were extremely scholarly, and others could barely read Hebrew. Of course, Rabbi Kamenetzky would come every Shabbos, but he would play a very behind-the-scenes role, allowing his younger brother-in-law to blossom on his own.

Clearly the divergence of a student of the Lakewood Yeshiva with the views of many of the congregants schooled in the ideology of Yeshiva University could have led to strong differences in a modern Orthodox community, but the Rebbe's warm embrace ensured that everyone felt welcome, no matter where they had learned.

The congregants each filled a unique role and each had a job. Mr. William Kay served as the *Kohain* with Mr. Leo Klein who would

Photo on right: (R-L): RDS, George Blumenthal (in grey suit), B. Topol holding Torah, Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky at the presentation of a Torah given by the Blumenthal family c. 1972







Rav Naftali Weitz with his father-in-law, Rav Dovid Spiegel

now share his time between the shteeble and Rabbi Kornmehl's shul.

David Sklar, who owned Novie Herring a smoked fish, herring and lox company, always ensured that the *shteeble* would have a plentiful array of that *kiddush* staple.

Rabbi and Rebbetzin Spiegel's large family of only girls was a topic of conversation throughout the community. After the Rabbi and Rebbetzin had their sixth or seventh girl, the rebbe, had seemed a bit bittersweet. To cheer him up, David Sklar joked with him. "God willing, if you have a boy, Rebbe," he said. You won't have to worry about a *bris*. I will take care of the entire cost and arrange for you a most wonderful *bris*."

The growth of the Shteeble spurred the construction of a magnificent new building in Cedarhurst, only a block away from the original house.

In September of 1980, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin had a baby boy after ten girls.

David and Rasha Sklar were true to their word and took care of the entire *bris*, a most beautiful event that was celebrated by more than 250 people in the gymnasium of the newly built HAFTR School.

At the funeral of Rasha Sklar, only one week before her husband's passing, Rabbi Spiegel spoke. "They announced that due to a time constraint only family members would speak. However, how can I not feel like family, when the Sklars took care of the entire cost of our first son's *bris*?"

Mr. David Zenilman, who owned a novelty business in New York City, served as the candy man, as well as the toy man who gave out *tchotchkes* to the kids on Simchas Torah. Jack Kiel from Savanah, Georgia joined as well.



Mr. David Zenilman

In 1970, Velvel Pasternak, a well-known curator and composer of Jewish music, had just returned from a sabbatical year in Israel. He was planning to resume *davening* at the Young Israel of Woodmere where he had been a member since 1961. It was not long after he arrived back in the States, that Rabbi Spiegel called him up. "I am starting a new *minyan* and I very much would like that you come to be *mechazeik* (strengthen) it, by joining our daily *minyan*." At the time, Young Israel did not have an easy time getting a *minyan* early in the morning and Velvel knew that this commitment would be difficult.



David and Rasha Sklar

"I work late at night," he explained "and it will be hard for me to get up in the morning for a 6 AM *davening*," he countered. But the Rebbe, wouldn't take no for an answer.

He would call Velvel every day at 5:30 AM to wake him to join the *minayn*, which he did faithfully.

In fact, Velvel was not the only one that the Rebbe called. A large portion of the *minyan* needed daily wake-up reminders, but they too, came with a newfound consistency. Velvel's relationship with the Rebbe grew, and continues to grow.

It did not hurt that the Rebbe had a melodious voice and had learned beautiful melodies from his own father, the Ostrove Kalushiner Rebbe, and his father-in-law Rav Abba Leifer, the Pittsburgher Rebbe, whose *nigunim* were sung and cherished the world-over. Rabbi Spiegel led the services often and attracted many newcomers with his beautiful *nusach* for the High Holy Days.

Rabbi Spiegel's niece and nephew, Rabbi Shlomo and Esther Wilhelm, the son-in-law and daughter of Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky, lived in Cedarhurst, and became mainstays of the Shteeble in its initial growth.

It was not long before the *Shteeble* became an extremely popular shul and the Rebbe became recognized as the major Torah scholar that he was. Collaborating with the Young Israel of Woodmere, Rabbi Spiegel led the first Daf Yomi there, and finished *Shas* with his *chevra* a number of times. The shiur began as a rotating group of community members whose affiliations spanned the entire spectrum. Led by Morty Weiser, Steve Savitsky, Morton Kriger and others, the small Daf Yomi *shiur* evolved as the community grew. More and more similar classes began and at the time of this publication there are more than a dozen different Daf Yomi classes every day in Woodmere and Cedarhurst alone!

While sitting on the actual hardwood of Madison Square Garden at the Siyum HaShas in 1990, during a national celebration of the completion of the Shas, Rabbi Spiegel mused to the members of his *shiur*, "The fellows who played basketball while we were learning, are still playing basketball in the Young Israel. We, however, have made it to the hardwood floor of 'The Garden'."

Over the years, the Bais Medrash of Cedarhurst has evolved from a small shteeble to a major center of Torah study and prayer in the Five Towns. The growth of the Shteeble spurred the building of a magnificent new building in Cedarhurst, only a block away from the original house.

"It was not long before the Shteeble became an extremely popular shul and the Rebbe became recognized as the major Torah scholar that he was."

It is currently host to major Torah gatherings where thousands gather to hear inspiration from national Torah figures such as Rav Ephraim Wachsman, among others.

Indeed, life in Cedarhurst for a Chassidic family could be challenging, but the Rebbe and Rebbetzin, with the help of the Almighty, or rather the Ribono Shel Olam, raised a family of 10 girls and two boys in the path of Chassidus, each marrying scions of illustrious Chassidic families. Two of his daughters have since moved to the Five towns where their husbands serve as Rabbanim in Woodmere and in Lawrence.



(L-R): Arnold Berkowitz, Velvel Pasternack

NO GOOD DEED...

IN THE LATE 1950S, Leibel Bistritzky delivered chickens and *chalav Yisrael* milk from his farm in Vineland, New Jersey, to Philadelphia. Often he would end his day very late at night. He was exhausted, and a ride back on the pitch-black country roads of Pennsylvania could spell misfortune under such circumstances.

One night, as fate would have it, Reb Leibel made his last stop at the Philadelphia Yeshiva. It was late at night, but a few of the *bachurim* were still burning the midnight oil.



Leibel Bistritzky

Reb Leibel, exhausted and in no condition to drive back that night, met a young man who was learning in the Yeshiva, a Chassidish fellow named Duvid. Duvid was not a regular student of the Yeshiva; he was an older *bachur* who had been sent by Rav Aharon Kotler to help start the Philadelphia Yeshiva in its inaugural years. Duvid served as an unofficial *mashgiach* in the *yeshiva* as well as a *baal tefilah* for the Yomim Noraim. Reb Leibel met him and asked if he knew of an extra bed where he could lie down for a while. Duvid told him that there was a boy who was away for Shabbos and his bed would be empty all night, and he was certain that Reb Leibel could use his bed. It was not until the next morning that someone told Reb Leibel that Duvid had actually given him his own bed. Indeed, while Reb Leibel slept until *Shacharis*, that young man, my uncle, now known as Rav Duvid Spiegel, the Ostrov-Kalushiner Rebbe in Cedarhurst, stayed up all night.

But the story does not end there. It ends about 25 years later and a half a block up from Bistritzky's Cheese Store on the Lower East Side.

It was getting dark sometime in early fall, not long before Sukkos. Essex Street was no longer the bustling avenue it once was and the Lower East Side had lost most of its ancient charm. But it still had a few *esrogim* sellers and that's why an old, distinguished Yid had come there by subway from the Bronx to purchase an *esrog* but the day was over and he was forced to head home.

The old man was walking on Essex Street, somewhere between Broome and Grand Street, when suddenly he glanced behind him. Two Latino thugs seemed to be following him methodically. As the old man picked up his pace, so did the teens. The old man tried as hard as he could to run. The two started closing in. They were clearly up to no good. One kid pulled out a switchblade.

As the elderly Yid passed by Bistritzky's, he was panting. The kids were close behind. From his store, then on Essex Street, Reb Leibel noticed something strange. An elderly Yid with a long white beard with *hadras ponim* was running towards Gus's Pickles.



He knew there was something going on. Another look and he saw what was coming. He realized the impending brutality and acted.

Wielding a 10-inch cheese cleaver raised way above his six-foot frame, he stormed out of the store in hot pursuit of the would-be muggers. The thugs turned around and, as if they saw the prophet Elijah on the day of reckoning, bolted as fast as they could toward Chinatown with Reb Leibel still in hot pursuit.

A few seconds later, Reb Leibel embraced the old Yid with the long white beard and invited him into the store for a *glaizel* tea.

The Yid, a distinguished *rebbe*, could not hold back his appreciation. And then Reb Leibel asked him his name. It was Pinchus Eliyahu Spiegel.

That Yid was my *zaide, zichrono livrachah*. Reb Leibel realized that this was the Ostrov-Kalushiner Rebbe from the Bronx. He thought for a moment and asked, "Rebbe, did you have a son named R' Duvid who learned in the Philadelphia Yeshiva in 1956?"

My grandfather, never much for words, nodded.

The smile on Reb Leibel's face could not have been broader. "All my life I waited to pay back his *chesed*. *Baruch Hashem* that I was *zocheh*!"



Rabbi and Rebbetzin Jungreis decorating a Sukkah with students in North Woodmere

Rabbi Jungreis considered it a mission during that difficult period, to bring as many Jews as possible closer to Hashem and His Torah.

Rav Meshulem HaLevi Jungreis,

was a scion of the famed Jungreis rabbinic dynasty, known in Hungary for their piety, leadership and Torah scholarship. Together with his wife, the famed Torah pioneer, Esther Jungreis, he founded the North Woodmere Jewish Center/Congregation Ohr Torah in the North Woodmere area of the South Shore of Long Island in 1964. It was one of the first Orthodox congregations in the area.

Rav Meshulem, whose roots traced back to David HaMelech, was born in the town of Gyongyos, where his father was the chief rabbi. He himself received *smicha* at age 18. Before his *petira*, he was the closest living descendant of the great *Tzaddik* and man of miracles, the Tcenger Rav, author of Menuchas Asher.

Before World War II, members of the Jungreis family headed 85 congregations across Hungary. He was ordained at age 18. When war broke out, he was conscripted into a labor battalion. When the German Army entered Hungary, he was held at Bergen-Belsen until the liberation. It was there that he never ate non-kosher food and almost starved into a skeletal figure of less than 90 pounds. But he kept his spirit and those of others alive by teaching portions of Gemara to fellow captives from memory alone.

He considered it a mission during that difficult period, to bring as many Jews as possible closer to Hashem and His Torah.

Rabbi Jungreis arrived on these shores having lost both his parents, all of his brothers and sisters except one and nearly all of his other relatives. Yet he immediately plunged in life of Torah and *chessed*. After marrying Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis, they began their joint efforts at reaching out to unaffiliated Jews at a time when *kiruv* work on any large scale was unheard of.

He was known for his warmth and creativity in bringing Yiddishkeit to his fellow Jews. Back in 1962, he convinced the Long Island Railroad to designate a special train on Purim to be used for Megilla reading. While Rabbi Jungreis read the *Megilla* for commuting congregants who otherwise might not have attended shul, Rebbetzin Jungreis handed out *hamantashen* to those who otherwise would not have participated in the beautiful Yom Tov of Purim. He noted at the time that joyful Purim was the only Jewish holiday he could celebrate on a moving train.



Rabbi Meshulem HaLevi Jungreis to the right of Pincus Peterseil (standing). Man sitting is unidentified.

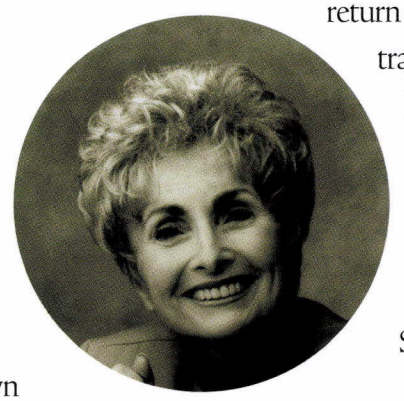


Rabbi Meshulem HaLevi Jungreis reading Megillas Esther for commuting congregants on the LIRR, who otherwise might not have attended shul.

Rabbi Jungreis established Ohr Torah in 1964, in a rented storefront with only 10 families, the shul grew to the point of being housed in a beautiful large edifice with a membership of several hundred families including a Sephardic Congregation as well, thanks to his unique combination of Torah brilliance, leadership qualities and gentle demeanor.

Whether visiting young sick children in the hospital at 6 a.m, so that they wouldn't be afraid of waking up in a strange hospital setting; or of his delivering *challah* every *erev Shabbos* to widows in the community or even helping children of shul members with their homework when their parents were not able to do so, he was a paradigm of outreach and kindness.

He would even stay on in *shul* on Shabbos morning for several hours after *davening* to listen patiently to the concerns of each member. He danced at *the simchas* of everyone as if it were his own *simcha*, and he cried at the suffering and tragedy of everyone as if it were his own family that was in agony.



Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis

His wife, the famed, Rebbetzin Esther Jungreis began the Hineini Movement in 1973, to inspire the Jewish people to return to their roots. Her reach transcended way beyond North Woodmere as through Hineni programs she transformed the lived of hundreds of thousands throughout the United States and across the globe.

From this base emanated the enormous acts of *chessed* for which they became loved and revered by all.



Left: Mr. Carl Wetanson (l) presenting Rabbi and Mrs. Friedman (center) an award for creating a scholarship at Yeshiva of South Shore

Rabbi Morris Friedman

In the history of the growth of the Five Towns Orthodox community, there was a unique relationship between clergy members who were committed to *halacha* as defined in *Shulchan Aruch*, better known as Orthodox, and those who were affiliated with the Conservative movement, clearly more liberal in their leanings yet, trying to "conserve" remnants of what the Reform movement try to uproot in its original quest for assimilation and acceptance by parodying other religions.

The seeds of growth of the Five Town's Orthodox community began when there was not much hope in the future of Orthodoxy and Conservative Judaism was clearly the dominant force.

The seeds of growth of the Five Town's Orthodox community began when there was not much hope in the future of Orthodoxy and Conservative Judaism was clearly the dominant force. Yet there were a number of rabbinic figures in the Conservative movement, who sought more for their congregants, and pushed them to stronger observance. Moving a family to send their children to Yeshiva would mean loss of a congregant to an Orthodox synagogue, and loss of students in the Hebrew School. Yet in the Five Towns community, one such a man rose to the challenge, and even while serving as a rabbi in Lynbrook, sent families to move to the budding community of Woodmere, and join Rabbi Kamenetzky's shul and yeshiva. His name was Rabbi Morris Friedman. Over his tenure of more than 45 years in the Conservative Rabbinate, as Rabbi of Congregation Beth David in Lynbrook and later at Temple Hillel, for thirty-three years, he forged a relationship with the Orthodox community that was indeed unique. Indeed, there were many families and individuals he persuaded to join, the burgeoning Orthodox community of Woodmere, and was extremely charitable to yeshivas and institutions whose missions were so strictly Orthodox, that many of their students and followers would not even set foot in an Conservative shul.

In many ways his imposing presence and eloquence made him a towering figure in his community and in its prime Temple Hillel had more than 1,000 members.

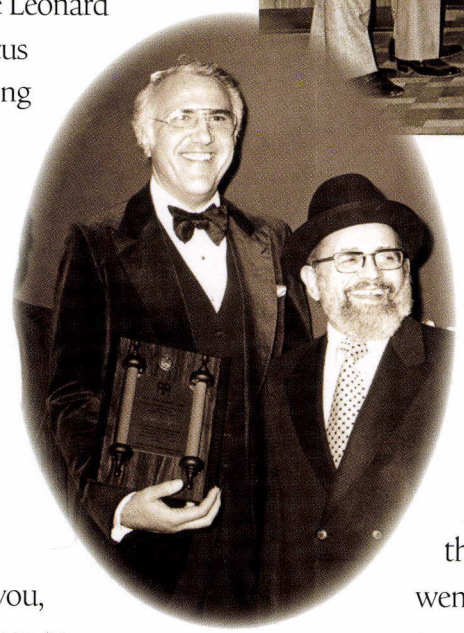
Below: Rabbi Morris Friedman speaking at a Yeshiva of South Shore Breakfast. **(L-R):** DA W. Kahn, Judge Joseph Jaspan, Alphonse D'Amato, Lou Maidenbaum





Rabbi Friedman standing fourth from left.
To his right is Rabbi B. Kamenetzky and Leonard Thun.
Rabbi M. Jungreis is second to right
(his hand is on the shoulder of Pincus Peterseil)

His relationship with Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky was extremely unique. Despite strong theological differences and backgrounds, Rabbi Friedman was a strong supporter of the budding Yeshiva of South Shore and encouraged his lay leadership, including families like the Leonard and Anne Thun and Pincus and Regina Peterseil among many others to contribute to the new yeshiva. The Orthodox President of Touro College, Dr. Bernard Lander, called him "a friend, spiritual guide, and mentor" and declared upon Rabbi Friedman's retirement that "world Jewry must compliment you, honor you, and pay homage to all that you have done."



Leonard Thun and
Rabbi Kamenetzky

As a young boy, no older than seven years old, I remember him allowing me to address his Men's club *Minyan*eer Breakfast in the Social Hall of the shul and make an appeal for Tashbar, one of the most *Chareidi* institutions in Israel. (See the article "Still Soaring" on Page 98.) When my father brought a young man to see him on behalf of Lakewood Yeshiva, he told the fellow, "I would love to give you a nice check from the Rabbi's communal charity fund, but when my *balabatim* see Lakewood Yeshiva in the ledger, they will have a fit!" Indeed, he figured out a way to funnel money to the Yeshiva that would decry the Conservative movement, through a third party charity.

He was extremely proud of students of the Hebrew school who went on to became rabbis or even extremely Orthodox leaders, one such student, Moshe Weiner, began his quest for *Yiddishkeit* in Temple Hillel's Hebrew school, where ironically, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky's daughter was his teacher. Rabbi Friedman called him "one of the brightest stars in the galaxy of my Rabbinate."

He was a magnificent fund-raiser for a broad spectrum of charities, among them. Boy's Town in Jerusalem; by Bet El, a very Orthodox *yishuv* in Yehuda and Shomron Judea Samaria in Israel; by Touro College's School of Health Sciences, Shaarey Tzedek Hospital among others.



L-R: Leonard Thun, Senator Al D'amato
and Rabbi Kamenetzky



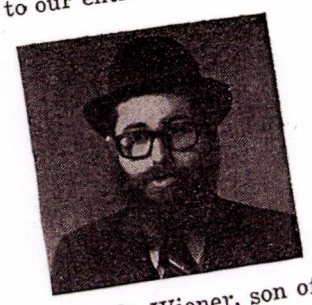
L-R: Rabbi Kamenetzky, Joe and Esther Peterseil,
Regina and Pincus Peterseil

FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

*



How does a rabbi evaluate his "success" or his spiritual impact on a congregation during the course of his ministry? You might respond by saying that the successful rabbi is measured by the size of his Temple membership, the number of children enrolled in his Congregational School, the program of cultural and religious activities sponsored by his congregation, his effort on behalf of the State of Israel, or in terms of the image which his synagogue projects in the larger community. If I have achieved any modicum of success during the course of my varied career I would say that it may be measured by the influence that I have had in molding the lives and character of some young people. I take this opportunity to tell you the story of a young man, who is not only a great source of pride to me and to his parents, but also to our entire Jewish community.



Moshe (Marc) Wiener, son of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Wiener, dear members of our congregation, was ordained as a "Rabbi In Israel," from the Lubavitcher Theological Seminary in Brooklyn a few weeks ago. I recall Rabbi Wiener well; as a child who attended the Ogden School, Junior High North, and our Temple religious school. On the Sabbath morning of his Bar Mitzvah, it was my sad responsibility to advise him, upon the completion of his chanting of the Haftorah, of the sudden demise of his beloved grandfather. Young Moshe manifested great love for his grandparents and was terribly moved by this traumatic experience. He continued to study in our Hebrew High School, was tutored in Rashi by Mr. Ben Rutta and developed a warm relationship with Mr. Harold Mechanic, at that time a member of our Hebrew School faculty. As a teenager he sought out the guidance of Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetsky who advised him to further his study at the Yeshiva University High School. He then pursued his studies at the Ner Israel Rabbinical Seminary in Baltimore and was graduated from its High School.

In 1973 he received his M.S. degree in Guidance from Long Island University. The very same year, he received "Smicha" (Ordination) from the Mir Yeshiva of Brooklyn. Rabbi Wiener then founded his own Yeshiva Haarav for young boys who were interested in Jewish studies during the summer months. Rabbi Moshe Wiener became a disciple of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and decided to continue his study at their Yeshiva. Although he lives in Brooklyn, he returns home to North Woodmere for the Sabbath and has taken a very active part in the formation of the Young Israel of North Woodmere, together with Rabbi and Mrs. Zelig Kevelson.

I consider Rabbi Moshe Wiener, a former student of our Religious School, and now a true scholar in Israel to be one of the brightest stars in the galaxy of my rabbinate. To Rabbi Moshe Wiener and the entire family we extend heartiest Mazel Tov!

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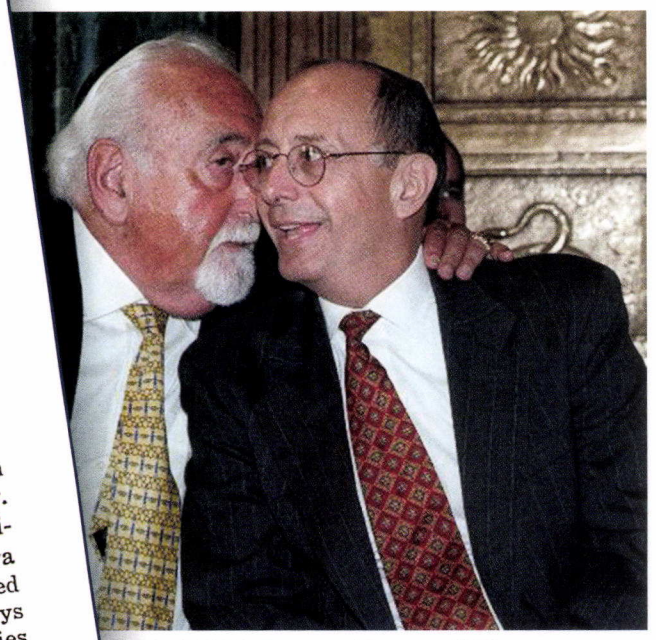
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President Ronald Reagan and Rabbi Friedman



Rabbi Friedman and Senator Al D'amato

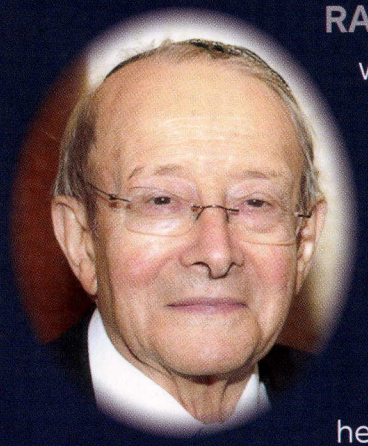
Like the Orthodox Rabbi Kamenetzky, Rabbi Friedman had a close affiliation with the Republican party and its political leaders, including Senator Alfonse D'amato who lauded him in a speech to the Senate in April of 1996. This relationship reached its zenith when on October 26, 1984 Rabbi Friedman and Temple Hillel made history with a visit by President Ronald Reagan, the first time that a United States President



was received by an American Synagogue since President George Washington visited the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island. Upon completion of a program in the Main Sanctuary, Rabbi and Mrs. Friedman hosted a luncheon at their home. President Reagan enjoyed the Mrs. Friedman's cooking of what she termed, a Shabbos-style meal, and "though he was watching his weight, "he cleaned his plate."

"This relationship reached its zenith when on October 26, 1984 Rabbi Friedman and Temple Hillel made history with a visit by President Ronald Reagan, the first time that a United States President was received by an American Synagogue since President George Washington visited the Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island."

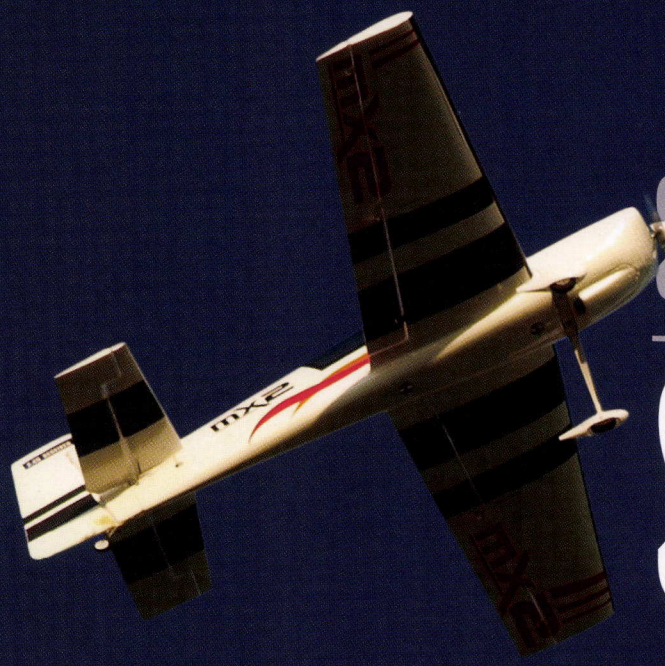
The long and distinguished career of Rabbi Morris and Addi Friedman ended with his retirement in 1995. He left behind his wife, Adeline, daughter, Naomi, two sons, Dr. Mark Friedman a distinguished physician and David, the United States Ambassador to Israel, with many grandchildren and great grandchildren.



RABBI SOLOMON AIDELSON, Z"L, was a beloved Five Towns personality for over 30 years. He was born in Wolomin, Poland in 1928 to a Rabbinic family, direct descendants of the first Amshinover Rebbe who traced their lineage to Rav Yehudah HaNasi, the author of the Mishneh. He was a young boy when World War II began and he lost his parents, most of his siblings and his extended family during the Holocaust. Less than fifteen years old, he fought in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and survived the concentration camps at Maidanek and Auschwitz. His stories of survival, culminating in smuggling Jews out of Europe into Israel, his own arrival in Palestine, and combat in the War of Independence were truly miraculous. But afterwards he settled down, and went on to receive his Rabbinic ordination from the Lomza Yeshiva in Petach Tikvah.

In 1980, Rabbi Aidelson, came to the community as Assistant Rabbi of Temple Hillel and the Principal of its Hebrew School. Rabbi Aidelson's had the uncanny ability to relate to individuals regardless of their age, background, or religious level. He loved to teach on every level, from small children adult beginners and his greatest joy was bringing fellow Jews closer to Judaism. He always spoke kindly and had an appropriate story or joke for every situation. He was careful to choose teachers for the Hebrew school, who would inspire youngsters, and many of them, became truly committed to live a Jewish life. He spoke often with tremendous impact about his Holocaust experience to a wide array of groups on every spectrum of humanity.

His wife Shoshana (may she live and be well), was a respected and much-loved teacher of Jewish Studies at the Brandeis School in Lawrence for over thirty years. In their many years of teaching in the community Rabbi Aidelson and Shoshana influenced hundreds if not thousands of children and, by extension, their families. After Rabbi Aidelson retired he used to proudly remark that he couldn't make it more than a few feet down Central Avenue without meeting former students, many who were married and living in the community. The rabbi left behind a devoted family who are strongly committed to Torah values and to Israel.



Spice of Life

Still Soaring

How a little boy's ordinary dream helped him fly

I'd like to share the tale of a little boy and his dream of an airplane. Enter a cast of characters, beginning with an old rabbi who spoke in heavily accented English and ending with members of a Conservative synagogue's men's club. Sprinkle in a newly arrived black neighbor and Sam Zuckerberg, a gun runner for the Haganah, (and eventually the father of Roy, the celebrated senior director of the Goldman Sachs Group). And add the magic of the Wizard of Oz on a cold winter night and you have a formula that raised enough money to cover a major part of a payroll for a fledgling charedi cheder in the heart of Bnei Brak. Let's begin with the airplane.

Dear reader, do you remember those balsa wood planes with paper-thin wings that came in even thinner paper packages? Do you remember cracking those wings every time you tried to squeeze them through the microscopic slit of the plane's alleged fuselage? Those of you who do, probably also remember where you were when President Kennedy was shot.

But whether you do or don't, let me take you back to the days when a second grader



would dream about getting the super-size, deluxe, balsa wood airplane. It even had a real propeller, which had a rubber band attached to it, It stretched from the propeller, and went under the plane's belly and attached to a tiny hook near the tail. That second grader would dream of winding the propeller a million times until there was no twist left in the elastic of the band. He would see himself releasing it into the crisp Spring air, and it would fly like the big propeller planes that shook his house on their way in and out of Idlewild International (now Kennedy) Airport, just a few miles from his home. That second grader was me.

As poor as we were, I somehow was always able to scrounge up enough money to buy the cheap balsa wood airplanes that they sold in Woolworth's on Central Avenue in the heart of Cedarhurst. But there were bigger and better models, planes a foot long or longer. A plane like that had thick wings that would not crack, either when you assembled it or when you threw it into your dining room chair. These fancier planes were the desire of all the poorer boys in my grade. These were the planes that the rich kids got for Chanukah—the type about which my mother's eyes silently admonished, "Don't even think about it." So they remained the object of my desire, as I laid plans and machinations so that I, too, would get one.

And then, one day, he walked into my classroom. He was a short man, who looked like he definitely escaped the horrid world of "back then" that no one in the early 60s really talked about to little kids like us. He had an orange-brown beard, an old black fedora, and a short jacket. He was carrying little booklets, each one a different color. They had coupon-like perforated pages. He also had a stack of mimeographed (I will not even begin to explain that one) sheets that held what the third graders had leaked was a list of prices and prizes. We all wondered, "Who was this man? What were those books? What was that list?" I did notice the name Tashbar on many of the papers, but had never heard of it. Our rebbi, Rabbi Meir Shapiro, hushed the class, and the man began in a very heavily accented English, marinated with centuries of Yiddish. Every nuance of his opening words, the rolling of the "R"s and the thick Yiddish inflection ring in my ears to this very day. "Boyz, I vant you to know that deer are childrrren in Eretz Yisrael who are staaarrrving."

I am not sure exactly what he wanted from us. His accented delivery, combined with my curiosity about whether there really were prizes on that list, distracted me from hearing his appeal, which was clearly not scripted for a second grade audience. I was not sure if we were supposed to collect for a yeshiva or for starving children. Maybe both. Or maybe the man knew that exhorting for starving children sells better in Peoria and the Five Towns than a bunch of kids learning Torah in the former home of the Chazon Ish.

But it made no difference. I saw the list of prizes that we would get by selling the 5, 10, and 25 cent tickets from those booklets. And one of the prizes (I think it was for collecting 50 dollars) was a super-duper, deluxe, balsa-wood airplane. Rubber band and all!

We were supposed to raise the money through the Chanukah recess. But no one really did . So the school extended the campaign for a while. Soon, time was running out and I decided to make a serious effort to raise some money. In January, I began my crusade for the airplane, cloaked in a religious mission for the starving children of Tashbar. The first night that I went out was a Sunday. I spent close to an hour-and-a-half at the Jacobys, a family that had just moved in down the block. It's not that I made a complex hour-long presentation to them about the virtues of Torah lishma and the holy children of Bnei Brak.

You see, I entered their house that Sunday night and the family opened the door and ran back to their newly-acquired color TV not long after Dorothy's house landed on some sort of Wicked Witch. When the screen filled with the frightening face of the bereaved green woman who was screeching, "Who killed my sister?" I forgot about balsa planes, coupon books, prizes, and the starving children of Eretz Yisrael. I spent the next hour or so in my coat and ear-flap hat, eyes transfixed to the television and the Wizard of Oz. About an hour later, I walked out, my mind filled with nothing more than frightening images of winged monkeys and melting green witches, and my pocket filled with nothing more than 50 cents. It was my first lesson about the time-wasting aspect of TV, which left me about 49 dollars and 50 cents short of my goal. I came home to a gentle tongue-lashing about staying out late, watching television, but my father turned it into a strategy session.

I'd like to share the tale of a little boy and his dream of an airplane. Enter a cast of characters, beginning with an old rabbi who spoke in heavily accented English and ending with members of a Conservative synagogue's men's club.

You see, by the time I finished with friends, relatives, and board members of the Yeshiva, I was still short at least 27 dollars. I was miserable and my father knew it. But my father always knew a guy. He could always find someone to get you out of a jam or fix a problem. The salvation often comes from an unlikely source. Rabbi Morris Friedman was the rabbi of Temple Hillel, a Conservative congregation in nearby Valley Stream. Rabbi Friedman was always helpful to my father, and members of his congregation always helped him with his yeshiva, and so my father asked him if he could perhaps write me a check to Tashbar from the synagogue's charity fund. Rabbi Friedman said he would do one better. Every Sunday, after the *davening*, they had a big breakfast for what they called the *minyaneers*, the men who would come to Sunday morning *minyan*. The rabbi would allow me to make an appeal at the breakfast.

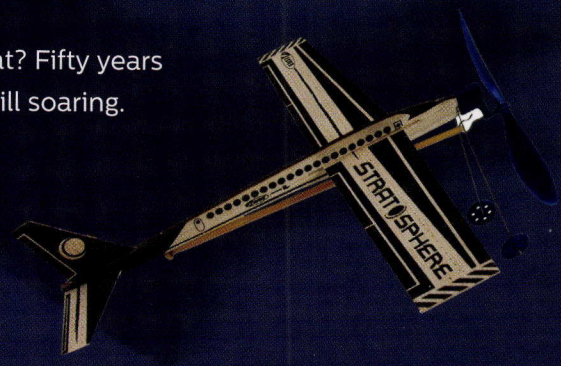
After we finished *davening* in Woodmere on Sunday, my father drove me to Valley Stream. We entered the Hebrew School building that was adjacent to the main synagogue building where they held the breakfast. I vaguely remember the well-groomed rabbi, his goatee perfectly trimmed, using big words that basically said, "I have no idea what he's collecting for, but he's Rabbi Kamenetzky's kid so how bad could it be?"

I really don't remember the exact words of the speech that this seven-year-old gave in early 1964. I spoke a little about Torah, and a little about starving children. All I remember is walking out of that building with close to 300 dollars in my pocket! I had more than enough money for a plane. I had enough money for an entire air force!

I did get only one super-duper plane. I used the rest of the money for a bunch of other toys and new-fangled electronic devices that were all made in Japan and broke before any of the money that I raised was spent. And the plane?

Well, I waited for the first sunny day in March. I wound the propeller so many times that the tension of the rubber band snapped the fuselage. And so, that plane never flew.

So what? Fifty years later, I'm still soaring.




CONGREGATION BETH SHOLOM



— CONGREGATION —

BETH SHOLOM

DEDICATED BY MARTIN AND MELODIE SCHARF



Congregation Beth Sholom

The following narrative is based on a history written by Meyer Parkoff published in the Dedication Book presented at the Annual Dinner of Congregation Beth Sholom which honored Albert B. Joffe on May 25, 1952.

Congregation Beth Sholom's history is clearly hallmarked by the many deeds and the exceptional devotion and loyalty on the part of many noble and unselfish men and women who shaped and molded its destiny.

The history of Congregation Beth Sholom, the oldest Orthodox Synagogue in the Five Towns, if not on Long Island, is a composite of spiritual growth which epitomizes the struggles and triumphs, trials and tribulations of Orthodoxy during the years of its continued growth and evolution. Its history is clearly hallmarked by the many deeds and the exceptional devotion and loyalty on the part of many noble and unselfish men and women who shaped and molded its destiny.

In 1928 a group of religious and committed individuals organized a synagogue to be known as "Congregation Derech Yosher – "Way of Righteousness." During an era when Reform was prevalent on the American scene, these men and women, in the heart of suburbia, in an area where Temples parodied their Episcopalian counterparts, had the gumption to establish a synagogue whose goal was, in the words of the Congregation's narrative of its own history, "pledged to strengthen Torah-True Judaism and make it vital and meaningful in their community and to their children."

At the time, the Five Towns were hardly as developed and densely populated as they are today. Lawrence and Cedarhurst were mostly composed of wide untenanted areas, dotted with the landscaped acres of large estates, much swampland and relatively few concentrated dwelling areas. The Jewish population was small and the founders of "Derech Yosher" were consequently limited in number. But their members were strengthened by their cause.

The men, though absorbed in their daily world of commerce and industry, were community-minded as they sought to make their community more diverse and accepting by creating a religious climate for their families that would parallel the splendid physical environment of the area. This they did by founding the synagogue. Their ideals were express in the following terms "... to advance the cause of traditional and Orthodox



First Nursery School Graduation – June, 1951

Judaism...to promote Jewish education...to join hands with local and national causes for the betterment of our community...and to help rebuild our homeland."

At the time, the State of Israel was but a dream, but the founders of the congregation were symbiotically attached to the efforts of its creation, an objective passionately supported by its members despite many in the greater Jewish community who were opposed to such un-American nationalism.

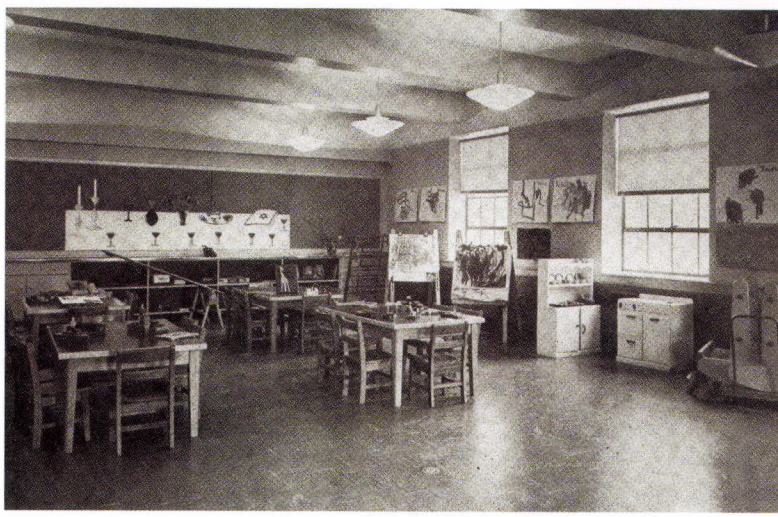
The congregation was organized and the first meeting was held in a store on Central Avenue in Lawrence. Among those who attended the organizational meeting were Henry I. Cohen, Sam Mittman, Ellis V. Hirsch and Ralph Garfiel.

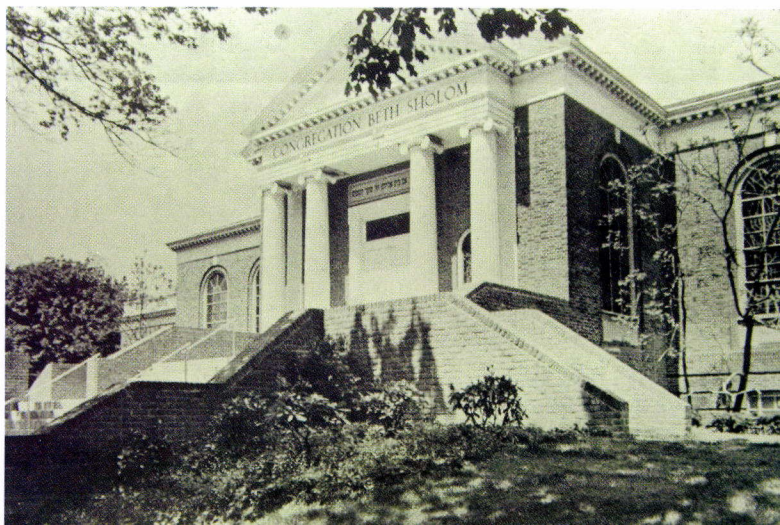
The trials and tribulations of the early membership were many. They were confronted with extreme shortages of the funds that were necessary to meet the expenses of a growing congregation. Regular meetings were often omitted due to lack of a quorum, and organizational accomplishments were limited due to the small membership. However, with the understanding and knowledge that success could be achieved only by constant hard work, perseverance and great devotion, the congregation continued undismayed. They were not so much concerned with what was, as with what would be. They were building the future!

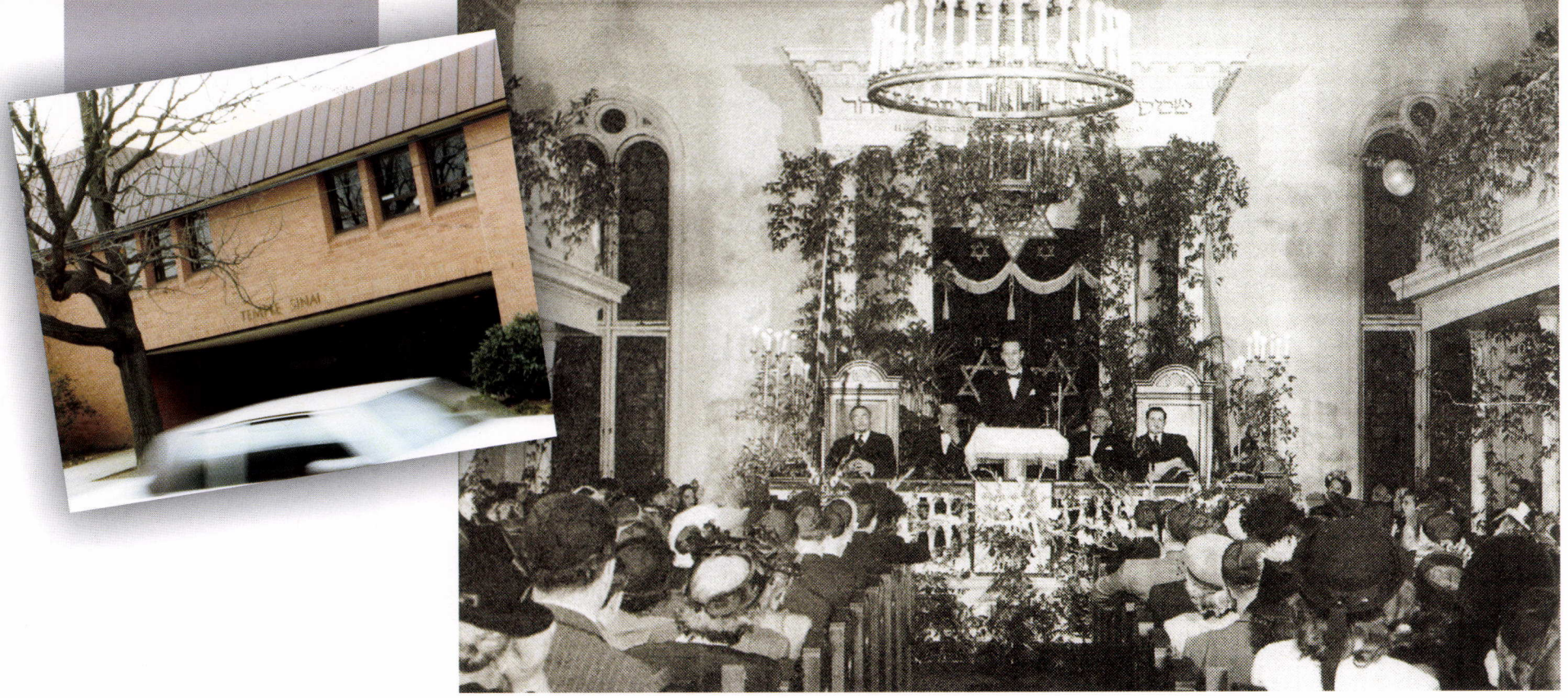
1928-1933 — The Beginning

The year 1928 was a period in US history, marked by the great economic depression, and social unrest in the United States. Clearly the difficult economic times made the survival of Congregation Derech Yosher even more difficult. However, the founders of Derech Yosher were undaunted. A small home was purchased to house the congregation









Installation of Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, Charleston, South Carolina

and conduct the daily prayers and activities. But not before long, the home was soon found to be unsuitable. The officers decided to acquire a more suitable house at 131 Washington Avenue at the corner of Mulry Lane in Lawrence. That building eventually became a Reform congregation, Temple Sinai, which subsequently was sold and is the present home of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov, the Ruth and Hyman Simon High School. This edifice was to be the home of the congregation for twenty years.

Rabbi Saul Baily was appointed as the spiritual leader of the young synagogue and over the first two decades, as membership increased and the varied activities and educational programs grew, the members realized that the building was lacking the space needed for growth. A new wing was added to the rear of the structure which was to serve as the synagogue proper. The remainder of the building was available to be used for the Hebrew School, meetings and social events.

If Derech Yosher were to continue to make Torah-True Judaism understandable it would have to serve these newcomers well in order to absorb them into the Congregational pattern and fabric.

1933-1943

Impressive events transpired during this decade of the synagogue. Lawrence and Cedarhurst still maintaining their suburban charm, were daily attracting more settlers. Many new families with diverse cultural and spiritual needs were moving into the area. If Derech Yosher was to continue to make Torah-True Judaism understandable it would have to serve these newcomers well in order to absorb them into the congregational pattern and fabric.

They began what was known as Beth Sholom Juniors to attract younger members to the activities of the congregation and in May of 1934 they appointed Marvin Mittman as president and Melvin Fischbein as vice president.

The practices of the institution were rounded out to meet these needs. The traditional Orthodox services remained unchanged but were expanded to include English sermons and congregational singing.



Rabbi Robert Marcus poses with young women from Kibbutz Buchenwald

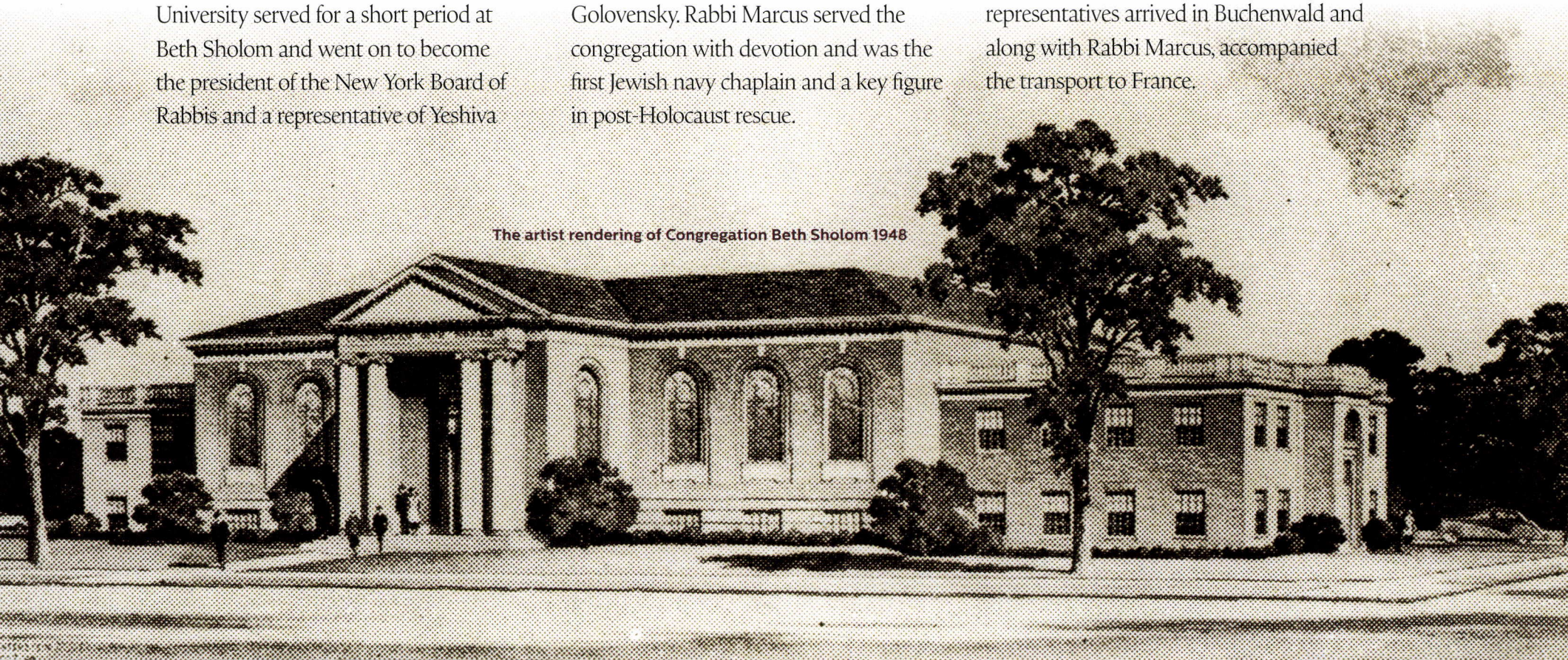
A number of prayers were read in English with congregational responses. A greater effort was made to increase synagogue attendance and interest.

Rabbi Baily was followed by Rabbi David Golovensky and the congregation continued to grow. Rabbi Golovensky, who received *smicha* from Yeshiva University served for a short period at Beth Sholom and went on to become the president of the New York Board of Rabbis and a representative of Yeshiva University at a number of ceremonial occasions. He later became the rabbi of Temple Israel of Long Beach and ended his career as the long time rabbi of Congregation Beth El of New Rochelle.

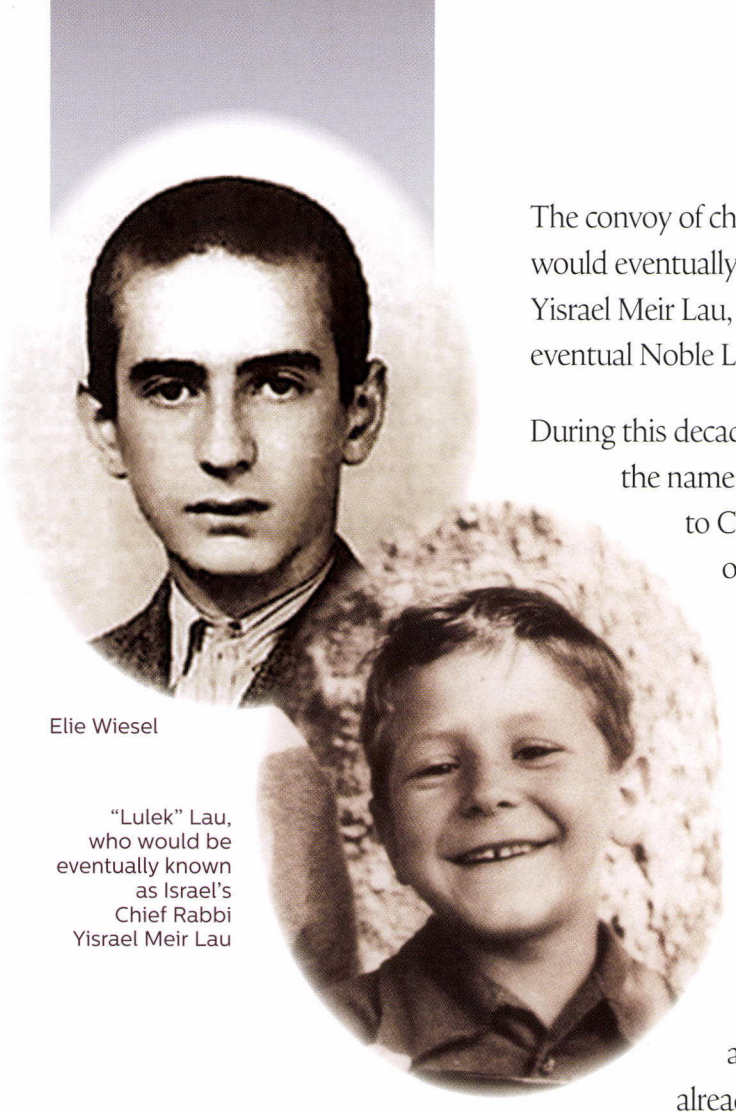
On October 18, 1934, the congregation announced the appointment of Rabbi Robert R. Marcus to replace Rabbi Golovensky. Rabbi Marcus served the congregation with devotion and was the first Jewish navy chaplain and a key figure in post-Holocaust rescue.

Rabbi Marcus eventually became Captain Marcus, a Jewish Chaplain with the 23rd Tactical Air Command, who was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service in connection with military operations.

When Rabbi Hershel Schacter, a prominent army chaplain, learned that Patton's forward tanks had arrived at the Buchenwald Concentration Camp, he commandeered a jeep and driver and discovered nearly a thousand orphaned children there. At the time, most of the 904 children who were in the camp when it was liberated were orphans. Rabbi Herschel Schacter and Rabbi Robert Marcus, both chaplains, contacted the offices of the OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants), the Jewish children's relief organization in Geneva, Switzerland and made arrangements to send 427 of the children to France, 280 to Switzerland and 250 to England. On June 2, 1945, OSE representatives arrived in Buchenwald and along with Rabbi Marcus, accompanied the transport to France.



The artist rendering of Congregation Beth Sholom 1948



Elie Wiesel

"Lulek" Lau, who would be eventually known as Israel's Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau

The convoy of children included "Lulek" Lau, who would eventually be known as Israel's Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, and the teenage Elie Wiesel, the eventual Noble Laureate.

During this decade, in the years before World War II, the name of the congregation was changed to Congregation Beth Sholom-House of Peace, a reflection of the prayers of the members in a world darkened by the gloom of a World War and an impending Holocaust.

Congregation Beth Sholom continued to grow in membership and stature. In a community where the other houses of worship were well established in age and position, Beth Sholom, a relatively new congregation, was already an accepted and respected institution. Under the leadership of its presidents, George Fischbein, Irving Handel, David Usdan, Sidney Haber, the synagogue, once again outgrew its facilities and physical structure. This was the third time in its first fifteen years that such expansive growth forced the congregation to look for new facilities.

The New Site

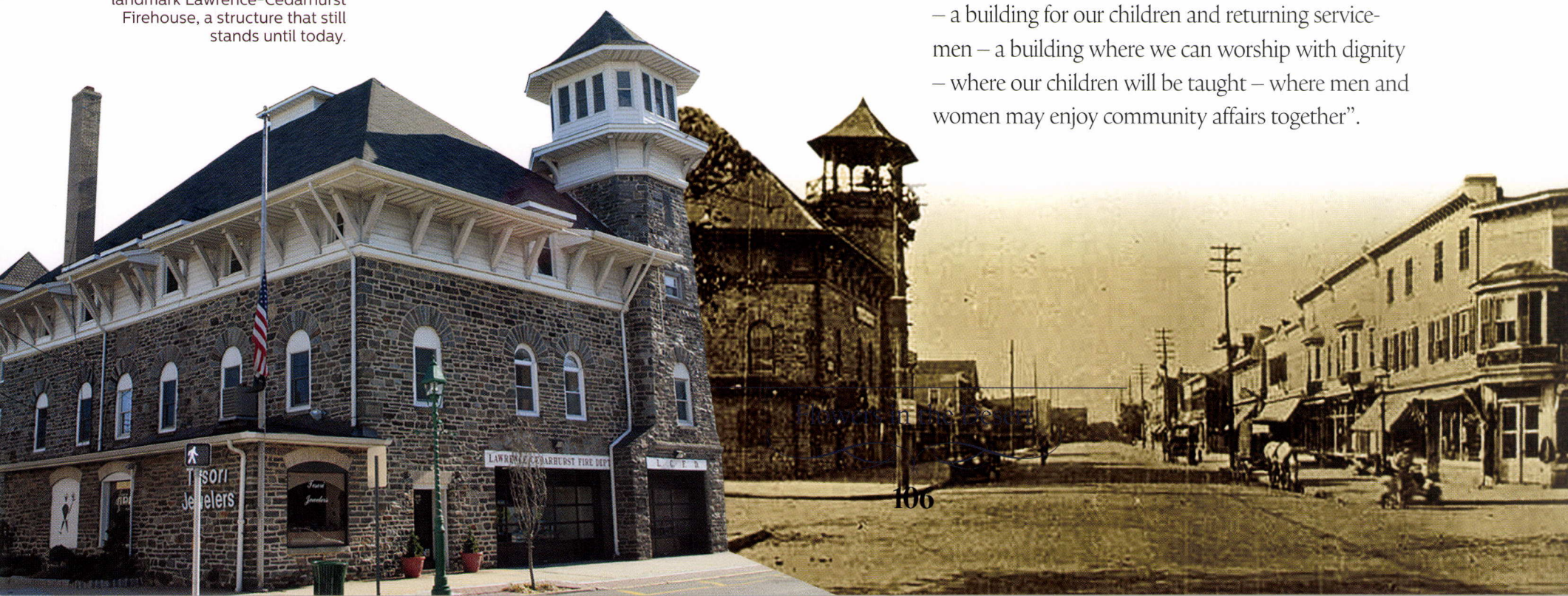
A new building to house the increased membership and the rapidly growing Hebrew School was most necessary. The congregation decided to purchase a plot of land located at Broadway and Washington Avenue, Lawrence, not far from the original location, to be the site of its future home. It was down the block from the landmark Lawrence Firehouse, a structure that still stands until today.

From remodeled and converted buildings originally designed as private homes and located near the business center of the village, the congregation was beginning to think of building a splendid structure which was to be a glory to G-d and an inspiration to man. The congregation had hardly completed a most difficult period of financial and organizational struggle. Its leaders knew quite well how demanding a new venture would be, but they had faith in the support of the congregation and community. And their faith gave them courage.

1944-1948 Building Fund

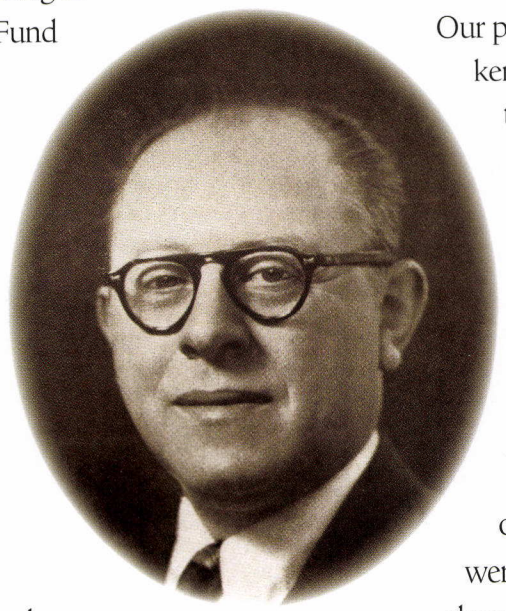
A special meeting in January, 1945, was held to coordinate the members into one powerful group "To plan the erection of a building of refinement and beauty – a building for our children and returning servicemen – a building where we can worship with dignity – where our children will be taught – where men and women may enjoy community affairs together".

Congregation Beth Sholom purchased a plot of land located at Broadway and Washington Avenue in Lawrence, to be the site of its future home. It was down the block from the landmark Lawrence-Cedarhurst Firehouse, a structure that still stands until today.



The appointed committee was ideally representative of our membership. Their task was enormous.

During the ensuing years, the congregation was slowly increasing in numbers. The Building Fund committee was constantly at work, striving relentlessly to reach the goal. Under the careful leadership, intelligent guidance and liberal assistance of Mr. Albert B. Joffe, the president, the work continued.



Mr. Albert B. Joffe, President

Executive committees were appointed to aid and assist the major committee in planning the new building. Many fundraising ventures were undertaken- raffles, bazaars, theatre parties and other interesting and social functions. The building fund continued to increase.

Yet, during these heavy years of concentration on the raising of funds, the very main posts of our congregation were not forgotten. The Hebrew School was enlarged. Youth activities were inaugurated to serve the teenagers and the entire educational structure of the synagogue was being geared to meet the needs of its youth.

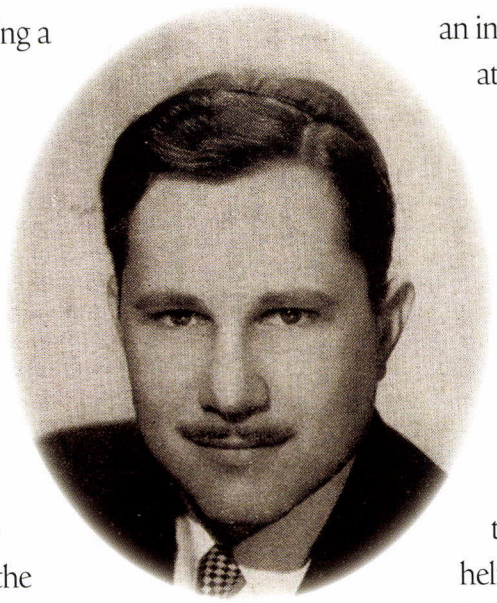
1949 Ground Breaking at Present Site

The year 1949 marked a milestone in the history of Beth Sholom and the culmination of a great hope spanning a score of years.

Our plot of ground was broken to begin the construction of our synagogue. Although no impressive ceremonies were held, the day ground was broken will remain in our hearts as the day when the dreams and aspirations for our beloved synagogue were given life. Steam shovels came one day and at one swoop began to tear up the thickly covered ground. We were on our way to having a real home.

Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman

But a home without direction and guidance could not hope to service. To grace the new home with godliness and spiritual leadership, it was necessary to bring a rabbi to the congregation who could infuse the young and old by precept and example in the traditions of Israel.



Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman

The selection of a spiritual leader was an important assignment that was referred to a special committee. After a careful and exhaustive study, Mr. Herbert Tenzer, chairman of the Committee, reported its conclusion to the board of trustees on March 14, 1950. Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman was recommended to the membership. Recommended as an "outstanding aspirant to guide the congregation spiritually", the report was unanimously accepted and acted upon at once by the membership. They all felt that Rabbi Klaperman was an ideal selection to serve as Rabbi for the congregation for, though a young man, he had already earned a reputation as a profound scholar and teacher and a spiritual personality. As a lecturer in religion at the State University of Iowa, an instructor of Talmud at Yeshiva University, a Chaplain in the Canadian Army, a Director of the Hillel Foundation and with a decade of services as a rabbi, the committee felt that Rabbi Klaperman was well equipped to stand at the spiritual helm of Congregation Beth Sholom.



Albert B. Joffe laying cornerstone at ceremonies held September 17, 1950.
With Mr. Joffe (L-R): Hon, Russel Sprague, George Fischbein, Herbert Tenzer and Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman.



Sifrei Torah being removed from the old building, September 17, 1950.

The Rabbi, officers and trustees then led the assemblage, headed by national and local dignitaries, in the building for the official consecration service. The day will forever live in our hearts.

According to Mr. Parkoff, "He was revered as a beloved Rabbi and a dear friend – a lover of his people and its Torah, in a community that regarded him as outstanding in character and scholarly attainments."

1950 – The Consecration of the Cornerstone

Under bright and sunny skies cooled by soft breezes, well known philanthropist, Albert B. Joffe, who served as honorary president, flanked by George Fischbein, president of Beth Sholom and other dignitaries removed the covering of the cornerstone which was brought from Israel for this occasion. This simple yet momentous gesture was greeted warmly by the many men, women and children who gathered to witness the ceremonies.

Newly appointed, Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman invoked God's blessing in the majestic edifice soon to be erected, and finally merited the status of the other prominent houses of worship in the area.

Mr. Isidore Stieger affixed a silver mezuzah to the door, and Mr. David Usdan officially opened the doors of the building with a specially designed golden key.

The rabbi, officers and trustees then led the assemblage, headed by national and local dignitaries, into the building for the official *chanukas habayis*, the consecration service.





Will Clurman, builder, presenting key
to Board Chairman David Usdan

1950 – The New Edifice

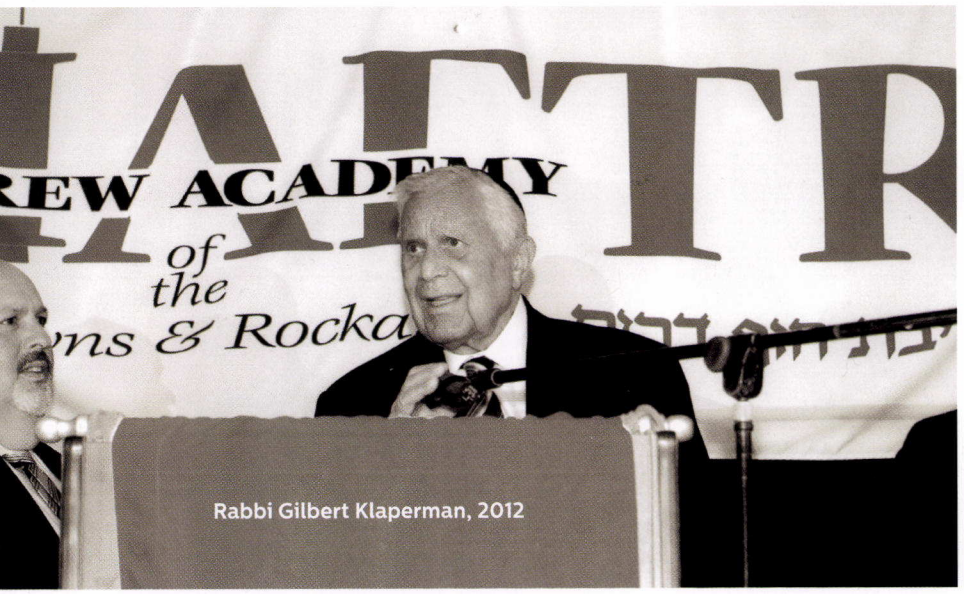
In September, 1950, the congregation was able to make use of the newly built synagogue for the High Holy Days. Those were the first services in commemoration of the New Year ever held in the new building. The walls were rough, unplastered and unfinished, the seats were temporary the lights poor and inadequate, the floors dusty with cement and sand-but spirit and jubilation of the members were magnificent.

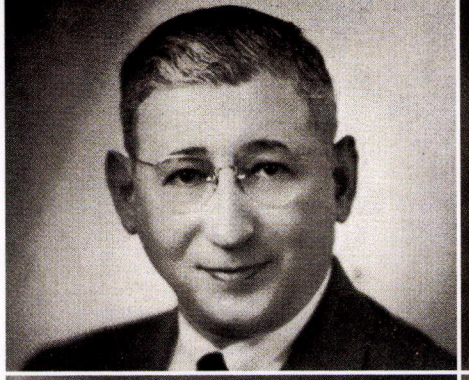
A most dignified and inspired Holy Day Service was held. Rabbi Klaperman, assisted by Cantor Borenstein, officiated with deep meaning and fervent prayers to the Almighty for the most Happy New Year.

While the contractor was still working on the inside and outside of the building, the membership




Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, 1951

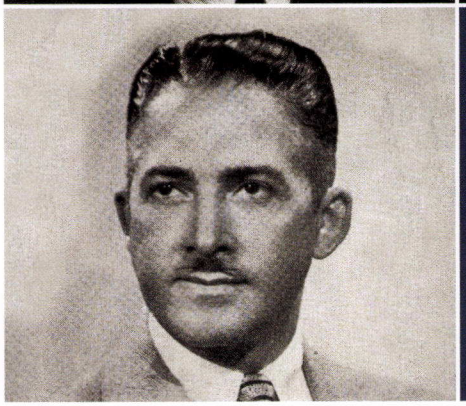

Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, 2012











Pictured Clockwise:
1950 Building Committee

Irving Moldauer (top left)

Dan Bittan
Interior Decoration Committee

Herbert Tenzer
President

Davit Altman, Chairman
Office Administration Committee

Fred Flatow
Constitution Committee Secretary

Cantor Moshe Ehrlich



continued regular activities, including a large Hebrew School, youth groups and a Men's Club and Sisterhood that carried on the social life of the congregation with successful programming and interesting functions.

In December of 1951 the shul honored its president, Mr. George Fischbein. He had been instrumental in acquiring the plot on which the new structure was built, and he had been president during the years of decision when contracts had to be signed for construction of the new building and when funds had to be raised to make the work possible. He was blessed to see the occupancy of the new building while still president and the Testimonial Dinner was a well-earned tribute on the part of all who knew him.

A plaque commemorating the event was placed on the building. (*See page 109.*) Soon enough, a new *chazzan*, Cantor Moshe Ehrlich was appointed and served the congregation for almost 50 years. He remained an iconic figure in the community until his passing in April of 2003.

The 1960s saw a surge of growth in the Five Towns with Beth Sholom being one of the premier centers for Jewish life and activity. Yet, new Orthodox synagogues were established in Cedarhurst and in Woodmere, attracting new residents to move to areas east of Washington Avenue.





Abraham Scharf







Rabbi Klaperman at 90

Still, Congregation Beth Sholom remained a center of Modern Orthodoxy that soon would shift slightly to meet the needs of a growing and diversifying community.

In 1988 Rabbi Klaperman retired from his active role as full time rabbi and accepted the position of Rabbi Emeritus. The shul appointed Rabbi Kenneth Hain a, native of Danville, Virginia. Ordained at Yeshiva University, he had previously served in prestigious congregations in New York City and Houston, Texas.



Rabbi Kenneth Hain

Rabbi Hain, together with his wife Nancy, quickly became cherished leaders for the shul and the community. They have been serving the congregation and the community until today. The last decade has seen a major influx of young committed Orthodox Jews who have invigorated Beth Sholom with more *minyan*im, Torah classes and communal activity. As envisioned by its founders, Congregation Beth Sholom has indeed become a center for Jewish life and prayer.

Over the last decades Beth Sholom has seen remarkable growth in both the size of the congregation and the renovation and expansion of its facilities.

This growth was highlighted by the renovation and dedication of the Mishkan Avraham Sanctuary in memory of Abraham Scharf by his children Martin and Melodie Scharf.



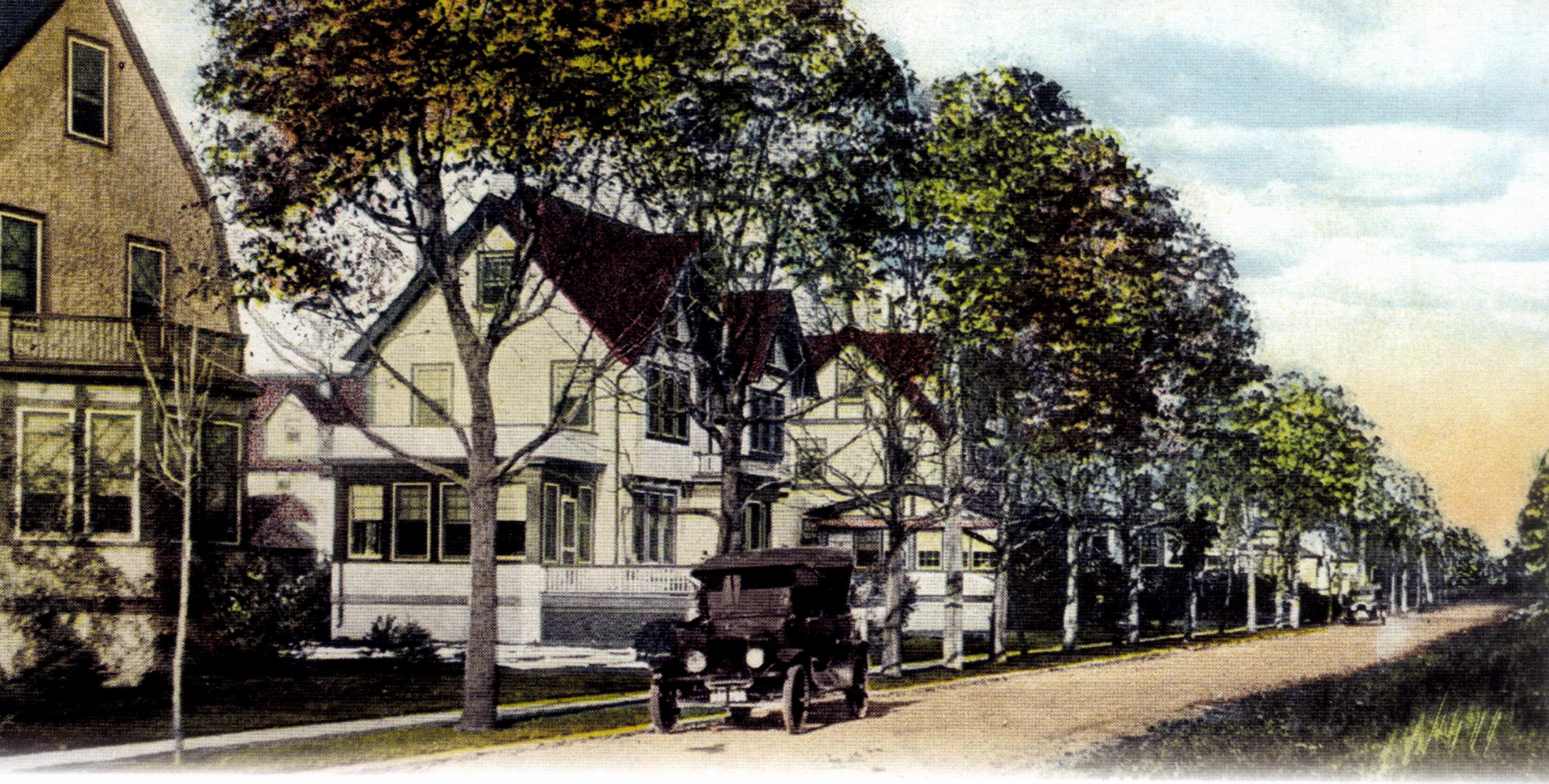
Martin and Melodie Scharf


YOUNG ISRAEL OF WOODMERE



YOUNG ISRAEL
— OF —
WOODMERE

DEDICATED BY SHLOMO AND ARIELA ZULLER



Above: Oxford Road, Cedarhurst, LI

The Young Israel of Woodmere

It was difficult. The shul had begun in a house, moved to a storefront, then to the premises of Yeshiva of South Shore about a mile east of its West Broadway location.

was born of a need, a need that arose as the area both north of Peninsula Boulevard and east all the way to Hewlett, began to develop during the early and mid-nineteen fifties. Peninsula Boulevard was originally a mere two lane road, somewhat like West Broadway today, until it was widened to its present size in 1956.

The only Orthodox synagogue in the Five Towns proper in the 1950s was Congregation Beth Sholom, a traditional Orthodox synagogue, that had served the area and its Orthodox families, since its establishment in 1928.

But Beth Sholom was about two miles south of the area between West Broadway and what is known as "Lee's Lake" to the north, far from Woodmere. Thus the need for another *minyan* on "the other side" of the Long Island Railroad tracks became pressing.

Another area synagogue, Congregation Sons of Israel, was actually on the eastern border of Woodmere, near Hewlett. It had shed its Orthodox nature, by eliminating its *mechitzah* and separate seating requirements. Although it did not officially align itself with the Conservative movement, and was committed to the Orthodox liturgy, it was, for all intents and purposes, considered a Conservative synagogue.



Congregation Sons of Israel

A fellow from Cedarhurst, Myron Bienenfeld, would bring his son, Jeffrey, to school in Yeshiva Toras Chaim in East New York. His teacher, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky, questioned the young Jeffrey as to why he shlepped in to East New York every day. "Where is Cedarhurst? Why is there no yeshiva in Cedarhurst?" Obviously Jeffrey told his father about the interrogation.

The next day Myron Bienenfeld called Rabbi Kamenetzky. "Rabbi," he began,

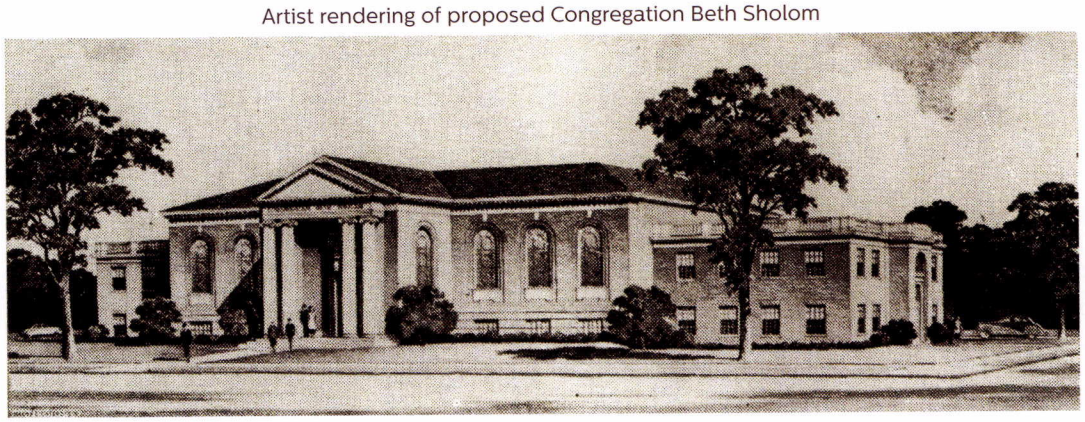


826 Peninsula Boulevard
(circa 1956)

"We moved to Long Island and I would very much like that you come to see my new home on Oxford Road in Cedarhurst. I'd like you to open a shul here."

At the time it was before the *Yomim Noraim* and as rabbi of Congregation B'nai Yaakov, Rabbi Kamenetzky was too busy to venture out to this foreign country,

Artist rendering of proposed Congregation Beth Sholom



Cedarhurst. He did, however, make a commitment to make the trek out to Cedarhurst for Chol Hamoed Sukkos.

After the High Holidays, Rabbi Kamenetzky backtracked. After all, why would he leave the comfortable confines of East New York and his two jobs, one as a teacher, and the other as a rabbi in a thriving community?

But Mr. Bienenfeld was persistent. He called the rabbi before Yom Tov, insisting that more and more people were moving to Cedarhurst. He asked that he come out to visit immediately and see the trucks that were bringing new families to the Peninsula Boulevard area.

On the third day of *Chol Hamoed*, Wednesday, October 5, 1955, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky, his wife and their three daughters, took a trip and ventured out on the Long Island Railroad to the Cedarhurst Station, only a few blocks from the home of Myron and Beverly Bienenfeld. Rabbi Kamenetzky recalled, "To our amazement we saw a beautiful house. There was a garden and it was so quiet and pristine! It was so different from what we knew of in East New York."

Indeed, Cedarhurst was not East New York! There were rows of new homes on both sides of the wide, two lane street called Peninsula Boulevard. Even though it was partially unpaved, there were construction crews working hard to make this street into a new thoroughfare. The town indeed looked very inviting, but Rabbi Kamenetzky was skeptical about its potential to be a haven for Orthodox Jewry. When he asked Myron and Beverly if there were any religious Jews in the area, they responded enthusiastically, "Yes! There are a number of religious families living in the area."

"So why don't they have a shul?" asked the rabbi.

Mr. Bienenfeld explained that the only Orthodox *minyan* was across the railroad tracks in the new shul built on the corner of Washington Avenue and Broadway — Beth Sholom. It had been the first Orthodox shul in the Five Towns, and they were members there, but he and some of his friends felt that it was too far to walk, and they wanted a shul closer to their home.

Why would he leave the comfortable confines of East New York and his two jobs, one as a teacher, and the other as a rabbi in a thriving community?





The Old Lee Mansion during demolition to prepare for construction of DRS High School

Mr. Beinenfeld offered to start the new shul in his home.

It was decided and a commitment was made to make the first *minyan* on *Shabbos Braishis* on October 15, 1955 in the Beinenfeld home on Oxford Road in Cedarhurst.

Mrs. Bienenfeld was worried from a more practical perspective. "A shul in my house? Does that mean I have to make a *kiddush* every Shabbos?" Rabbi Kamenetzky smiled and tried to alleviate her concern, "Not a *kiddush*, but a jar of gefilte fish, some crackers and soda would not hurt!"

But the rabbi was worried about more than gefilte fish. He would need a *sefer* Torah, *siddurim*, and of course, most importantly, perhaps even more important than a *Sefer* Torah, they needed men. Were there enough Jews to support a *minyan* in Cedarhurst, Long Island? Myron agreed to help, but that would be the rabbi's job.

Myron began to think of the people who would normally walk to Congregation Beth Sholom from his side of town. There was a man named Leo Klein, he said. Rabbi Kamenetzky called him and Leo was delighted. And better yet, he was a *Kohen*!

"Can you *daven* for the *amud*?" asked Rabbi Kamenetzky.

"Of course," he responded, "My father is a *shamash* (sexton) in Yonkers and I know the *nusach*."

Right after the *Yomim Noraim*, the High Holidays, in 1955, a small *minyan* was organized, consisting of, among others: Elliot Austern, Myron Bienenfeld, Irving Doppelt, Meyer Greenberg and his son Lester, Leo Klein, Manfred Lehmann, BenZion Shepard, Frank Herman, William Kay (who served as another Kohen), Nachum Maidenbaum and Joe Kestenbaum. The rabbi made one more.

Leo named some more people that he felt would eventually join the *minyan*.

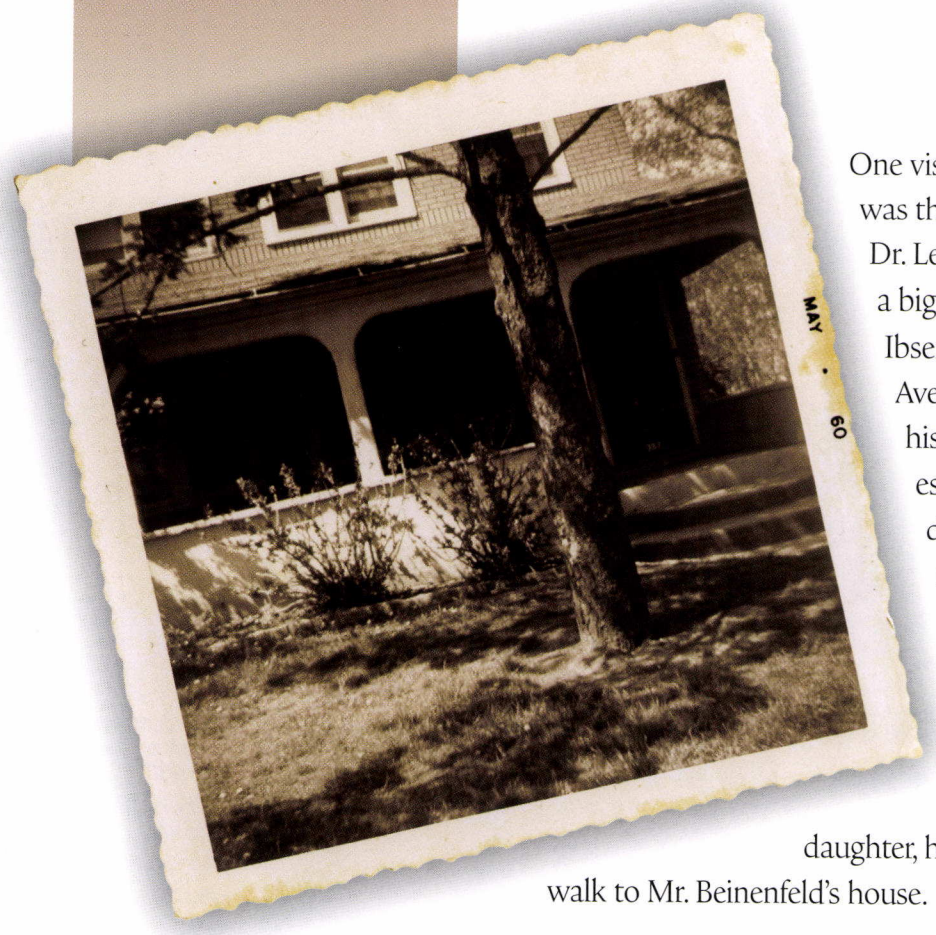
Others who came were parents or in-laws who were visiting their children. In fact, there were quite a few elderly people who lived in Brooklyn who would come visit their children in the "sticks." Having left Orthodoxy, the children of those people no longer attended shul on Shabbos, but their parents needed a *minyan*.



Some members of original minyan 1955–1956

(Clockwise from upper left)

Meyer Greenberg
Lester Greenberg
Frank Herman
Nachum Maidenbaum
Rabbi Kamenetzky
Joe Kestenbaum
Gedaliah Maidenbaum
Manfred Lehmann



The Kamenetzky Home on Barnard Avenue on the Woodmere-Cedarhurst border

One visitor, Sam Aaron, was the father-in-law of Dr. Levine who lived on a big estate between Ibsen Street and Howard Avenue, and changed his name to Lee. Lee's estate was eventually demolished and is now the location of DRS Yeshiva High School for Boys. Whenever Mr. Aaron would come visit his daughter, he, too, would walk to Mr. Beinenfeld's house.

Among them were Sam and Gertrude Zuckerberg who invited Rabbi Kamenetzky to their home on the corner of Barnard Avenue and Emerson Street, only a few hundred yards from where the rabbi would make his home some eight months later. Sam was an ardent Zionist and cherished anything Jewish. As a towel manufacturer, Sam had smuggled arms to the Irgun via towel shipments to what was then called Palestine. Although he personally was not Shabbos observant, he longed to see the growth of Torah and shuls in the community. He pledged his support and even offered to attend the *minyan*. (Sam's son Roy eventually became a vice president at Goldman Sacks and a supporter of Rabbi Kamenetzky's yeshiva.)

Surprisingly, there was also a core of congregants who were not Shabbos observant. Indeed, instead of complaining about services being held in a home, or a new shul opening up without zoning approval, these neighbors joined the *minyan*. Despite their lack of personal commitment to Shabbos observance according to Shulchan Aruch, they felt it important to support a new shul in the community.



Rav Pinchus Eliyahu Spiegel, the Ostrove-Kalushiner Rebbe

Despite, their lack of personal commitment to Shabbos observance according to Shulchan Aruch, they felt it important to support a new shul in the community.

But if there was to be growth, the rabbi needed some sense of permanency. Some members offered to help Rabbi Kamenetzky purchase a two-family home; the first floor would be the shul, and the rabbi and his wife and three daughters would live upstairs. They began to look for a home and the rabbi made some friends who were not observant, yet welcoming.

With the *minyan* well underway, the problem at hand was to equip the shul with its proper religious needs. Rabbi Kamenetzky asked to borrow a Sefer Torah for the new shul from his father-in-law, Rav Pinchus Eliyahu Spiegel, the Ostrove-Kalushiner Rebbe, the Rav of Congregation Tiferes Eliyahu on Arnow Avenue in the Bronx. *Siddurim* from the Bronx *shteeble* would be of little use – they were *nusach Sefard* and the new *minyan* would be *Ashkenaz*. Therefore the *siddurim* and *talleisim* were supplied by the men's club of the Congregation B'nai Yaakov *Shul* on Pennsylvania Avenue in East New York, where Rabbi Kamenetzky still held his pulpit.

The Ostrove-Kalushiner Rebbe never heard of Cedarhurst, where his daughter and son were destined to raise families, but he quickly agreed to his son-in-law's request and lent a Sefer Torah.


HaChaver Chaim Lehmann

Little did he know that he was planting the seeds for his own son, Reb Dovid, who would one day establish a Chassidic Bais Medrash only a few blocks away from the original *minyan* where his father's Sefer Torah was used some fifty years prior!

Rabbi Kamenetzky was still holding his position in East New York, and they did not have anyone designated to read the Torah on a weekly basis. But everyone did their share to make the *minyan* a success. According to Myron Beinenfeld's son, Jeff, "Most weeks we actually split *krias haTorah into* seven parts. Everybody did one *aliyah*!"

Jeffrey, who presently lives in Merrick, Long Island and is involved in the building of the synagogue in that community, recalls how difficult it was to be a kid growing up as a *shomer* Shabbos in those days. "It was terrible! I had no one to play with on Shabbos. On Saturday, every kid on the block was doing something I was clearly not allowed to do!"

Jeffrey explained that if there were two *Shomrei* Shabbos families living within five blocks of each other, they were lucky! "Nobody went to Yeshiva! It was unheard of!"

The conversation turned to naming the new shul. Though the majority at an official meeting liked, "South Shore Jewish Center," there was some dissent.

At the meeting was Dr. Manfred Lehmann, a visionary businessman who was a good friend of Rabbi Kamenetzky from when they both attended Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore. By this time, Manfred had earned a doctorate and was a successful businessman who was establishing communication systems and postal services in Africa. *(See chapter on Lehmann Family)*

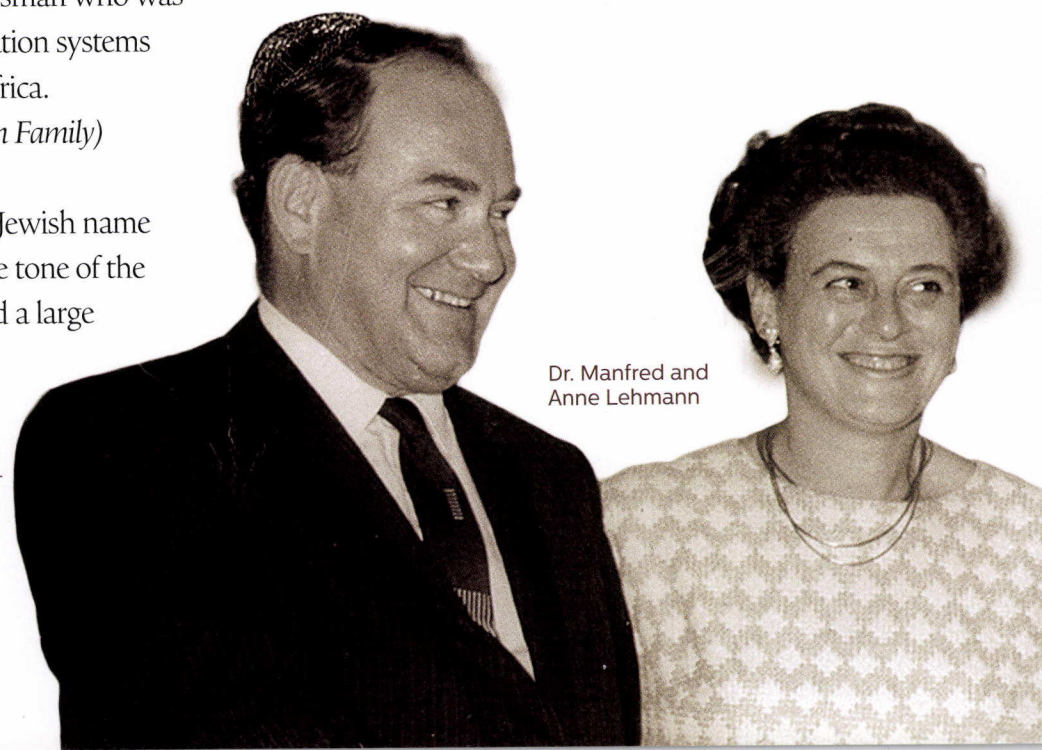
Dr. Lehmann felt that a Jewish name was important to set the tone of the congregation. He offered a large contribution to name the shul Eitz Chaim, after his father Chaim Lehmann, a descendant of distinguished German Jews who epitomized the expression, *Torah u'gedulah b'makom echad*, Torah and greatness in one place.

Reb Chaim and his family had spent the war years in Sweden where he was an essential link in myriad rescue operations. After the war, he was one of the first Jews to travel to Russia to aid the plight of his brethren in that battered country.

One of the greatest concerns that the group had was maintaining the integrity of an Orthodox congregation. Many shuls in that era that began as Orthodox congregations, had slowly removed their

Continued on page 122

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Dr. Manfred and Anne Lehmann

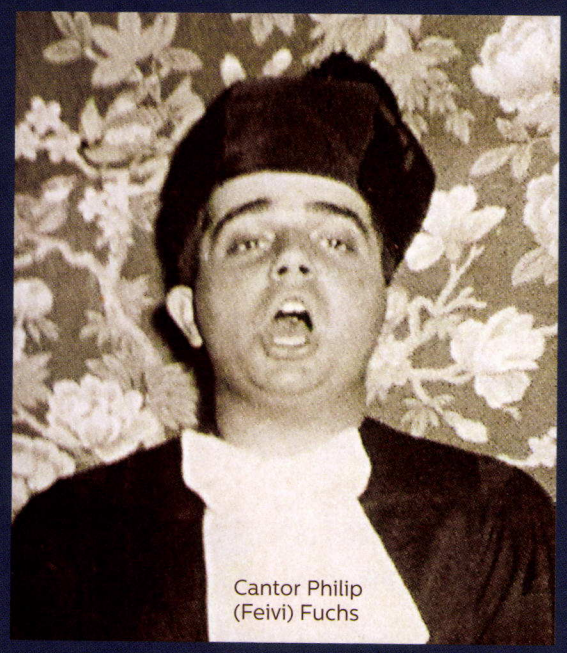


Spice of Life

Rosh Hashanah Memories

Everywhere different, but everywhere the same.

You would think that *Rosh Hashanah*, Judgment Day, is the type of *Yom Tov* that would exclude kids while taking on a very somber character. But somehow it's not. In fact, some of the fondest memories of my youth are those of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. And though through my lifelong travels on the Streets of Life, I have spent my *Yomim Noraim* in the most diverse sorts of *minyanim, shtieblach, yeshivos* and congregations, every one of those experiences was uplifting and exhilarating. Though the people, *minhagim, niggunim* and approaches to *davening* are different everywhere, in many ways they are much the same. It was certainly difficult to transition from *davening* in the '60s on *Rosh Hashanah* in a sparsely populated *minyan* in the Young Israel of Woodmere, where my father was the founding rabbi, to *davening* in the '80s with thousands packed shoulder to shoulder in the great hall of Yeshivas Ponovezh. And though my father had left the pulpit before I was old enough to sit through the *Rosh Hashanah davening*, he served as a *baal tefillah*, first in the shul he had started and then in another shul. And the *niggunim* that he sang were not based on anything he had heard in Tzitivyan or Vilkomir, but probably on what he had overseen as an American rabbi. But somehow they never left me.



Cantor Philip (Feivi) Fuchs

I went from basically a joyous celebration, where the *tefillah* was accompanied by singing and camaraderie and the rabbi giving a speech in which he would refer to all sorts of mundane ideas, to a very serious *yeshiva* service.

I guess that no matter where you come from and no matter how long or short the *tefillos* (or services, if you will) are, *davening* is difficult for kids. I remember how in Woodmere, even the older boys would finish the long *Rosh Hashanah* or *Yom Kippur Musaf Shemoneh Esrei* in just a few minutes and then run out to play ring-a-levio, or even worse, scour the neighborhood to find out a baseball score. On *Yom Kippur*, even the adults would sneak out, but that's only when it was the *heilige* World Series!

But from Young Israel to Ponovezh, no matter where we were, and no matter what our *Shemoneh Esrei* looked like, everyone would come back for *Aleinu*. There was always the kid who gave out the paper towels and the kid who would collect them. I never knew that it had anything to do with the *halachah* of bowing on a stone floor. I thought it had something to do with getting dirty.

But no matter what, we all loved bowing for *va'anachnu korim*. After all, in the blasé *galus* existence, there are very few officially dictated, overtly animated expressions of service to Hashem. The bowing in the middle of every *Shemoneh Esrei* is not particularly dramatic. As atypical as the bowing on the *Yomim Noraim* is, it is vitally important, at least during one period a year, for even the youngest folk to see total subservience and submission to a Creator that you cannot and may not define. And I believe that even today, even for the coldest among us, there is a certain thrill to be able to physically act out total subservience to *Hashem* for a few moments a year.

I can't remember the first time I experienced *va'anachnu korim*. But I am sure it is very confusing for a kid to see an entire room of grown men prostrate themselves.

A fellow once told me about a large yeshiva in Brooklyn. The *beis midrash* was packed from wall to wall like sardines.

A five-year-old child who had come for *tekias* shofar watched in awe. Suddenly the *chazzan* began the words "*va'anachnu korim*" and all at once, everyone dropped to their knees and pressed their faces to the floor in a quiet murmur.

And then a loud—a very loud—five-year-old voice shouted over the hushed prayers:

"WHAT'S EVERYBODY LOOKING FOR DOWN THERE!?"

I went from one *nusach* of *davening* to another *nusach*, from Young Israel *davening* that was replete with traditional melodies, where wannabe *chazzanim* evoked their baritones and the repetition of singsong words was not taboo, to Philadelphia, Ponovezh and then the world of Lakewood, where singing a *niggun* was totally out of the question. I rememeber *duchaning*, as well. If my father, *shlita*, was not the *chazzan*, he would make both my brother and me stay under his *tallis*. He would wrap us in his *tallis* as if shielding us from nuclear radiation. And in certain ways he was. I'm not sure if it was he, a *rebbe* of mine or a classmate that first whispered the words into my ears, "If you look at the *kohanim* when they *duchan*, you'll go blind."

Post-*davening*, we young *Yisraelim* always tried to mimic the special finger formation of the *kohanim* on the *duchan*. Of course, some older kid, inevitably a *kohain*, would warn us that something drastic would happen if we dared make the sign of the *kohanim*.

And then, soon after I turned 13, I went to *Mesivta*. It was a far cry from a 1960s Young Israel shul, where the *chazzan* would gorgle, and they would sing catchy tunes and sometimes repeat words in *piyutim*. I'll never forget the final one in Musaf, the *chazzan* singing, *"Hayom hayom hayom,"* literally 10 or 15 times before *"t'amtzainu."* Almost any sound was acceptable for *tekias* shofar. On break the fellows would make World Series predictions or meet up with someone from another shul to *shmooze* about the latest news or ask, "What time d'ya finish?"

Philadelphia Yeshiva was a whole new world. The *amein yehai shmai rabbas* were so loud, the *Shemoneh Esreis* were so long, and not one word was repeated. The *shofar* was blown over and over until perfect. I felt

The bachurim who were considered the tzaddikim in yeshiva, who were kindest and holiest, would daven and cry as if they were the worst of the lot.

so bad for the *Roshei Yeshiva*, who would be crying during their *drashos*, and for the boys in *beis midrash* who would be banging on their *shtenders* and *shuckling* and *krechtsing* heavenward as if they were ax murderers looking for mercy for their horrific crimes. And there were no breaks. They *davened* and *davened* and in the few minutes allotted for a break they learned *mussar*.

About one month into my first foray into the *yeshiva* world, I felt like an idiot or worse, a *goy*, finishing *Shemoneh Esrei* while everyone else was still shaking away. I sneaked a look at the fellow in the row in front of me. He was just one *shiur* higher. I was finished but he was only up to *Hamelech Hakadosh*. I thought that if I were to take three steps back before a half hour had passed, the *mashgiach* would pull me by my ear and throw me out of *yeshiva*. And no, I was not running to open a *Gemara*.

In an ironic twist of fate, that very *nusach* is used where I now daven every *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, in the *Yeshiva Gedolah* and *Kollel* of the Five Towns, where Rav Knobel served many years as *baal mussaf*.

For me it has all come together, with Rav Spiegel at one end of town, Rav Knobel on the other, and the Young Israel in the middle. I will never know for sure if the *Ribono Shel Olam* liked the songs of *Ki Anu Amecha* or *Hayom, Hayom, Hayom* the way they sing it in the Young Israel, or the intonations of the *yeshiva minyan*. I won't dare weigh whether the strained *shofar* blowing of a Holocaust survivor means less than the powerful blasts of the *shofar* by a *yeshiva rebbe*. And I will never know if the 15-minute *Shemoneh Esrei*, each word read while looking at an English translation, is worth any less than an hour of shaking and *shuckling*, with sporadic forays into unknown worlds way beyond the *siddur*.

I don't have to know. It's *Rosh Hashanah* and all we have to do is remember that He knows. And despite the different ways we sing and shake, despite the different ways we sound the *shofar* and even eat our meals, there is one service that I believe all of us perform exactly the same. All of us, no matter where or how we *daven*.

We all say *Aleinu*, declare His Oneness and then prostrate ourselves flat on our faces in total subservience to His Majesty while declaring that he is our King.

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky



The original location of Congregation Eitz Chaim, 724 West Broadway

"Yes, I must admit. All of my three children have payos — long payos."

The silence was deafening, but the Rabbi, after waiting a few precious moments continued. "But not to worry, they are all girls!"

mechitzos, mingled the genders and introduced the nouveau leniencies and egalitarian rituals of Conservative Judaism into their services. The group asked Rabbi Kamenetzky to explore various shul constitutions that included stop-gap measures to prevent their new shul from turning Conservative. They wanted to make sure that it would eternally remain an Orthodox shul.

Another committee was assigned to find a two-family house that would serve both as a dwelling for the rabbi and his family and a place to call a shul. The search was on for a permanent location for a home for Rabbi Kamenetzky and a shul for the newly established Eitz Chaim South Shore Jewish Center.

Within a month both were nearly realized. In May of 1956, Lester Greenberg loaned the rabbi $500 for a deposit on a home on Barnard Avenue on the southern side of Peninsula Boulevard.



Gedaliah Maidenbaum

One problem remained. The existing tenant would not budge on the lease and would not move out! Lester Greenberg arranged for the rabbi and family to stay at the home of Nachum (Nat) and Esther Maidenbaum at 66 Washington Avenue in Cedarhurst. When Rabbi Kamenetzky arrived at the home, he did not find a middle-aged couple, instead he found an elderly gentlemen who was waiting for him. "My name is Gedaliah Maidenbaum. I am Nachum's father. Nachum and Esther had to go away for Shabbos; I will be your host."

Once again providence played an amazing role: Rabbi Kamenetzky noticed a familiar accent in this man's dialect. It sounded a bit like the Polish-Lithuanian dialect of Yiddish that the rabbi was accustomed to.

"Where were you from in Europe?" he asked. "What *shtetl* are you from?"

The answer was a shock. "I am from Ostrove-Mazeviezk," replied Reb Gedaliah.

"Ostrove-Mazeviezk?" repeated Rabbi Kamenetzky in amazement. "Do you know the Spiegel family? My wife's grandfather, Rabbi Naftali Aryeh Spiegel was the rebbe in that town, known as the Ostrove-Kalushiner Rebbe!"

Indeed, the Maidenbaums were not only familiar with the rebbe, but they were *chassidim* of Reb Naftali Aryeh. They went to him for blessings and advice as well.

Rabbi Kamenetzky's relationship with the Maidenbaum family, born that Friday, endures until today. In fact, a building of the yeshiva he was about to establish would bear the name of the venerable host of the rabbi's first Shabbos in Woodmere, Gedaliah Maidenbaum Preparatory School.



Rabbi Naftali Aryeh Spiegel, the Ostrove-Kalushiner Rebbe

As the shul began to function in earnest, rumors in the neighborhood began to fly. People were buzzing about a different type of rabbi that would be moving to the area – memories of the Sederhaila Yeshiva founded in Woodmere in the early 1950s by Rabbi Moshe Neuschloss were evoked.

Back in the earlier part of the 1950s, a group of Chassidim tried to establish a *kehillah* in Woodmere, but they were unsuccessful and left. Likewise, when Rabbi Kamenetzky first came with his family, many were not welcoming to the Brooklyn rabbi moving to the area.

They heard the words, "Brooklyn rabbi" and immediately thought that the dreaded chassidim were coming.

One evening Rabbi Kamenetzky received a call from a soon to be neighbor on Barnard Avenue, a Mr. Snyder.

"Hello, this is Mr. Snyder, I understand you are moving to Woodmere."

"Yes, *Im Yirtzeh Hashem*."

"Excuse me?"

"I mean God willing"

"Rabbi, I am not worried about God, the question is, are *we* willing? Are the *neighbors* willing?"

"Excuse me?" countered Rabbi Kamenetzky. "Is there a problem?"

"Let me ask you a question. Is it true that your children have *payos*?"



The three Kamenetzky girls shortly before moving to Woodmere.
(L-R): Esther, Sarah and Shoshana

Thursday, June 21, 1956

Etz Chaim, New Temple, Holds Third Service



Rabbi Benj. Kamentzky

A new Jewish congregation, Etz Chaim, will hold its third service this Saturday morning under the direction of Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetsky. The temporary temple is a store at 732 West Broadway, Woodmere.

Etz Chaim, an orthodox congregation, is composed, at present of about 40 families. It met, without organization, in the late months of 1955. It became formally organized in Jan. of this year with Samuel Zuckerberg, Manfred Lehman, Myron Bienenfeld, Joseph Herman and Meyer Greenberg among the founders.

Rabbi Kamenetsky, whose father is dean of Torah Vordath in New York, is a graduate of the Rabbinical College of Baltimore. He comes to Woodmere from Congregation Sons of Jacob in Brooklyn.

The new congregation is in the midst of registration for the Hebrew School which it intends opening this year.

He Counts to 10



Some of the early members and founders of Young Israel of Woodmere.
L-R: Manny Libin; Sam Weill; Frank Herman; Joe Peterseil; Rabbi Lebor; Ed Kopell; Gabriel Deutsch

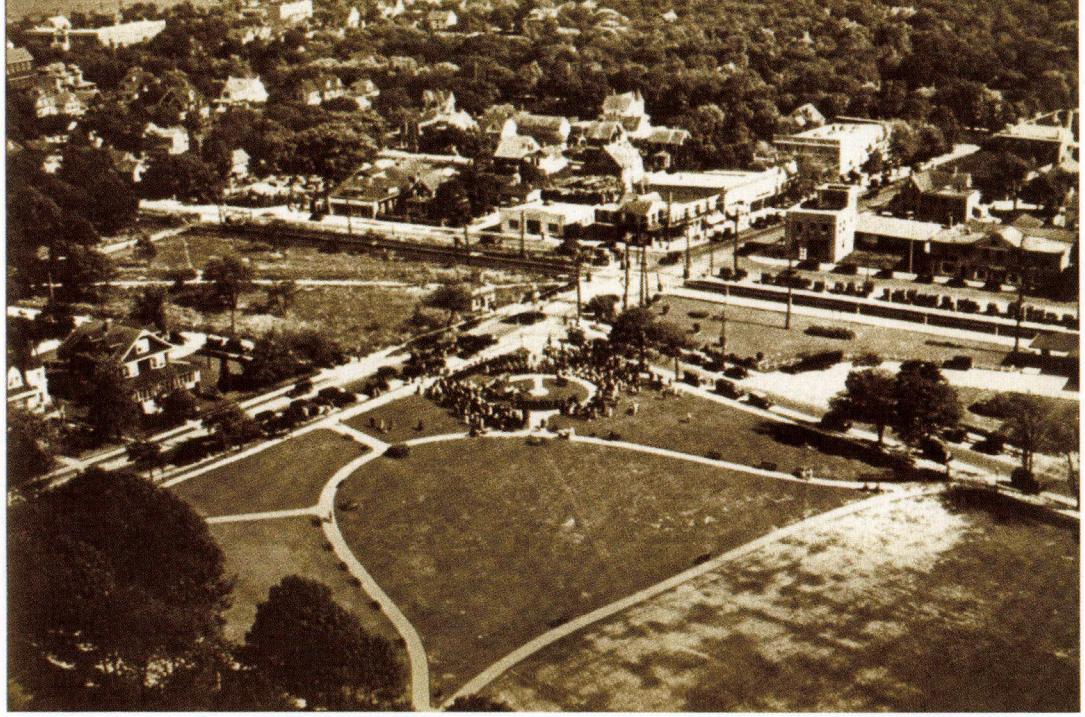
Rabbi Kamenetzky, paused. It was a long pause. And then he finally answered. "Yes, I must admit. All of my three children have *payos* – long *payos*."

The silence was deafening, but the rabbi, after waiting a few precious moments continued. "But you have nothing to fear. They are all girls!"

It was only a few weeks before Rabbi Kamenetzky, his wife — the daughter of a Chassidic rebbe, and their three girls who spoke fluent Yiddish, moved to Woodmere, to a home that was not far from Mr. Snyder.

But now the task at hand was for Rabbi Kamenetzky to look for a place to call a shul. In June of 1956 he found a machine shop – two stores together – 732-734 West Broadway. The shul's new board signed a lease for four months. That would get them through the summer months. Much had to be done to fix up the shul; there were no fixtures, no benches, no *Aron Kodesh* and worst of all, it was difficult to turn a machine shop into a shul in a week.

Rabbi Kamenetzky returned to his home turf, Blake Avenue in East New York, and picked up some strong fellows who got the place in order. A Mr. Zisholtz, who owned a factory in East New York, removed the fixtures



The woods and fields in this 1924 aerial view of Cedarhurst are only memories, but the distinctive pathways of Cedarhurst Park are easily recognizable.

from an unused part of his building and donated them to the shul, and a Mr. Eider who had connections to an old movie theatre, got some used seats donated!

Mr. Aaron became very involved in the renovation process; he oversaw the workers as they cleaned out the stores and went with the rabbi to pick out linoleum.

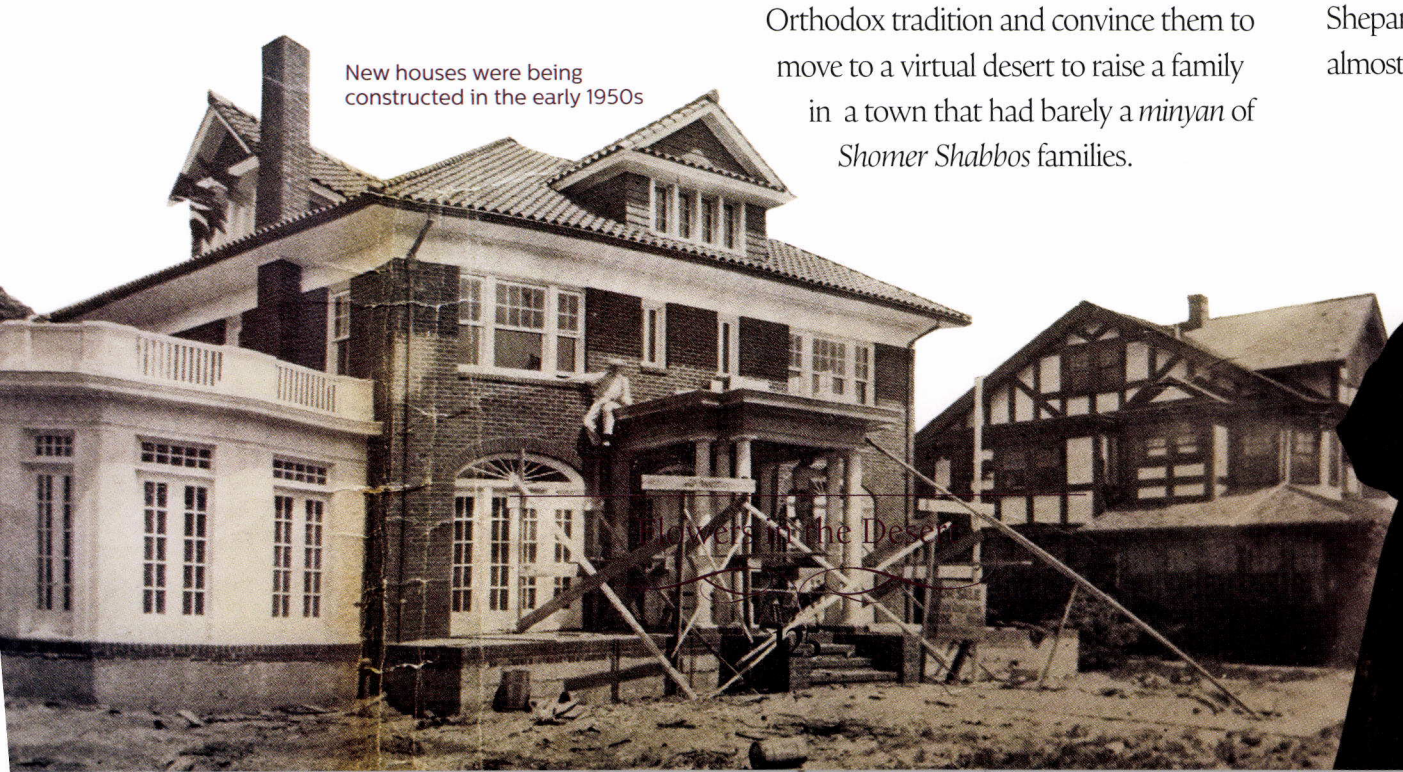
All the members worked as a team to get everything in place, and somehow the little shul was open for (religious) business on Shabbos *Parshas* Korach, June 1956.

Rabbi Kamenetzky, who had not moved into his home as of yet, came alone to spend the Shabbos with the newly formed *kehillah*.

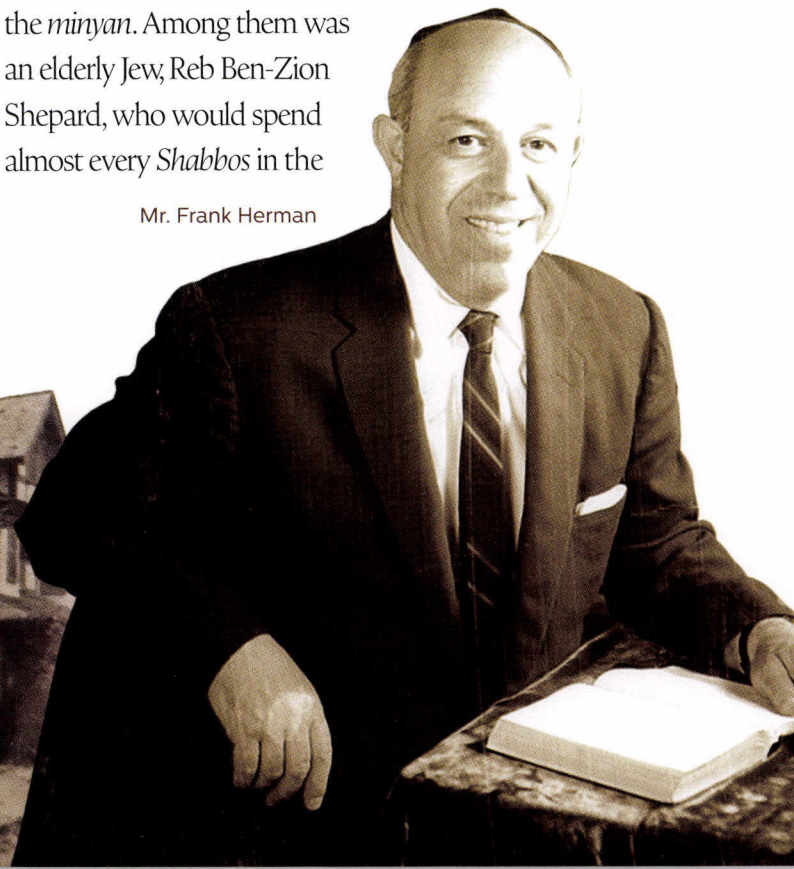
The clientele who may have been interested in an Orthodox synagogue were few and far between. Most people who walked by were not interested in the goings on inside, but, as a curiosity, some people stuck their heads in to the services to take a peek. Some stayed and came back for the next week's services. But it was hard to attract families who were already committed to Orthodox tradition and convince them to move to a virtual desert to raise a family in a town that had barely a *minyan* of *Shomer Shabbos* families.

Rabbi Kamenetzky sought the help of an old friend from Yeshiva Ner Yisrael of Baltimore, David Schwartz, the executive director of Congregation Beth Sholom. David helped prepare press releases announcing adult education classes, plans for a Talmud Torah, Hebrew School and plans for a new building for Eitz Chaim on Peninsula Boulevard. All this with the knowledge that the lease for the West Broadway location would be over not long after the last *hakafa* on Simchas Torah of 1956! Then they would have to start all over again!

The small shul had to start attracting people who would move to Woodmere. The shul needed a vote of confidence from those who lived elsewhere, had young children, and had the confidence that this neighborhood would be the right choice for their families, not only socially but religiously as well. It was decided that a daily *minyan* would be vital to attract new people. Again it was the elderly men who formed the core of the *minyan*. Among them was an elderly Jew, Reb Ben-Zion Shepard, who would spend almost every *Shabbos* in the



New houses were being constructed in the early 1950s



Mr. Frank Herman

Flowers in the Desert



Above: Broadway follows the route of an old Indian trail that stretched from Hempstead Village to Far Rockaway. The site of an early stage coach stop, the intersection of Broadway and Franklin Avenues has been the business center of Hewlett village since its founding.

Kamenetzky home, since his own children were not observant. Some elderly women would come on Shabbos as well.

The only children to attend the shul were the rabbi's daughters who would leave the house dressed in their Shabbos clothes. It was a real anomaly to all of the Jewish kids in the area who only knew of services on the High Holy Days at best. (See "Spice of Life" on page 106)

Shortly thereafter, in December 1956, Mr. Frank Herman, a Holocaust survivor who had become a successful businessman, moved to Woodmere and took an active part in the affairs of the synagogue.

The lease was over and the shul had been staying in the newly formed Yeshiva of South Shore, about



Frank and Estelle Herman receiving award at a Yeshiva of South Shore Dinner from Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kamenetzky

a mile east of the original location. Since Rabbi Kamenetzky served as the rabbi of Eitz Chaim and the principal of the fledgling Yeshiva of South Shore as well, he decided to move the shul there. The building was on 4 Oak Street in Woodmere, one of the "tree streets" (Elm, Pine, Oak and Linden), that run perpendicular to Central Avenue, the main thoroughfare of the Five Towns. It was there that the first bar mitzvah of the young *kehillah* took place. The bar mitzvah boy was Bobby Schulman, known now as Dr. Robert Schulman, a prominent internist in Brooklyn's Maimonides Hospital. Robert's

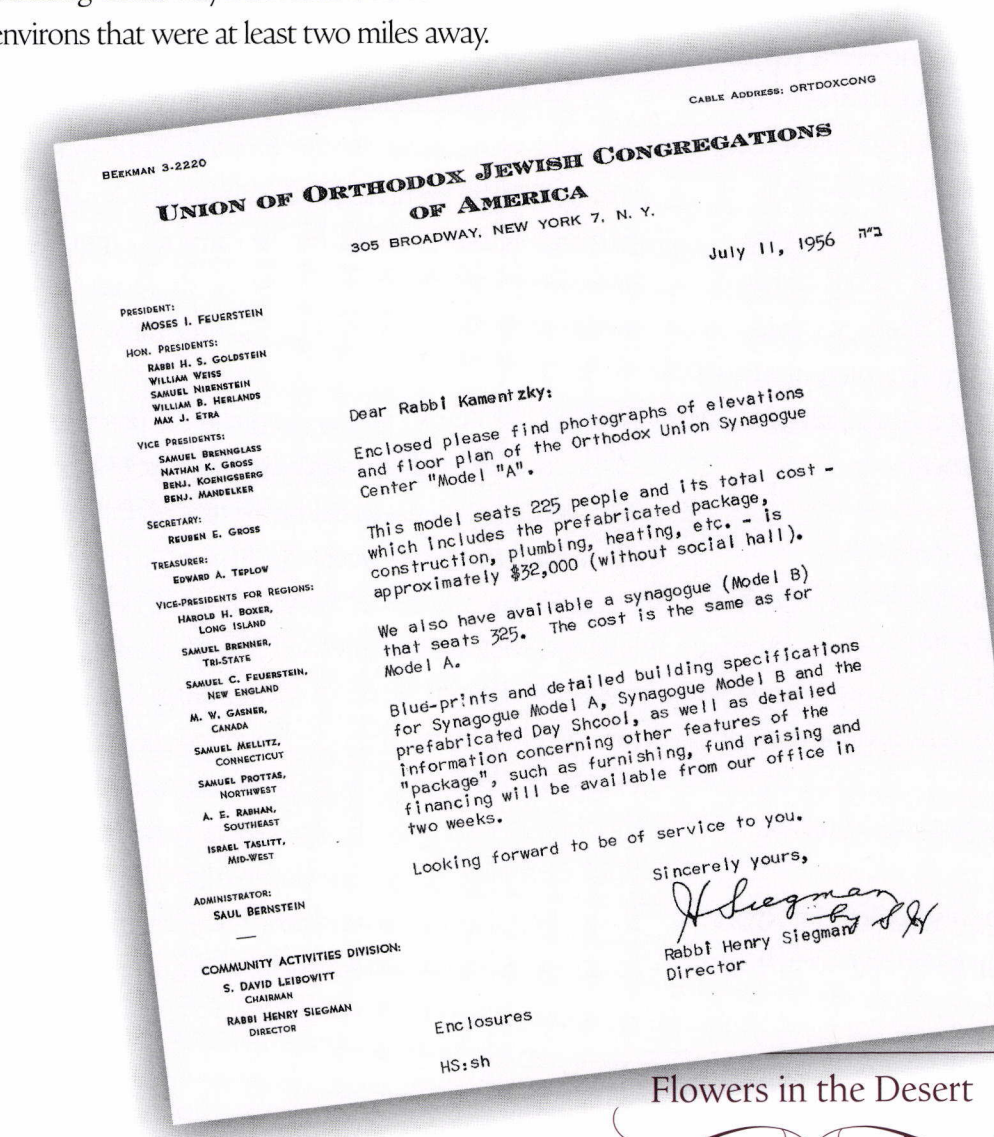
"We moved from Hillcrest because they made a shul right next door to me!" "We will make barbecues on Yom Kippur and smoke you out!"

parents, Milton and Molly, had been members of the Conservative Temple Beth David in Lynbrook but their rabbi, Morris Friedman, encouraged them to send their children to a Jewish day school and join the new Orthodox congregation in Woodmere. They were just one of many families that Rabbi Friedman had a role in helping move toward Orthodox observance.



Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky and Robert Schulman at his Bar Mitzvah at Congregation Eitz Chaim, the forerunner of Young Israel of Woodmere

However it was the last bar mitzvah in that location. Oak Street proved too far a walk for the members living in the budding Cedar Bay Park area and other environs that were at least two miles away. And with hardly any observant Jews in the "tree street" area, it became almost impossible to assemble a *minyan*.



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UNION OF ORTHODOX JEWISH CONGREGATIONS OF AMERICA

305 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 7, N. Y.

July 11, 1956 ב"ה

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COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES DIVISION:
S. DAVID LEIBOWITT
CHAIRMAN
RABBI HENRY SIEGMAN
DIRECTOR

Dear Rabbi Kamenitzky:

Enclosed please find photographs of elevations and floor plan of the Orthodox Union Synagogue Center "Model "A".

This model seats 225 people and its total cost - which includes the prefabricated package, construction, plumbing, heating, etc. - is approximately $32,000 (without social hall).

We also have available a synagogue (Model B) that seats 325. The cost is the same as for Model A.

Blue-prints and detailed building specifications for Synagogue Model A, Synagogue Model B and the prefabricated Day Shcool, as well as detailed information concerning other features of the "package", such as furnishing, fund raising and financing will be available from our office in two weeks.

Looking forward to be of service to you.

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Henry Siegman
Director

Enclosures

HS:sh

Therefore, in the summer of 1957, the members of Congregation Eitz Chaim decided to purchase a more centrally located building. They put a deposit on a house at 600 Oceanpoint Avenue on the north side of Peninsula Boulevard. This house had been built by a Mr. Lee, of Lee Builders (not to be confused with the owner of the Lee Estate) who was building an area called Park Circle at the time. He had a model home available on the other side of Peninsula on Oceanpoint Avenue—originally built for a one family occupancy in Cedarhurst. He agreed to allow the *minyan* in the model home, but the neighbors made an uproar.

Rabbi Kamenetzky recalls some of the shouting: "We moved from Hillcrest because they made a shul right next door to me!" "We will make barbecues on Yom Kippur and smoke you out!"

Left: The OU's response for a request to construct a synagogue



500 Forest Avenue, the fourth home of the fledgling Young Israel of Woodmere

Indeed, when services began at the new location, there immediately arose a storm of protests from the neighboring homeowners. A meeting of the parties was called at Yeshiva of South Shore to discuss the situation. The opposition showed up en masse, over 50 strong. In view of this outpouring of negative sentiment by the local community, it was felt best to abandon the house as a shul site. Noted activist Hebert Tenzer and a well known attorney, David Koss joined with Herbert Berman, a representative of the Orthodox Union, who came to the contentious meeting to try to make a settlement.

A compromise finally was worked out. The congregation could hold services at the Oceanpoint address for the High Holidays in 1957, with the promise that immediately after the High Holy days they would vacate the model home. Mr. Lee returned the deposit.

Once again, the young synagogue was homeless.

In addition, things did not go so smoothly for Rabbi Kamenetzky. Pressure was placed on him to help the congregation grow and raise funds for the needs of the small *minyan*. Rabbi Kamenetzky had additional pressures meeting the challenges of his own yeshiva – and the situation came to a head. He had a choice to make, and decided that he had to devote his full strength to the yeshiva. He would help be a part of the growth of the shul, but he came to a mutual agreement with the members of the shul that he would no longer serve as their full time rabbi.

Pressure was placed on Rabbi Kamenetzky to help the congregation grow and raise funds for the needs of the small minyan.

At that time, Frank Herman assumed the presidency of the shul. Immediately after Yom Kippur 1957, an emergency meeting was held with nine members: Elliot Austern, Lester Greenberg, Meyer Greenberg, Frank Herman, Jack Kiel, Edward Koppel, BenZion Shepard, Milton Schulman and Sam Zuckerberg. By a vote of 8-1, Frank Herman was authorized to acquire new quarters for the floundering congregation. Mr. Herman purchased a home, 500 Forest Avenue, on the southeast corner of Forest Avenue and Peninsula Boulevard, for $24,500. The house was to be home for the shul for the next seven years, and is affectionately remembered by the old timers for its flying insects on

the hot Sabbath afternoons in the summer and the dishwasher starter button that proved so irresistible to the fingers of the new young children coming to shul.

It was not so simple, however. Nobody wanted to sell a new house for use as a shul. The previous experience of the tumult and protests that took place back when the *minyan* began in a home in Cedarhurst and later in Woodmere on Oak Street, were well publicized in the neighborhood, and thus, the house had to be bought by an individual and the title then taken under that individual's name. The money for the down payment was raised among the small number of members who had to come up with 25% of the purchase price at closing.

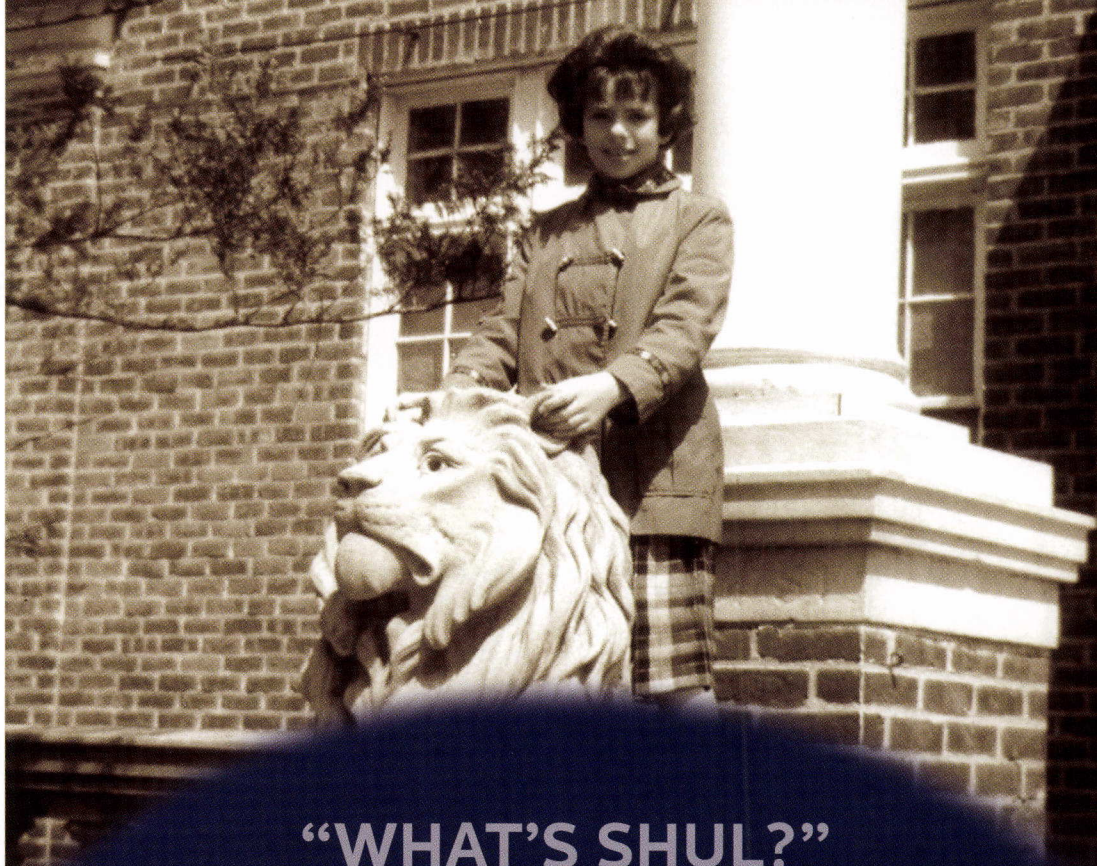


Rabbi Ephraim Sturm

Through the efforts of Frank Herman and the other board members, the shul on 500 Forest Avenue was ready for High Holiday services for the first time in 1958. Eitz Chaim finally had a home of its own, and the board felt that aligning with a national organization would help the fledgling *minyan* gain some prominence as well.

Irving Bunim (at podium)





"WHAT'S SHUL?"

I WAS NOT BORN YET, and bringing my three sisters from their comfortable life in thriving East New York, to the barren Woodmere was indeed a challenge.

During her first weeks in Woodmere, My sister Shoshana had made friends with Beth Sulzbaker, a child who hardly knew what being Jewish meant. On her third Shabbos in Woodmere, my sister was out early on her way to the shul that my father had just established a few blocks away.

Beth stared at her friend who was dressed up for no apparent reason. "Where ya going, Shawnee?" she asked.

"To shul." My sister looked down at her frilly pink Shabbos dress and repeated, "I'm going to shul."

"Shul?" Beth repeated incredulously. "What's shul?"

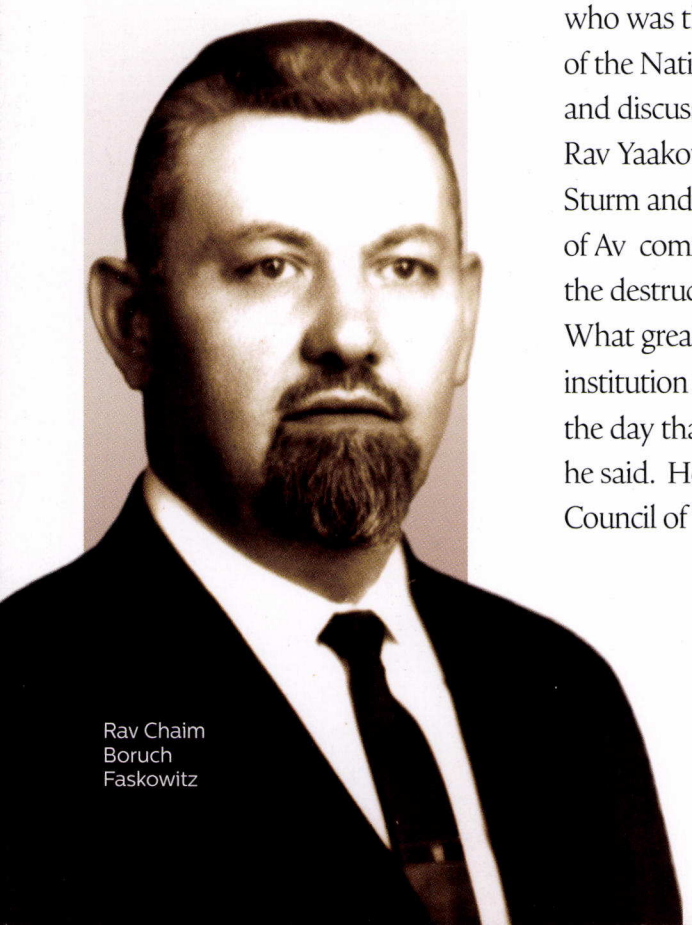
"Shul?" asked Shoshana "What do you mean, 'what's shul?' Shul is shul!"

The conversation bounced back and forth for a minute, until Beth's father came out of the house dressed in overalls and carrying gardening tools. "Dad?" asked Beth. "What's shul?"

"Oh, Beth!" he exclaimed. "Shul is temple!"

My sister's eyes widened in uneasiness. "Temple?" she repeated incredulously, "what's temple?"

"I think I said a good thought, but it is lying somewhere in the room..." In other words, he thought that although the idea was wonderful, it never entered anybody's mind!



Rav Chaim Boruch Faskowitz



Right: Rabbi Kamenetzky stands as Rabbi E. Rackman, and Rabbi Sidney Lebor test YOSS students

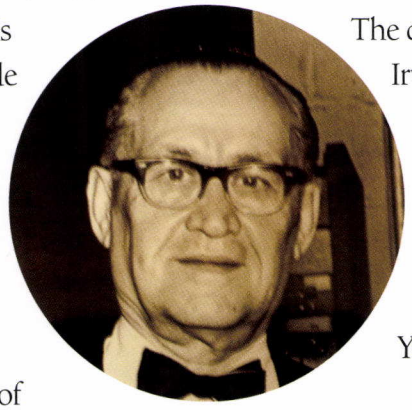
"Maybe, if we become part of the Young Israel movement," they suggested, "people would want to move here and join the shul."

Shortly thereafter, the members entered negotiations with the National Council of Young Israel, represented by Rabbi Ephraim (Frank) Sturm, with the goal of obtaining a branch charter. The need was felt, not only for national affiliation, but also to insure the Orthodox character of the synagogue in the future. Joining the Young Israel movement would help provide a guarantee.

The National Council of Young Israel was hesitant to approve this fledgling group as a Young Israel. Some in the National Council did not see a future for Orthodoxy in Woodmere.

It was Tisha B'Av 1958. Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky's father, Rav Yaakov, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, was in town visiting his son. Sometime that afternoon, he made a point to meet with Rabbi Sturm, who was the executive vice president of the National Council at the time, and discuss the situation with him. Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky met Rabbi Sturm and noted the date. "The 9th of Av commemorates the anniversary of the destruction of both Temples in Jerusalem. What greater day is there to establish a new institution in which to worship the Almighty than the day that our *Bais HaMikdash* was destroyed?" he said. He assured Rabbi Sturm that the National Council of Young Israel's concerns about the shul losing the Orthodox character of the *minyan* were unfounded and guaranteed the integrity of his son's leadership and his commitment to Orthodoxy.

Rabbi Sturm accepted the assurance and Rav Yaakov reiterated, "The Bais HaMikdash was destroyed today. How fitting it would be that we agree to establish a new, small *Bais HaMikdash* in this community, starting today."



Nathan Farber

The deal was sealed. With the urging of Irving Bunim, a major lay leader in the Young Israel movement and a powerful force in Torah Jewry, together with the advocacy of Rabbi Sturm, South Shore Jewish Center – Congregation Eitz Chaim was officially chartered as Young Israel of Woodmere.

This affiliation proved to be one of the most important and farsighted decisions taken, shaping the nature and composition of the congregation's membership for the foreseeable future and laying the seeds of one of the largest Orthodox congregations in America.



SOUTH SHORE RECORD

January 20, 1966

Closing Ranks

Maurice Sameroff Photo

EN AT CLOSING OF MORTGAGE granted by Peninsula National Bank to the Young Israel of Wood-re, Peninsula Blvd., Woodmere, are (seated, from left): Julius Rosenzweig, temple president; W. s of the Title Co.; Jerome W. McDermott, PNB president; Rabbi Sidney Lebor; Selwyn Karp, attorney the temple. Standing: Rudolph Rosen, temple board member; Oreste Muglia and Frank Reno, PNB istant vice presidents; and Sam Weill, temple board member.



Norman Dachs

In the summer of 1959, Nathan Farber assumed the presidency of the congregation. Among the couples who moved into the area and joined the shul was Julius and Grace Rosenzweig, who moved around the corner after having resided in the Parkchester section of the Bronx for nine years, where Julius was a vice president of the Young Israel there. It was in Parkchester, at a parlor meeting with officers of the National Council, that Julius first learned about plans for a Young Israel in Woodmere and was told to contact Rabbi Kamenetzky.

During that crucial period, Rabbi Kamenetzky's time was taken up more and more extensively at the Yeshiva of South Shore, and as more people moved into the area and joined the synagogue, the

HIS KEHILLAH CRIED WITH HIM

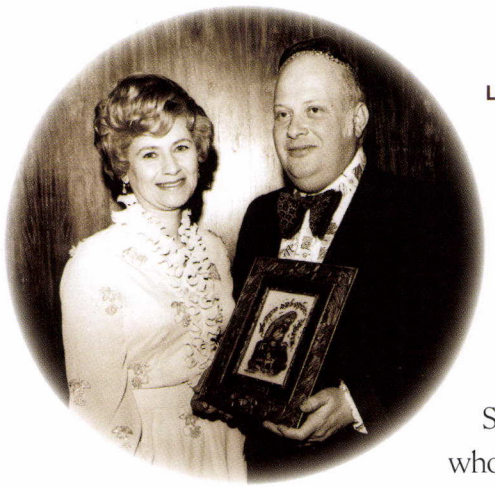
RABBI CHAIM BORUCH FASKOWITZ was born in Poland in 1916. A son-in-law of the renowned Dean of the Novardok Yeshiva, Rabbi Avraham Yaffen, he was hailed as a brilliant Torah scholar and a magnificent orator.

Rabbi Faskowitz served as Chief Rabbi of Rochester in the 1950s and in 1959 he served very briefly as the Rabbi of Young Israel of Woodmere. Although he was an excellent orator, his mother tongue was Yiddish, a language not well understood, by the younger American crowd moving into the Five Towns. It was not long before Rabbi Faskowitz left Woodmere and assumed a position as the Rabbi of the Clymer Street (Brisker) shul, on the Lower East Side. In his late seventies, Rabbi Faskowitz established a pulpit in Bais Medrash of Hillcrest, an institution that ultimately became a recognized Torah Center in Queens, Yeshiva Madreigos HaAdam led by his son, Rabbi Moshe Faskowitz.

An interesting story, cited by the Hakhel Website, tells of a Holocaust survivor, who interacted with Rabbi Faskowitz in an extremely emotional manner. The man, whose father was named Noach, had 13 uncles and brothers who were murdered by the Nazis. On the fast day, Asara BaTeves, the sole survivor observed one collective Yahrzeit for them all, since he did not know the specific dates upon which each of them was killed. (This was a practice among many survivors. They picked a date that thier ghetto was liquidated, or the date that a transport arrived in a death camp.) On the tenth of Teves, the man approached Rabbi Faskowitz, and asked if a collective *Kel Molai Rachamim*, the prayer recited in memory of the departed, could be made for them. Rabbi Faskowitz himself took the Sefer Torah and began to recite the *Kel Molai* As the man was about to give him the list of all of the names to be inserted in the appropriate spot, Rabbi Faskowitz stopped him and informed him that he would making a distinct *Kel Molai,* for each of the martyrs. Each of the victims had their own life, and there would be no wholesale prayers or remembrances. About half way through the Kel Molais, HaRav Faskowitz could no longer bear reciting brother after brother, name after name, which concluded with the same father–"Ben Noach"–and with the Sefer Torah in hand, he sat down crying, as his *kehillah* cried with him.

Myron Kaufman, a lifelong member of Far Rockaway's Shaarey Tefilah Congregation, had a warm spot for an Orthodox shul in his heart.

need for a full time rabbi became more and more apparent. Rabbi Kamenetzky was not taking a salary from the shul, but even in an unofficial capacity, others complained that he was not devoting enough time to its success.



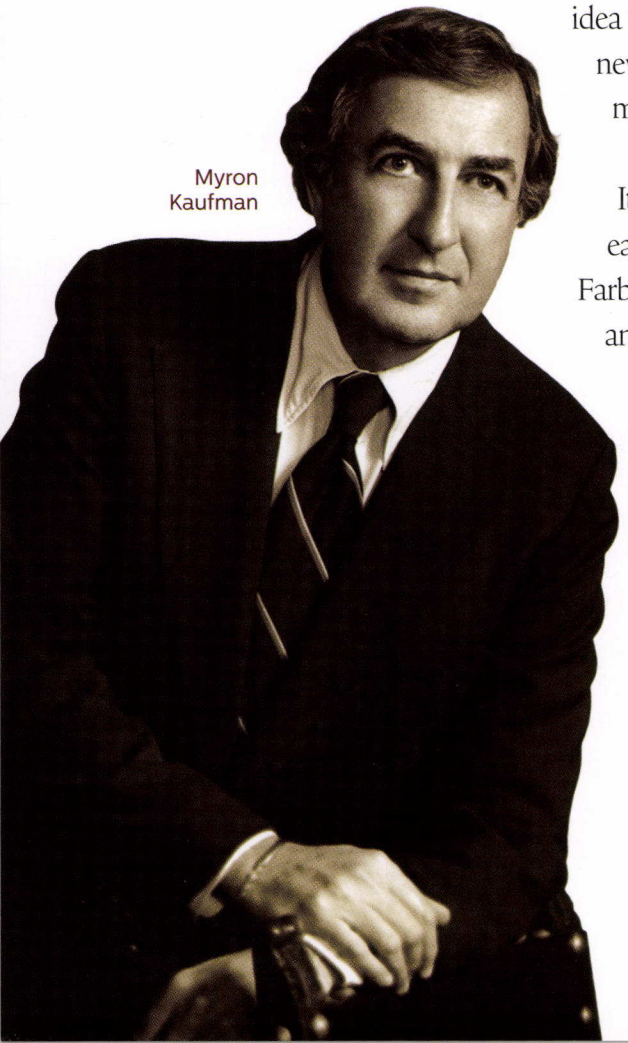
Left: Leonard and Adele Goldstein

The interviewees for the position included distinguished rabbanim, among them Rav Chaim Boruch Faskowitz *(see sidebar)*, a distinguished Talmudic scholar who had been a rabbi in Rochester, New York. Rabbi Faskowitz stayed for a few weeks, but his *drashos* (sermons) were in Yiddish, a language that most of the congregants did not speak and did not understand. Rabbi Faskowitz confided in Norman Dachs, a student of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath who understood Yiddish, "*Ich mein az ich zug a gut vort, uber es ligt ergetz* – I think I said a good thought, but it is lying somewhere in the room..." In other words, he thought that although the idea was wonderful, it never entered anyone's mind!

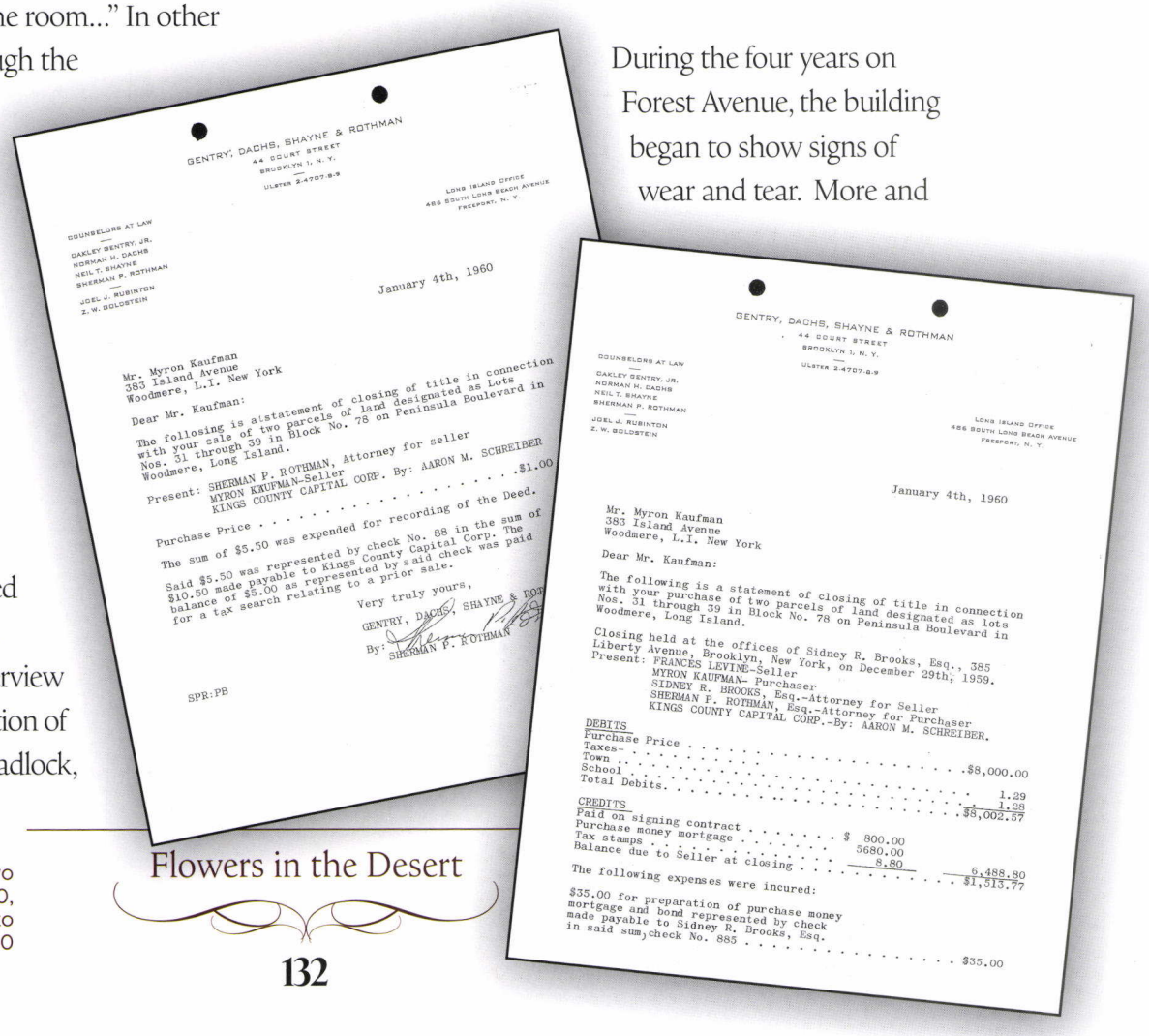
It was at this time, early in 1960, that Mr. Farber resigned as president and Milton Schulman, who had served as vice president, assumed the presidency. A committee was formed and the congregation began to seriously interview candidates for the position of rabbi. After an initial deadlock, a compromise was worked out by certain active members, among them Harry Schlacht, turning the administration over to a new team, with Edward Koppel as president and engaging Rabbi Sidney Lebor. A native of England who had studied in the Mir Yeshiva before the war, Rabbi Lebor had served almost ten years as the first spiritual head of the newly merged Bikur Cholim and Sheveth Achim Synagogues in New Haven, Connecticut and later as the rabbi of Young Israel of Sheepshead Bay. The salary was not enough to sustain a full time rabbi so Rabbi Lebor took a position teaching at the Yeshiva of South Shore where his son, Dovid, was a student.

It was a difficult summer for the small, active group in the shul but a part of the maturing process.

During the four years on Forest Avenue, the building began to show signs of wear and tear. More and



Myron Kaufman



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ULSTER 2-4707-8-9

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COUNSELORS AT LAW
OAKLEY GENTRY, JR.
NORMAN H. DACHS
NEIL T. SHAYNE
SHERMAN P. ROTHMAN
JOEL J. RUBINTON
Z. W. GOLDSTEIN

January 4th, 1960

Mr. Myron Kaufman
383 Island Avenue
Woodmere, L.I. New York

Dear Mr. Kaufman:

The following is a statement of closing of title in connection with your purchase of two parcels of land designated as lots Nos. 31 through 39 in Block No. 78 on Peninsula Boulevard in Woodmere, Long Island.

Closing held at the offices of Sidney R. Brooks, Esq., 385 Liberty Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, on December 29th, 1959.
Present: FRANCES LEVINE-Seller
MYRON KAUFMAN- Purchaser
SIDNEY R. BROOKS, Esq.-Attorney for Seller
SHERMAN P. ROTHMAN, Esq.-Attorney for Purchaser
KINGS COUNTY CAPITAL CORP.-By: AARON M. SCHREIBER.

DEBITS		
Purchase Price		$8,000.00
Taxes-		
Town		1.29
School		1.28
Total Debits		$8,002.57
CREDITS		
Paid on signing contract	$ 800.00	
Purchase money mortgage	5680.00	
Tax stamps	8.80	
Balance due to Seller at closing		6,488.80
		$1,513.77

The following expenses were incured:

$35.00 for preparation of purchase money mortgage and bond represented by check made payable to Sidney R. Brooks, Esq. in said sum, check No. 885 . . . . . $35.00

After purchasing two parcels of land for $8,000, Myron Kaufman sold it to the Young Israel for $1.00



(L–R): Julius Rosenzweig, Herbert Tenzer, Rabbi Lebor, Aaron Jacoby

more families began moving into the area and children were filling up the shul. What was once a struggling synagogue that had to send children out to look for a tenth man, had became a burgeoning center for Jewish growth in the area. And the house, not meant for a shul, was becoming worn down.

Even the first *Yomim Noraim* in the new building on Forest Avenue was a pivotal one, and though the Shabbos *minyan* was small, it was packed for the High Holy days. It was so crowded that the shul put up a tent in the backyard. That Yom Kippur it poured. It was cold and the floor became muddy and then the minute that services were over – the tent collapsed. There had to be a better plan.

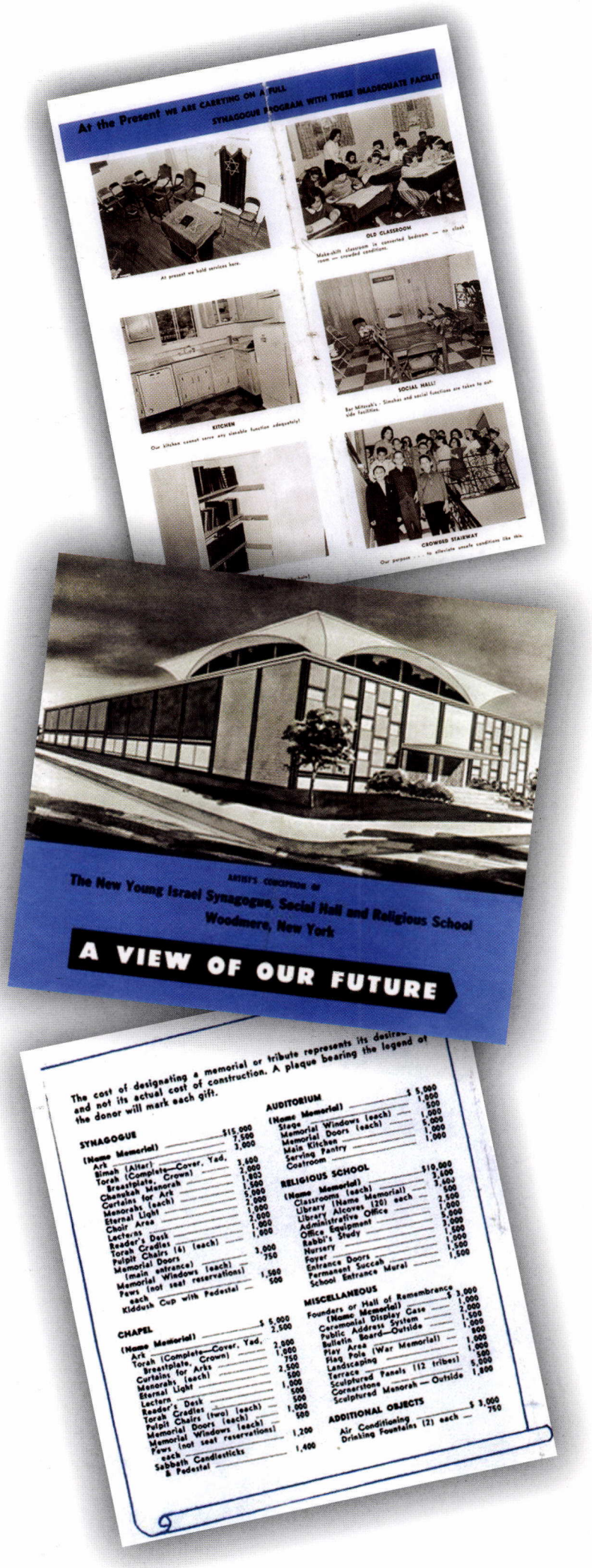


Rabbi Lebor and Rabbi Kamenetzky dancing together at a simcha

Leonard Goldstein, another émigré from East New York, and his family, had recently moved to the Saddle Ridge area of Woodmere. He joined with the existing members to form a committee to find a centrally located piece of land to build a proper home for the shul.

A $600 mandatory building fund assessment was established, and, as Julius Rosenzweig wrote in the shul's 50th anniversary journal, "dues rhymes with lose, and indeed a number of members who were not inclined to participate in the expansion of the shul left because of the imposed building fund tax."

At that time, a traditional Jew named Myron Kaufman had moved onto Island Avenue in Woodmere. Myron had grown up in Far Rockaway, but his parents, members of Shaaray Tefilah, were not able to afford Hebrew School. They were too proud to take a scholarship. Myron's grandfather had been a prominent *maggid* (preacher) in Vilna, Lithuania, and Myron,



Right Column:
The first building campaign brochure for the building on Peninsula Boulevard

Rabbi Lebor speaking at groundbreaking ceremony.

a lifelong member of Far Rockaway's Shaarey Tefilah Congregation always had a warm spot for an Orthodox shul in his heart.

In 1960, Myron personally bought a lot fronting 200 feet along Peninsula Boulevard and 70 feet deep for $8,000. He then sold it to the shul for one dollar and built the shul on it.

It was the beginning of a long history of Myron's benevolence to shuls and yeshivas in the area. In addition, the committee purchased an adjacent bungalow type building for $22,000, which Rudy Rosen arranged to have lifted off its foundation and sold separately. Norman Dachs served gratis as the lawyer for the proceedings. It was one of his many acts of gratis work on behalf of the shul and other community institutions, a tradition of legal aid for institutions that would continue for more half a century until his passing in 2015.

In 1962 Leonard Goldstein was elected president of Young Israel of Woodmere and, under his tenure, the building plans began to materialize. Julius Rosenzweig took office as president in December 1963, and lead the small group in obtaining financing through Peninsula National Bank in the amount of $100,000 as an original construction loan at 6 percent interest,. It was converted into a 20-year mortgage in February 1966. Originally, excavations were for a two-story building, but due to the shortfall in the amount of money raised, the shul had to settle for a one-story building. Under the leadership of Julius Rosenzweig, and Emanuel Libin, Joseph Peterseil, and Norman Dachs, who served as vice presidents the campaign was underway.

In May 1964 a professional fund raiser was engaged and a dedicated effort was launched to obtain pledges for the construction of the new building. It was a difficult, time consuming process, which was partly successful, but here again the burden was carried by a relatively small number of people, among them building chairmen, David Miller and Norman Dachs and building fund chairmen, Sam Weill and Selwyn Karp.



First Young Israel of Woodmere Banquet Journal, under the leadership of Rabbi Lebor.



(L-R): Norman Dachs, David Miller, and Joe Peterseil viewing the construction.

A young Jonathan Dachs (front) and Mordechai Kamenetzky look on.

Although the building was totally completed during the summer of 1965, the shul was officially dedicated with ceremonies beginning Friday evening, October 23, 1964 through Sunday morning, October 25. A Torah transfer procession from the old building at 500 Forest Avenue to the new building at 859 Peninsula Boulevard, marked the occasion.

Yomim Noraim (High Holiday) services were held in the new building for the first time that year, which was a solid improvement over the tent that had to be used in the prior years on Forest Avenue. Indeed, a tent would once again be necessary on the Peninsula Boulevard property as the shul grew in size and membership.

Herbert Bodek took office as president in August 1966 and consolidated the gains achieved in prior years. During his two-year administration, permanent pew seats were installed both downstairs and in the women's section of the synagogue.



Rabbi Lebor (l.) and Joseph Miller (r.)

The sanctuary of YIW, circa 1970



Under the leadership of Julius Rosenzweig, President; Emanual Libin, Joseph Peterseil, and Norman Dachs who served as Vice Presidents the campaign was underway.

He was followed in office by Joseph Miller, who served for one year, during which another memorable event in the history of the shul took place: a Torah was presented to the congregation by Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Goldstein, the first one to be owned outright by the shul.

Joseph Miller's life was tragically ended on December 21, 1988, when a bomb placed by a Libyan terrorist on Pan Am flight 103 detonated over Lockerbie, Scotland. The Young Israel's main sanctuary bears his name.

In June 1969 Philip (Feivi) Fuchs was elected president. During his two-year term of office, the shul acquired the additional piece of land east of the present building on the county pumping station, where they had hoped to erect the additions to its present facilities. The shul expanded its youth program with the hiring of a new youth director, Paul Silverstein, who remains a vital part of all its youth activities until this very day.

Morty Weiser was elected to the presidency in November 1971 and served for one term. During this time, central air conditioning and additional permanent seats were installed in the



Torah procession from the old building at 500 Forest Ave. to the new building at 859 Peninsula Blvd.
(L–R): Julius Rosenzweig, Rabbi Lebor, Lester Greenberg, unknown

synagogue, with additional mandatory assessments to defray the costs of these improvements. His tenure was followed by Gilbert Davidoff, who was elected in November 1972. Gilbert's administration, was sadly cut short by his tragic death in the spring of 1973 when he was struck by a vehicle as he saved the life of his own child who had run out into Peninsula Boulevard. His term in office was completed by Irwin Luxemburg, who in turn was followed by Joshua Muss.

In 1981 Rabbi Lebor retired and a young, dynamic leader, Rabbi Hershel Billet, assumed the position of rabbi. Although much younger than Rabbi Lebor who was in his 70s, the congregants were enamored by his charisma and charm. When asked about his youth he responded simply that a passing blemish never invalidates a sacrificial lamb. Adele Goldstein remembers mentioning that she was old enough to be his mother. Rabbi Billet quipped back, "Then I will treat you with the respect that I afford my mother."

The shul grew exponentially and within a decade, there was hardly any room to sit in the once spacious sanctuary. During the tenures of shul presidents Allen Lebovitz, Allen Ganz, Jacob Weicholz and Elliot Platt, a campaign was initiated toward further expansion. Chaired by David Schreiber, members Bruce Lilker, Mark Honigsfeld, Laurence Garber, Alan Aronowitz, Norman Dachs and Ben Weinstock collaborated on the legal, design and fund-raising efforts. In 1998 the Hershman Building, the new home to myriad *minyan*im from *vasikin* (sunrise) to late evening, was dedicated by Drs. Ronnie and Dwight Hershman. More than ten Shabbos *minyan*im, including a young couples' *minyan*, nusach S'fard *minyan* and a teen and college *minyan* now flourish under the leadership of Rabbi Billet, and the presidency and chairmanship of Shlomo Zuller. Five additional rabbis were appointed to serve. A Bais Medrash program and new adult education programs were initiated. In 2010 Rabbi Sholom Axelrod assumed the position of Co-Rabbi. The shul purchased seven homes adjacent to the YIW current building and is planning an expansion to accommodate the growing needs of the community.

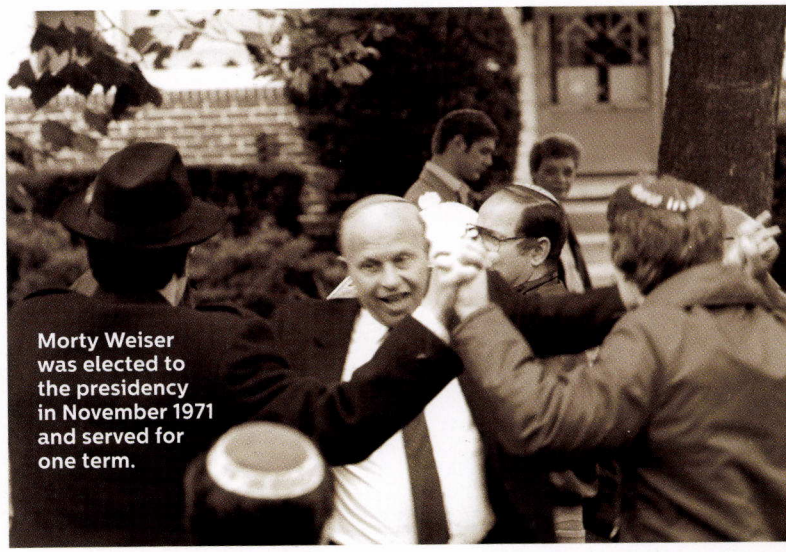
What began as a tiny group of men clamoring for a *minyan* has now become the Young Israel synagogue with the largest membership in the United States.



Joshua Muss, president (holding a new Sefer Torah)



Philip Fuchs, President of YIW 1969.



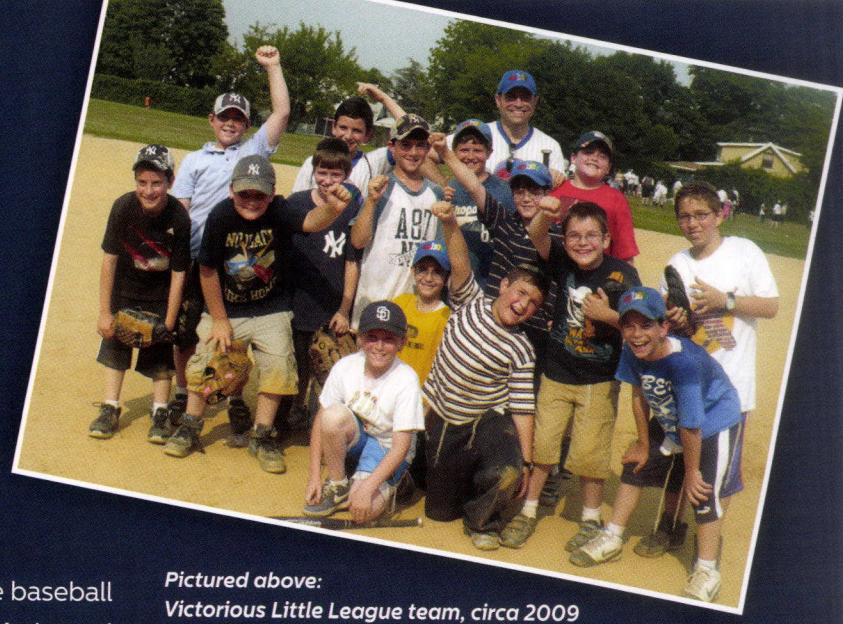
Morty Weiser was elected to the presidency in November 1971 and served for one term.



In 1981 Rabbi Hershel Billet, assumed the position of rabbi. He had previously been Rav in the Blueberry Hill section of Monsey.

Spice of Life

First The Boys of Summer



Pictured above:
Victorious Little League team, circa 2009

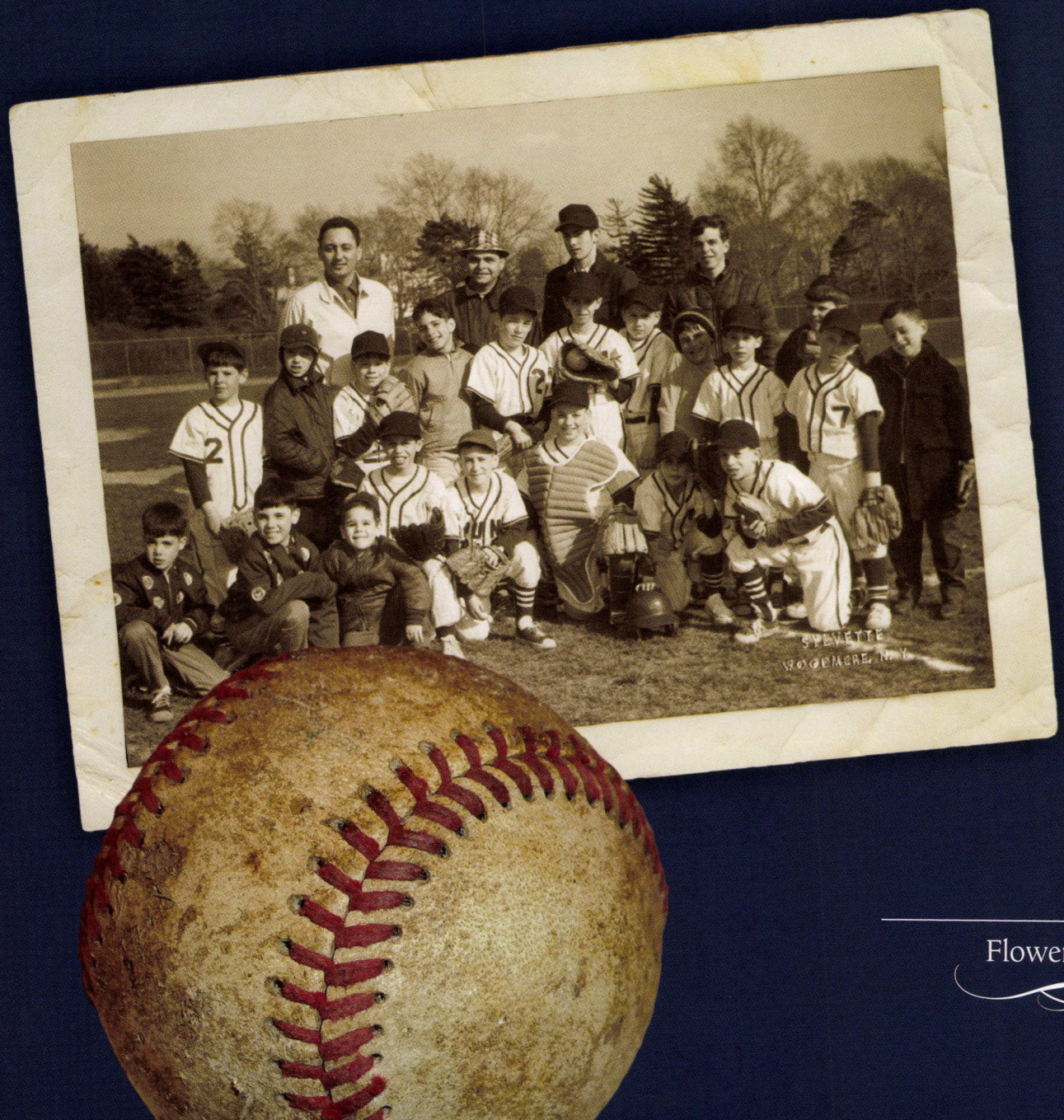
From bottom left to right are (first row) Noam Marans, Zvi Kamenetzky, Ezra Friedlander, unidentified, Arthur Luxenberg, Mordecai Kamenetzky, and David Bodek;

(second row) Ira Heller, unidentified, Maury Heller, Zvi Marans, Billy Eisenberg, William Hochman, Howard Friedman, unidentified, Ellie Libin, Fred Shulman, and unidentified;

(third row) coaches Irwin Luxembourg, Morris Hochman, unidentified, and Emanuel Libin.

I DON'T KNOW if it was as much a breakthrough as the first kosher pizzeria, but what I think was the first Shomer Shabbos Little League where all the players, coaches and umpires were Sabbath observant was probably a breakthrough in the growth of the Orthodox community.

Baseball was a defining activity in the sixties. If you were part of the baseball conversation, if the names Mantle, Maris and Koufax were part of your vernacular, then you were a citizen. And if you played in Little League then you were a real American – a Yankee.



It has been a long while since I have played a regular pickup game of baseball, the type with a legitimate amount of players on a legitimate type of field, with grass and dirt and bases and balls. And, of course, strikes. But as a youngster Little League was part of my life and baseball was always a sport I played or talked about or even used as a parable to explain the most complex Talmudic or theological concept. And baseball was the glue that bound adults together back then. In the innocent world bereft of Jewish scandal, that is what they talked about in shul, and out. After all, who can forget the buzz when Koufax refused to pitch on Yom Kippur back in the 1965 World Series. I mean that was the type of event crafted Divinely for the sermonic experience!

I was once a neophyte in the world of Jewish Education, and things that are perhaps a bit more non grata today were acceptable in that short period of yesteryear, more than a decade ago, especially on the fields of North Woodmere Park. A few members of our school's parent body and neighbors and friends who noticed that I had begun to develop an early-thirties paunch encouraged me to do some exercise, when, of course, they conveniently needed a ninth man on their team. I was a bit reluctant, but remembering the perhaps mythi-

cal (and perhaps not) stories of American *Roshei Yeshiva* who were considered the aces of the handball court, I figured that standing out in the outfield with someone's oversized glove on my left hand would not be so bad. Truth be told, I was always a scrappy player.

And the tradeoff would be a few more guys who committed to a weekly Gemara *shiur* that I was giving then to some community members.

I was really not sure if I would either have the strength or determination to play, and I was wondering, as well, whether I had passed my prime baseball days, so I brought along my 15 year old son, who was home from yeshiva that weekend.

I won't forget the first time that I got up to bat. This was not about me hitting in front of the *baalei batim*, I wanted to show my son that although I may have had some white hairs at 40 years old, I could hit the ball hard. And I did. A screaming line drive. Right toward my son's head. I winced. He did not. He lifted his glove and snagged it effortlessly. And there was a pall of silence on the field.

It was broken by my good friend Yaakov Hagler, from my days in Camp Torah Voda'ath, a campmate whose perpetual smile through thick and thin always seems to sweeten the delightful witticisms that pass through those upturned lips.

"I think the Talmud in Sanhedrin somewhere talks about the ramifications of a son causing his father to get out..."

And that is the last baseball play that I remember. The ninth man arrived, and I asked him to take my place while my son held his position, snagging the balls of non-blood relatives, his distant tribal cousins, as I watched from the sidelines. And with that I officially ended my career as a grown man playing children's games.

It was quite different from the first baseball game that I ever played. That takes much more work to remember, and if not for the picture, maybe I never would.

The picture contains what is now a wide and diverse spectrum of people, who are presently spread across hundreds, perhaps thousands of miles. Back then, the gap was much narrower. We had one thing in common. We were all players on the Young Israel of Woodmere Little League team, probably one of the first *Shomer Shabbos* teams in the USA. The picture contains kids who are now either *menahalim* in yeshivas, world famous *chazzanim*, prominent lawyers, doctors, corporate head hunters, presidents of large *kehillos*, heads of major *chevra kadishas*, and even a *Shomer Shabbos* television producer of reports on world-class and historic events such as Olympic Games, space shuttle launches, and the summit meetings of world leaders.

But back then in the spring of some year in the 1960s, we were just simple kids from the Five Towns—a motley crew of would-be pitchers and catchers, first basemen and outfielders. And then there was me. I was the short-something. At barely 4'10" I knew that I was always going to play something that had short in it: shortstop, short center, and the like.

I really did not care that much about the position as I did about the number on my uniform. In retrospect I can't imagine why anyone let us fight over a number only twenty years after Jews wearing numbers was almost profane. But I did. And I almost lost my best friend, Fred Schulman, over the number. It was a number seven. And the symbolism, suffice it to say, had nothing to do with the lyrics of *Echad Mi Yodea.*

But in retrospect, after growing up and learning a bit more about the man behind the number as opposed to the man behind the plate, I am happy that I lost the fight and that I was not the kid who put a number seven on his spanking new baseball uniform. And in a recent conversation, my friend Fred, now a distinguished member of our community, laughed sadly as he echoed my feelings, "You know, I *really* do wish that it was you who had won, and I had let *you* have that silly number."

Things have changed. Different sports have taken center stage on the American scene and the love affair with Jews and baseball has, like many of the amorous kind, cooled off. The kosher Little League in the Five Towns which spread to Far Rockaway, West Hempstead, North Woodmere and once had hundreds of kids from dozens of shuls is beginning to lose its luster. The proliferation of the Orthodox community has forced the more professional Community Little League to accommodate the Shabbos observant community, and the better athletes have bolted to them.

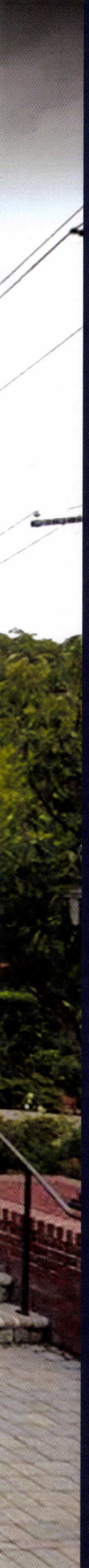
But for me, I will still cherish the memories and friendships forged from those days on the diamond, and revel in the memories of our victories against the few teams that existed back then. And of course in the memories of Koufax sitting out Yom Kippur.


Woodmere Baseball team, early 1900s

YOUNG ISRAEL
OF
LAWRENCE CEDARHURST

יזל שם
שרה ברייא בת עזריאל שלום ע"ה

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YOUNG ISRAEL

— OF —

LAWRENCE-CEDARHURST





Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst
Dinner 1967

The founding of the Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst was not simple. According to both Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky, who was deeply involved with its founding, and Arthur Federman, who was one of the original founders, the story "is fraught with controversy and is very sensitive."

In the years that Orthodoxy was struggling with the quest for modernity, it was a difficult job to grow membership and attract families who were lured by the ability to sit family style and drive their cars to the synagogue.

It was in 1963. Beth Sholom was the only Orthodox shul on the south side of the Long Island Railroad Tracks. The closest other Orthodox synagogues, on the south side of the Long Island Railroad tracks, Shaarey Tefilah, and Kneseth Israel were in Far Rockaway.

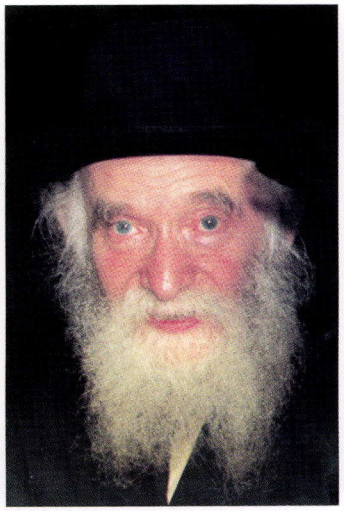
Rabbi Kamenetzky had left his position as the rabbi of Eitz Chaim, and the shul he founded in 1955 was now part of the Young Israel Movement, and known as Young Israel of Woodmere, under the leadership of Rabbi Shaya Lebor.

Beth Sholom was the most prestigious Orthodox synagogue on Long Island. In the years that Orthodoxy was struggling with the force of Conservative Judaism and the quest for modernity, it was a difficult job to grow membership and attract families who were lured by the ability to sit family style and drive their cars to the synagogue. The Conservative congregation, Beth El was just down the block.

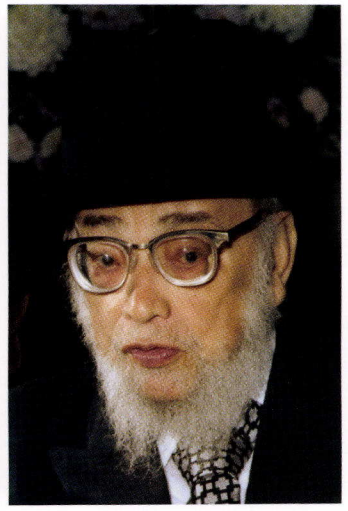
The decorum in synagogue created an austere atmosphere as well. According to Arthur Federman, "If you left the sanctuary before the rabbi's sermon, you could not just walk back in once the rabbi began speaking."



Prime Minister Menachem Begin meeting with the Moetzes Gedolei Torah of America.
(L-R) Rabbi Moshe Sherer, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, Rav Yitzchok Hutner, Rav Moshe Feinstein, Menachem Begin.



Rav Aharon Kotler

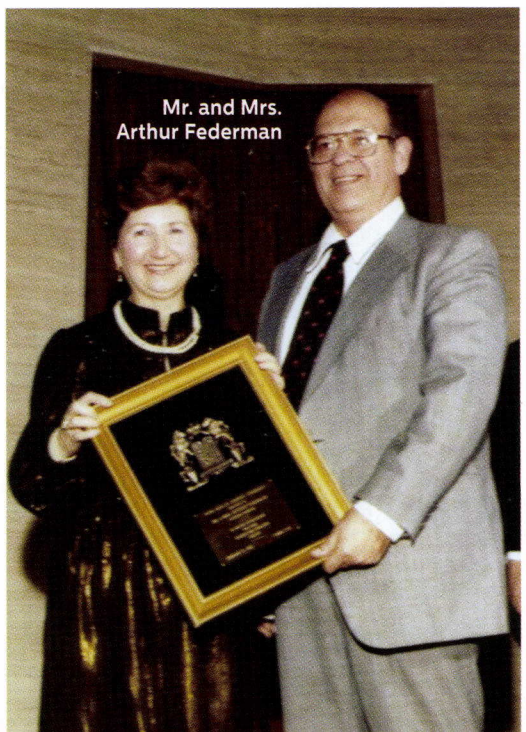


Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman

The doors were closed and ushers would prevent you from walking in. To members like Arthur who had grown up in the *shteebles* of the Lower East Side, this was almost akin to Reform Judaism.

Exacerbating the issue was the tenuous question of membership in the Synagogue Council.

Rav Aharon Kotler and his European colleagues Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman and Rav Yitzchok Hutner had all recently signed a document that prohibited joining the Synagogue Council and Board of Rabbis, an organization that collaborated in an official capacity with Reform and Conservative rabbis.



Beth Sholom was among other Modern Orthodox synagogues who were battling Conservatism, yet felt they needed to collaborate with the entire spectrum of Jewish leaders and had joined the council.

But the edicts of those distinguished European rabbis troubled a number of Beth Sholom members.

Being that Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky's father had signed the ban, four people came to visit him in his home in 1963 after Shmini Atzeres, after Yom Tov. They wanted clarification.

Rabbi Klaperman was a student of Rav Joseph B. Soleveitchik, a rabbi who had not signed the ban. Rabbi Klaperman had previously, respectfully responded, that he understands that there are those who disagree, "But I am also a rabbi and I say you can belong."

Alongside Manfred Lehmann, one of the men who had come to discuss the situation, Rabbi Binyamin called his father. Manfred was an alumnus of Ner Israel, where Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, one of the signers of the ban, had been the Rosh Yeshiva. Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky powerfully explained the reasoning behind the ban that prohibited collaboration with those who do not believe in Torah miSinai. After speaking to the Rosh Yeshiva, the four men, Rabbi Nathan Kohler, Menashe (Manfred) Lehmann, Nathan Maidenbaum and Joe Kestenbaum concluded that they would form another shul.



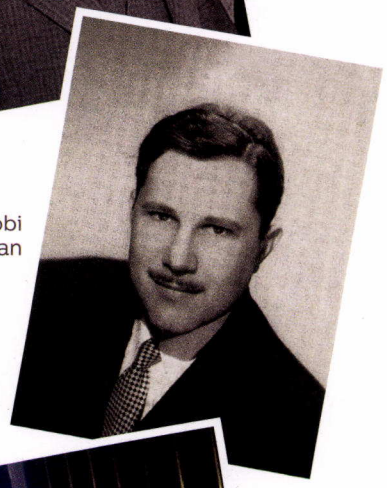
Dr. Manfred Lehmann



Rabbi Nathan Kohler



Rabbi Klaperman





Milton and Sylvia Kain

According to Arthur Federman, the renegade members were at first treated as rebels by their colleagues at Beth Sholom. Orthodoxy was struggling enough and no one wanted them to form a breakaway shul. Rabbi Klaperman had even acceded to allow them to make another *minyan* downstairs in Beth Sholom, but it was to no avail.

Nathan Kohler was himself a rabbi who had led congregations in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Chicago. He had become a successful businessman who was active in real estate and manufacturing. Together with Arthur Federman, he quickly looked for a property and found a suitable house at 26 Columbia Avenue on the border of Lawrence and Cedarhurst.

They had not formed a proper organization yet, but Rabbi Kohler wanted to close quickly. Since he was travelling to Israel, he asked Milton Kain, a young local attorney, to purchase the house in his own name.

"We will transfer it to the shul, when the time comes," he said.

Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky had given up his pulpit in Woodmere and joined the group. He walked every Shabbos from his home in Woodmere to the shul on Columbia Avenue, sometimes taking his seven-year-old son, Mordechai, in tow.

Now they had to furnish the shul. Arthur Federman heard about a movie house that was closing in upstate New York. He drove up there and got more than one hundred movie-style seats that they soon bolted into the floor of the renovated home. They borrowed a Torah, made a makeshift Aron and the shul started.

It was early 1964, and the synagogue was growing. Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky noted that he was the *chazan* on the *Yomim Noraim*, the High Holy Days and his former Ner Yisroel classmate, Rabbi Dr. Manfred (Menashe) Lehmannn, who had become active in the

shul, would speak on Shabbos about the *sidrah* and *haftorah*. Arthur Federman was the Gabbai. He befriended, a Mr. Weinstock, a very wealthy man who was barely religious, and convinced him to donate a Sefer Torah to the shul. One of Rabbi Kamenetzky's students from Yeshiva of South Shore, Shelly Lang, walked weekly from his home in Arverne to be a *b'aal koreh* (Torah reader) for $25. Soon the *minyan* grew to 25 people.

But the search for a permanent Rabbi was on. Murray Kotkes, a member of the new shul had a daughter-in-law, Martha Kornmehl, who married his son Freddy.

Martha's parents lived in Albany, where her father had served as the rabbi of the Agudath Achim synagogue. Rabbi Kornmehl was a brilliant Torah scholar, a prodigy from Poland who received *smicha* at age 19. A scion of a rabbinic family, upon his father's death he had ascended to his father's position as the rabbi of Prater, Vienna and had served on the *bais din* of Vienna as well. He had authored *seforim* back in the 1930s and had a compendium of responsa with the greatest Torah sages in Europe. Rabbi Kornmehl had started a yeshiva in Albany as well as a Vaad HaKashruth. But the strain of leading a congregation in Albany where there were very few observant Jews, was taking a toll on his health. In addition, the rabbi and rebbetzin had more daughters to marry off. There simply were no boys in Albany for them.

In May of 1964, at a Mother's Day dinner at the home of the Kotkes family, the Rabbi and his wife Rose were joined by, Nathan Kohler, Manfred Lehmann, William Kaye, Nathan Farber and Rabbi Harold Leiman, Rabbi Nuchim Zvi Kornmehl was offered the position of rabbi at the newly formed shul. The committee had decided to affiliate with the Young Israel Movement, even though dues would be costly.

Plans were underway to bring the new rabbi, when suddenly in June of 1964, Nathan Kohler passed away while in Rome. He was only 55 years old and had left no children. The fledgling congregation was devastated. But they persevered.



Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kornmehl

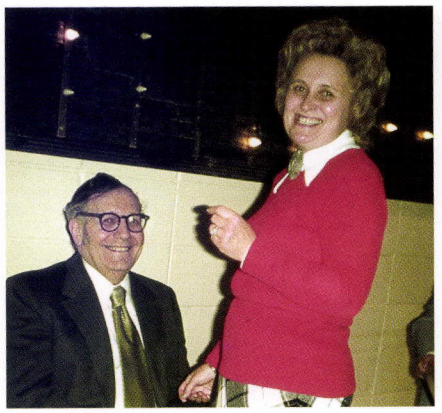
Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kornmehl moved into 26 Colombia Avenue which would serve as the shul and their home, at the end of December of 1964.

The congregation continued to grow and when they needed another Torah, miraculously, Mr. Weinstock had no problem donating another one.

In 1986, as the community began to expand exponentially, a new building was purchased and a search committee was formed to appoint an assistant rabbi to help the rav.



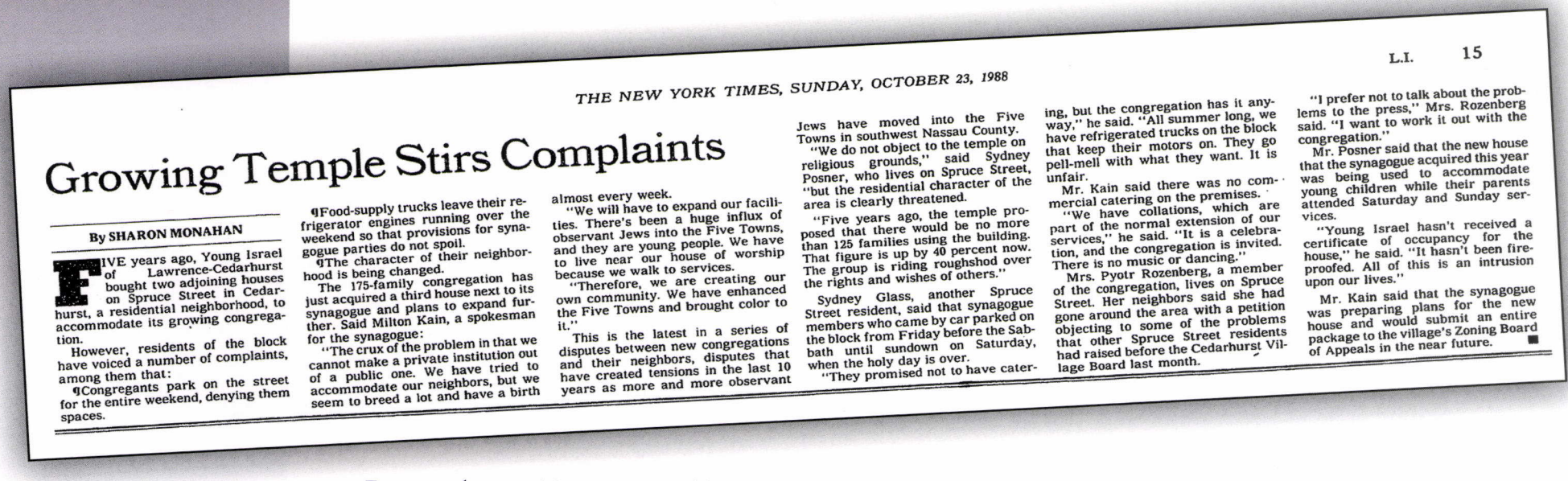
At a dinner of Young Israel Lawrence Cedarhurst circa 1965



William and Betty Kay



Matzeivah of Rabbi Nathan Kohler



THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1988 L.I. 15

Growing Temple Stirs Complaints

By SHARON MONAHAN

FIVE years ago, Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst bought two adjoining houses on Spruce Street in Cedarhurst, a residential neighborhood, to accommodate its growing congregation.

However, residents of the block have voiced a number of complaints, among them that:

¶Congregants park on the street for the entire weekend, denying them spaces.

¶Food-supply trucks leave their refrigerator engines running over the weekend so that provisions for synagogue parties do not spoil.

¶The character of their neighborhood is being changed.

The 175-family congregation has just acquired a third house next to its synagogue and plans to expand further. Said Milton Kain, a spokesman for the synagogue:

"The crux of the problem in that we cannot make a private institution out of a public one. We have tried to accommodate our neighbors, but we seem to breed a lot and have a birth almost every week.

"We will have to expand our facilities. There's been a huge influx of observant Jews into the Five Towns, and they are young people. We have to live near our house of worship because we walk to services.

"Therefore, we are creating our own community. We have enhanced the Five Towns and brought color to it."

This is the latest in a series of disputes between new congregations and their neighbors, disputes that have created tensions in the last 10 years as more and more observant Jews have moved into the Five Towns in southwest Nassau County.

"We do not object to the temple on religious grounds," said Sydney Posner, who lives on Spruce Street, "but the residential character of the area is clearly threatened.

"Five years ago, the temple proposed that there would be no more than 125 families using the building. That figure is up by 40 percent now. The group is riding roughshod over the rights and wishes of others."

Sydney Glass, another Spruce Street resident, said that synagogue members who came by car parked on the block from Friday before the Sabbath until sundown on Saturday, when the holy day is over.

"They promised not to have catering, but the congregation has it anyway," he said. "All summer long, we have refrigerated trucks on the block that keep their motors on. They go pell-mell with what they want. It is unfair.

Mr. Kain said there was no commercial catering on the premises.

"We have collations, which are part of the normal extension of our services," he said. "It is a celebration, and the congregation is invited. There is no music or dancing."

Mrs. Pyotr Rozenberg, a member of the congregation, lives on Spruce Street. Her neighbors said she had gone around the area with a petition objecting to some of the problems that other Spruce Street residents had raised before the Cedarhurst Village Board last month.

"I prefer not to talk about the problems to the press," Mrs. Rozenberg said. "I want to work it out with the congregation."

Mr. Posner said that the new house that the synagogue acquired this year was being used to accommodate young children while their parents attended Saturday and Sunday services.

"Young Israel hasn't received a certificate of occupancy for the house," he said. "It hasn't been fireproofed. All of this is an intrusion upon our lives."

Mr. Kain said that the synagogue was preparing plans for the new house and would submit an entire package to the village's Zoning Board of Appeals in the near future. ■

Every week an aspiring assistant rabbi would come and lead the service, and offer speeches and Torah talks to the congregation. Each was also asked to speak, and lead a discussion on Friday night after the traditional Shabbos meal. Rabbi Kornmehl normally would not return to the synagogue for those speeches.

Rabbi Moshe Teitlebaum, son-in-law of noted author and Jewish historian, Rabbi Berel Wein, and his wife Suri were serving as Rabbi and Rebbetzin of congregation in Poughkeepsie, New York.

His *proba* (in-house interview) coincided with a *sholom zachor* that founding members Milton and Sylvia Kain were making for their first grandson. Rabbi Kornmehl, who had returned to the shul in honor of the *sholom zachor,* stayed to hear Rabbi Teitelbaum. He gave his warm approval to the young rabbi's Friday night talk. That sealed the deal.

Rabbi Moshe Teitlebaum

And thus, almost coinciding with the building of new expanded facilities, only one block away, on the corner of Spruce and Broadway in Cedarhurst, Rabbi and Rebbetzin Teitelbaum joined the congregation as assistant rabbi. After Rabbi Kornmehl's passing in 1992, Rabbi Teitelbaum became the *Morah Da'asra* of YILC. Under his leadership, the building was expanded in 1993 and again in 2005, despite challenges from neighbors who feared the changing demographics.

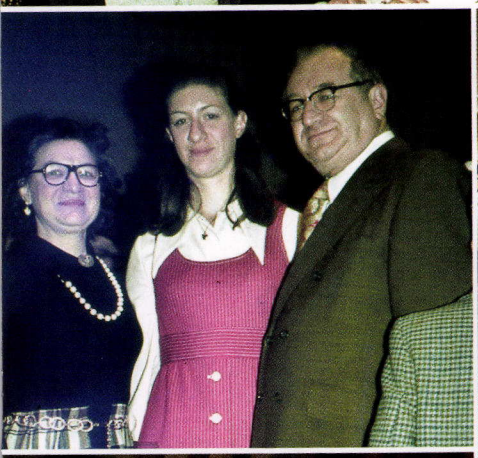
In 2014, Rabbi Yaakov Trump, a native of South Africa joined the leadership as an Associate Rabbi.

Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst is now a thriving congregation with more than 400 member families. With four sanctuaries, an extensive library, a youth center and a social hall, it has become a centerpiece of Jewish life in the Five Towns.

Despite challenges from neighbors who feared the changing demographics, the building was expanded in 1993 and again in 2005.

Facing Page: Clockwise from top, all captions L-R.
Renah and Rabbi Alex Bell, unidentified; (2 Pics) Rabbi Teitelbaum teaching at YILC; Shelly Lang (inset as a student at Yeshiva of South Shore)
Present Day YILC; Rabbi Teitelbaum with YILC youth; Arthure and Anita Federman receiving award at YILC Dinner
Early YILC Members, Rasha and David Sklar, daughter Blima is standing in middle.



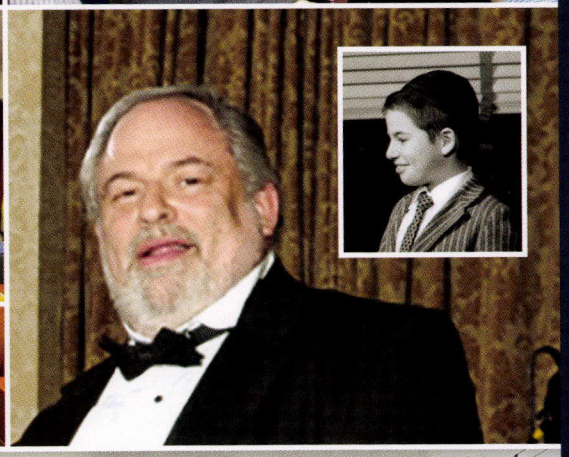












REFLECTIONS OF A TALMID

By Rabbi Pinchos Chatzinoff

RAV NUCHIM ZVI KORNMEHL ZT"L was a powerful transitional figure in the community, and in the lives of so many of his students and kehillah members. His roots were firmly in the experience of the pre-war European Torah elite, but his gentle manner, warmth, and vision made him very much a rav for the more modern iteration of American bnei Torah.

His erudition and scholarship were evident to all, and his role as *posek* was predominant. He was a master of Torah material, and he displayed an incisive ability to polish up a student's question or a congregant's dilemma to reframe the issues and make the conclusion easily understood and nearly obvious.

His photographic memory allowed him to demonstrate an encyclopedic mastery of Shas and poskim, as he would often respond to an inquiry with multiple references in Shas commentaries, citing them all in rapid succession; he was a Torah search engine way before computers had become ubiquitous. He did not learn Torah, he experienced it. He stood at Sinai, he brought korbanos in the Beis Hamikdash, he heard the Navi's words – and the energy of his Torah reflected the depth of his surreal perceptions.

Perhaps Rav Kornmehl's greatest strength as a teacher was how he simultaneously challenged and encouraged his students. In his Shabbos afternoon shiur in Rambam, he went for months, starting again each week from the beginning of the material. Frustrated by the slow pace, some students questioned why the shiur couldn't move on. Rav Kornmehl then demonstrated with a surgeon's precision exactly where the students had flaws in their understanding or gaps in their knowledge. He knew best when a student or shiur was ready to move on, which created an appreciation for intellectual honesty, and a sense of accomplishment when the group would finally be ready to proceed.

As a Rav and teacher, Rav Kornmehl was a bastion of patience. He listened with equal intensity to a congregant's serious problem and the basic question of a child, and he treated both with respect. He was a sensitive and gentle advisor, never doing more than urging or suggesting, almost unaware of the great power of his opinions. He conveyed a powerful timeline, as it seemed when you spoke with him, you were speaking to the noble past of Torah majesty, and he looked at you as a piece of nascent, future Torah glory.



Right: Rav Kornmehl, Rav Yonasan Shteif, the Satmar Dayan of London and Rav Ahron Kotler (c.1955)

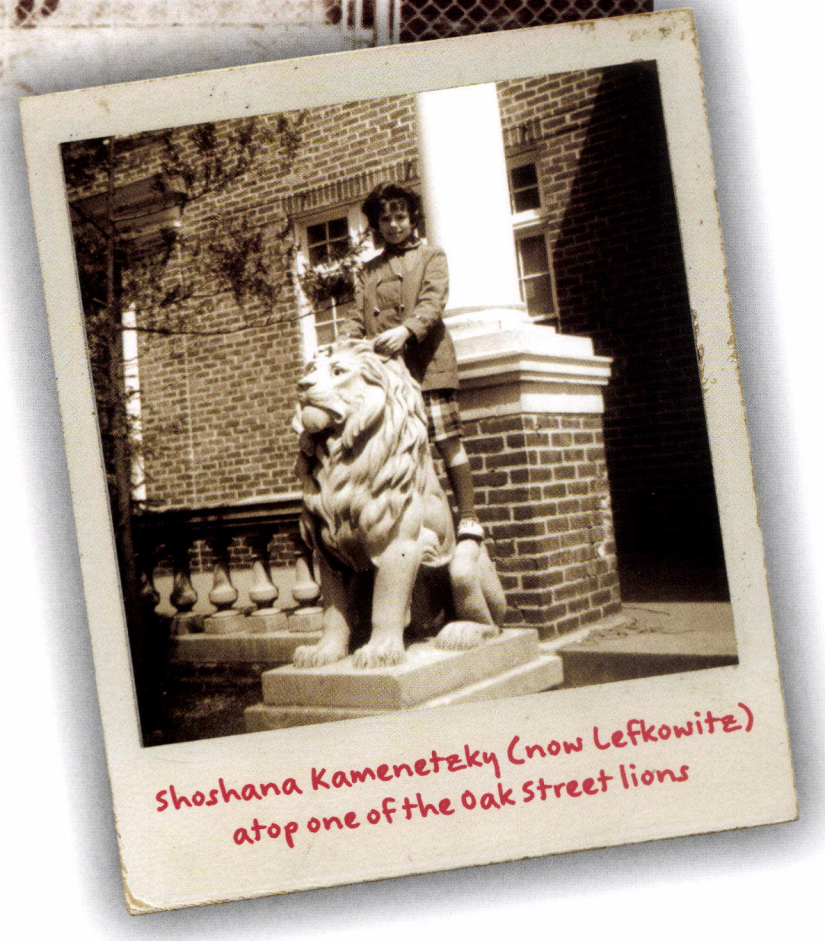




YESHIVA
— OF —
SOUTH SHORE







Summer 1956.

It seemed as if Rabbi Kamenetzky was running out of time and miracles. Until another Kaminetsky stepped in.

Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky had originally moved to Woodmere to start a shul. *(See chapter on Young Israel of Woodmere)*. Almost in conjunction with the move, he was approached by a group of lay leaders from Far Rockaway who were not content with HILI, the coeducational Hebrew Institute of Long Island. They wanted a separate school for both boys and girls, and they wanted Rabbi Kamenetzky to administer it.

After almost a year of planning, the rabbi had begun a shul in the early months of the summer of 1956. Simultaneously, he spent that July and August recruiting students for a first grade. September was not far away. Despite having some students, the school year was a few months away and he was desperate to find a building for them. It seemed as if he was running out of time



Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky teaching at Yeshiva Toras Chaim in East New York with Rabbi Schmidman supervising, circa 1954

and miracles. Until another Kaminetsky stepped in.

Rabbi Dr. Joseph Kaminetsky, a *musmach* of Yeshiva Rabbeinu Yitzchok Elchonon Theological Seminary (RIETS), who held a Ph.D. from Columbia University, was the executive vice president of Torah Umesorah, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools. He was Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky's older, distant cousin and knew him from the many times that he had driven Binyamin's father, Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, to Torah Umesorah meetings.

In 1946, Dr. Joe, as he was affectionately known, had been recruited by Reb Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, zt'l, Rabbi Aharon Kotler, zt'l, and other Torah leaders to take on a seemingly impossible task — establishing a day school network in America. The suggestion in most cases was ridiculed and flatly rejected by the community leaders whom he approached. "Sending to a Jewish Day school was un-American," they said. Dr. Joe persevered and ultimately achieved great success.

In 1956, Rabbi Binyamin, reached out to him with the idea of establishing an all-boys yeshiva in Woodmere, Long Island. He asked his cousin if perhaps, he knew of a building for the new Yeshiva. Although the request seemed as futile as was the greater, national challenge, the idea caught his attention.



First Kindergarten & First Grade Class of Yeshiva of South Shore (L-R):

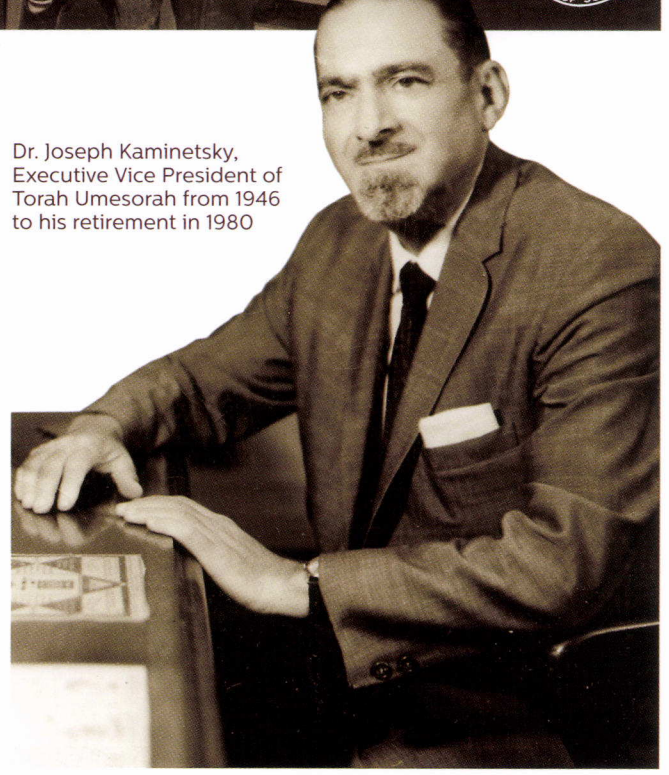
Rabbi Heshy Saffire, first grade teacher, Rabbi Shemano and Rabbi Kamenetzky.

Among those identified (in no particular order) are: Allan Greenberg, Krunchie Neuman, Alan Hermes, Y. Katz, Shelly Lang, Jerry Katz, Sy Weissman, Sholom Brody, A. Cohen, David N. Joseph, Sy Marcus, M.J. Osowsky, Judah Septimus, A. Blumenkrantz, JJ Septimus ob"m, A. Glick ob"m, Charles Segal, Joseph, Feig, Heshie Marcus, I. Feigenbaum

For lack of a justifiable purpose, the majestic house with two lions regally perched at its entrance went unused.

Dr. Joe had a great idea. As a camp counselor in the 1920s, at Camp Mohegan, one of the first Orthodox sleep away camps in America, he had two campers, Lester and Bernie Feuerstein. They came from a wealthy family in Woodmere. Their father, Hyman Feuerstein, although not Orthodox, wanted his sons to remain traditional Jews.

Hyman and his family attended Congregation Sons of Israel, a congregation in Woodmere that reached out to all Jewish denominations. Although it did not adhere to *halachic* guidelines, as per the Shulchan Aruch, it was not officially aligned with the Conservative movement. Hyman also insisted that his boys partake in a Shabbos meal every Shabbos.



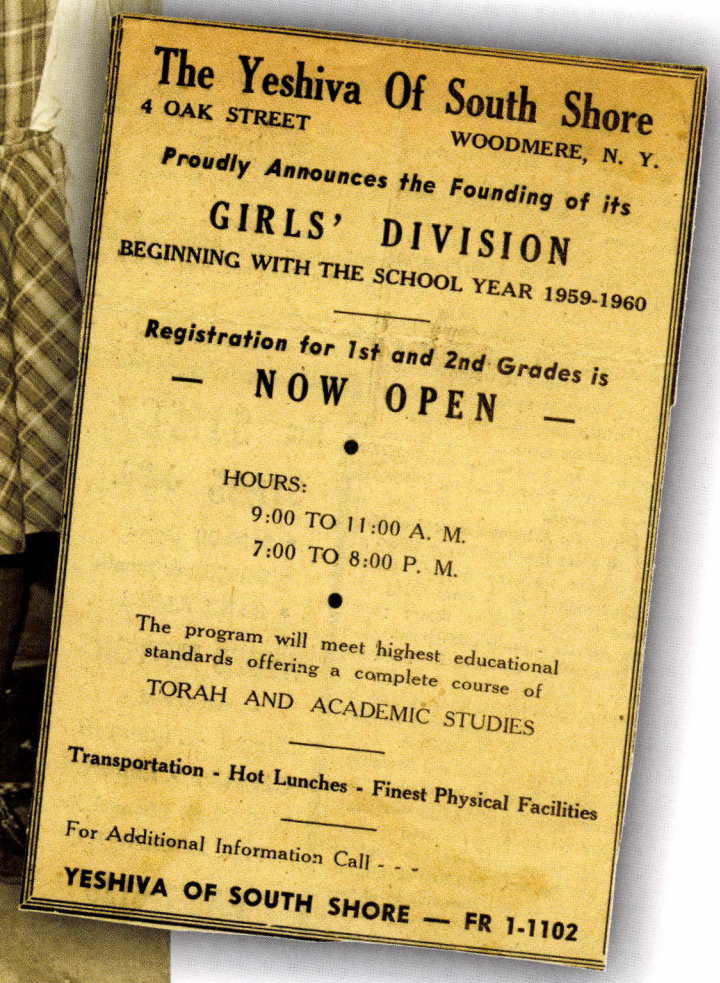
Dr. Joseph Kaminetsky, Executive Vice President of Torah Umesorah from 1946 to his retirement in 1980





Above: Summer Camp, 1961

Left: Fifth Grade girls on steps of Yeshiva of South Shore for Girls, circa 1962



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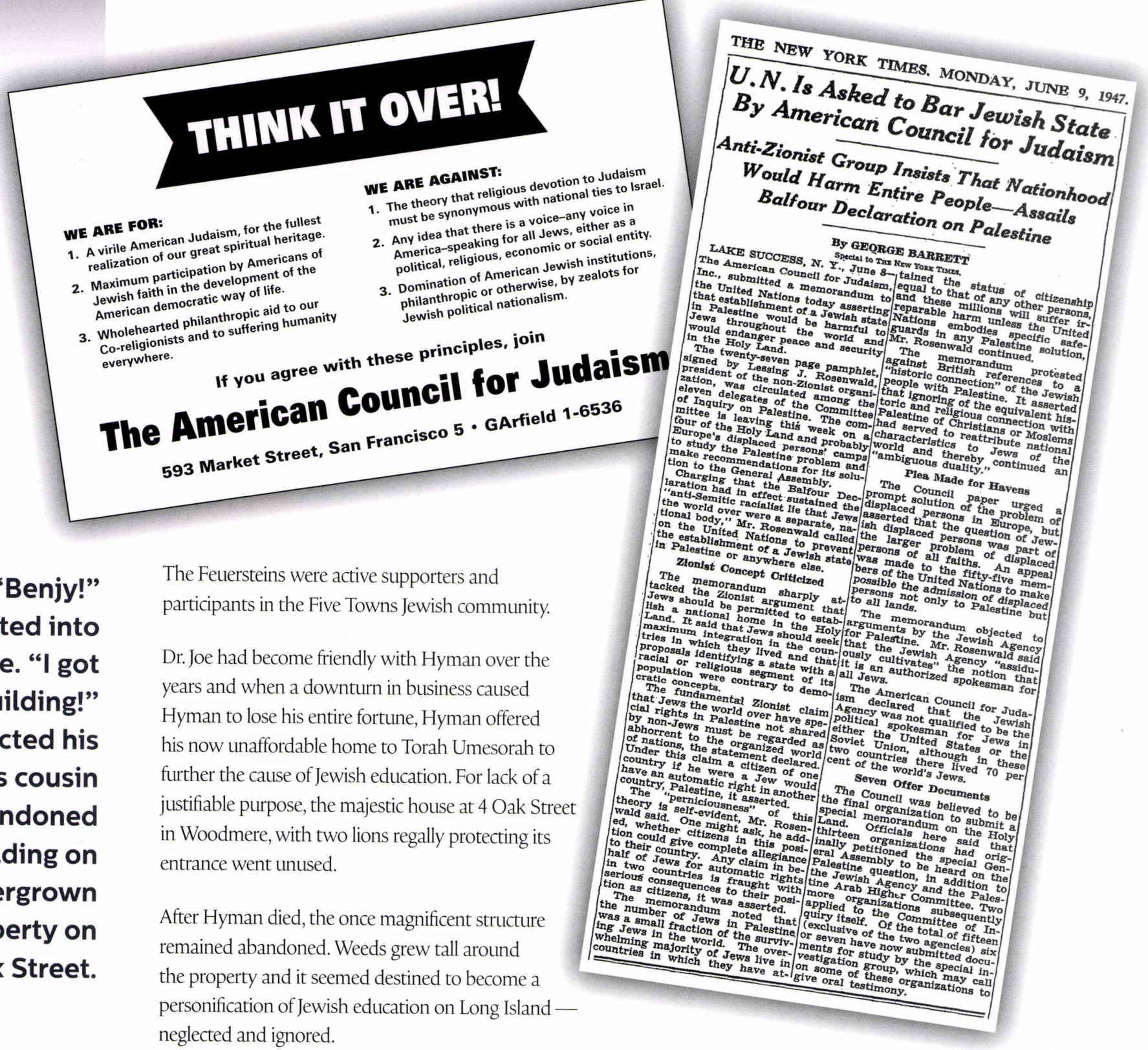
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3. Wholehearted philanthropic aid to our Co-religionists and to suffering humanity everywhere.

WE ARE AGAINST:

1. The theory that religious devotion to Judaism must be synonymous with national ties to Israel.
2. Any idea that there is a voice–any voice in America–speaking for all Jews, either as a political, religious, economic or social entity.
3. Domination of American Jewish institutions, philanthropic or otherwise, by zealots for Jewish political nationalism.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, JUNE 9, 1947.

U.N. Is Asked to Bar Jewish State By American Council for Judaism

Anti-Zionist Group Insists That Nationhood Would Harm Entire People—Assails Balfour Declaration on Palestine

By GEORGE BARRETT

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LAKE SUCCESS, N. Y., June 8—The American Council for Judaism, Inc., submitted a memorandum to the United Nations today asserting that establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine would be harmful to Jews throughout the world and would endanger peace and security in the Holy Land.

The twenty-seven page pamphlet, signed by Lessing J. Rosenwald, president of the non-Zionist organization, was circulated among the eleven delegates of the Committee of Inquiry on Palestine. The committee is leaving this week on a four of the Holy Land and probably Europe's displaced persons' camps to study the Palestine problem and make recommendations for its solution to the General Assembly.

Charging that the Balfour Declaration had in effect sustained the "anti-Semitic racialist lie that Jews the world over were a separate, national body," Mr. Rosenwald called on the United Nations to prevent the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine or anywhere else.

Zionist Concept Criticized

The memorandum sharply attacked the Zionist argument that Jews should be permitted to establish a national home in the Holy Land. It said that Jews should seek maximum integration in the countries in which they lived and that proposals identifying a state with a racial or religious segment of its population were contrary to democratic concepts.

The fundamental Zionist claim that Jews the world over have special rights in Palestine not shared by non-Jews must be regarded as abhorrent to the organized world of nations, the statement declared. Under this claim a citizen of one country if he were a Jew would have an automatic right in another country, Palestine, it asserted.

The "perniciousness" of this theory is self-evident, Mr. Rosenwald said. One might ask, he added, whether citizens in this position could give complete allegiance to their country. Any claim in behalf of Jews for automatic rights in two countries is fraught with serious consequences to their position as citizens, it was asserted.

The memorandum noted that the number of Jews in Palestine was a small fraction of the surviving Jews in the world. The overwhelming majority of Jews live in countries in which they have attained the status of citizenship equal to that of any other persons, and these millions will suffer irreparable harm unless the United Nations embodies specific safeguards in any Palestine solution, Mr. Rosenwald continued.

The memorandum protested against British references to a "historic connection" of the Jewish people with Palestine. It asserted that ignoring of the equivalent historic and religious connection with Palestine of Christians or Moslems had served to reattribute national characteristics to Jews of the world and thereby "continued an ambiguous duality."

Plea Made for Havens

The Council paper urged a prompt solution of the problem of displaced persons in Europe, but asserted that the question of Jewish displaced persons was part of the larger problem of displaced persons of all faiths. An appeal was made to the fifty-five members of the United Nations to make possible the admission of displaced persons not only to Palestine but to all lands.

The memorandum objected to arguments by the Jewish Agency for Palestine. Mr. Rosenwald said that the Jewish Agency "assiduously cultivates" the notion that it is an authorized spokesman for all Jews.

The American Council for Judaism declared that the Jewish Agency was not qualified to be the political spokesman for Jews in either the United States or the Soviet Union, although in these two countries there lived 70 per cent of the world's Jews.

Seven Offer Documents

The Council was believed to be the final organization to submit a special memorandum on the Holy Land. Officials here said that thirteen organizations had originally petitioned the special General Assembly to be heard on the Palestine question, in addition to the Jewish Agency and the Palestine Arab Higher Committee. Two more organizations subsequently applied to the Committee of Inquiry itself. Of the total of fifteen (exclusive of the two agencies) six or seven have now submitted documents for study by the special investigation group, which may call on some of these organizations to give oral testimony.

"Benjy!" he shouted into the phone. "I got you a building!" He directed his speechless cousin to a abandoned building on an overgrown property on Oak Street.

The Feuersteins were active supporters and participants in the Five Towns Jewish community.

Dr. Joe had become friendly with Hyman over the years and when a downturn in business caused Hyman to lose his entire fortune, Hyman offered his now unaffordable home to Torah Umesorah to further the cause of Jewish education. For lack of a justifiable purpose, the majestic house at 4 Oak Street in Woodmere, with two lions regally protecting its entrance went unused.

After Hyman died, the once magnificent structure remained abandoned. Weeds grew tall around the property and it seemed destined to become a personification of Jewish education on Long Island — neglected and ignored.

Almost five years after his passing, Dr. Joe remembered Hyman's wishes and immediately realized that building could be available to be used as a yeshiva.

He rushed to the telephone. "Benny!" he shouted into the phone. "I got a building!" He directed his speechless cousin to go to an abandoned building on an overgrown property on Oak Street. He described the two stone lions in front.

Hours later, after discovering that the Oak Street that Dr. Joe meant was in Woodmere, not Cedarhurst, Rabbi Kamenetzky was standing in front of the correct location, 4 Oak Street between Central Avenue and Broadway in Woodmere. (author's note: For some reason, my father, z"l, liked to recount about his futile search for a building with lions on Oak street in Cedarhurst and then running to the nearby Cedarhurst train station to make calls to Dr. Joe to clarify the correct address.)

Dr. Joe's description of a badly neglected house was accurate. But to Rabbi Binyamin, the two lions looked exactly like those that sit smiling on the title page of every traditional Gemara. It was a good sign.

But Rabbi Kamenetzky's relief was short lived. Hyman's two sons had strayed far from the traditions of their parents.

One son, Bernie was an active member of the American Council for Judaism, an offshoot of Reform Judaism founded in 1942 dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religion of universal values. Council members were vehemently anti-Zionist, and did not believe that Judaism was a nationalistic religion. They rejected any effort to impose Jewish nationality upon all Jewry. They shunned any affiliation or support of the State of Israel, on the basis that dual loyalties would harm the Jewish position in the United States. They felt that Jews had no National identity.

The other son, Lester, fared not much better. Indeed, he knew how to read, having been taught at the Jewish Center in Manhattan by Rabbi Leo Jung and by Joe Kaminetsky. But after his second son, Scott (who had no Hebrew name) was born, Lester Feuerstein changed his name to Lester Forest and joined the Christian Science group.

Rabbi Kamenetzky realized that it would surely be a challenge to get them to donate their parents' house to an Orthodox yeshiva!



YOSS President, Moshe Katz (center) with Bernie and Lester Feurstein

However, the day would indeed come when the lions of the Feuerstein home would play host to the lions of the Talmud.

Reb Binyamin made the call to Lester Feuerstein. Despite his lack of affiliation, their first conversation was positive.

"Hello, my name is Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetzky."

Lester did not give him a chance to ask anything.

"You must be the rabbi who has the shul in the store on West Broadway!"

"Yes," the rabbi responded.



Left: Rabbi Kamenetzky on steps of
4 Oak Street building of Yeshiva of South Shore

Rabbi Kamenetzky was frankly at a loss as to what to do. He needed the building for the Yeshiva, but he clearly knew that the Feuerstein brothers had little interest in the religion of their father.

Lester was quite warm. "Do you need, by any chance, a Sefer Torah for your shul?"

Rabbi Kamenetzky would not let an opportunity slip by and answered, that he currently was borrowing on from his father-in-law and would be delighted to replace it.

Mr. Feuerstein told him to come to his home in Lynbrook.

When Rabbi Kamenetzky arrived at the home he was greeted by a scene that perhaps summed up the situation of American Jewry.

He rang the bell and a dog began barking and would not stop until Lester's wife pulled it away and led the rabbi in. Lester, a man in his 30s, was sitting in the living room in his boxer shorts and an undershirt. He greeted the rabbi, and asked right away, "How are you related to my teacher, Joe?"

After brief chit chat and the ubiquitous game of Jewish geography, Lester said, "Come, I will show you the Torah."

With no shame, he brought Rabbi Kamenetzky into the bedroom where he opened the armoire and behold, there was the Torah, standing helplessly next to an array of undergarments.

Rabbi Kamenetzky expected to take it, but instead Lester placed it on his bed and unfurled a few columns and began to read it with the proper cantillations of the *trop*!"

Rabbi Kamenetzky was flabbergasted from the surreal scene. Here he was with a man, half undressed, reading from a Torah unfurled on bed! Rabbi Kamenetzky wanted to dash out with the Torah, simply to save it from the embarrassment. But it was not that easy. Lester, a lawyer, had already prepared documents to affirm that the transfer of the Torah was just a loan, to be returned upon demand.

They walked out of the room and the dog began barking again. Rabbi Kamenetzky clutching the Torah, wanted to leave as soon as he could, but then he remembered that he had forgotten to ask the real question.

"Lester. What's with the building?"he pleaded.

"Ah! The building," sighed Lester. "There are so many people asking for it, frankly I am not sure what to do."

"I'll tell you what," suggested Lester. "Write us a letter and specify exactly what you intend to do with the building. Then we will decide whether or not we think that your intended use conforms to what we perceive was our parents will."

Rabbi Kamenetzky was frankly at a loss as to what to do. He needed the building for the Yeshiva, and he needed it fast. He clearly knew that the Feuerstein brothers had little interest in the religion of their father.

"Write a letter?" he pondered.

Only about fifteen years ago he was a Lithuanian immigrant who did not know a word of English. Now the fate of a building was dependent upon his skill in composing a letter to two non-religious sophisticated young men who seemed to be very reluctant to depart with what they perceived would be their inheritance.

Rabbi Kamenetzky had a friend from Yeshivas Ner Yisrael, Rabbi Avrohom Krohn, (the father of the renowned mohel, speaker and author, Rabbi Paysach Krohn) a well-known mohel who performed circumcisions at Long Island Jewish Hospital. His wife Hindy (nee Ackerman) was an excellent writer (a talent that she obviously passed to her son). Mrs. Krohn offered to pen a letter to Lester Forest. In the letter, she stressed the importance of education teaching youngsters about their heritage and roots. Knowing that their religious affiliation was non-extant and that their involvement in the vehemently Reform, Council for Judaism would have them frown on any reference to the State of Israel, Mrs. Krohn had to dance carefully between the will of the deceased Hyman and Rebecca Feuerstein and the eccentric, anti-religious, anti-Israel children. She decided to play upon the emotions of the children who clearly had an obligation to fulfill the wishes of their parents.

The letter was sent. Weeks passed. No response. It was already August.

Where others may have given up, Rabbi Kamenetzky was relentless. He found out everything he could about Lester and his parents, including a little about Jacob Jacobson, the attorney for the estate. Mr. Jacobson had an office on Long Beach Road in Oceanside. Rabbi Kamenetzky contacted the lawyer and implored him to use his influence, so that the children would render a favorable decision.

Within a few days after the call, a meeting was arranged. On August 7, 1956, Rabbi Kamenetzky and a few lay leaders of the proposed yeshiva, arrived at the lawyer's office at the scheduled time and saw only a receptionist who had him



Kindergarten class, 1963



Kindergarten graduation, 1962

wait by her desk. Rabbi Kamenetzky remembers vividly: "I waited for a half hour, dismayed in thinking that the Feuerstein boys would not show up. Little did I know that the two boys and their two sisters were in an adjacent room where their lawyer was prepping them for the meeting.

An hour later Mr. Jacobson, brought Rabbi Kamenetzky into the room and wished him luck. The Rabbi began talking about his own background and his connection to Dr. Joseph Kamenetzky who had introduced him to Lester. He discussed the purpose and proposed use of the building. But the reluctance was apparent. The family did not want to let go.

Rabbi Kamenetzky then launched into an appeal which would clearly be the first of hundreds if not thousands that would ensue – appeals he would make to all types of potential donors from simple people to philanthropists – throughout the years.

Rabbi Kamenetzky then launched into an appeal. It would be the first of hundreds if not thousands of appeals for Torah education that would ensue over the next sixty years – appeals that he would make to potential donors from simple people to philanthropists – throughout the years. He spoke to the Forest brothers about the need for a Yeshiva in the community and how vital Jewish education is for Jewish continuity.

But his ideas did not sell easily. They peppered him with questions in staccato-like manner.

"How are you going to maintain the building?" they asked. "What will happen if you neglect the building? Who is backing your operation? How can you sustain such a school in this type of neighborhood?"

The Rabbi assured them that he had the backing of prominent businessmen and distinguished philanthropists. The Feuerstein boys' apprehension did not fade when suddenly, Rabbi Kamenetzky stood up and pointed to the big wall calendar on the wall of the law office.

With a firm voice he declared, "On September 7th we will open a school in this community!"

He stared at the children of Hy Feurstein and declared, "It is now five years since your parents died



Board of DIrectors of YOSS, circa 1960



In front of the Yeshiva building on 4 Oak Street, Woodmere, 1956

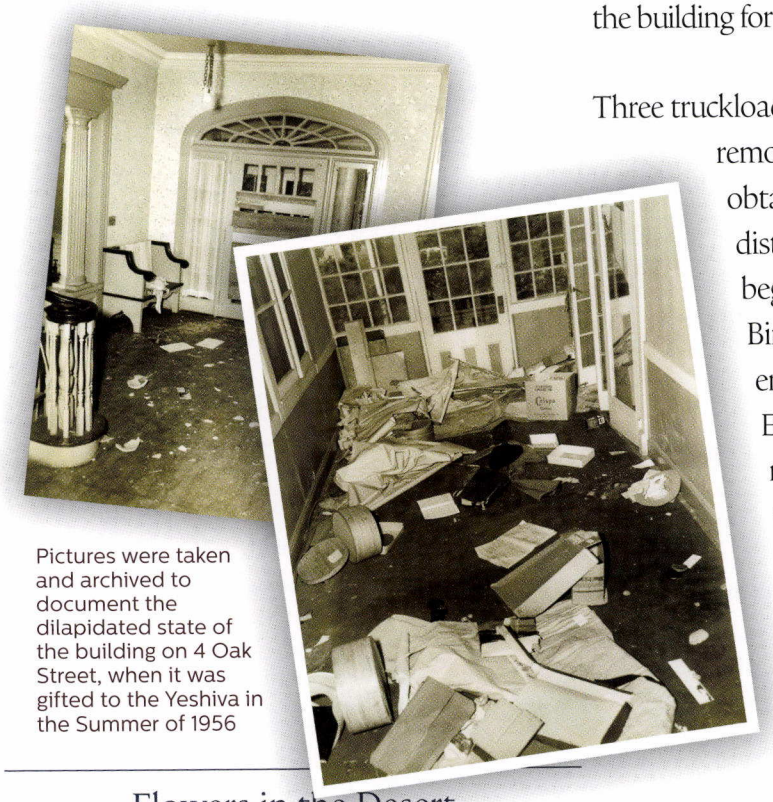
and they are not resting in their graves because their wish has not been fulfilled. It is up to you, their children, to fulfill their last wishes to allow their home to be used for the advancement of Jewish education. It is up to you to leave the keys here and allow us to use the building in accordance with their last will and testament!"

Rabbi Kamenetzky turned around and walked out. He sat and waited in the outer office. He just sat and waited until finally, Mr. Jacobson came out and said. "Here are the keys. They will let you use the building. I will see to it that they meet with your committee and transfer title. Be in touch with me."

Elated, Rabbi Kamenetzky called Mr. Moshe Katz who had recently been elected as the Yeshiva's first president at a meeting of the Yeshiva planning group a few months prior in Lawrence. Mr. Katz was happy but he had seen the building and he knew of its sad state of disrepair. He urged Rabbi Kamenetzky to hire a photographer to take pictures of every facet of the building – just in case the family would make a case as to the state of further disrepair – sometime in the future.

Those pictures, dated and signed, were held in a safe until the yeshiva moved into the new edifice on William Street in the early 1960s.

The new Yeshiva took ownership a few days later. In just one month, the board had to remove five years' worth of lawn growth and weeds, all sort of rubbish and refuse from the empty bottles that littered the lawn to garbage dumped at the abandoned site.



Pictures were taken and archived to document the dilapidated state of the building on 4 Oak Street, when it was gifted to the Yeshiva in the Summer of 1956

In addition, vandals had broken into the building and juvenile delinquents had used it for a haven for their mischief. It took a month of hard work from many people including, Sam Fox, Jack Brody, Shaul Stern, an original partner of one of the first kosher take-out stores, Mauzone, and others to get the building for September.

Three truckloads of debris were immediately removed. Old desks were obtained from the local school district and the classrooms began to take shape. As Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky was still employed by Toras Chaim in East New York, he initially had no educational position in the yeshiva, he was involved in organizing the staff and in the recruitment and registration of students.

Pictured on right:

Eli Gut is pictured bringing a Sefer Torah into the Yeshiva of South Shore for the first Orthodox synagogue and Yeshiva in Woodmere, NY.

L-R: unidentified, Yehuda (Yiddel) Klein, Moshe Katz, Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetzky, Louis Newman, Eli Gut (holding Torah), Alter Koslowski (partially obscured), Yonoson Steinmetz, Joel Katz, unidentified, Sonny Katz, unidentified, and unidentified.



Many people were happy that an all boys school was starting in Woodmere. The officials of HILI condoned the opening. Rabbi Hershel Leiman, the principal, admitted, "I myself am a student of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, and realize the need for an all boys Yeshiva as well."

He had used the shul on West Broadway as a registration office, and through the months of July and August, even before the building was obtained, word of the Yeshiva began to spread in the Far Rockaway community. All the children who registered were from the Rockaway area. There were no students from the Five Towns.

Before a building was even acquired, twelve children registered for grades one and two. Indeed, with those children, the Yeshiva of South Shore opened its doors September of 1956.

Many people were happy that an all-boys school was starting in Woodmere. Even officials of HILI were pleased with the opening of a boys' school. Rabbi Harold Leiman, the principal, admitted, "I myself am a student of Yeshiva Torah Vodaath, and realize the need for an all-boys Yeshiva as well."

There was no official stationary and the official school phone number was that of Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kamenetzky's home. Led by Moshe Katz, the first president of the Yeshiva, a meeting of the board was held in the shul. They decided to look for two teachers. Rabbi Avraham Simcha Steinberg, a graduate of Yeshiva Chasan Sofer, who was a principal in Bais Yaakov, was appointed as second-grade rebbe as well as the General Studies Principal. Rabbi Steinberg would hire the English teacher and supervise the first grade and hire another teacher for that grade as well. The first grade rebbi was recommended by Rabbi Isaac Shmidman. His name was Rabbi Avraham Moseson, a *talmid* of Yeshiva Chaim Berlin. The language of instruction would be English.

Rabbi Kamenetzky still had his position in East New York and the South Shore Yeshiva was about to start with him as an administrator. Because of the very tenuous situation, the rabbi who had moved to

Long Island and had exchanged a pulpit in East New York for a budding pulpit in Woodmere, was not willing to give up his full-time job as a teacher in East New York. He planned to juggle all the responsibilities – commuting each day to Toras Chaim in East New York, serving as Rabbi of Eitz Chaim in Woodmere, and administrating a brand-new Yeshiva in Long Island. But it was not to be.

One day while teaching his class in East New York, Rabbi Kamenetzky got a message from the office downstairs that there is an important call for him. He replied, "Please have whoever it is call back in one hour." At that time, he would be taking the children to lunch and would have a few moments to talk. Sure enough, in exactly an hour the secretary ran down to the lunchroom.

"The man is very upset. He must speak to you now!" Indeed, it was Louis Glick one of the board members of the new school.

"Rabbi Kamenetzky," he said, "A pipe in the Oak Street building has burst and there is a major problem. It is important that we speak to you about taking charge of the yeshiva! We need you to give your full time here in the yeshiva!"

Rabbi Kamenetzky had a meeting with his father the Rosh Yeshiva of Torah Vodaath, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky who encouraged him to take a permanent



(L-R) standing: Torah Umesorah President, Samuel C. Feuerstein, Rav Ahron Kotler, Moshe Katz at the dinner inducting YOSS as a Torah Umesorah school.



Front Row: unidentified, Sheldon Goldstein **Second Row:** Randy Fox, Yehuda Grossman, Yehuda Klahr, Bentzion Rivkin
Third Row: Warren Cohen, obscured, Yoseph Waldman, Barry Katz
Fourth Row: Robert Banniettis, Chaim Ehrlich, Michel Lisker, Ayli Maza



Rav B. Kamenetzky (l) talking to his father, Rav Yaakov (r)



A first grade class in the Oak Street building 1959

But now, Rabbi Kamenetzky was officially in charge which meant that his father, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky would have to make the final decision!

position with the new Yeshiva, but only if Rabbi Schmidman would let him leave.

Permission was granted and as winter began, so did Rabbi Kamenetzky's career as the dean of the Yeshiva of South Shore.

On the educational end things were not going smooth. Morris Weinberg, a prominent community activist proposed to change the language of teaching the children from English to Yiddish. He wanted it to be more like a *cheder*. Rabbi Steinberg had no problem with that as he was fluent in Yiddish as well. Agreeing to the change, Rabbi Steinberg and Rabbi Moseson started to prepare Yiddish sheets for the children to use.

But now, Rabbi Kamenetzky was officially in charge. That meant that his father, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, a master educator and brilliant scholar would have to make the final decision!



Dina Goldman became the first kindergarten teacher at the newly established Yeshiva of South Shore

Rav Yaakov strongly disagreed with and presented a principle of education that remains the paramount philosophy of the Yeshiva of South Shore. "Children must learn in the language that is their "*momma lashon*", the language in which they think and process ideas. If they must translate whatever they are learning, it will just add another step in their processing the information. Then they will remain a step behind.

The decision was made and it became a point of discomfort for some of the board members who were adamant about Yiddish instruction. Some of them opted out and decided to send their children to Rabbi Geltzeiler's Yeshiva, Ohr Yisroel in Queens as that school taught in Yiddish.



A model seder in 1957 at YOSS

OFFICE







Top: Student, Motty Klein with model of proposed Yeshiva of South Shore building
2nd: Nathan Kalikow, Amos Bunim, Mina Bunim, Morris Morgenstern c. 1959
3rd: Unidentified, Nathan Farber, Srully Katz, Morris Morgenstern, Sonny Katz, Moshe Katz, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky
Bottom: Morris Morgenstern, D.A. Ed Silver, Supreme Court Justice, John E. Cone, with Mina Bunim and Rochelle Silbermintz

It was not until 1978 when Yeshiva Darchei Torah was founded, did a local Yeshiva begin teaching in Yiddish. And that did not last too long, as Rav Yaakov's prescient prediction manifest in the students' inability to keep up with a forced language. In just two years Darchei Torah reverted back to English as the primary teaching language, as it remains today.

Rabbi Kamenetzky decided to expand to younger students. Stephen Klein, founder of Barton's chocolates, had pledged $1,500 to anyone who would start a kindergarten. Rabbi Kamenetzky seized the opportunity and appointed Dina Goldman of Far Rockaway as the first kindergarten teacher at the newly established Yeshiva of South Shore.
(Ms. Goldman later married Rabbi Noach Weinberg,*z"l*, the late founder and dean of Aish HaTorah.)

The boys' school continued to grow and a demand rose for a girls' school as well. Morris Morgenstern, a wealthy banker and real estate developer in the community, donated $30,000 to buy a building, one block away, on Pine Street for the girls' school. In 1959, Yeshiva of South Shore for Girls opened. Mr. Morgenstern envisioned a large consolidated building with two wings, one for the boys and the other for the girls, naming it in honor of his wife, Celia.

The Yeshiva was growing, albeit slowly. In 1960 the community of Woodmere was not growing the way Rabbi Kamenetzky had predicted. The Hillel School, was attracting a modern-Orthodox, Zionist-oriented element of newcomers to the neighborhood.

Many of the young people moving in wanted a co-educational school that taught Zionist culture and values in Modern Hebrew and did not have Yeshiva oriented rabbis from Brooklyn, stressing Talmud. Nor did they want to have yeshiva on Sunday mornings.

In addition, the old building on Oak Street was in total disrepair with new problems arising every day.

Indeed, many wonderful community members did entrust their children to Yeshiva of South Shore despite all the problems and lack of funds. Rabbi Kamenetzky had hired some of the best-known Rabbeim, *talmidei*





Rav Shmuel DIshon (r) with the Yeshiva's seventh grade class in 1969



Rabbi Meir Kahane

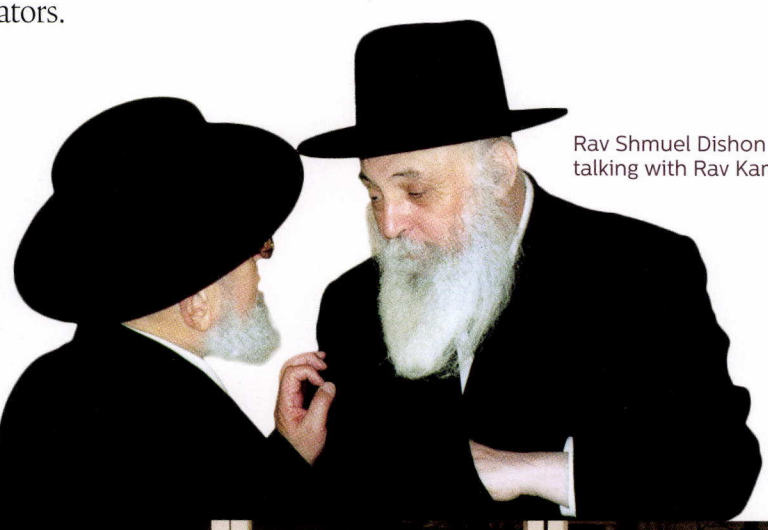


Rabbi Eliahu Rominek

chachomim, renowned for their warmth and abundant Torah knowledge. Some of them who began their careers at the Yeshiva of South Shore eventually became well known icons in the field of Jewish education. Among them, Rabbi Meir Shapiro, who served as the first principal of the Yeshiva, and later led the Ari Crown Yeshiva for fifty years. Rabbi Shmuel Dishon served as a rebbe and later a principal in the 1960s. He later became the menahel and mashgiach of Stolin Yeshiva at the Yeshiva, and a world renown speaker.

Boys slowly began to come from the Five Towns, but most were from, outside of the immediate environs. There was a large contingent of boys from Far Rockaway and Laurelton which boasted a large Jewish population. The two rabbis of the Rosedale/Laurelton community, Rabbi Eliahu Rominek and Rabbi Meir Kahane, who later became the founder of the Jewish Defense League, were both strong advocates and encouraged parents to enroll their children in Yeshiva of South Shore. Both rabbis sent their children there, as well as Rabbi Sholom Rivkin of Bayswater.

Lay leaders like Leonard Goldstein, Al and Moshe Friedman, Joe Kestenbaum, Ernie Lowenthal, Sam Lipschutz, Milton Schulman, and many others did whatever they could to try to maintain the Yeshiva, but the burden of fund-raising and maintenance of the buildings ultimately fell upon the shoulders of Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky. Despite the cost, Rabbi Kamenetzky spared no effort in hiring the best teachers and educators.



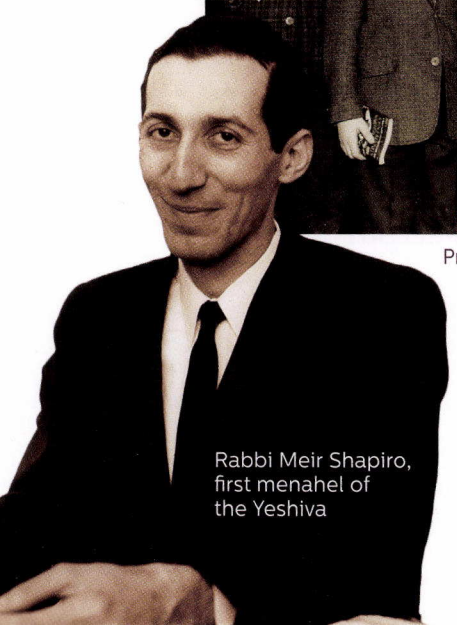
Rav Shmuel Dishon
talking with Rav Kamenetzky



Principal Simon Cohen (l) and Menahel, Rabbi Meir Shapiro (r) with awardees (L-R): Joel Felderman, Marcus Herschberg, Leslie Pearl, Arthur Frommer, unknown , Jay Kestenbaum



Rav Isaac Schmidman, Rav Shmuel Dishon (left) Rav Laibel Newman and Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky on right
(Bottom row L-R): Shimshon Peretz, Yitzchok Cooper, Bentzy Levovitz, Zvi Kamenetzky, Chaim Shonek
(Top row L-R): Binyamin Benjamin, Jonathan Gersten, Steven Silverstein, Pinchos Klahr



Rabbi Meir Shapiro,
first menahel of
the Yeshiva



First Chinuch Atzmai Dinner, Riverside Plaza Hotel, January 1956.
(L-R): Rabbi Joseph B. Soleitchik, Rabbi Aaron Kotler, Irving M. Bunim, Rabbi Eliezer Silver and Rabbi Eisenstadt

(L-R): Rabbi Friedman looks on as Rabbi Emanuel Rackman and Rabbi Kamenetzky test a class at YOSS

A settlement was reached. The boys would remain in Woodmere, the girls' school would move.

In the summer of 1962 there was a bit of a rebellion. Many of the lay leadership and the founders of the Yeshiva from the Rockaways wanted the yeshiva to move to Far Rockaway.

They felt that Woodmere and the Five Towns were just not the future. Amos Bunim and his famed father, the renowned activist and lecturer, Rabbi Irving Bunim, went to Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky to discuss the matter with him. They wanted an institution in the area where so many of the families sending to the Yeshiva were living.

In addition, they felt that the burden of both schools was too much to bear for Rabbi Kamenetzky.

Moving to Far Rockaway would put a bigger onus upon the wealthier and more established, Far Rockaway community to support the yeshivos.



Louis Goldwyn

A settlement was reached. The boys would remain in Woodmere, the girls' school would move.

In October of 1962, Rabbi Kamenetzky, reluctantly wrote an official letter to Moshe Katz, asking him to take over the responsibilities of the girls' division.



Yeshiva Toras Chaim in East New York

In September of the following year, the Torah Academy for Girls opened in Far Rockaway. The nucleus of the newly formed Torah Academy for Girls were the students of Yeshiva of South Shore girls' school.

With the move, Louis Goldwyn assumed the presidency of YOSS and eased many of the most difficult situations.

At the same time, the Woodmere building's needs grew and the constant cost of maintenance was like throwing money into a black hole. Hardly a day passed when a chunk of concrete did not fall from the ceiling or the plumbing or heat malfunctioned.

It was time to build a new building.

On a parcel on William Street in neighboring Hewlett, there was a plot of land between two public schools that was owned by the Town of Hempstead.

It had been used to store trucks. It was an ideal place for a school. There were two public schools nearby and it was close to Peninsula Boulevard. Since the school was replacing a truck storage yard, it was an improvement in the community and probably accounted for the minimal opposition of the community to its construction. Leonard Goldstein was deeply involved in the legal aspects, again gratis, for the yeshiva.

A $300,000 mortgage was arranged somewhat miraculously, construction began.

At the same time, the East New York neighborhood in Brooklyn was deteriorating. People were moving to the suburbs, synagogues were being converted to churches and vandals ran rampant.

Zev Isseroff, a former East New Yorker who later moved to Long Island recalled, "In 1963, when on the holiest day in the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur night, I was attending services in a synagogue on Ashford Street. A few members from the Yeshiva Toras Chaim congregation walked over to our synagogue and asked for some volunteers--they did not have a quorum of ten men for the services. We realized that Jewish life in East New York was rapidly coming to an end."

Rabbi Isaac Schmidman, Rabbi Kamenetzky's former employer as Rosh Yeshiva of East New York's Yeshiva Toras Chaim, was in a quandary. The neighborhood was dying, and the shuls were being vandalized by hoodlums who had invaded the once beautiful neighborhood of East New York.

Below: The once beautiful neighborhood of East New York today



Right: (L–R): Leonard Goldstein, Joseph Jaspan, Rabbi Kamenetzky, Ed Harris



LONG ISLAND COMMUNITY NEWS

Page Twelve

Thursday, June 14, 1962

South Shore Yeshiva Breaks Ground for New Facility

The ground-breaking ceremonies of the South Shore Yeshiva Center were held on Sunday, June 3, at the new site: William Street near Penninsula Boulevard, in Hewlett. Addressing the audience gathered to witness the event, the Hon. Eugene H. Nickerson, Nassau County Executive, gave special emphasis to the importance of community support for this great endeavor.

The Hon. Palmer D. Farrington, supervisor of the Town of Hempstead, stated: Religious values have been stressed in the history of our great nation ever since its inception. These values must be maintained through our religious educational institutions."

Hon. Edward S. Silver, District Attorney of Kings County, praised the "great strides" this school has made "ever since its inception." He also noted that the sum of $150,000 must be forthcoming from the community in the South Shore area, and that it was "the duty and obligation of every communal-minded citizen to see this goal is reached and to offer their support."

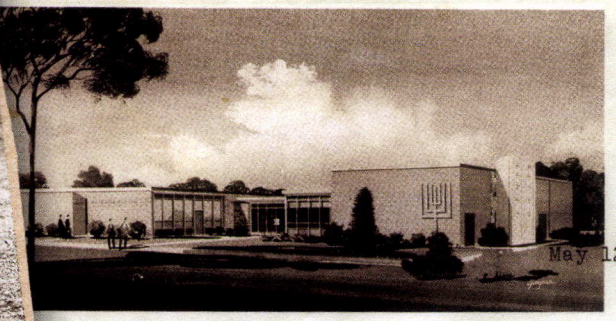
Amos Bunim, well-known leader, was chairman of the event.



L. to r.—Hon. Eugene H. Nickerson, Nassau County Executive; Hon. Palmer D. Farrington, Supervisor Town of Hempstead; Hon. Edward S. Silver, District Attorney of Kings County, and Nathan Boriskin, chairman, development of the South Shore Yeshiva Center, breaking ground for the new $500,000 school to be erected in Hewlett.

Groundbreaking at 1170 William Street





BUILDING CAMPAIGN

SOUTH SHO YESHIVAH

FOUR OAK STREET, WOODMERE, L. I. FR

May 12, 1964

Dear Colleague:

With a deep sense of pride and jubilation, I wish to inform you that the Yeshiva has entered into contract with R.A. Burdick Construction Company of Wantagh, for the erection of our new building.

I take pleasure in inviting you to join the distinguished leaders in the community in this joyous occasion. The beginning of the construction of this new building on Thursdy, May 14th at 10 A.M. will be held on the original site purchased by the Yeshiva on William Street at Franklin Avenue in Hewlett.

This new modern edifice will start a new life in the history of the Yeshiva. It will surely serve better the educational and spiritual needs of our children, and it will be a source of pride and joy to the entire community.

I ask you to please make every effort to attendthis historic event. There will be no solicitation of funds.

In anticipation of greeting you personally, I remain

Yours most sincerely,

Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetzky
Dean

rbk/c

TO APPROACH NEW BUILDING SITE:

Enter Franklin Avenue from Peninsula Blvd. opposite Woodmere-Hewlett Junior High School. Travel one block and turn right on William Street to site



RBK, Irving Dropkin, Leonard Goldstein at construction site on William Street

Rabbi Isaac Schmidman (l.) and Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky (r.) lead procession to bring the Sifrei Torah into the new Yeshiva building. Behind Rabbi Schmidman is Rabbi Nuchim Kornmehl

Burying Shaimos at construction site.
(R-L): (Nathan Farber, Sam Lipschutz, unidentified, unidentified

Rabbi Refael Pelcowitz speaking at Yeshiva of South Shore groundbreaking.
The two Rabbis in hats (R-L) are Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky and Rav Isaac Schmidman







Rabbi Chanina Herzberg, menahel



Elazar Aryeh from Iran being greeted by Rabbi Yehuda Oelbaum



Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky with Nathan and Sylvia Farber







Meanwhile, the former rebbe, who left in 1956, was trying to put up a building on William Street in Hewlett, far from East New York. There was cost overruns and little money left from the mortgage, and thus many stoppages.

Rabbi Schmidman decided to sell the East New York building and use a portion of the proceeds to help his former employee and first grade teacher, Rabbi Kamenetzky. (The other portion was used to establish Yeshiva Toras Chaim, Pri Yitzchok in Israel.)

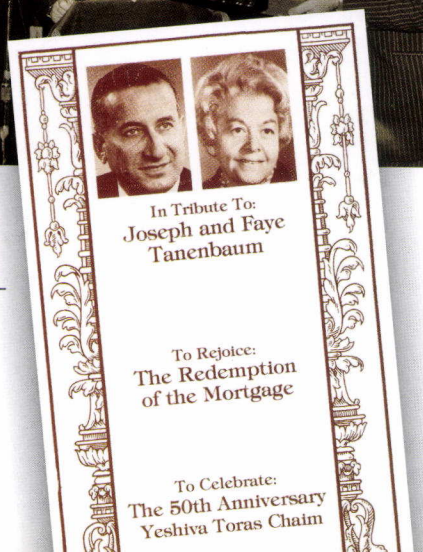
In 1963 the Yeshiva of South Shore merged with Yeshiva Toras Chaim and became officially known as Yeshiva and Mesivta Toras Chaim of Greater New York at South Shore. The building that began as Yeshiva of South Shore, was completed as Yeshiva Toras Chaim at South Shore.

Rabbi Schmidman joined with Rabbi Kamenetzky and played a role in the newly merged Yeshiva by speaking to the students and testing classes.

The building was dedicated in 1964 and the construction loan, converted into a mortgage would soon cause trouble. The bank threatened foreclosure and Rabbi Kamenetzky had to make the most difficult choice whether to pay the bank or the teachers. Divine providence and intervention, combined with Rabbi Kamenetzky's tenacity and brilliant usage of the media to capture the hearts and souls and harvest the benevolence of an amazing range of people was extraordinary. Supporters of the Yeshiva, ranged from old-timers and Yiddish speaking, Holocaust survivors as well as young, dynamic entrepreneurs, who were far removed from Judaism.



(L-R): Peter Desibio, Faye Tanenbaum, Joseph Tanenbaum, RBK



The rabbi spared no effort in recruiting boys as well. In a period before New York State had allocated money for bussing, he would send busses and vans to bring students to the yeshiva. David Brecher, remembers how Rabbi Kamenetzky had promised that there would be bussing to the yeshiva from Belle Harbor. On the first day of school, there was Rabbi Kamenetzky in front of his house, driving a van!

The yeshiva continued to grow, and in 1970 the Gedaliah Maidenbaum Preparatory School was built as a High School Division, headed by Rabbi Yehuda Oelbaum. It was short lived and later assumed by Rabbi Israel Chait who would eventually establish Yeshiva B'nei Torah in Far Rockaway. A few years later, as the Yeshiva of South Shore continued to expand, the new Gedaliah Maidenbaum Building was needed to accommodate the growing elementary school.

Rabbi Oelbaum served as the elementary school principal, a position he held until 1978 when he left to establish Machon Bais Yaakov High School for girls in Brooklyn.

Struggles and Renewal

During the mid-1970s the financial situation was tenuous. Rabbi Kamenetzky faced foreclosures and service interruptions from utility companies. The situation was dire.

Rabbi Kamenetzky reached out to the community-at-large for donors. He would solicit funds from anyone who would help him in affording scholarships to any Jewish child. Many of the donors were not even observant. Rabbi Kamenetzky's reach extended far beyond the parents of his school. He would learn with many non-observant community members and influence them to not only become more observant, but to send their children to yeshiva.

Salvation came from the north, when Toronto philanthropists, Joe and Faye Tanenbaum, gifted a magnanimous sum to help redeem the mortgage. All the while, through the rabbi's friendships and relentless fund-raising ability, the yeshiva managed to endure, and meet its obligations, all the while producing young men who would become a pride to their communities.



Hewlett Yeshiva Is Facing Closing

By PHYLLIS BERNSTEIN

Special to The New York Times

HEWLETT—"It was a little heartbreaking for the children" when three weeks ago, the 250-student Yeshiva Toras Chaim at South Shore closed down temporarily for two days, Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetzky said.

Still, the door-to-door fund-raising by the pupils netted $2,500, and the Rabbi concedes "although we never before solicited for ourselves, we are greatly encouraged by the response."

The fiscal crisis here in this all-boy, Orthodox Hebrew day school is at such severity that the school faces the possibility of closing permanently next year if its mortgage payments and bills cannot be met.

Although the school payroll is $260,000, tuition payments are only $147,000.

"Right away, we start with a deficit," the rabbi said, adding that 60 percent of the students were on partial scholarships.

The school, which serves 12 communities, has started a $400,000 community fund drive to raise money to pay, among a number of items, $100,000 in overdue bills. Recently, $24.000 was raised after a public appeal was made by the Young Israel of Woodmere, a local Orthodox congregation.

The religious school currently is two weeks behind in its payments to the 30 teachers, who average $9,000 in salary for working a six-day week. Many of these teachers are family men, who, the rabbi says, give of themselves in exemplary fashion.

'Never Had a Strike'

"We have never had a strike," he says proudly. "Nobody is interested in personal gains."

The school is 17 months behind on its mortgage payments, which come to $3,345 [illegible] Rabbi Kamenetzky has told the bank has been kind.

[illegible] other situations, "they would [illegible] ago."

But since then a large outpouring of sums has been diverted to support the state of Israel. (A recent Israel bond campaign to aid the economy of that country—part of a nationwide bond effort to provide $100 million—raised some $4.5 million in the New York area alone.

Additionally, the local philanthropists who used to give substantial aid, contend that they have been hurt by the stock market. They say they, too, are financially strapped.

Coupled with the current economic situation is a distinct falling away from orthodoxy in many middle-class Jewish homes. Only 30 percent of the Yeshiva's students live in the Five Towns area.

"A parent who is conscious of his Jewishness will send his child to a Yeshiva," Rabbi Kamenetzky believed, adding that in the Five Towns area "they are not that aware" except for a segment of young people newly arrived in the community.

Mostly Queens Students

The majority of the students (the school runs from nursery level through high school) come from Far Rockaway, Bayswater and other communities in Queens, and many of the parents work for the city in modest-paying jobs.

Some of these people have been badly hit by inflation and the downturn in the economy. Last week, a parent phoned the school to "hold the check" because he had just lost his job with the Urban Renewal Department.

Although the tuition costs per child ranges from $1,500 to $1,800, the school bills students who are on partial scholarships $1,100.

The curriculum here is a rigid one, and much emphasis is placed on intellectual achievement. School starts at 7:45 A.M. for all students, and grades 6 through 8 do not finish until 5:15 P.M.

Religious services are held in the school synagogue six days a week; the mornings are devoted to parochial stud- [illegible] ular studies are after-

74 ☆☆ DAILY NEWS, THURSDAY, MARCH 20, 1975

Yeshiva SOS: We're growing, need money

By STEVEN MATTHEWS

"If you're Jewish, chances are your grandchildren won't be."

"What happened to the Jews in Europe in 1939 the Jews of America are doing to themselves in 1974."

In big black print on the pages of national news magazines and mass circulation newspapers, these warnings assailed the New York Jewish community last fall.

The slick, Madison Avenue advertising campaign was geared to strike right at the heart of the problem that Jewish leaders here fear more than any other: assimilation.

And the ads worked — at least for the Board of Jewish Education, which sponsored the campaign. The board reported recently that the ads had attracted a significant amount of interest [illegible] many persons believe is the best solution to the assimilation problem: the loosely-knit system of Jewish day schools, or yeshivas.

Many of these schools are in trouble.

They are subject to the same stresses and strains as other private schools: declining enrollments and endowments, increased costs and changing neighborhoods.

Nearly 50,000 students are enrolled in almost 200 yeshivas in the city and the Westchester and Long Island suburbs, and the philosophical and physical diversity of these schools is sufficient to disabuse even a casual observer of the notion that they form an amalga-



Tuesday, September 2, 1975 FORWARD — 3 —

ישיבה ארמקיים אין דעם רייכסטן
שטעטל פון ניו יארק סטיים

טרב אהרן בן-ציון שורין



6

Thursday, January 12, 1995 - SOUTH SHORE RECORD

Yeshiva takes first step toward $3M expansion

By ROBERT SNYDER

Bulldozers were blazing away on Jan. 4, tearing down two one-family homes on Williams and Serena Road to make space for the upcoming expansion of the Yeshiva of South Shore in Hewlett.

"This is the greatest event to happen to us in the past 20 years," says Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetzky, founder and dean of the yeshiva. "We're growing and growing and we want to bring the upper school here as well."

According to yeshiva officials, the planned construction of a three-story, 12,906-square-foot building across the street from the existing elementary school is only one step in the proposed $3 million expansion. The school also hopes to knock down seven homes behind the main structure on Haven Place and eventually construct a high school building there. At present, it owns three houses on that street.

Rabbi Kamenetzky and associate dean Rabbi Simcha Lefkowitz stress that the construction is within the Town of Hempstead building-code guidelines. "We don't need variances," says Rabbi Lefkowitz, referring specifically to the Williams Street expansion, "and that's a matter of right and out of consideration for the neighbors...not because anyone did us a favor. We have designed the project within all the setback and parking requirements."

Town deputy spokesman Michael McConnell confirms that the yeshiva's building permit was approved by the Hempstead building department on Sept. 19, without need of variances. "It's in a residential zone, where a private or parochial school is permitted," he says. "The building is not higher than 45 feet, which is the maximum permitted. And, they're allowed one parking space per 25 students and one space per two faculty members. There are 10 spaces projected on the new building's first-floor parking area, which means five spaces for 125 students and five spaces for 10 staffers."

While the work on Haven Place is still in the early planning stage, the Williams Street expansion is under way. As described in a school release, the new building will house eight new classrooms, an auditorium, a lunchroom and a fully-equipped library with audio-visual materials. According to the release, "The new building will allow the school to increase enrollment in its pre-school program, which will include classes for 3-year-old boys and girls." It is anticipated that the new structure will be in use by September of 1995.

Yeshiva founder Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetzky and principal Murray Bromberg outside Yeshiva of South Shore in Hewlett.

A bulldozer tears into a house across the street from Yeshiva Toras Chaim in Hewlett.

PACKAGING EXPRESS
OFFICIAL UPS SHIPPING STATION
ANNOUNCES 4TH ANNUAL
NEW YEAR'S CLEARANCE SALE
MANY ITEMS

Under his leadership, the yeshiva grew to 350 boys and a pre-school building, known as the Hollander Early Childhood Center was built.

The Yeshiva's influence spurred the outgrowth of a post high school Bais Medrash founded in 1985, by Rabbi Kamenetzky's oldest son in law, Rabbi Yitzchok Knobel. Established as Yeshiva Gedolah Ateres Yaakov, in honor of Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky, it was the first of its kind in the Five Towns. Two years later, in 1987, the Ruth and Hyman Simon High School was established. After a few years housed in various shuls from Lynbrook to Elmont, it found a home back on the Manfred and Jamie Lehmann Campus of the Yeshiva of South Shore, newly named for Rabbi Kamenetzky's dear friend and his son. (See chapter on the Lehmann family).

In 1978, Rabbi Chanina Herzberg, a student of Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld, one of the master educators and Torah pedagogues of the last generation, was appointed menahel of the Yeshiva, a position he still holds at the time of this writing.

In 1981, Rabbi Simcha Lefkowitz, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky's son-in-law, was appointed the Associate Dean of the yeshiva and the rabbi of Congregation Toras Chaim, the *minyan* that gathered in the Yeshiva every Shabbos with members from the burgeoning community in Hewlett.

In 2001 under the direction of Rabbi Simcha Lefkowitz, the Milton and Sandy Ostreicher Building, a fourth building on the Yeshiva of South Shore Campus, was built to accommodate the growing needs of Congregation Toras Chaim and the Mesivta. However, the cost of construction and maintaining a mortgage became increasingly difficult, and the Yeshiva was faced with a tremendous financial burden in supporting three institutions and a mortgage.

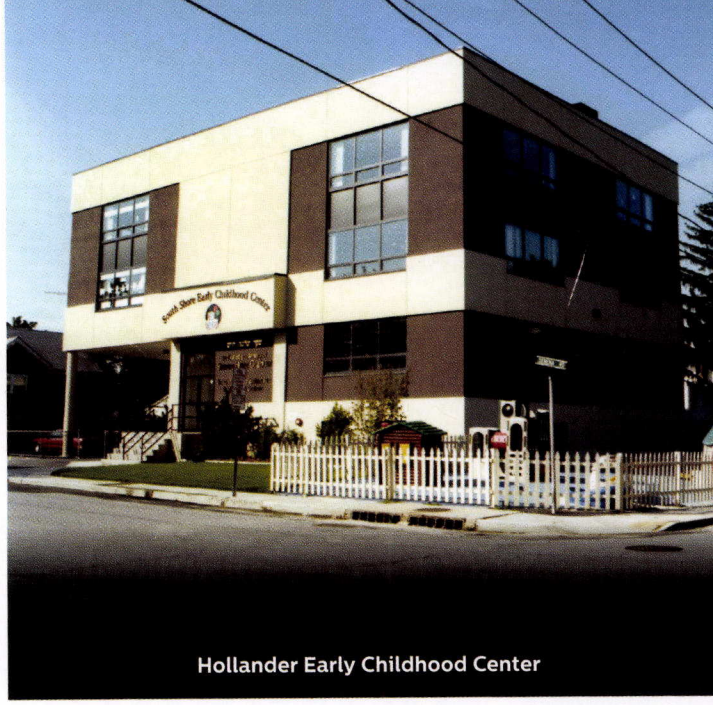
In 2003 Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky, at age 80, announced his official retirement

In 2003, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky, at age 80, announced his "official retirement" and together with the Board of Directors, asked his son, Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky to assume the role of Dean, a position he currently holds.

At the same time, Mesivta Ateres Yaakov became independent and under the leadership of Rabbi Mordechai Yaffe, moved to Lawrence in 2010. The Bais Medrash became an independent institution as well, as the Yeshiva Gedolah of the Five Towns led by Rabbi Moshe Katzenstein and Rabbi Knobel.

The Elementary School continued to grow and the Junior High School, moved into the new building. In 2013, in honor of Rabbi Kamenetzky's 90th birthday, the 4-plus-million-dollar mortgage was burned. Yeshiva of South Shore is one currently of the largest boys' elementary exclusive yeshivos in the New York Metropolitan area. Over the sixty years since its founding, its graduates have assumed prominent roles through the Jewish landscape in every facet of Jewish communal life and leadership.

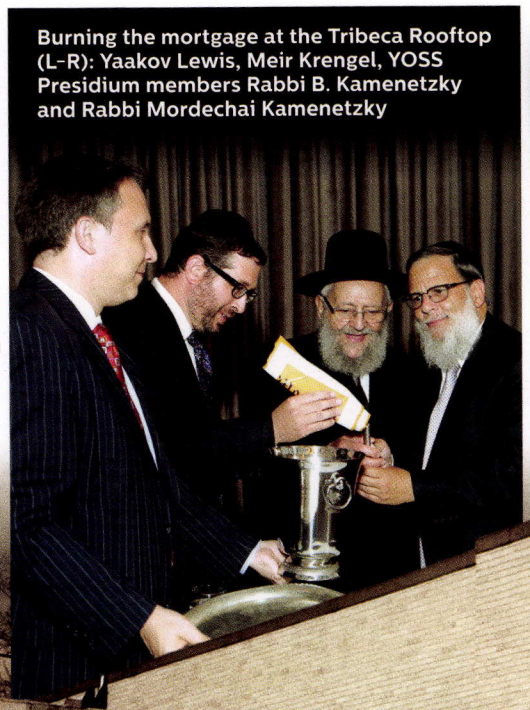
Its impact on the growth of the community and its role as a pioneering force for Torah growth will forever be treasured in Jewish history as the trailblazing institution that forged the path for myriad institutions of Torah study in the Five Towns and Rockaway area.



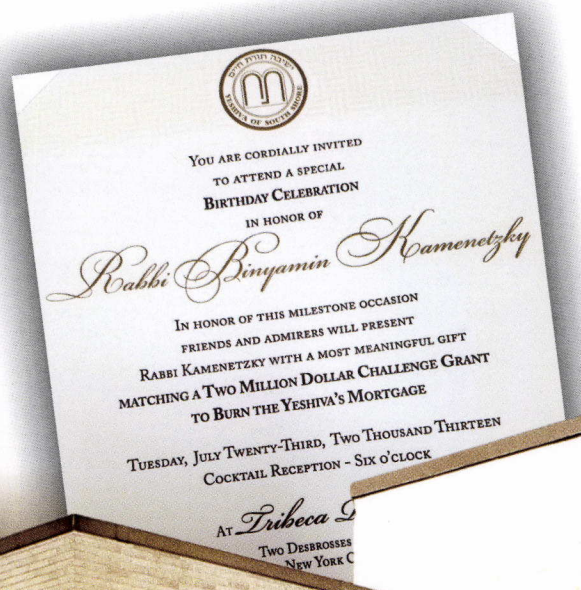
Hollander Early Childhood Center



Partial view of the Dr. Manfred and Jamie Lehmann Campus of the Yeshiva of South Shore



Burning the mortgage at the Tribeca Rooftop (L-R): Yaakov Lewis, Meir Krengel, YOSS Presidium members Rabbi B. Kamenetzky and Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky







Left to Right:
Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky,
Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky,
Rav David Hollander,
Rabbi Irving Miller,
(sitting: Mr. Eli Gut)

Spice of Life

A Puzzling Photo

They seemed an unlikely foursome

There are many iconic photos depicting the presentation of Sifrei Torah. Notable, of course, is the photo of Dr. Chaim Weizmann presenting a Torah to President Harry S. Truman in gratitude for his immediate recognition of the State of Israel. I've often wondered what Chaim Weizmann was thinking; after all, the President certainly didn't need it for a *minyan* by his shver, patriarch of the notoriously anti-Semitic Wallace family that wouldn't permit any Jew—not even Harry's beloved friend and business partner, Edward Jacobson—to cross the threshold of their home.

But as I once wrote, every picture has a story, and I recently found two interesting old photographs of a hachnasas sefer Torah. In the more typical of the two, the donor, a Mr. Eli Gut, is carrying the scroll up the walkway to the entrance of Yeshiva of South Shore, where it would be read on weekdays and on Shabbos. Mr. Gut is flanked by the distinguished newly-elected founders and board members of the fledgling institution, notable among them my father, with his trimmed goatee, and the iconic askan Mr. Moshe Katz.

But there's another picture that was taken of the ceremony inside the shul, a picture of four rabbis. The makeup of the group struck me as odd, if not downright bizarre.

The picture had my zeide, Harav Yaakov Kamenetzky, zt"l, standing next to my father. Of course, I understood that pairing: My father was his eldest son and the dean of the new yeshiva.

> *Every picture has a story, and I recently found two interesting old photographs of a hachnasas Sefer Torah.*

But the next two figures seemed incongruous. To my father's left, looking rather stoic, stands Rabbi David Hollander, rabbi of the Mount Eden Jewish Center in the Bronx. He is next to Rabbi Irving Miller, leader of Congregation Sons of Israel, a shul that was slowly betraying its Orthodox roots by liberalizing its agenda to conform to the whims of the Conservative movement. Miller was also chairman of the Zionist Organization of America.

Rabbi Miller originally began his career in the Five Towns in the 1930s, as the rabbi of Congregation Shaarei Tefillah, an Orthodox synagogue in Far Rockaway. In 1952, however, he moved on to Congregation Sons of Israel in Woodmere, New York. Under his tenure, a once Orthodox shul with a mechitzah was transformed into one with a three-sectioned sit-as-you-please service. Technically, even today, despite its breach of tradition, Congregation Sons of Israel is neither officially aligned with the Conservative movement, nor is it an official member of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. Its charter directs that "prayers should be recited according to the tradition of Orthodox Judaism." And to fulfill that missive, they use an Orthodox *siddur*.

Rabbi Miller, to his credit, founded the Jewish Center School, the first Jewish Day School on Long Island and perhaps one of the first ten in the United States. But in 1954 the name was changed to The Brandeis School, in honor of Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis, and the school aligned itself with the Conservative Solomon Schechter Day School movement by becoming one of its first members.

Mr. Eli Gut, the donor, is sitting and, as always, smiling.

I asked my father to explain how Rabbi Miller was connected to the yeshiva, and why Rabbi Hollander — a well-known zealous advocate for the primacy of Torah-true Judaism according to the rule of Shulchan Aruch—would be standing next to him at the same ceremony. Rabbi Hollander was a *kanai*, a powerful spokesman for unadulterated Orthodox Jewry, who would not even openly use the title "Rabbi" to acknowledge rabbinic members of the Conservative movement. Rather, he would call

them "members of the Jewish clergy." In many of his speeches, he expressed his view that those who use the term "rabbi" to refer to Conservative Jewish clergy, but do not recognize their rabbinic actions or rituals as valid, are being dishonest.

At the time, nearly 60 years ago, it was not easy to get someone to donate a sefer Torah. The executive director of the American Office of Slabodka Yeshiva, Rav Friedman, was delighted that a yeshiva had been started on Long Island by the son of his dear friend from Slabodka, Rav Yaakov Kamenecki (as it was spelled when he knew my grandfather in Europe). He met my father and introduced him to another Slabodka talmid, Rav Alter Koslowski, zt"l, who lived in Woodmere. Rabbi Koslowski and his wife were frail, and his daughter and son-in-law in Woodmere looked after them. The children were members of Congregation Sons of Israel, so that's where they brought their father to daven. Rabbi Miller allowed a separate *minyan* in his office for the older generation Orthodox members, including Rabbi Koslowski, a *minyan* that still exists on the Yomim Noraim until today with a proper mechitzah in the synagogue building. Rabbi Koslowski endeared himself to many of the congregants and introduced my father to another Orthodox member of that synagogue, the aforementioned Mr. Eli Gut, a successful manufacturer of zippers and fasteners. Mr. Gut, together with his wife, Lily, a scion of the Chasam Sofer's family, was at the forefront of many philanthropic endeavors.

Eli and Lily had commissioned the writing of a sefer Torah in honor of the bar mitzvah of their son Ralph, to take place on Parshas Lech Lecha in 1954. The bar mitzvah took place—but without the Torah. The sofer had passed away in the middle of writing it, so it wasn't finished on time. That took another two years.

That's when my father stepped in. There was a yeshiva. And the yeshiva needed a Torah.

And so, a relationship with Mr. and Mrs. Gut soon evolved into the dedication of a Torah scroll. It turned out to be a festive celebration, but there were some issues of political correctness to deal with, even in those days. The Guts were members of Rabbi Miller's congregation, and it was only proper for him to be invited to the hachnasas sefer Torah. After all, the Torah was coming from his shul to the yeshiva, with his blessing.

What in the world was Chaim Weizmann thinking when he gave Harry Truman a Torah?

And if a rabbi comes, a rabbi speaks. Because Rabbi Miller had moved to the left, my father was afraid he might articulate some radical thought in his remarks. So he called his father, Rav Yaakov, zt"l, for advice. "I will come," said my zeide. "I doubt he would say anything against the mesorah in my presence. And just in case, invite Rabbi David Hollander. If there will be something needing immediate refutation, Rabbi Hollander has been a most powerful advocate for the emes. Indeed, Rabbi Hollander, a son-in-law of Rav Shimshon Zelig Fortman of the nearby Congregation Kneseth Israel (The White Shul), knew what my father was trying to accomplish in Woodmere and accepted the invitation.

Rabbi Miller did speak, in English. Believe it or not, he only alluded to his leanings, stating that "Yiddishkeit is like a tree, an eitz chaim, and a tree has as many branches as Yiddishkeit has divergent ideas and customs. But," he concluded, "there must be a trunk. And the trunk of Yiddishkeit is a yeshiva. Without the trunk, there could be no branches."

The message was focused on the importance of the yeshiva, with little elaboration on what he meant by "many branches." Afterward he approached my zeide, subtly acknowledging that the presence of the rosh yeshiva clearly mitigated the chance of any wrong ideas coming from him. However, he apologized to my grandfather. "I am sorry that I gave the speech in English."

My grandfather smiled and said, "Don't worry. What you spoke was a Yiddishe drashah."



Pictured left:

Mr. Eli Gut (the donor), carrying the scroll up the walkway to the entrance of Yeshiva of South Shore, where it would be read on weekdays and on Shabbos.

Mr. Gut is flanked by the distinguished newly-elected founders and board members of the fledgling institution, notable among them my father, with his trimmed goatee, and the iconic askan Mr. Moshe Katz.

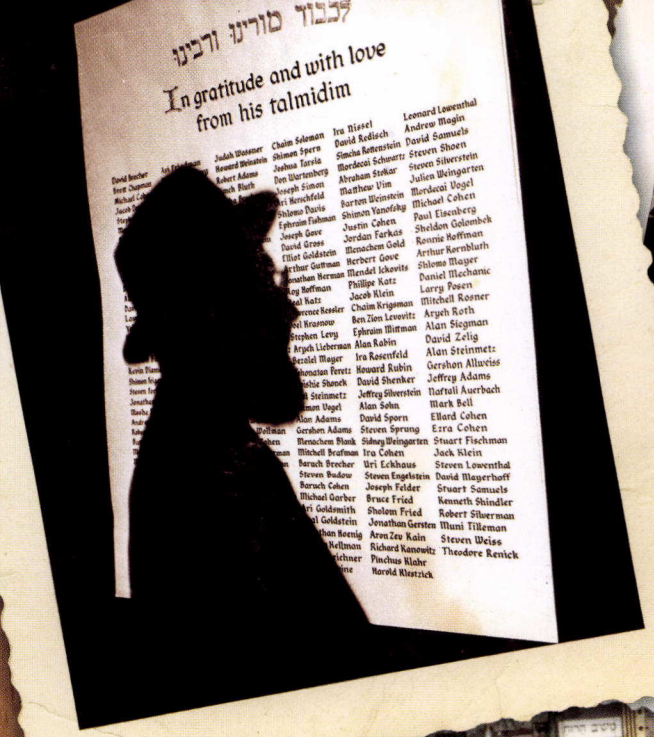
POSTSCRIPT:

In 1966 the Guts moved to Raleigh, North Carolina, where they had built a manufacturing facility. Ralph continues to be a dear personal friend of the yeshiva and our family, and he and his wife have been instrumental in the growth and sustenance of the Orthodox community there. When they moved, my father gave them the sefer Torah back, to be used in the shul they were building in Raleigh. Years later, early one Rosh Chodesh morning, when fate had me *davening* in Congregation Sha'arei Israel of Raleigh, I was honored to open the Aron Kodesh. And what I saw there is another tale.

לכבוד מורינו ורבינו

In gratitude and with love
from his talmidim

Judah Wassner
Bernard Weinstein
Robert Adams
Chaim Soloman
Shimon Spero
Joshua Tarola
Don Wartenberg
Joseph Simon
Shlomo Davis
Ephraim Fishman
Joseph Gove
David Gross
Elliot Goldstein
Arthur Guttman
Jonathan Herman
Ira Nissel
David Redlich
Simcha Rottenstein
Mordecai Schwartz
Abraham Stokar
Matthew Vim
Barton Weinstein
Shimon Yanofsky
Justin Cohen
Jordan Farkas
Menachem Gold
Herbert Gove
Mendel Ickovits
Phillipe Katz
Jacob Klein
Chaim Krigsman
Ben Zion Levovitz
Ephraim Mittman
Alan Rabin
Ira Rosenfeld
Howard Rubin
David Shenker
Jeffrey Silverstein
Alan Sohn
David Sporn
Steven Sprung
Sidney Weingarten
Ira Cohen
Uri Lekhaus
Steven Engelstein
Joseph Felder
Bruce Fried
Sholom Fried
Jonathan Gersten
Aron Zev Kain
Richard Kanowitz
Pinchus Klahr
Harold Klatzick
Leonard Lowenthal
Andrew Magin
David Samuels
Steven Shoen
Steven Silverstein
Julien Weingarten
Mordecai Vogel
Michael Cohen
Paul Eisenberg
Sheldon Golombek
Ronnie Hoffman
Arthur Kornbluth
Shlomo Mayer
Daniel Mechanic
Larry Posen
Mitchell Rosner
Aryeh Roth
Alan Siegman
David Zelig
Alan Steinmetz
Gershon Allweiss
Jeffrey Adams
Natnili Auerbach
Mark Bell
Ellard Cohen
Ezra Cohen
Stuart Fischman
Jack Klein
Steven Lowenthal
David Mayerhoff
Stuart Samuels
Kenneth Shindler
Robert Silverman
Muni Tilleman
Steven Weiss
Theodore Renick























רבנו מבקר בבית־ספר ישיבה תורת חיים, בניו־יורק,





THE HILLEL SCHOOL

HEBREW ACADEMY OF THE FIVE TOWNS AND ROCKAWAYS



Seagirt Boulevard, Far Rockaway, circa 1935

You can say The Hillel School began as a dream,

but according to one of its founders, Milton Kramer, it began as a small group of spurned parents.

At the time, in 1957 there were only three institutions of Jewish education in the greater Five Towns area. HILI the Hebrew Institute of Long Island, was the premier institution. In existence since 1937, it was a center for Jewish education in the heart of a thriving community. The other two, HALB, Hebrew Academy of Long Beach, was founded in 1955 and catered to students from the Long Beach and Oceanside area. A yeshiva that had opened in a dilapidated building in nearby Woodmere, was at this point not only untested, but was unknown to Milton and his friends who had come to HILI to register their children.

At the time in 1957 there were only three institutions of Jewish education in the larger Five Towns area HILI was the premier institution.

Milton Kramer, along with two friends, David Levin and Mike Emerson, walked into the building on its Seagirt Boulevard campus. They wanted to see the school in action, and just walked in. They approached the receptionist sitting by a window. She slid the glass window open. "We'd like to visit a classroom and see what's going on," said Milton.

"We don't permit that here," she countered tersely. "You have to work it out with the president of the school." She then curtly slid the window shut.

The closing of that window, in essence opened another one.

The three men were a bit stunned and walked out. "We're not sending our children here," said one emphatically. "Where *should* we send then?" said another. "Brooklyn?" "Let's start our own yeshiva!" said another. And thus was planted the seed that would soon sprout into a new school on Long Island, The Hillel School.

The three like-minded men had met and become friends in Far Rockaway, where they had moved from elsewhere to start families in the beach-side Jewish community that boasted shuls, a *mikvah*, a school and a kosher butcher.

Milton and his wife Rita married in 1949 and moved to an apartment in Far Rockaway in 1950. They both came from religious families. Rita hailed from Boro Park, Brooklyn; her grandfather Meshulam Tzvi Gross was a study partner (*chavrusa*) with the Lubavitcher Rebbe and had authored two texts of insights on the weekly Torah portion. Milton was born in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, and was the product of a religious family and a yeshiva education. They still live in the home in Far Rockaway that they bought in 1965.

Milton and the two friends *davened* in Congregation Shaaray Tefila and were mentored by Rabbi Emanuel Rackman. "We always walked home together from shul," recounted Milton. "On the way home we told him that we were going to start a new yeshiva." "You don't know what you are heading in for," he recalls Rabbi Rackman warning them.

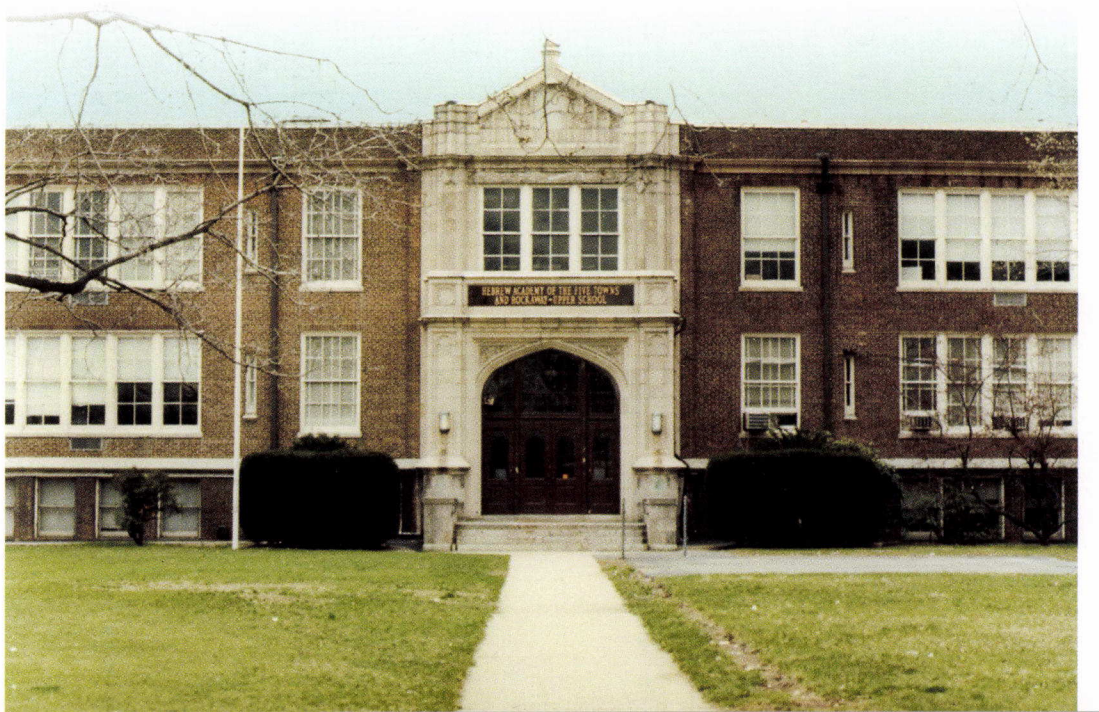


Milton Kramer said that they found out that a very wealthy man with little Jewish background on the Board of Trustees was running HILI. The three friends resolved to create a different structure for their yeshiva, where the board of education would be a separate unit. "Decisions would be made by a board of education, not by a board of trustees," explained Kramer. "This was the basis for starting The Hillel School."

Indeed, there was rabbinical council, at HILI. Rabbi Rackman was on HILI's board of education but it was controlled by the board of trustees."

Milton stressed that at Hillel the members of the board of education had to have a yeshiva background and be frum and they elected the board of trustees. Rabbi Rackman supported the separation between the board of education and the board of trustees. The school would have parallel classes to cater to the needs of different types of students.

The school began to gain traction. David Levin became the chairman of the board and Kramer and Emerson the vice presidents. "As vice president I was told that I had to keep the records," said Milton.



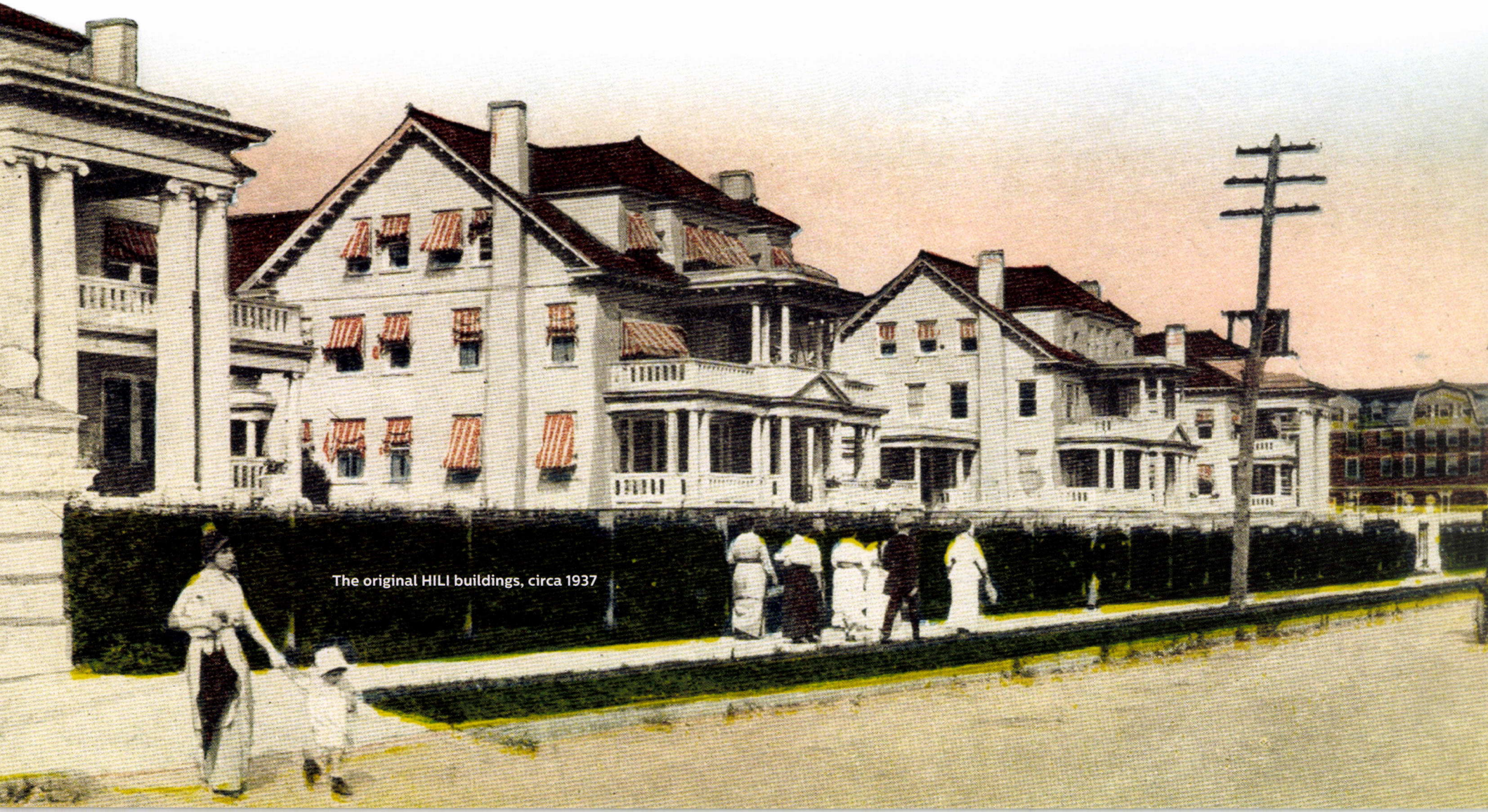
"We opened September 1957 without a nickel in our pocket. We had 16 students in first grade. In less than 20 years the student body numbered 750, including a new high school.

"We knew who had school age kids. Every Shabbos we knocked on the doors of families, some of whom had older siblings in HILI, attempting to speak with parents who would maybe send their younger kids to Hillel. Most of those parents with kids in HILI didn't let us in the house – they knew what we were there for." Even a rabbi from a local shul pulpit who was on the HILI board excoriated attendees not to send their kids to the new school.

"In spite of all that," stressed Kramer, "we opened September 1957 without a nickel in our pocket. We had 16 students in first grade-including my son. In less than 20 years the student body numbered 750, including a new high school. This accomplishment was proof positive of the urgent need of a new yeshiva because HILI could not possibly accommodate the numbers."

Rabbi Rackman created the preamble for Hillel's constitution, stating that the focus of the yeshiva was *derech eretz kodma l'Torah,* proper behavior, manners and respect was a requirement for the study of Torah. Hillel's constitution detailed how the school was formed and operated.

The first classes, kindergarten and first grade, were held in Congregation Beth Sholom with a nod from Rabbi Dr. Gilbert Klaperman, Esq, the shul's rabbi; Irving Perlow was the founding principal. At the school's first dinner, honoree Rabbi Nathan Kohler, who would soon establish the Young Israel of Lawrence and Cedarhurst, gave $10,000.
"In those days that was a lot of money," Kramer pointed out. "Tuition wasn't what it is today." He added that some wealthy parents were able to cover the school's expenses. The school continued to



The original HILI buildings, circa 1937



Hillel class, 1958

grow, adding classes in Beth Sholom and Congregation Shaaray Tefila. The school was a Zionist school, proudly promoting the State of Israel and its leaders and with many Israeli teachers. Jewish studies classes were taught in Hebrew, *"Ivrit b'ivrit,"* said Kramer proudly.

Students came by word of mouth, parents' friends and acquaintances were recommended and joined, thanking Mr. Kramer for the recommendation. They added a grade a year, rapidly growing since the parents and students were happy with the school and word grew. The endeavor drew the support and legal assistance of lawyer and local Congressman Herbert Tenzer and the input of Nat Maidenbaum. In 1960, Hillel moved into its own building next to Congregation Beth Sholom on Washington Avenue, between Central Avenue and Broadway. A parent whose father worked in real estate cultivated a connection to a bank that was willing to give them a mortgage; each trustee had to sign for $25,000 in the event that the school would not pay the mortgage.

Part of the draw for the school was upheaval in that era in the public school system and the yearning of parents who had not received a Jewish education to provide one for their children. Congregation Shaaray Tefilah was a very open shul and Rabbi Rackman welcomed many who initially drove to shul. One of them who said, "I can't eat kosher food; it doesn't agree with me," became an observant Jew together with most of his family only after a year-and-a-half at Shaaray. This family and descendants have since became *shomer Shabbat*, have a kosher home and one son is now a rabbi. "He completely turned around," said Kramer.

Parents were very satisfied with the education at Hillel, noted Kramer. Perlow had an open door policy and worked with the parents "They kept getting large enrollments." Kramer served on both boards and was vice president a number of years. "I did a lot of work for the school," he said, and his wife Rita was active in the parents' league. He recounted his hectic schedule, running his business, attending school meetings late into the night sometimes till 2:00 am, dealing with students and parents, researching teachers, investigating their backgrounds

and approving teachers, and working to find answers to problems along with the other board members.

During the 1960s, the only Orthodox Jewish schools in the Five Towns were the Yeshiva of South Shore and Hillel. Their philosophies were different, but there were times when they united in support of the greater Jewish community. In January of 1969, the schools brought the community together at Hillel to protest the hanging of nine Iraqi Jews, who were executed for "spying" for Israel.

Students of both the Yeshiva and Hillel and Yeshiva of South Shore spoke at the rally.

As Hillel co-educated boys and girls and their philosophy was directed toward that of the demographic of newcomers to the Five Towns, the bulk of the newly arrived members of the community sent their children to Hillel. Though there was a number of students from the Woodmere and Cedarhurst area, during those years, the Yeshiva of South Shore's student body came mainly from Lawrence, Far Rockaway, Laurelton, Rosedale and the outlying areas.

The Merger

In 1978, HILI was having financial problems, the demographics of the community were changing and Far Rockaway was not growing with the sort of population that could easily support a coed, Zionistic school. Many of HILI's potential clientele were moving east to the Five Towns and sending their children to Hillel.

HILI and Hillel merged to form the Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway.

During the 1960s, the only Orthodox Jewish Schools in the Five Towns were the Yeshiva of South Shore and Hillel. Their philosophies were different, but there were times when they united in support of the greater Jewish community.



Graduating Class of Hillel High School, circa 1974



Left: (L-R): Mr. Schoum, Mr. Rappaport. R' Hoffman, R' Israel Chait, Mr. Gorfein

Seated: Mrs. Rapaport, Ms. Raisin, Unidentified, Ms. Robbins, Ms. Judy Levy

But there were people who wanted the independence of Hillel.

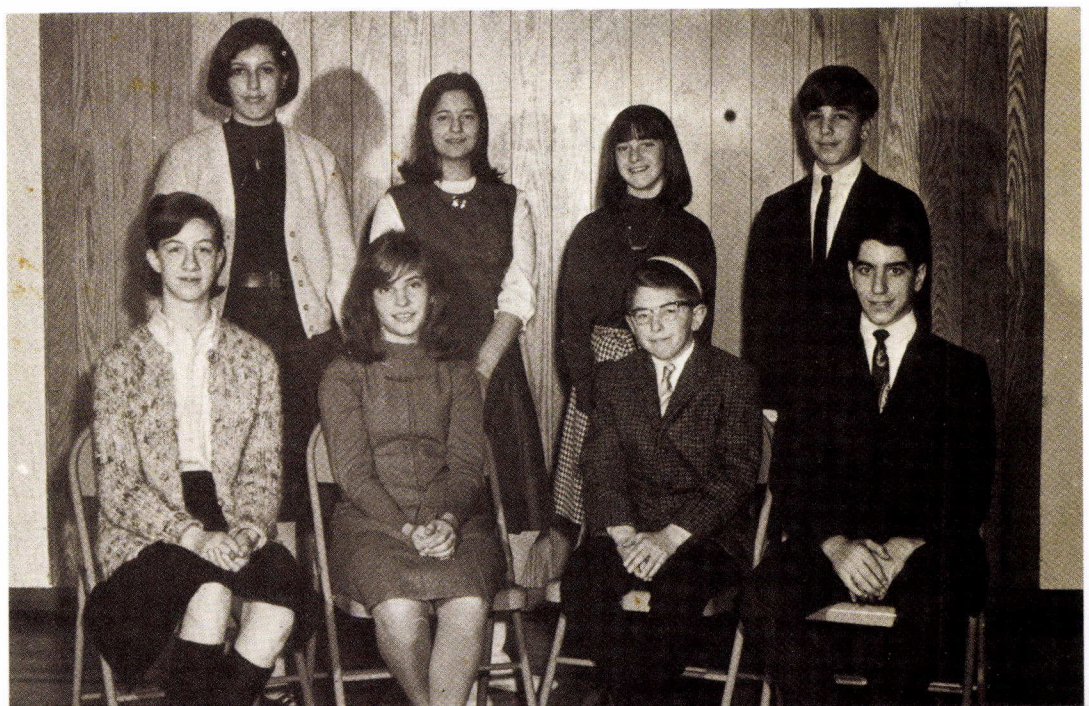
"I was against the merger," explained Mr. Kramer. He wanted the board of education to be independent of the board of trustees. "They voted not to be separate and became one unit," said Kramer, bitterly. "So I disembarked.

Fortunately my kids graduated before that." He said that Rabbi Rackman also opposed the merger. The members of the board of education were then beholden to the board of trustees. HAFTR, the Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaway, emerged from the merger with a student body of more than 1,000 students and continues to thrive at the same location today, its high school further down Central Avenue.

Others disagree. "It was one of the best things that happened," insisted David Kolatch, who was executive director in the 1960s and oversaw the merger of the two institutions in the late 1970s.

David Kolatch, who has lived in Woodmere since 1961, grew up in Borough Park, Brooklyn, attended Yeshiva Eitz Chaim and Yeshiva University's Brooklyn Talmudical Academy for high school followed by Brooklyn College. He began his career as a social studies teacher in public high school but became executive director of the Hillel School in Lawrence in the 1960s.

"It was senseless to have two high schools in the same area," explained Kolatch. "It was a big fight but it was the right thing to do. I strongly believed in the merger. Far Rockaway was a different community in those days than the Five Towns. Far Rockaway was more Orthodox, it had a little different *hashkafa* (philosophy). I think to this day people still object to the merger." He noted that his children attended Hillel and later HAFTR after the merger, all of his grandchildren went to HAFTR. He also noted that Rabbi Nitzlich was the principal of HILI at the time of the merger. "Mostly everybody was absorbed into the new school. It was a good move for the community. Duplication of spending money for the same thing didn't make sense. The schools blended into an allegiance to HAFTR. All teachers were incorporated. It was a good, fair merger." He added that "acquiring the high school building was another big fight, a major effort." He lauded the education at HAFTR with special emphasis on Judaic studies taught *Ivrit b'Ivrit* (Hebrew language), strong science and math and boys and girls in separate classes in the high school. He said that it also proved that "other schools too were needed and are successful," noting that "different schools have opened and people have choices. It helped this community grow dramatically" with the "right leadership and *hashkafa*." He further pointed out that



Class Officers (L-R) Standing: Susan Cohan, Rachel Muchnick, Debbie Weinstein, Andrew Klein

Seated: Bleema Sklar, Lynda Bienenfeld, Ezra Rosenfeld, Andrew Schulman



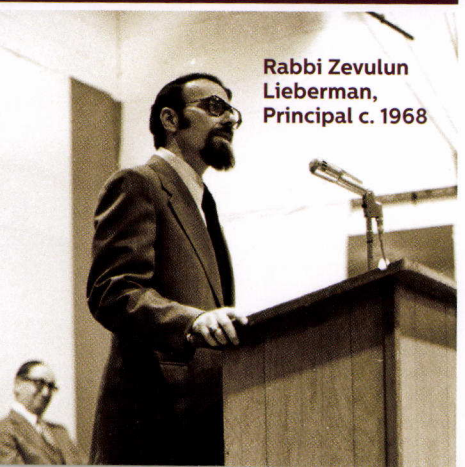
Standing from L-R: Rabbi Sirota, Rabbi Schields, Mr. Pasternak, Rabbi Kalmar.
Seated: Rabbi Assaf, Mr. Irving L. Perlow, Principal, Rabbi Arthur Laifer, Assistant Principal



Standing from L-R: Rabbi Arthur Laifer, Assistant Principal, Mr. Schneider
Seated: Mrs. Statsinger, Mr. Irving L. Perlow, Principal, Mrs. Raisin



Morning Prayers in Hillel School



Rabbi Zevulun Lieberman, Principal c. 1968



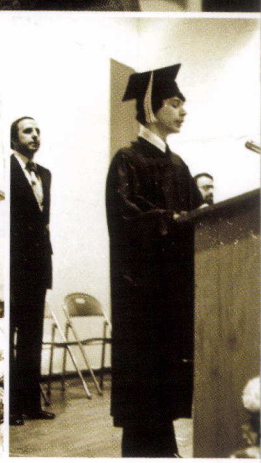
Jacob Heller greeting Rabbi Levitz



Velvel Pasternack at key board



Rabbi Leiter, Principal



A Hillel graduate

"public schools are being taken over by the yeshivot" as the Jewish community here continues to grow and the secular population in the area shrinks.

Soon enough the base of the institutions grew with active involvement from powerful and philanthropic lay leaders, like Joshua Muss, Charles Alpert, Eli Wallach and more recently Philip Pilevsky and Martin Scharf among others.

Today, HAFTR consists of two campuses, one in Cedarhurst for their high school and one in Lawrence for early childhood, lower and middle schools.

With 1,400 students they are one of the largest Modern Orthodox yeshiva in the area. Although their co-ed classes are on all levels of the secular studies departments, starting with 4th grade, there are separate classes for *limudei kodesh*.

From their large student body, graduates matriculate to both the finest yeshivos in Israel after graduation from high school and the best secular colleges in the country, including many Ivy League institutions.

Today, HAFTR consists of two campuses, one in Cedarhurst for their high school and one in Lawrence for early childhood, lower and middle schools.

Many of the current faculty members, are former students of both HILI and HILLEL and HAFTR and many have also enrolled their own children and grandchildren at HAFTR.

The growth and success of HAFTR over the last few years has been one of the key factors in the continued growth of the Five Towns.










HEBREW ACADEMY
of the
Five Towns & Rockaway
ישיבת חוף דרום
HAFTR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL




HEBREW ACADEMY
of the
Five Towns & Rockaway
ישיבת חוף דרום
NYU
NYIT
PRINCETON
UMASS AMHERST


HAFTR
MIDDLE SCHOOL











Pennsylvania State Policemen and truck drivers remove an injured child from the overturned bus

A Tragic Accident Pierces the Heart of a Community

An everlasting pall was cast over the Five Towns communities when a Hillel Country Day School summer camp overnight trip turned deadly in July 1970. It left a painful memory that remains to this day for the families and friends and entire Five Towns community affected by that tragedy.

Hillel had established a summer camp program which thrives today as the Hillel Country Day School. At the time, there were 550 campers from across the greater Five Towns and Queens area. A camp bus, filled with mostly eleven or twelve-year-old children was on its way to tour the Amish countryside in Lancaster, when it skidded on a rainy S-curve of Highway 22, ten miles west of Allentown, near the town of Smithville, and slid off the wet highway and over an embankment near Allentown, Pennsylvania.

The bus hydroplaned plunging through the cable guardrail, flipping end over end, landing against the stone foundation of an old vacant house. The roof and the side of the bus were ripped open and most of the windows were shattered. In news reports, State Trooper Robert Clarson said, "It was a mess. There were children all over, in the embankment, in the grass, in the bus. They were crying and very upset. Most of them appeared to be in shock." Some were trapped inside and under the bus. Motorists and truck drivers stopped to help, comforting the children and attempting to stop the bleeding with towels and blankets. Some of the truckers brought hydraulic jacks and lifted the bus with cables to enable rescue crews to reach the victims of the crash.

Seven children were killed, and 52 others were injured, eight seriously. Two of the dead children were from the borough of Queens, the other five from the Long Island towns of Woodmere, Cedarhurst, Valley Stream and Lawrence.

Nahum Gordon, a well-known lawyer and community activist, was the chairman of the school's board of trustees, at the time. He was tasked with the grim duty of informing the many parents of the details. At 8:30 that evening in a tear filled voice, he broke the tragic news to the shocked community members.

The scene was searing. All the parents were crying openly and were in states of daze and near-collapse.

It was considered one of the most tragic accidents of the era and In Washington, the National Transportation Safety Board was sent to the scene to investigate.

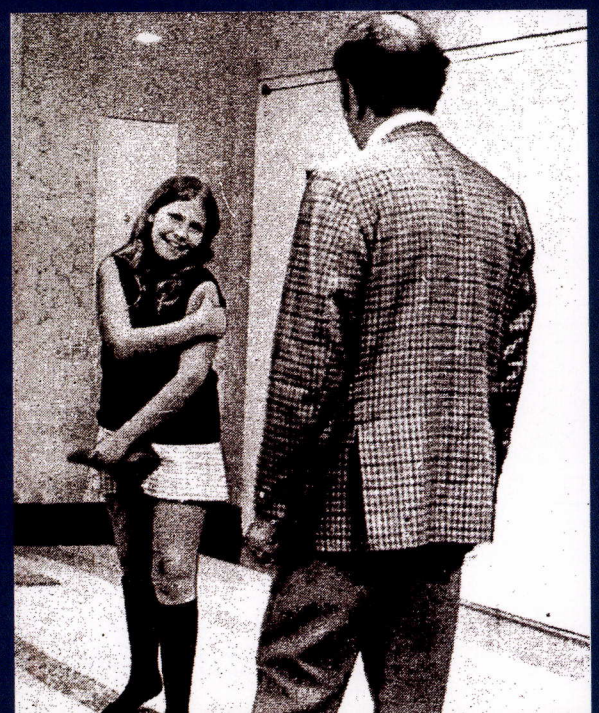
According to Allen Burkin of Woodmere, one of the children aboard, said he was sitting in the back seat at the time of the accident. "All I know is the bus started turning and somebody screamed to grab ahold of something and that's exactly what I did," he said. "Then a boy started falling out of the bus, so I caught him."

The police said the roof and a side of the bus had been ripped open. “It was a mess,” State Trooper Robert Clarson said. “There were children all over—in the embankment, in the grass, in the bus.”

Parents drove or flew to Allentown where an emergency center was set up at Temple Beth-El there for the almost 100 parents and relatives of the victims.

At the time, Hillel had been a thriving school for 13 years with a student body of more than 500. It continued to grow and thrive as did the summer camp after the tragedy. But in recent comments on various websites with news accounts from then, it is apparent that classmates and siblings of the victims are still seared with the memory of that day and the loss of their loved ones.

The children who perished, Bonnie Eisenberg of Belle Harbor, Jonathan Elstein of Far Rockaway, Lisa Gerstman of Valley Stream, Nancy Jacobson of Woodmere, Spencer Jaffe of Lawrence, Randee Lewis of Woodmere, and Randi Press of Cedarhurst, will always be remembered by the Hillel family and the greater Five Towns communities.



7 Children Killed In Pa. Bus Crash

ACCIDENT SCENE. Arrow indicates point on Route 22 in eastern Pennsylvania where the bus carrying children from Long Island wrecked.

Laughter . . . Sorrow

Story of a ‘Happy’ Journey: Death Waited on the Road

7 Children Killed, Many Hurt As Bus Overturns Off Pa. Road

Tour Group From School In Lawrence

Pennsylvania State Policemen and Truck Drivers Remove an Injured Child From the Overturned Bus

In the Morning . . . Laughter; In the Evening . . . Sorrow

EXPLAINING. Ilene Tuller of Woodmere, L.I., manages a smile as she explains to a doctor yesterday how she escaped with only a few bruises in the bus accident. They talked at Allentown’s Temple Beth-El.

מוקדש לזכר
ר' אלימלך מרדכי בר'
יוסף זאב שרייבר ע"ה
תשד"ם – 1983



— THE —

SOUTH SHORE MIKVAH



NASSAU
HERALD

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 1982 15¢

This Paper in Two Parts
Total Number of Pages 40

Opening of Five Towns Mikvah is clogged with ritual back-ups

STORY ON PAGE 2

Like most stories

of groundbreaking spiritual achievements, the South Shore *Mikvah* came to being due only to the dogged determination and unswerving vision of many individuals.

These individuals, some known and others unknown, some residents of the Five Towns and others not, nevertheless all shared one important characteristic: they believed in a dream and wouldn't give up until that dream was fulfilled.

In the Five Towns, until the late 1970s, the idea of building a community Mikvah was neither discussed nor promoted.

In the Five Towns, until the late 1970s, the idea of building a community *Mikvah* was neither discussed nor promoted. The closest *Mikvah* at the time was on Dinsmore Avenue in Far Rockaway. Its gritty environs hardly contributed to the commitment of those wavering in the observance of *taharas hamishpacha*, and daunting to those who were already committed. The surrounding neighborhood was crime-ridden, and packs of wild dogs roamed its burned-out buildings. The conditions were clearly not ideal.

Max Schreiber, one of five brothers who owned a successful family business, had devoted his life to building *mikvaos* around the world. Max's passion for building mikvaos came following a meeting with the Chazon Ish in Bnei Brak. He instructed him to focus on the mitzvah of building mikvaos above any other. "*Mikvah* is a *mais mitzvah*," said the Chazon Ish. "It supersedes any other *mitzvah*."

Max took the Chazon Ish's words to heart and fully immersed himself and his family in this sacred mission. Over the course of his lifetime, Max was responsible for building over 300 *mikvaos* in Israel, the United States and around the world—one as far away as Japan!

2 Ritual Bathhouses Get Mixed Reception

By BARRY ABRAMSON

HEWLETT

TO serve a changing, more observant Orthodox Jewish community, the first ritual bathhouse in the southern part of Nassau County is nearing completion in the basement of a Colonial house in West Hempstead. But another bathhouse, to be constructed in Hewlett, has run into opposition from some neighbors of the proposed facility, which is designed to serve residents of the Five Towns.

In West Hempstead, the project has met no opposition, but in the Five Towns — which comprise the Villages of Woodmere, Hewlett, Cedarhurst, Lawrence and Inwood — there have been objections. The Hempstead Town Board of Zoning Appeals, at a meeting attended by about 100 people, last week reserved decision on the matter.

Bernard A. Kesselman, president of the Mikvah Association of Nassau County, said the West Hempstead bath was already under construction "at a central location on Hempstead Avenue."

"We had a united community supporting it, and things went smoothly in getting all the necessary permits," Mr. Kesselman said.

David Schreiber of Woodmere, president of the Mikvah South Shore Congregation, said that he had expected the same kind of positive response in his community but that he was "shaken" by the intense opposition registered by the nearby residents and the Hewlett-Woodmere School Board.

"I am greatly disturbed that there are objections to a place that will provide a necessary service to a religious group," Mr. Schreiber said.

Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetzky, dean of the Yeshiva of the South Shore and a member of a rabbinical committee supporting the mikvah, also expressed surprise at the opposition. "I would certainly think that this community has matured enough to accept a project for a traditional ritual observance," Rabbi Kamenetzky said.

Opponents told the zoning-appeal board that they had no objection to the concept of a ritual bath, that they objected only to the site. The site is a home that adjoins the Woodmere North Junior High School, on Peninsula Boulevard at the Hewlett-Woodmere border. It was damaged by fire two years ago, has been vacant for some time and was acquired by the Mikvah South Shore Congregation six months ago.

The plan is to spend $180,000 to repair it and convert it to serve women who are members of Young Israel of Woodmere, Young Israel of Cedarhurst and Congregation Beth Sholom of Lawrence. Seven bathrooms are to be installed, along with two ritual bathing pools. Women first take their baths, then proceed to a special bath in the ritual pool.

A variance from the Hempstead Town Board of Zoning Appeals is necessary to permit a nonresidential use of this property because it is in a residentially zoned neighborhood. Lawrence Franklin, the president of the Hewlett-Woodmere School Board, opposes the variance because "we object to changing the residential character of our community," he said. "We also feel there is inadequate parking and we are concerned about them using the school parking lot at night."

Mr. Schreiber said that about 120 women would use the facility each month, but that there would be no great increase in the volume of traffic because only two or three women at a time would be coming to the baths.

Mr. Franklin said, "We question that claim in view of the plan to install seven baths, large dressing rooms and a large waiting room."

"The mikvah belongs in a commercial place, not a residential area," said Beverly Koopersmith, one of the neighbors who is objecting to the variance. "We feel that we much traffic as it is, and to would be unfair to those of us nearby."

Mrs. Koopersmith added, "want to add to the problems o lice around here." As a result o of crimes, principally burglar residents have special stickers autos so that when the police they can identify them as belon the local homeowners.

"The cars belonging to outside would be coming here at night not have stickers on them, and police would not know whether th longed to the women coming ritual bath or by somebody wh coming to pull off a burglary o bery," Mrs. Koopersmith said.

Leonard Spector, the chairman Concerned Jewish Youth of Na County, said: "We feel that the Towns have a large enough Je community and the presence of a vah is essential. The opposition cla that parking is one of the issues." said that in actuality fewer wo would be using the facility at any time than the opponents had anticip ed.

"We, the Concerned Jewish Yout he added, "are ashamed that memb of our own community would try deny this important religious service its fellow members."

Mr. Kesselman said: "Some peo lack the understanding of the conce of such a facility. With the growth the Orthodox population, there is greater need for mikvahs."

An offer to settle the controversy wa made before the zoning appeals boar by Ira J. Raab, a Woodmere lawye representing the Woodmere Merchant Association. Mr. Raab said he agree with the residents who contend that mikvah belongs in a commercial place and said he had found an ideal spot. He is a member of Congregation Sons of Israel in Woodmere, and contends that a number of homes near his synagogue are already being used for commercial purposes. One large home houses a travel agency and another is used as an American Legion hall.

"I have learned that the house next to the travel agency is up for sale," Mr. Raab said. "The mikvah congregation could sell the house near the junior high and purchase this one for its ritual bath. That would make everybody happy." ■

roubled Waters Remain at Ritual Bath

James Bernstein

Hewlett — The white split-level with the neatly
med lawn and large picture windows looks like
ny of the other dwellings along Peninsula Boule-
d in this well-to-do community. But it is unlike
of the others because since September — after
en years of controversy — it has been used as a
ual bath, or mikveh, by Orthodox Jewish women.
There are seven bathrooms and two ritual baths
feet below ground level inside the plushly deco-
ted two-story home at 1156 Peninsula Blvd., the
ilding purch[illegible]ed and renovated by Orthodox Jews
r $188,000. [illegible]peted waiting room that
ncludes a gl[illegible]hairs and a room
specially fo[illegible]

Yesterda[illegible]
ong ceremo[illegible]
ended by [illegible]
heard pra[illegible]
Israel's t[illegible]
kenazi le[illegible]
leader.

of European origin or those from Arabic and Asian areas. Both have been visiting the metropolitan area this month and had agreed to participate in yesterday's celebrations.

But some of the controversy that surrounded the facility since it was first proposed seven years ago has not ended. Ira Raab, a Woodmere attorney who said he favored the concept, but feared an auto accident because of increased parking on the heavily traveled road. "My feeling is more of fear than antagonism," Raab said. "I favor it. I want it. I'm only afraid of the location."

"The fears are entirely unwarranted," Harvey Schwartz, attorney for the mikveh, said.

The battle originally centered on whether the mikveh would be a religious facility — a court ruled it was — and then on whether it would produce [illegible] to warrant denial of a zoning vari- [illegible] said it would; two courts [illegible] proponents spent the [illegible]nds to open the facility. [illegible], who lives right next to the mikveh, said he has not had traffic, parking or noise problems since it opened in September, but added, "I would still rather it wouldn't be there." He said he worried that the value of his and his neighbors' property might be decreased because of feelings that the facility is commercial in nature.

Those inside the Woodmere public school, however, were intent on celebrating. "This is a historic moment for us," Philip Fuchs of Woodmere, chairman of the celebration day and a mikveh leader, told the gathering. "We have completed the mikveh which is so important to our community."

Renee Singer of Cedarhurst said she and other women had to go to either Far Rockaway or West Hempstead to use a mikveh. Now, she said, her trip will be easier. "It beautifies the community," she said. "It means there'll be more Orthodoxy in the neighborhood."

Malkie Alpert of Woodsburgh agreed. "The concept is very important," she said. "It's not an easy ritual to uphold. We're trying to make it more pleasant."

Ritual Bath At Hewlett Is Opposed

By Jean Schindler

Hewlett—To Orthodox Jews from the Five Towns area, creation of a ritual bath, or *mikvah*, within their community would mean the end of trips to Far Rockaway at night.

Orthodox women are required by Jewish law to take the ritual bath after dark once a month.

Now, three local Orthodox congregations plan to build a mikvah in a vacant house at 1156 Peninsula Blvd. next to Woodmere Junior High School North. But neighbors and the school board, concerned about night parking at the school, say the site would be inappropriate.

David Schreiber, president of the Mikvah South Shore Congregation, said he is shaken by the community's negative response. He said the Orthodox group's needs were not being understood in this largely Jewish commu-
ty.

"I find it disturbing we should be getting
s kind of heat," he said. "It will be a place
t will provide a vital service to a religious
n that dwells within our community."
chreiber said his group, wh
,000 to repair the

Cohn & Foley, Baldwin, of counsel,
and William S. Cohn, Baldwin, of counsel,
respondent.

Before LAZER, J. P., and COHALAN, MARTUSCELLO and WEINSTEIN, JJ.

Opinion

MEMORANDUM BY THE COURT.

*855 In a proceeding pursuant to article 78 to review a determination of the Board of Zoning Appeals of the Town of Hempstead which, inter alia, denied petitioner's application for certain variances, the appeal (by permission) is from a judgment of the Supreme Court, Nassau County, dated June 10, 1980, which, after a hearing, annulled the Board's determination and remanded the matter to the Board for further proceedings.

Judgment affirmed, without costs or disbursements.

Petitioner Mikveh of South Shore Congregation, Inc. owns a parcel of real property which is located on Peninsula Boulevard in a residential district of Nassau County. The property is improved with a [illegible]-frame brick, single-family detached [illegible] of which was seriously [illegible]ds of 7.4 feet

Mikveh of South Shore Congregation, Inc. v. Granito, 78 A.D.2d 855 (1
432 N.Y.S.2d 638

Petitioner proposed to alter the interior of the [illegible]structure to convert the first floor for use as [illegible]mikveh, and the second floor for use as a [illegible]idence for a caretaker and her family. In [illegible]rance of this plan, petitioner filed two [illegible] permit applications, one for a waiver [illegible]ff-street parking restrictions and the [illegible] partial waiver of the 20-foot side [illegible]ment. When the applications were [illegible]oner appealed to the Board of [illegible] of the Town of Hempstead for

[illegible]ng, the Board found the [illegible]eligious use, [illegible]

for this [illegible] by substa testimony the Board's yard restric or that a va requirement hazards for th Jewish Recons Shore v. Incorp 38 N.Y.2d 283, 534). In any ever not justify the ex

Attorneys and Law Firms

[illegible]th Chave, Jr., Town Atty., Hempstead, of

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1983

Israel's 2 chief rabbis to bless Five Towns Orthodox bathhouse

The two chief rabbis of Israel, who are visiting the United States together for the first time, will attend the official opening of the South Shore Community Mikvah in Woodmere. The ritual bath used by Orthodox women, and also men, is located on Peninsula Boulevard, adjacent to the Woodmere Middle School, formerly Woodmere Junior High School.

The Israeli spiritual leaders Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Avraham Shapira and the Sephardi Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu will participate in a special program inaugurating the mikvah Sunday morning, at 9:30, at the Middle School.

David Schreiber, president of South Shore Mikvah says, "It is a great honor" to have been "chosen to host part of this historic visit" by the rabbis.

Philip Fuchs of Woodmere, chairman of the day, notes that the program will be followed by a collation at the school. The assemblage will then visit the mikvah site and the dedication will take place.

The bathhouse opened its doors in September for use by the Orthodox community. The long-stalled facility, the center of a two-year legal battle, was operational in time for the High Holy Days. Neighbors had opposed changing the structure's use from residential.

The mikvah, adjacent was dug out 14 feet below ground level to specifications of Jewish law. Detailed tiling work delayed the opening by more than a year.

The women of Congregation Beth Sholom in Lawrence and the Young Israels of Woodmere and Cedarhurst-Lawrence are utilizing the tubs for the spiritual cleansing mandated by their Orthodox beliefs. It was announced this week by the trustees of Temple Hillel in North Woodmere, a Conservative congregation, unanimously accepted a motion that the temple become an annual member of the mikvah. The action was taken, after a visit to the institution by Rabbi Morris S. Friedman, spiritual leader and members of the ritual commit-

of the facilities prior to marriage.

The mikvah was landscaped to be unobstrusive and to conform to the residential flavor of the area. A caretaker family maintains the building.

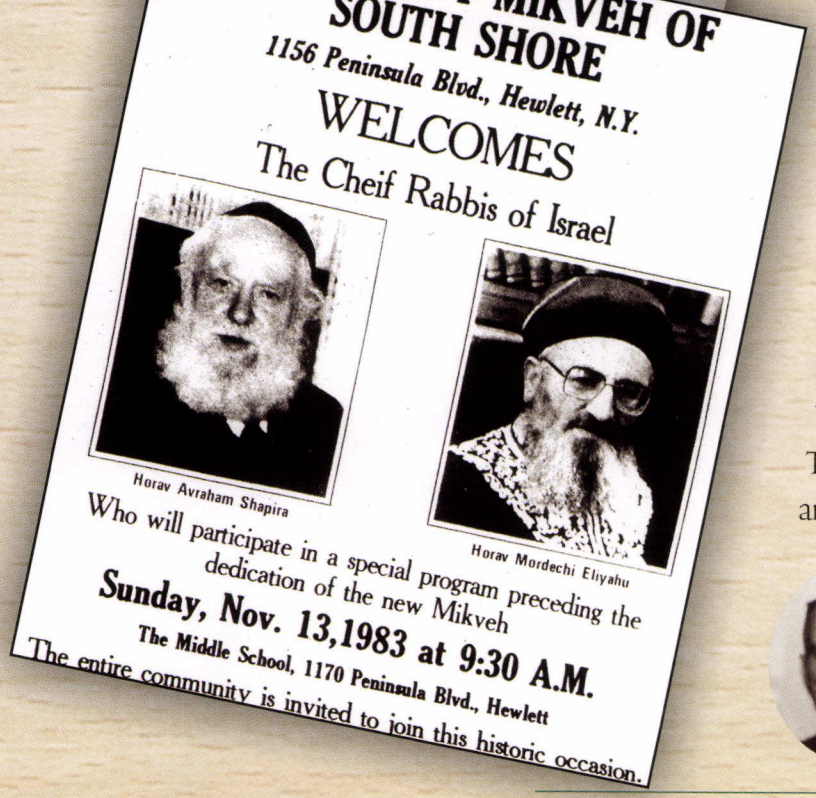
The structure, a one-family house, had been gutted by fire. Proponents of the mikvah had allocated $180,000 for renovation. The two tubs were lined by hand with tiles to avoid possibility of leakage which would render the pools not sacred. The facility also includes seven dressing rooms.

Women in their child-bearing years may use the cleansing pools. They enter after sunset to partake in the purification ritual on a monthly basis. A maximum of six will be at the mikvah at any one time.

The ritual bath is regarded in Jewish law as an aid to spirituality, as well as a necessity for cleansing. It is compulsory for in-



Center: Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky introducing a Yeshiva of South Shore student to Chief Rabbi Avraham Shapiro, upon his visit to the *Mikvah*.



COMMUNITY MIKVEH OF SOUTH SHORE

1156 Peninsula Blvd., Hewlett, N.Y.

WELCOMES

The Cheif Rabbis of Israel

Horav Avraham Shapira

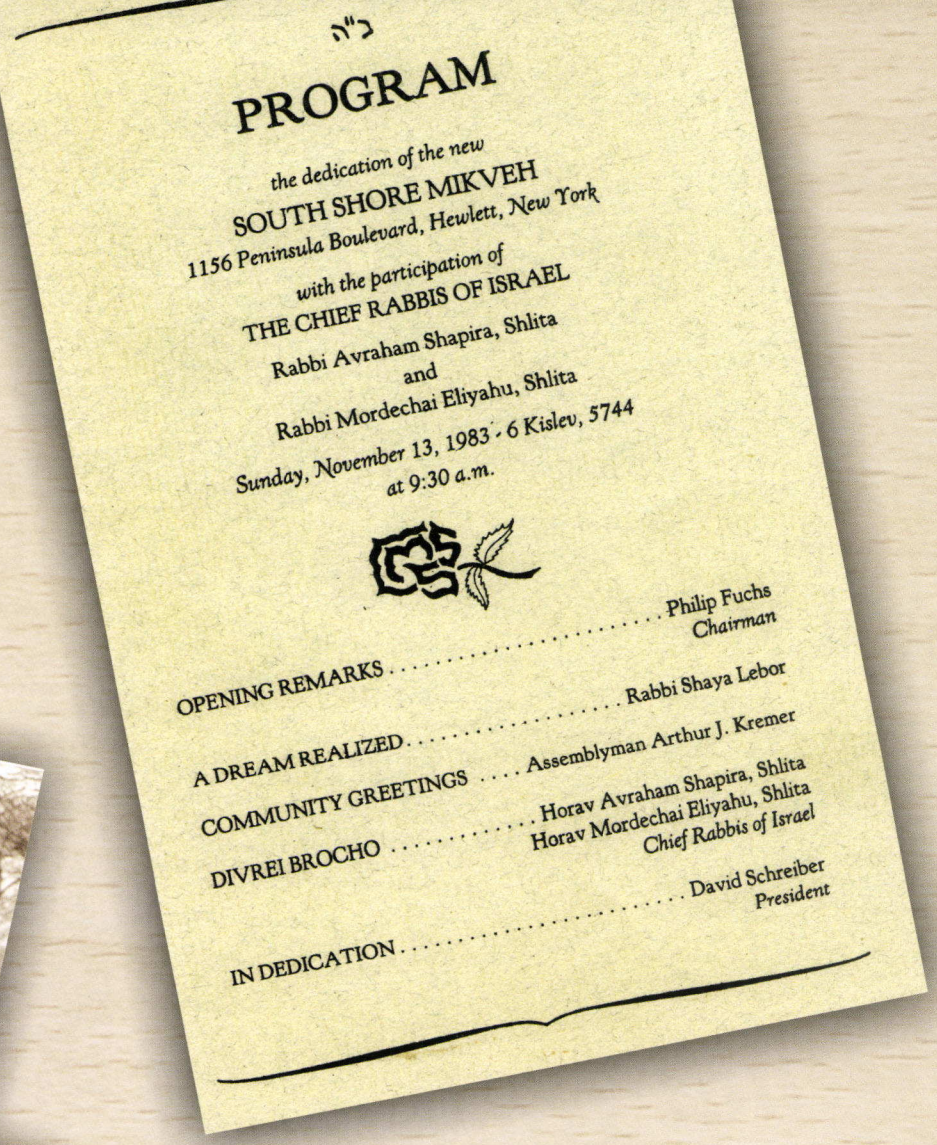
Horav Mordechi Eliyahu

Who will participate in a special program preceding the dedication of the new Mikveh

Sunday, Nov. 13,1983 at 9:30 A.M.

The Middle School, 1170 Peninsula Blvd., Hewlett

The entire community is invited to join this historic occasion.



ב"ה

PROGRAM

the dedication of the new
SOUTH SHORE MIKVEH
1156 Peninsula Boulevard, Hewlett, New York
with the participation of
THE CHIEF RABBIS OF ISRAEL
Rabbi Avraham Shapira, Shlita
and
Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, Shlita
Sunday, November 13, 1983 - 6 Kislev, 5744
at 9:30 a.m.

OPENING REMARKS . . . . . Philip Fuchs, *Chairman*

A DREAM REALIZED . . . . . Rabbi Shaya Lebor

COMMUNITY GREETINGS . . . . Assemblyman Arthur J. Kremer

DIVREI BROCHO . . . . . Horav Avraham Shapira, Shlita
Horav Mordechai Eliyahu, Shlita
Chief Rabbis of Israel

IN DEDICATION . . . . . David Schreiber, *President*

Malkie and Zane Alpert were residents of the Five Towns. They were also Max Schreiber's daughter and son-in-law. During Max's frequent visits in the late 1970s, he began noticing how fast the Orthodox community in the Five Towns was beginning to grow. He also noticed that there was no *Mikvah*.

One day, while visiting his daughter and son-in-law, and his nephew Rabbi David Schreiber and his wife Dassie, residents of Woodmere, he broached the idea of building a *Mikvah* in the Five Towns. His excitement rising, Max quickly wrote a check for $1,000 and told his assembled family members to start building.



Max Schreiber ob"m

In addition to his niece, Dassie Schreiber, one of the founding matrons of the *Mikvah*, a third generation of Schreibers, including Tobi Fein, Tamar Deutsch, and Ariella Bruger, among many other women, remain active in the daily upkeep and operation of the Five Towns *Mikvah*



The job was easier said than done. Launching the project took the formation of a committee; the chairpersons were Rabbi Schreiber and prominent community member Moshe Soshtain, ob"m. They set out to build what they planned would be the most beautiful *Mikvah* in Nassau county and one that was fully amenable to those who observed *taharas mishpacha*, and would encourage those yet to be committed.



Rabbi Elias and Ilse Lauer

Following the close halachic guidance of HaRav Moshe Bick, zt"l, a world renowned Gadol and expert on *mikvaos*, they turned to Abe Friedman, a well-known and accomplished builder of mikvaos, who had a heart of gold. It began to seem as if the Five Towns *Mikvah* was soon to arrive.

As word of the Mikvah spread, many Five Towns residents, Jews and non-Jews alike, stood unified in solid opposition.

But the realization of a vision rarely goes unhindered. As word of the *Mikvah* spread, many Five Towns residents, Jews and non-Jews alike, stood unified in solid opposition. Many objected to what they viewed as an anachronistic ritual bath in the Five Towns. Others called it an affront to modern Judaism. Fearing the impact that a *Mikvah* might have on their property values, many loudly objected to plans to build anywhere near their expensive homes. They put up roadblocks, citing issues related to parking, increased traffic, and the intrusion a *Mikvah* could have on their idyllic suburban lifestyle.

Then again, support and opposition came from unexpected sources. The first large donation that came from the community was from Rabbi Morris Friedman, drawn from the account of Temple Hillel, his Conservative Congregation. "We all need a *Mikvah*," said Rabbi Friedman. "For our children and our children's children." In time, his prescient words proved correct. Although many members of his congregation did not avail themselves of the use of the *Mikvah*, per se, their children, who grew up to become *shomrei Torah* and *mitzvos*, continue to reap the benefits of their parents' and Rabbi Friedman's contribution.





Rabbi Lebor presenting an award to Rabbi David Schreiber

Despite the support, the *Mikvah* was a non-starter, since the committee couldn't find a proper location. But one evening, Moshe Soshtain looked out the back window of his home on Westwood Road and saw a fire raging in a home on Peninsula Boulevard. The home was the last in a row of sizable houses, next to the enormous parking lot of the Woodmere Middle School. Knowing the well-lit parking lot was empty at night, Moshe had an idea.

Several days later, after researching to discover that the plot was zoned for residential and religious use, Moshe approached the owner of the fire-ravaged house and offered to buy the property. The man accepted. The *Mikvah* was back on track.

But so were the *Mikvah*'s detractors. They leveled complaint after complaint and soon won the support of the Town of Hempstead Board of Zoning Appeals.

The application to build the *Mikvah* was rejected. Among other comments, one board member questioned just what kind of religious use they planned. "How do you pray in a *Mikvah*?" he asked.

A fierce legal battle followed. With divine intervention, and the invaluable aid of zoning attorney, William Cohn, a good friend to many religious institutions in the community, Norman Dachs, Lenny Goldstein, Harvey Schwartz, Rabbi Elias Lauer and Joseph Miller among others, legal briefs were filed, appeals were submitted. After years of hard work, the *Mikvah was* finally approved. There were two stipulations: there could be no signage and it must be built to maintain the look of a private home.

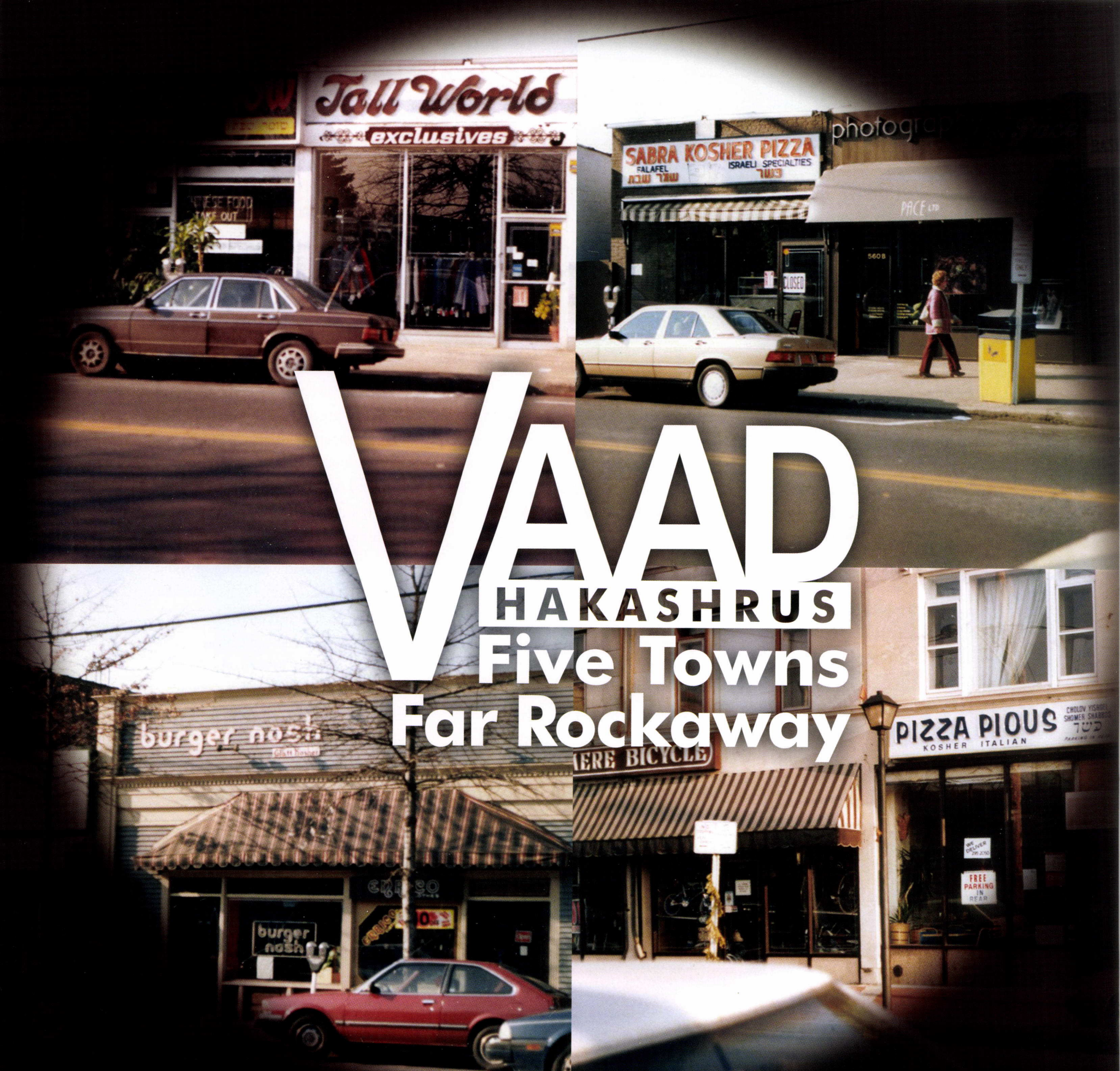
On Sunday, November 13, 1983, at a dedication ceremony attended by all the community's rabbonim and the State of Israel's two Chief Rabbis, Mikvah South Shore was opened.

The *Mikvah* was indeed the most beautiful in all of Nassau County, if not the entire region. And its décor and amenities served as a model for many new mikvaos nationwide. Rabbi and Mrs. Seymour Hirschman would live upstairs, the rabbi attending to the physical needs of the *Mikvah*, and Mrs. Hirshman serving as its matron.

Sadly, by the time the *Mikvah* was complete, two of the *Mikvah*'s original visionaries, Max Schrieber and Moshe Soshtain, were no longer alive to rejoice in their accomplishment. Yet, their memory and contributions are inextricably associated with the continuing spiritual and physical growth of the Orthodox community in the Five Towns.

Building the *Mikvah* was a long, grueling journey. But the certainty of its completion could best be summed up by the words of Pete Peterson, a devout Christian who fought for approval as a member of the town of Hempstead Board of Zoning Appeals.

He once asked Rabbi Schreiber why Jews were so committed to the *mitzvah* of *Mikvah*. As Rabbi Schreiber struggled for the best way to phrase his answer, Mr. Peterson stopped him cold. "Rabbi, you don't have to explain," he said. "You use the *Mikvah* because Hashem wants you to. I know… and I understand." Then he reassured Rabbi Schreiber. "Don't worry, you won't lose. God never loses."



VAAD HAKASHRUS
Five Towns
Far Rockaway

— THE —

VAAD HAKASHRUS

AND

EATERIES



Today, as a visitor to the Five Towns

strolls along Central Avenue, he or she can rest assured that the stores displaying the certification of the local Vaad are reliably kosher. This certification has its roots in the early 1970s. It began with a collaboration of a small handful of Orthodox and Conservative rabbis in the area.

The Vaad Hakashrus began with a collaboration of a small handful of Orthodox and Conservative rabbis in the area.

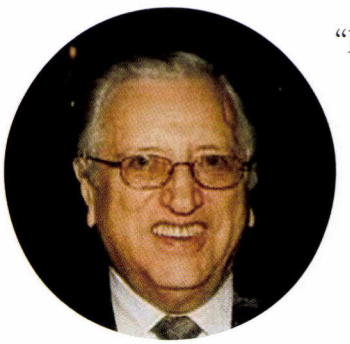
"The Vaad had been around for at least 15 years before I came," explained Steve Savitsky who has been involved since 1982 and at the time of this writing serves as its co-president.

Savitsky was born in Crown Heights in Brooklyn, earned his bachelor's degree at Yeshiva University and a master's in finance at Baruch College. He founded and is president of a health care company that provides temporary and permanent medical personnel to various industries including schools and prisons.



Stephen Savitsky

He and his young family originally lived in Queens where he was actively involved in the community life in Kew Garden Hills. The Savitskys moved to Woodmere 34 years ago when Steve met community activist, Joseph Miller a"h. "Joe was involved in many Jewish organizations. He got me involved in the Orthodox Union," said Savitsky, who later became president of the OU. "He was a driving force and asked me to be treasurer of the Vaad Hakashrus. If Joe Miller asked you to get involved you got involved." At that time the Vaad covered only the Five Towns area.



Rabbi David Weinbach

"Rabbi David Weinbach was a founding president of the Vaad and was still active as president when I moved here," Savitsky pointed out. In 1982 there were about a dozen small stores that carried the Vaad's coverage including a pizza shop, a bakery and a deli.

Although both Orthodox and Conservative rabbis originally sat on the Vaad, the "Conservative rabbis didn't get involved in the halachic functioning," explained Savitsky, "but were in day to day operations, financing and funding. We had a good relationship with them; it worked extremely well." One of the Conservative rabbis, who did not want to be named, confirmed, "When it came to the halacha decisions, we held our peace."

The Vaad, began with a few stores. There were only two Orthodox shuls and their rabbis who were originally involved, in the Vaad: Congregation Beth Sholom and Rabbi Klaperman, and the Young Israel of Woodmere and Rabbi Lebor. The few other Orthodox rabbis chose not to get involved.

It is fascinating to note that the early ledgers of the Va'ad showed only a few sources of communal income. Three Conservative synagogues, Bet El, Temple Hillel, and Sons' of Israel and two Orthodox synagogues, Beth Sholom and Young Israel of Woodmere were the sole institutions that paid dues. The rest of the income came from the few stores that carried supervision.

There were two *mashgichim* (kosher supervisors) who were employed full time and others came and went on a need to serve basis.

The supervision continued, and as the community grew and more stores came under the hashgacha.

Fifteen years ago Moishe Mishkowitz approached Savitsky in Far Rockaway to attempt to merge the Vaad Harabanim of Far Rockaway and the Vaad Hakashrus of the Five Towns. "We worked for two years with all the rabbis and brought in Rabbi Yosef Eisen," said Savitsky. "He had been one of the kashrus supervisors of the OU and we brought him in to be the head of the Vaad. It's been a wonderful merger. It's almost unheard of in Jewish life for there to be one Vaad for the whole community. And everyone respects the Vaad. Today there are more than 90 different facilities under our hashgacha.

"Originally it was financed by the different shuls in the community," Savitsky noted. "Now each store is currently assessed a certain amount. We want them to be successful, to try to be the least amount of cost. We don't want it to be a burden for them and the shortfall comes from the shuls. Not all shuls contribute, the bigger ones, the major community synagogues



Left: Joe Miller

Below L-R:
Rabbi Kenneth Hain
Rabbi Yaakov Reisman
Rabbi Hershel Billet



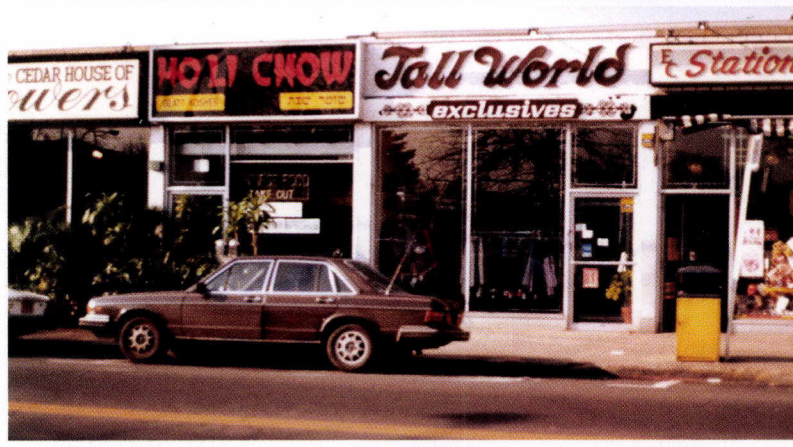


Rabbi Eitan Feiner



Rabbi Yosef Eisen











VAAD HAKASHRUTH
Of The Five Towns

is proud to announce
that the following locations are under
our supervision:

Nosh
Express
ous Kosher Dairy
Bakery
adine Caterers
rmet Glatt Kosher Meats
gry Harbor Bakery
obs Ladder

Karmel Kosher Take Out
King David
Mazel Take Home Foods
Pizza Plous
Sabra Pizza
Supersol
Woodmere Kosher Meats
Zomicks II Bakery

Member Synagogues

Beth El
Beth Emes
Beth Shalom
Ohr Torah
Sephardic Synagogue
Sons of Israel
Temple Hillel
Toras Chaim
Young Israel of North Woodmere
Young Israel of Woodmere

Philip Fuchs — 333 Longacre Ave., Wdmere. 11598
Elie Gut — 116 Hewlett Neck Rd., Wdmere.
Eliezer Hirmes — 359 Derby Avenue, Wdmere.
Alfred S. Friedman — 626 Church Avenue, Wdmere.
Philip Kraut — 2 Roberts Lane, Ced.
Rabbi Sidney Lebor — 325 Longacre Ave., Wdmere. or 859 Penin
William Kotkes — 30 Lawrence Ave., Lawrence 11559
Rabbi Arnold Marans — Sephardic Temple, Branch Blvd., Ced.
Nathan Renick — 5 Rose Street, Ced.
Meyer Robinson — 75 Cedarhurst Avenue, Ced.
George Saks — 477 Barnard Ave., Ced.
Rabbi Edward Sandrow — Temple Beth El, Locust Ave., Ced.
Herman Silverstein — Cong. Beth Emet, 36 Franklin Ave., H
David Sklar — 365 Broadway, Lawrence
Rabbi Saul Teplitz — Cong. Sons of Israel, 111 Irving Pl
Rabbi David Weinbach — 301 Jordan Ave., Wdmere.
Philip Wiesel — 358 Church Ave., Wdmere.
Seymour Weinrib — 220 Franklin Place, Wdmere.
Joseph Richman — 29 Woodmere Blvd., Wdmere.
Rabbi Stanley Wagner — 46 Sealy Drive, Ced.
Frank Herman — 72 Martins Lane, Lawrence
Rabbi Peres — Temple Beth Emet, 36 Franklin A
Rabbi G. Klaperman — 390 Broadway, Lawrence

...srael of Cedarhurst
...el, Woodmere
...ere
...eth Sholom

Vaad Hakashruth of the Five Towns

There will be a very important meeting of the Vaad to discuss organization procedures on Wednesday, June 2, 1971 at 8:30 P.M. at Young Israel of Woodmere.

Please make every effort to attend.

Rabbi David Weinbach
President

Reminder

VAAD HAKASHRUS OF THE
FIVE TOWNS
859 Peninsula Boulevard
Woodmere, New York 11598

November 17, 1982

Dear Member,

We invite you to attend the next meeting of the Vaad Hakashrus of the Five Towns, which will be held on Wednesday evening, December 1, 1982, at 8:15 pm at the Young Israel of Woodmere, 859 Peninsula Boulevard, Woodmere.

AGENDA:

1. Increasing participation by neighborhood Congregations.
2. Establishing a regular meeting schedule for the year.
3. Advertising Campaign for Kashruth observance.
4. Report on stores supervised
5. Financial Report

Please make every effort to come on time.

Sincerely yours,
David Weinbach
RABBI DAVID WEINBACH

RDW:e

SUPERSOL

I. MEAT DEPARTMENT
1. There always must be a ... department when meat is being proce... freezer is open.
2. A "mashgiach" must be present to supervise all "traibering," soaking and salting.
3. The key to the refrigerator must be in the possession of the Vaad. The refrigerator must be opened daily by the mashgiach or by a Shomer Shabbes person.
4. The mashgiach must check the (tags and kosher signs on all meat) which arrives in the store.

NOT TO ACCEPT UNLESS

II. FISH DEPARTMENT
1. All filleted fish must be prepared in the presence of a Shomer Shabbos person or a mashgiach.
2. If filleted fish is not prepared in the store but is purchased from the outside it must come in a box which is sealed. The seal must be signed by the mashgiach.
3. Filleted fish which was not prepared in the presence of a mashgiach must arrive in the store with its skin and scales.

III. APPETIZING DEPARTMENT
1. Strict separation must be maintained between the meat, pareve and dairy departments. This includes counter space, storage space, serving space and utensils.
2. The meat department should be separated by a wall fro the other two areas.
3. There should be a separate person to serve customers in the meat department and a separate person to serv in the other two departments.
4. There should be marked aprons and a sink in both th meat department and the dairy-pareve department.
5. In unusual circumstances, when only one individual available to serve the meat, pareve and/department the following procedure must be followed: The co person must wash his hands and remove his apron b leaving one department and going to the other. always wear the appropriate apron designated for department.

GOURMET GLATT KOSHER

1. There must always be a Mashgiach in the store.
2. The Mashgiach must oversee all "traibering," s and salting of meat.
3. The key to the refrigerator must be in the po of the Vaad.
4. The Mashgiach or a member of the Vaad must o refrigerator daily.

...T KLAPERMAN, RABBI
...NGREGATION BETH SHOLOM
LAWRENCE, N.Y. 11559
516-569-3600

VAAD HAKASHRUTH FINANCIAL REPORT

as of June 9, 1978

BANK BALANCE:

SYNAGOGUES — $901.00
Paid for June
Temple Beth El
Cong. Sons of Israel — 125.00
125.00

Due from Synagogues
Young Israel of Wood. — 125.00
Beth Sholom — 125.00
Temple Hillel — 125.00

STORES
Paid for June
Sum Sum — 50.00
Woodmere Meats — 100-75.00
Delicious Dairy Rest. — 75-50.00
Sabra Pizza — 75-50.00
Mazel — 75-50.00 for May (owes $50. for June)

Due from Stores
Law.Kosher Meats — 334.00 (May & June)

PAYMENTS DUE:

Ronald Rosenfeld
6/16 — 300.00
6/30 — 100.00 expense
250.00

VAAD HAKASHRUS OF THE FIVE TOWNS
301 Jordon Avenue
Woodmere, N. Y.

February 4, 1981

...Foods, Inc.
... Avenue
...ew York 11516

This will confirm the understanding reached ...eek between the Vaad Hakashrus and Mazel Take ... wherein it was agreed that henceforth:

1) There shall be no cooking started by any ... of Mazel, until one of the owner's, or a Shomer employee, is physically present.

2) Mazel will arrange with the Mashgiach of ...ad Hakshrus, to broil livers on Mondays and on ...ys only.

If the foregoing represents our understanding, ...ly acknowledge your agreement by signing a copy of ... letter, and returning same to us.

Very truly yours,
Vaad Hakashrus of the 5 Towns
By: Rabbi David Weinbach, Pres.

The foregoing is agreed to:

MAZEL TAKE OUT FOODS, INC.

BY: _____

January 16, 1975

Rabbi David Weinbach
301 Jordan Avenue
Woodmere, N.Y.

Dear David:

I believe that our inaction on the Vaad HaKashru... is intolerable. We have had a series of meeting... with both butchers. We have worked out some for... of agreement and everything has been left hanging...

cautioned my Congregation against purchasing ...rom these butchers but now that they have agreed ... principle to our demands, it is our obligation ... complete and ratify our agreements. They are ...itled to an answer and our congregants have a ...ht to know.

...se call a meeting of the Vaad so that we can ...ve the matter. Best wishes and regards.

Cordially yours,
Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman

...t Teplitz
...a L. Muss



WOODMERE, N. Y. 11598
(516) 295-0150

EY LEBOR
bi
IAEL MARCUS
i
A L. MUSS
dent
LAZER
President
R DAVID
esident
NCE GARBER
sident
WEISSMAN
FELSEN
Secy.
OFMAN
Secy.
N
ng Secy.
REICH
or

December 17th,
Teveth 13th,

Rabbi David Weinbach,
301 Jordan Avenue,
Woodmere, N.Y. 11598.

Dear David,

I am sending you a copy of the suggested agreemer for Mr. Hirsch's signature for the change to Glatt Kosher of his store. Please advise me if you have any suggestions on this or if it is acceptable as is. He asked if he would be allowed to buy a non kosher meat store in the Rockaways. The store would have no connection of course with his present store and he would spend but little time there.

Please contact me. I thank-you.

Sincer

RSL;sg
Encl.

United Vaad Hakashruth
OF THE FIVE TOWNS
תעודת כשרות
CERTIFICATE OF KASHRUTH

This is to certify that

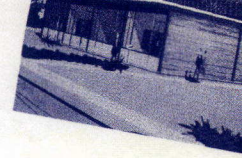
_____

located at _____

is under our supervision and is strictly Kosher. You may use their products with complete confidence and fullest assurance of Kashruth

Effective Date _____

This Certificate Expires _____



ODMERE N. Y. 11598
(516) 295-0150

Copy for ↓

November 24, 1971
Kislev 6, 5732

Dear Rabbi Weinbach,

Please attend a meeting of the Va'ad Hashrus of the Five Towns at the Young Israel Woodmere on Wednesday, December 1st, at 0 P.M. sharp. It is most important that two representatives of each congregation attend. is the only notice being sent to your congation so I trust you will arrange that it be ately represented, since a most important ion for the future of the Va'ad has to be

Sincerely yours,

David Weinbach

Rabbi David Weinbach
President

VAAD HAKASHRUTH - May 1978

	$125.
e Beth El	125.
g Israel of Wood.	125.
s of Israel	125.
th Sholom	
emple Hillel an. Feb. Mar. Apr. &May	625.
Sabra Kosher Pizza	50. (Paid in advance)
Mazel Take Out Apr. & May	100.
Delicious Dairy Rest.	50.
Sum Sum	50.
Wood. Kosher Meats	75.
Law. Kosher Meats Apr. & May	334.

uth will be held on Monday,
Young Israel of Woodmere, 859
, Woodmere.
lease attend.

Sincerely,

David Weinbach

Rabbi David Weinbach,
President

is an updated list of establishments under our supervision. rust that you are informing your congregants of same.

Kosher Pizza
entral Avenue, Cedarhurst

ere Kosher Meat & Poultry
Broadway, Woodmere

ce Kosher Meat & Poultry
ntral Avenue, Cedarhurst

Mazel Kosher Take Out Foods
119 Cedarhurst Avenue, Cedarhurst

Delicious Kosher Dairy Restaurant
698 Central Avenue, Cedarhurst

Jacob's Ladder
83 Spruce Street, Cedarhurst

NOTE: THE 2 MEAT MARKETS "WOODMERE KOSHER" AND "LAWRENCE " ARE THE ONLY 2 MEAT MARKETS IN THE 5 TOWNS SUPERVISED BY AD HAKASHRUS OF THE 5 TOWNS THAT GUARANTEES THAT YOUR MEAT EN "TRAYBERED" (VEINS REMOVED) AND "KOSHERED" (SOAKED & ACCORDING TO KASHRUS LAWS.

BETH EL

Rabbi Gilbert S. Rosenthal
Study: 516-569-1114
Residence: 516-374-4154

Locust Avenue
ew York 11516

December 6, 1984

Rabbi David Weinbach
Vaad Hakashruth of the Five Towns
859 Peninsula Boulevard
Woodmere, New York 11598

Dear Rabbi Weinbach:

I received the invitation to attend the meeting of December 5, 1985 of the Vaad Hakashruth on December 6, 1985, the day after the ing. This is just another example of the contempt you show for bers of the Vaad Hakashruth. If you really wanted us there, u would give us adequate notice.

Sincerely,

Gilbert S. Rosenthal

Rabbi Gilbert S. Rosenthal

For references on this matter, please contact either Ra Ziskind or Rabbi Sladowsky of the Vaad harabonim of Queens.

Thanking you very much, Ian

Sincerely yours,
Kenneth Jerme

Study: (516) 569-1114

RABBI GILBERT S. ROSENTHAL

Residence: (516) 374-4154

TEMPLE BETH EL
Broadway and Locust Avenue
Cedarhurst, N.Y. 11516

November 10, 1980

Rabbi David Weinbach
Vaad Hakashruth of Five Towns
859 Peninsula Boulevard
Woodmere, New York 11598

Dear Rabbi Weinbach:

Thank you for inviting me to the meeting on November 19. You have already changed the meeting twice but this third date is not good for me.

May I suggest that we stick to a date for future meetings.

Sincerely yours,

Gilbert S. Rosenthal

GSR:apg

Gilbert S. Rosenthal
Rabbi

67-49 Clyde St.
Forest Hills, N.Y. 11375
October 19, 1981

bach
ue
11598

einbach,
writing this letter in request of an application
gacha" under the Vaad ha-Kashruth of Five Towns
proprietor of Burger Nosh Restaurant of Kew
Hills, N.Y., we have been under the supervision of
aad ha-rabonim of Queens for the past two years
that I am opening a Burger Nosh Restaurant on
ral Avenue in Cedarhurst, I inquired as to the
ssibility of having the Vaad harabonim of Queens pro
the hashgacha for both restaurants. They feel, however,
that it would be improper for a Queens Vaad to "ste
onto the territory" of the Five Towns, and they sugge
that I request your hashgacha for the Burger Nosh

hashgacha, I would like
-mitzv



do. Between the stores and the shuls we cover the bills. There is no profit."

Many businesses have their own in-store *mashgichim* who are paid by the stores but work under the Vaad's supervision, said Savitsky. "Rabbi Eisen is in charge. There are five or six full time *mashgichim* who and check on a regular basis."

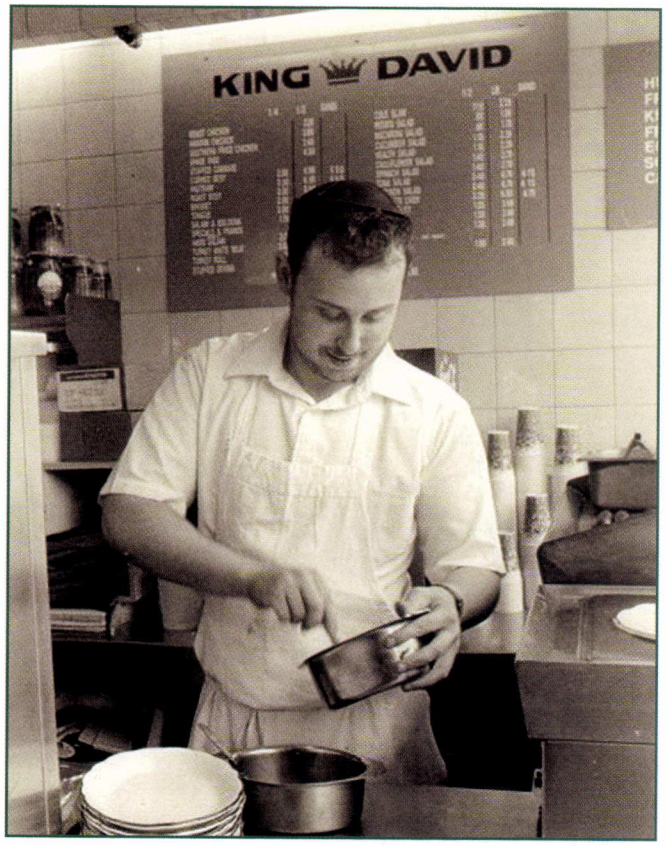
Savitsky is still co-president of the Vaad with Moishe Mishkowitz and he is responsible for the financial, personnel and operational aspects but not the halachic aspects. That is Rabbi Eisen's purview and all the rabbis in the community belong to the Vaad, he said. The Vaad has an executive committee of two permanent members, Rabbi Kenneth Hain and Rabbi Hershel Billet, and two other rabbis, one from Far Rockaway and one from the Five Towns who change every few months to ensure a "good mix" between the two communities. Currently Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz of North Woodmere and Rabbi Eitan Feiner of Far Rockaway are on the committee. This group works with Rabbi Eisen on a closer basis, said Savitsky. "They are the go to people. When Rabbi Eisen has a *halachic* question he goes to them.

Rabbi Eisen is a worldwide expert on kashrus and is called on throughout North America. He is well known and respected."

Stephen Savitsky has been actively involved in many Jewish organizations including the Bnai Zion Foundation, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, president of the OU and chairman of its board for 12 years and was chairman of the board of Partners in Torah. All four of his children are married and live in the Five Towns.

"When I go to other communities and I see seven (different) *teudot* and kosher certification letters on the store's window, I think of our community and that it is a model of unity and harmony," he said. "There are many stores and everyone will tell you that we have one hashgacha that everyone trusts, across the community and all the shuls. It's a tribute to the community, not just the rabbanim. That makes this community really special."

We have one hashgacha that everyone trusts. It's a tribute to the community, not just the rabbanim. That makes this community really special.



The Early Eateries

No history of a Jewish community would be complete without an overview of how that community eats. The Five Towns is now a haven of myriad kosher restaurants and pizza shops, food stores, bakeries, and delis. But like so many of the other institutions that cater to Orthodox Jewish life, nothing came easy.

The first kosher pizza shop in the area was opened adjacent to the Five Towns in Far Rockaway, by a young man named "Zuzu Barnes" in 1966. It was called "Jerusalem Pizza" located on 1913 Mott Avenue. Its clientele primarily included the student body of HILI, the Hebrew Institute of Long Island. Many of Zuzu's workers included students from the recently established Shor Yoshuv and Yeshiva of Far Rockaway. On occasion, the Yeshiva of South Shore ordered from him as well.

There were two Vaads in the area, and according to Zuzu, "there was some tension between the Far Rockaway rabbis and the Five Towns Vaad regarding the *kashrut*, and I was caught in the middle," recalled Zuzu about the era. "I had some wonderful Yeshiva boys as workers, so thankfully, we were able to work things out."

Zuzu and his wife Ruthie sold the establishment to his partner and eventually opened Sabra Kosher Pizza on Central Avenue in Cedarhurst in the early 1970s.



Sabra's succeeded enormously – so much so that the incidences of double-parking soared. One day Zuzu had to deliver thirty pizzas to HILI; while loading his car, he double-parked in front of his pizza store. He received a ticket as did many of his customers who were not able to find parking. While at the court, Zuzu told the judge, "How can you make me pay? Look at all the business I brought you!" The judge laughed and dismissed the ticket.

Zuzu's statement to the judge perhaps had deeper symbolism. His relocation to the Five Towns brought an influx of business to Central Avenue.

Zuzu was one of the first people in the United States to import an Italian machine to press the dough. It gave him the ability to mass produce pizzas. Yeshivos were able to order as much as one hundred pies at a time. Barnes also began to market frozen pizza to supermarkets. It was all produced in his Sabra store on Central Avenue.

Eventually, Ruthie Barnes took over sole propriety of Sabra's Pizza shop, and expanded it to include Ruthie's Kosher Dessert two doors down from Sabra's. Later, she took over the store in between, and Ruthie's became one of the most fashionable and popular dairy restaurants in the Five Towns. In February of 2013, Sabra served its last pie. At the time of this writing, Pizza'leh, managed by the long-time manager of Sabra, Ari King, continues to serve Pizza to the Five Towns clientele. However, by that time, four or five pizza shops along with a variety of dairy restaurants joined the kosher pizza scene.

The first sit down kosher restaurant was Jacob's Ladder on Spruce Street. A number



Moshe Peking: A Success Story

"If you want to run a successful Chinese restaurant, open it in a Jewish neighborhood," the saying goes, and so Martin Soshtain, the owner of Moshe Peking, opened his kosher Chinese restaurant on West 37th Street in Manhattan's garment district.

"Amongst Jews, Chinese is one of the most, if not the most, popular cuisines," Mr. Soshtain said. "But I don't know why—it's certainly not because it's similar to Jewish cooking. My mother would boil vegetables until they were dead and she wouldn't let us eat them unless she was sure they were dead," the 33-year-old restaurateur said.

Among the explanations why Jews find Chinese food so appealing is that Chinese, unlike French or Italian cooking, rarely combines dairy and meat products, and is thus in keeping with a central Jewish dietary law.

Also, chicken soup with dumplings, whether they be won tons or kreplach, and omnipresent pots of tea are familiar to both cultures. And yet the quick searing and frying methods of Chinese cooking provide the Jewish palate with a refreshing change from potted and stewed meats and vegetables.

But where does a kosher Chinese restaurateur find a kosher Chinese chef? In the Catskill Mountains, of course. Nien Kai Chang, Moshe Peking's Shanghai-born head chef, had 18 years of training in the kitchens of Brown's Hotel. His dual background makes him a perfect leader for the all-Chinese staff of a restaurant that serves Mandarin and Shanganese food as well as traditional Jewish.

Although Mr. Chang's Jewish repertoire required no alterations, his Chinese dishes had to undergo some changes. Dishes based on unkosher shellfish are now made with sea bass; where ham is called for, Rumanian pastrami is substituted, and instead of pork, veal is used.

Beef, poultry and fish dishes can all be made unadulterated. Among the popular entrees on the Chinese side of the menu are moo goo gai pan—a chicken and vegetable dish —steamed sea bass with slivered scallions and ginger, and pepper steak—beef stir-fried with green peppers and onions.

Though the first kosher restaurant was Jacob's Ladder on Spruce Street, a number of the kosher eateries in the Five Towns area were actually started by one family – the Rosses.

of the kosher eateries in the Five Towns area were actually started by the Ross family. One of their more famous kosher restaurants in the area was the King David restaurant located on Central Avenue in Cedarhurst. Bob Ross and his wife opened the King David in 1984.

"We were originally from Massapequa," Bob Ross explained. "In 1975, there was a huge rally against the UN's Zionism is Racism resolution. One of the organizations that was there wearing *Yarmulkas* was Jews for J. It seems that they were starting a whole campaign to inculcate Jewish kids with their philosophy. We wanted to do something, but we realized we knew nothing about Judaism. We felt we had to educate ourselves. We wanted unadulterated knowledge – Orthodox Judaism. The Jewish Board of Education sent someone to teach us – Gershon Winkler (who later became the famous author of the book on the Maharal's Golem), then after that they sent Dovid Din, a student at Shor Yoshuv."

The Rosses started a coffee house in Massapequa called "Bilu." "Rabbi Yossi Lieber, a student of Shor Yoshuv yeshiva, would come. He sang, played his guitar, told stories, and taught Torah." The idea was that Jewish singles should come and feel comfortable, through a program that was Jewish. "We served Migdal cheese and Kedem wine, and they all played checkers and backgammon. Then someone would get up and talk about Judaism. Initially some people walked out. After a few weeks, people started drifting in, and eventually the crowd often grew to 200 people."

This was the Ross's initiation into both Judaism and food service. Both would be areas in which the Rosses would excel. As they became observant, the Rosses were determined to move to an observant neighborhood. They joined the Young Israel of Cedarhurst- Lawrence and were the 49th family of the small but growing shul. They bought Sandy's Cedar Deli, a non-kosher but Jewish style deli on Central Avenue in Cedarhurst, and decided to make it fully kosher. They named it King David. It was soon to become the hub of Five Towns kosher culinary activity.

Originally, the landlord was somewhat hostile when he heard Bob Ross's plans for the deli. A Glatt Kosher restaurant here? Brooklyn, New York transplanted onto Central Avenue? He thought that being closed once a week would mean less traffic, fewer customers, and would affect his other properties on the block. Bob went into action. He met the landlord at a non-kosher restaurant in full nonreligious regalia – a tan suit, a light, open collared shirt, gold chains, and a Panama hat. Relieved, the landlord gave his consent. "I thought you'd have a long beard and those side curls!" The landlord would later receive his just retribution – Orthodox Jewish grandchildren.

To go kosher, they contacted the Five Towns Vaad HaRabbonim. Harry Goldgrab was the Vaad representative at the time. The Vaad members came daily to visit the fledgling establishment. Rabbi Billet and Rabbi Simcha Lefkowitz were in charge of koshering the facilities.

"The waiters we used were local kids and some of them were very, very good," said Ross.

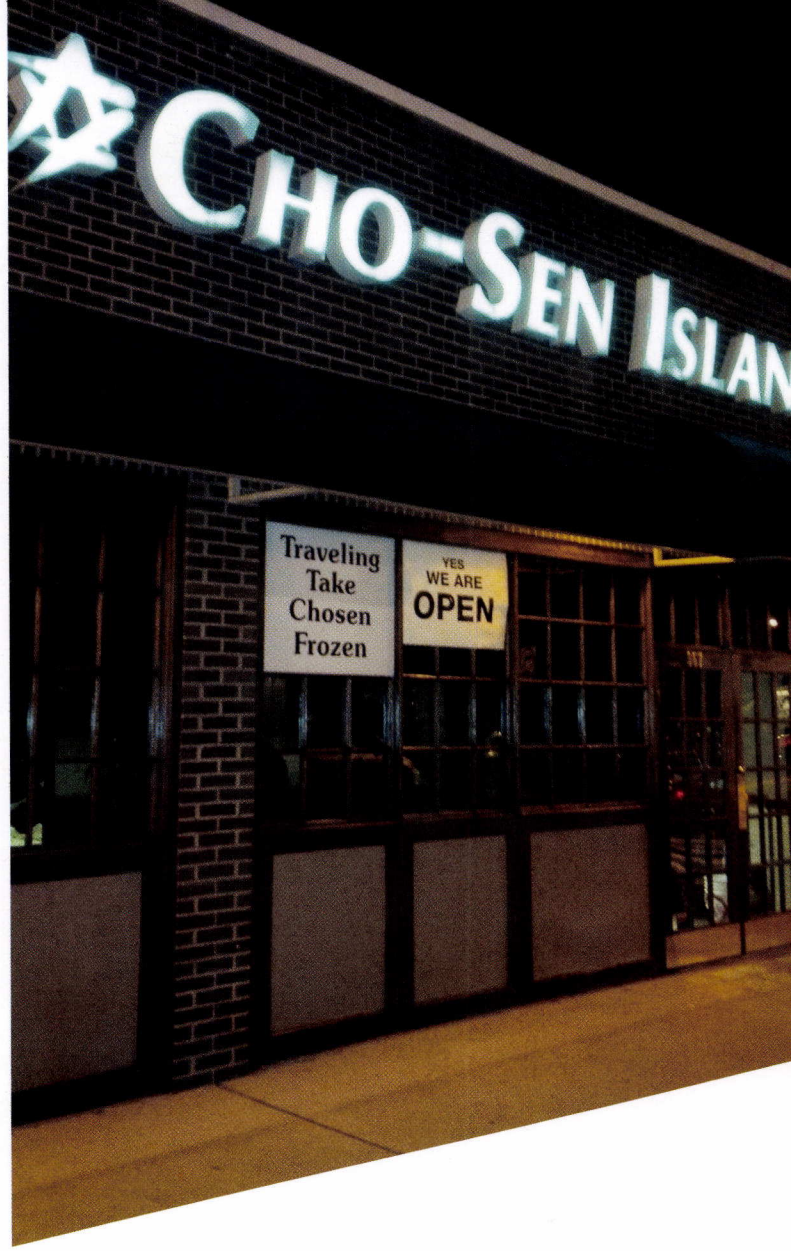
Although the short-lived Jacob's Ladder had preceded it, King David was a much larger and busier restaurant. It should have made an impact even to those who were not observant, but the non-Orthodox establishment took no note. "The Nassau Herald ignored us. We tried to get their restaurant critic to come and taste the food, but they chose to ignore the King David." Even in the late 1970s when the Rosses moved to Woodmere, they also experienced some negativity. "You *Yammies* (a pejorative term for those who wear *yarmulkes*) go back to where you came from!" was a statement actually told to them when they first moved to Woodmere.

For years, King David was an anchor on Central Avenue and filled with customers for both lunch and dinner. The Ross's sold King David in May 2006 but it closed shortly thereafter.

Perhaps the most premier and longest running restaurant in the Five Towns is Cho-Sen Island, a restaurant that set new standards in kosher Chinese cuisine. It achieved a number of firsts. In addition to featuring the first sushi bar in a kosher restaurant, it also was featured in the New York Times as one of the only kosher restaurants to be fully kosher for Passover.

It story has origins that are filled with emotions as well as kindness.

After the Ross family had opened the King David Restaurant, they also opened Holy Chow, a takeout Chinese cuisine establishment in 1986. Located on the corner of Central Avenue and Maple in



Cedarhurst, it was more of an informal take-out facility. However, in 1988, the Ross family decided to open a formal sit down Chinese restaurant. They closed Holy Chow and opened "Annie Chan's China Café and Steakhouse," named for Annie Chan, a native of Hong Kong who served as its authentic Chinese cook. This new establishment was in a free-standing building on the corner of Central Avenue and Frost Lane in Lawrence, the former home of the decidedly non-kosher



Right: Chosen Island is the Five Towns longest operating kosher restaurant



Moish Soshtain, the owner of the famed "Moshe Peking" restaurant in Manhattan with his wife, Mimi, and Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky

The Vaad Hakashrus began with a collaboration of a small handful of Orthodox and Conservative rabbis in the area.

Alfredo's Italian Restaurant. The Ross's soon sold Annie Chan's to young entrepreneurs Neil and Marcia Goldberg. Together they began to build up the new restaurant. But shortly after, a devastating illness struck Mr. Goldberg. It began to take a toll on the family and business. It looked like it was going to have to close.

Divine Providence, however, had other plans and they were seeded in the 1970s.

The concept of an elegant Kosher Chinese restaurant began when in 1974, Moish Soshtain, a resident of Hewlett, and member of Congregation Toras Chaim and Young Israel of Woodmere, opened Moshe Peking, an upscale Chinese restaurant in New York City. It received wonderful reviews and complimentary columns in the New York Times. In the words of his wife, Mimi, "Moish planned to give a kosher restaurant an elegance...A place traditional business people, primarily, could bring with pride their clients, Jewish and non-Jewish. His dream was more than fulfilled as he shaped this, here in the Garment Center."

A young man named Neil Wallin, a rabbi's son from the town of Trumbull, Connecticut had worked for him from 1978 when he first came down to New York City to attend Touro College. Neil continued working through the challenging times the restaurant faced when Moish passed away tragically and suddenly in 1981.

Neil took a leave of absence from his senior year at college and dedicated himself to maintaining the continuity of Moshe Peking, helping during the transition period when Mimi eventually took over the daily operations of her late husband's dream.

Neil, had majored in Political Science with a minor in business, attributes his real education to his experience under the tutelage of Moish Soshtain ob"m. "Working with Moish Soshtain," Neil explains, "I knew what true excellence in the restaurant business really was."

In March of 1990, Neil decided to open on his own restaurant, Cho-Sen Garden, in Forest Hills. Not long after, he moved to the Five Towns.

Wallin's restaurant in the heart of Forest Hills featured authentic Chinese cuisine in addition to an American menu. It soon became a culinary icon on the Orthodox Jewish New York scene, attracting a broad spectrum of clientele from Chassidic customers to gentiles.

Not long after he had opened, Wallin received a very distressing phone call from Neil Goldberg. His terminal illness had progressed and he could no longer manage Annie Chan's China Café and Steakhouse. He needed to sell and wanted someone who understood how to run a Chinese restaurant.

Ever the consummate professional, Wallin knew quite well the fundamental rule of restauranting: "Never own a restaurant where you live." But Wallin also knew quite well the fundamental rule of Judaism, "*VeAhavta lerayacha kamocha* – love your neighbor as yourself."



Wallin decided that despite the fact that waiting a few more months would surely get him a better deal, he understood, Mr. Goldberg's concern for the future of his family.

Neil was committed to paying the asking price rather than take advantage of someone in such dire circumstances. One of Neil's Cho-Sen Garden customers, Five Towns resident Charlie Alpert, a close friend of Neal Goldberg, bore witness to this evolving situation and personally guaranteed Mr. Wallin that for doing "the right thing" he would do everything in his power to help this new venture succeed. To this day, Charlie, his family and his many friends can be found in Cho-Sen Island every few days of every week.

The deal was expedited by Moshe Sukenick, ob"m, with incredible sensitivity, presided over a closing with the seller who was lying on his couch in extreme pain and discomfort. (Neil's landlord, a totally unaffiliated Jew, has recounted this story for the last twenty-one years as his testament to the scripture "*mee k'amcha yisrael.*")

Immediately, Neil closed Annie Chan's and rebooked any party or event that had been previously planned there to other local restaurants. He put every





effort into building a brand new highly attractive yet comfortable establishment and focused equally on guaranteeing the highest standards of kashrut and quality. "I felt it was wrong for restaurants to be able to get away with things with the excuse that they were a kosher establishment," he said. The food in his restaurant had to be fresher, better- tasting, and of a higher quality than that of the non-kosher restaurants.

Zagat's survey, which normally did not include kosher restaurants, lauded the new establishment in its reviews. Both Newsday and The New York Times also included a half page feature on Cho-Sen Island. It too, was all praises. Almost twenty-eight years later, Cho-Sen Island is the longest running kosher restaurant in the Five Towns.

"I felt it was wrong for restaurants to be able to get away with things with the excuse that they were a kosher establishment."

— Neil Wallin

The Supermarkets

Most neighborhoods have chain store supermarkets where most of the residents shop. Not so the Five Towns. The Five Towns can boast of its own "home grown" supermarkets that not only are all-kosher, but they can put the chain supermarkets in their back pockets in terms of pricing, too.

"What you have here is a situation where even the gentile population shops in the kosher supermarkets," relates a typical shopper.

Supersol, the first of them all of course, is not related to the Supersol chain of supermarkets in Israel. However, most Israelis are unaware of this fact. The point came home to Laurie Garber when he was taking a tour of the area west of Jerusalem. The tour guide stopped in the town of Beitar, where the mayor greeted Mr. Garber. He was surprised with a benefit held in his honor, replete with catered food, speakers and all. Mr. Garber was too embarrassed to tell them that they had confused him with the owner of the Israeli Supersol.

Gourmet Glatt was originally owned by Benny Bolender, who had added a line of kosher products to his kosher butcher shop. He aimed to cater to the needs of the religious Jewish community in the Five Towns. After some controversy, new owners purchased the store, and now the supermarket serves as a mini-mall of sorts. Other establishments have moved in – some old Five Towns names such as Zomicks' bakery and Chap A Nosh and some new, such as Ossie's Fish and the Deli. They are more attuned than ever to the needs of its shoppers. Gourmet Glatt now sells ice coffee in the back and is one of the few supermarkets in the country that has ensured that their shopping carts are equipped with coffee cup holders.



Brach's in Lawrence was started by Yanky Brach, in 1997, in the home of the old Falcaro's bowling alley. He had learned the grocery business working side by side with his father. His father, a Holocaust survivor, had opened up Brach's supermarket in Kew Garden Hills. Yanky certainly admired his father's achievement in creating one of the first large kosher only supermarkets in the country, but he envisioned something even more. Taking an enormous gamble, Yanky built a warehouse size supermarket off Rockaway Turnpike in Lawrence. At first, it was slow-going. The store was far from other shops. True, it had a huge parking lot, but no one was used to such a large kosher only supermarket. Brach's eventual success proved the naysayers wrong. They opened up a meat section, a bakery, a deli, a fish section, a candy section, an Israeli spice section, and more. What's more, they soon launched what can be defined as the apogee of achievement in kosher supermarketry – every day at precisely 2:00 PM they had their own *minyan* for *Minchah*.

Though Brach's was a Five Towns icon for many years, newer supermarkets opened closer to the central shopping areas. In May of 2016, almost twenty years after its opening, Brach's closed its doors. Almost two years later, KolSave Market, a discount style 40,000-square-foot supermarket owned by Gourmet Glatt, opened in its place.

Hardly a month passes where a new kosher eatery does not open in the Five Towns. The Vaad which once had to supervise a mere handful of stores, is quite busy, as are the customers who go from kosher store to kosher store on a daily, even hourly basis!

Hardly a month passes where a new kosher eatery, be it dairy or meat or even a parve ices parlor does not open in the Five Towns.





Above: Rabbi Anshel Pearl, shopping at Brach's, the former home of KolSave presently KolSave



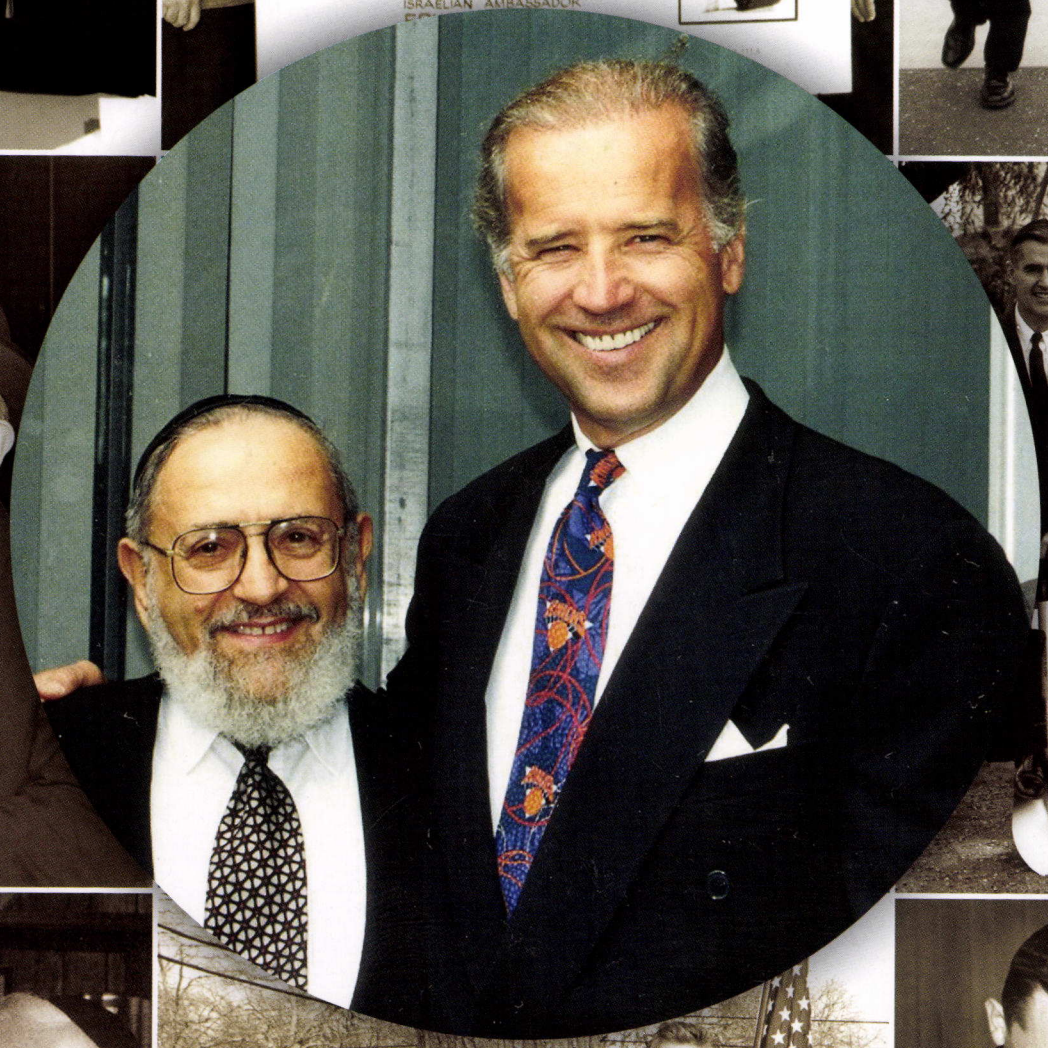
As the ribbon is cut at the opening of KolSave Market, Nassau County Executive Laura Curran is flanked (from left) by Achiezer Founder and President Rabbi Boruch Ber Bender, Gourmet Glatt's Yoeli Steinberg, Howie Klagsburn, Moshe Ratner, and (in back at right) KolSave store manager Mendy Herz




YESHIVA TORAS CHAIM at SOUTH SHORE
Silver Anniversary
SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET
MARCH 28th 1982
SANDS BEACH CLUB
UNITED STATES SENATOR
ALFONSE D'AMATO
ISRAELIAN AMBASSADOR








CENTER







ALLIES

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GOVERNMENT

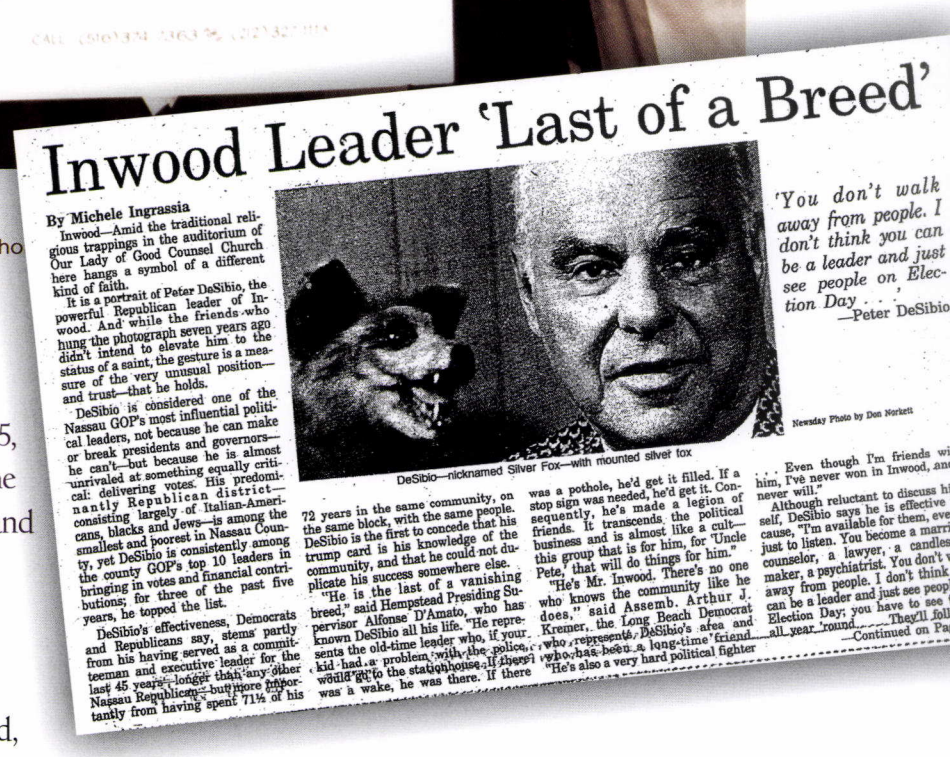
Right (From L–R):

Joseph Binder, Congressman Ray McGrath, unidentified, unidentified, Rabbi Kamenetzky, Jeffrey Glick, Pete DeSibio, Jerry Newman, WIlliam Wallach, Martin Bernstein, unidentified



Above:

Uncle Pete, the sobriquet for Peter DiSibio (to the right of Rabbi Kamenetzky), the powerful local Republican leader who ran the area and was the first stop when needing to solve a problem.



Inwood Leader 'Last of a Breed'

By Michele Ingrassia

Inwood—Amid the traditional religious trappings in the auditorium of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church here hangs a symbol of a different kind of faith.

It is a portrait of Peter DeSibio, the powerful Republican leader of Inwood. And while the friends who hung the photograph seven years ago didn't intend to elevate him to the status of a saint, the gesture is a measure of the very unusual position—and trust—that he holds.

DeSibio is considered one of the Nassau GOP's most influential political leaders, not because he can make or break presidents and governors—he can't—but because he is almost unrivaled at something equally critical: delivering votes. His predominantly Republican district—consisting largely of Italian-Americans, blacks and Jews—is among the smallest and poorest in Nassau County, yet DeSibio is consistently among the county GOP's top 10 leaders in bringing in votes and financial contributions; for three of the past five years, he topped the list.

DeSibio's effectiveness, Democrats and Republicans say, stems partly from his having served as a committeeman and executive leader for the last 45 years—longer than any other Nassau Republican—but more importantly from having spent 71½ of his 72 years in the same community, on the same block, with the same people. DeSibio is the first to concede that his trump card is his knowledge of the community, and that he could not duplicate his success somewhere else.

"He is the last of a vanishing breed," said Hempstead Presiding Supervisor Alfonse D'Amato, who has known DeSibio all his life. "He represents the old-time leader who, if your kid had a problem with the police, would go to the stationhouse. If there was a wake, he was there. If there was a pothole, he'd get it filled. If a stop sign was needed, he'd get it. Consequently, he's made a legion of friends. It transcends the political business and is almost like a cult—this group that is for him, for 'Uncle Pete,' that will do things for him."

"He's Mr. Inwood. There's no one who knows the community like he does," said Assemb. Arthur J. Kremer, the Long Beach Democrat who represents DeSibio's area and who has been a long-time friend. "He's also a very hard political fighter . . . Even though I'm friends wi him, I've never won in Inwood, an never will."

Although reluctant to discuss hi self, DeSibio says he is effective cause, "I'm available for them, eve just to listen. You become a marri counselor, a lawyer, a candles maker, a psychiatrist. You don't away from people. I don't think can be a leader and just see peop Election Day; you have to see all year 'round. . . . They'll foll

—Continued on Pa

DeSibio—nicknamed Silver Fox—with mounted silver fox

Newsday Photo by Don Norkett

'You don't walk away from people. I don't think you can be a leader and just see people on Election Day . . .'

—Peter DeSibio

Nassau County,

The place where Rabbi Kamenetzky moved in 1955, was notoriously political. When he moved into the neighborhood Jews wielded little political power and hardly did their symbiotically connected sympathizers – Democrats. This place was Republican and basically still is.

The Republican power base was basically in Inwood, the last of the Five Towns, nestled on the border of Far Rockaway, which belongs to New York City's Borough of Queens. This author is not a political scholar and the only perspective he has was from the interaction of his father, Rabbi Kamenetzky, with the local Five Town political representatives whose influence transcended the Five *Shtetls* and spread to the greater area at large.

My father knew on what side the bread was buttered, and quickly made friends in relatively high places.

Rabbi Kamenetzky was quite savvy and new the rule that all politics is local, so even though the greater district leaned left and often voted Democrat, the locals were all staunch Republican. He knew on what side the bread was buttered, and how important it was to now the Town of Hempstead officials quickly made friends in relatively high places.

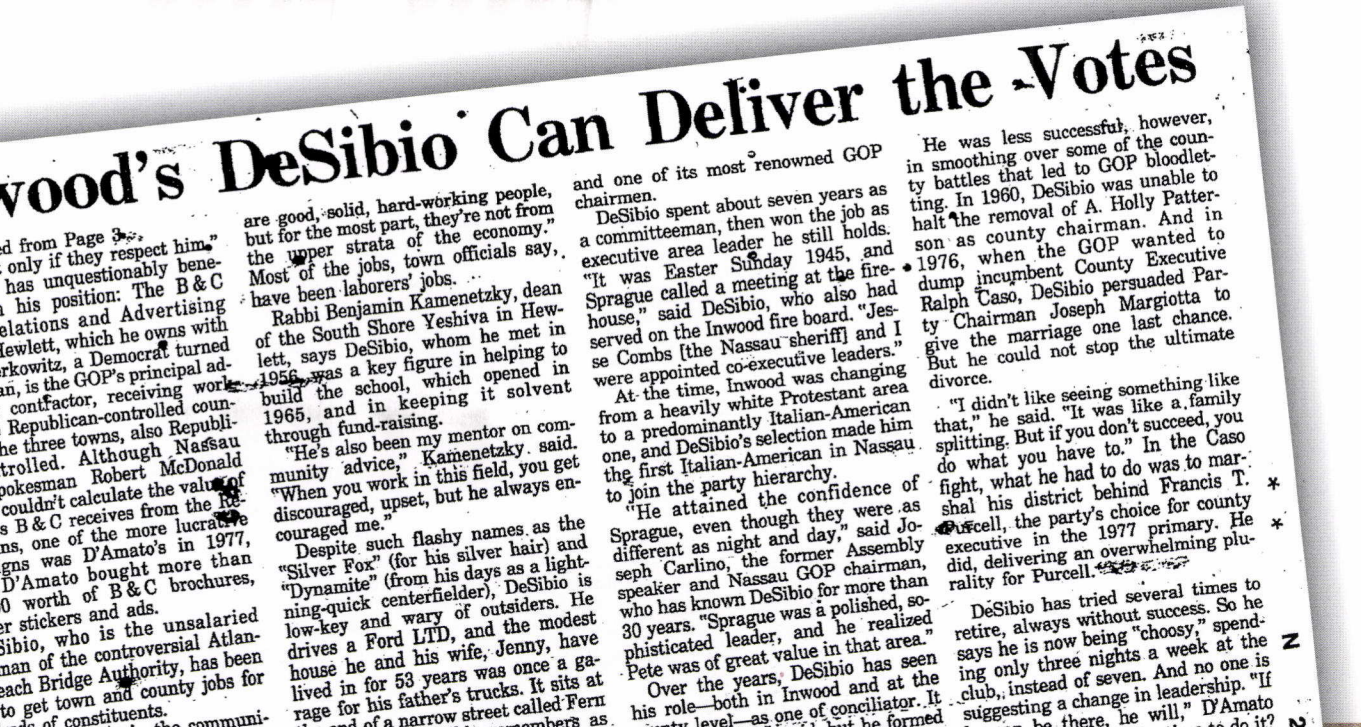
It was quite weird always hearing about Uncle Pete, the sobriquet for Peter DiSibio, the powerful local Republican leader who ran the area and was the first stop when needing to solve any problem. Indeed, my father knew who to befriend, and even without a power base of *chassidim* or Orthodox Jews, the politicians responded. Names like Holly Patterson, Eugene Nickerson and Ralph Caso, the Nassau County Executives in the late 50s, '60s and early '70s, were always bandied about, and before my high school years, when we all get cynically indoctrinated about the evils of politicians, these were all the go-to guys.

And I think from the very get-go, Uncle Pete and his minions really did help.

When my parents moved in, the neighbors heard them speaking to my sisters in the language that they brought from East New York – Yiddish.

"You're not bringing those *chassidim* here! You know, those fellows from Brooklyn with the *payos*?"

My father coiffed the hair of my sisters in a way that showed long black strands on the sides of their faces. "I'm sorry to tell you, but all of my children have *payos*."



Inwood's DeSibio Can Deliver the Votes

—Continued from Page 3.

leader, but only if they respect him."

DeSibio has unquestionably benefited from his position: The B&C Public Relations and Advertising Corp. of Hewlett, which he owns with Sandy Berkowitz, a Democrat turned Republican, is the GOP's principal advertising contractor, receiving work from the Republican-controlled county and the three towns, also Republican-controlled. Although Nassau GOP spokesman Robert McDonald said he couldn't calculate the value of business B&C receives from the Republicans, one of the more lucrative campaigns was D'Amato's in 1977, when D'Amato bought more than $26,900 worth of B&C brochures, bumper stickers and ads.

DeSibio, who is the unsalaried chairman of the controversial Atlantic Beach Bridge Authority, has been able to get town and county jobs for hundreds of constituents.

"He's well-known in the community, and half of Inwood owes their jobs to him," said the Rev. Gerard Gfroerer, an assistant pastor at Our Lady of Good Counsel. "He is an old-time politico and has been able to get a lot of people work in various phases of the county and the town . . . These are good, solid, hard-working people, but for the most part, they're not from the upper strata of the economy." Most of the jobs, town officials say, have been laborers' jobs.

Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetzky, dean of the South Shore Yeshiva in Hewlett, says DeSibio, whom he met in 1956, was a key figure in helping to build the school, which opened in 1965, and in keeping it solvent through fund-raising.

"He's also been my mentor on community advice," Kamenetzky said. "When you work in this field, you get discouraged, upset, but he always encouraged me."

Despite such flashy names as the "Silver Fox" (for his silver hair) and "Dynamite" (from his days as a lightning-quick centerfielder), DeSibio is low-key and wary of outsiders. He drives a Ford LTD, and the modest house he and his wife, Jenny, have lived in for 53 years was once a garage for his father's trucks. It sits at the end of a narrow street called Fern Place, which DeSibio remembers as farmland years ago.

DeSibio got his start in politics through his friendship with Wilbur Doughty, the uncle of J. Russel Sprague, Nassau's first county executive and one of its most renowned GOP chairmen.

DeSibio spent about seven years as a committeeman, then won the job as executive area leader he still holds. "It was Easter Sunday 1945, and Sprague called a meeting at the firehouse," said DeSibio, who also had served on the Inwood fire board. "Jesse Combs [the Nassau sheriff] and I were appointed co-executive leaders."

At the time, Inwood was changing from a heavily white Protestant area to a predominantly Italian-American one, and DeSibio's selection made him the first Italian-American in Nassau to join the party hierarchy.

"He attained the confidence of Sprague, even though they were as different as night and day," said Joseph Carlino, the former Assembly speaker and Nassau GOP chairman, who has known DeSibio for more than 30 years. "Sprague was a polished, sophisticated leader, and he realized Pete was of great value in that area."

Over the years, DeSibio has seen his role—both in Inwood and at the county level—as one of conciliator. It took 30 years, he said, but he formed a single Inwood-North Lawrence Republican Club out of five clubs in the district.

He was less successful, however, in smoothing over some of the county battles that led to GOP bloodletting. In 1960, DeSibio was unable to halt the removal of A. Holly Patterson as county chairman. And in 1976, when the GOP wanted to dump incumbent County Executive Ralph Caso, DeSibio persuaded Party Chairman Joseph Margiotta to give the marriage one last chance. But he could not stop the ultimate divorce.

"I didn't like seeing something like that," he said. "It was like a family splitting. But if you don't succeed, you do what you have to." In the Caso fight, what he had to do was to marshal his district behind Francis T. Purcell, the party's choice for county executive in the 1977 primary. He did, delivering an overwhelming plurality for Purcell.

DeSibio has tried several times to retire, always without success. So he says he is now being "choosy," spending only three nights a week at the club, instead of seven. And no one is suggesting a change in leadership. "If he can be there, he will," D'Amato said. "Who else has the time to do it? It no longer exists."

L-R: Shelly Lang, Asher Biron, Sarah Steinmetz, Rabbi Kamenetzky, with Nassau County Executive, Holly Patterson



Moshe Katz, first President of YOSS presenting Governor Nelson Rockefeller with Testimonial Journal at first YOSS banquet. Rabbi Kamenetzky is behind the Governor.

In the Five Towns, where the words "No Jews" were not seen, the feelings "No Hassids" or "No Orthodox" resonated.

Just a number of years before the arrival of Rabbi Kamenetzky, the Sederhella Yeshiva attempted to establish itself in the neighborhood. The yeshiva had bought a home on Howard Avenue in Woodmere and some of the chassidim began moving in.

They were not welcome at all, and whether it was a cold shoulder or numerous violations that they were presented, it was not long before they packed up and left.

I do not know what would have happened if the Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Neuschloss, would have befriended Uncle Pete, or if Uncle Pete could have intervened to save the Sederhella Yeshiva, but due to Rabbi Kamenetzky's friendship, he had always helped Yeshiva of South Shore, and involved himself in other issues on behalf of the community and its members (sometimes in ways that only he and some of his Republican acquaintances knew how).

But he did have what to fear. The nearby towns of Lynbrook and Valley Stream had only recently removed their "No Dogs, Blacks or Jews Allowed" signs from their parks' entrances, but they still had those signs in their hearts.

And in the Five Towns, where the words "No Jews" were not seen, the feelings "No Hassids" or "No Orthodox" resonated.

The original Yeshiva of South Shore building on Oak Street, an old, dilapidated mansion in Woodmere a few blocks from where the Sederhella Yeshiva began, should have been demolished long before any student entered them. I remember a couple of fellows in sixth grade running down the staircase and landing with the banister in their hands!

Somehow, the Yeshiva received no violations. Rabbi Kamenetzky was somehow able to establish two schools smack in the middle of a residential block, across the street from a country club.



Peter DeSebio, Congressman Ray McGrath, Nassau County Executive Tom Gullotta, Assemblyman Jerry Kremer, Rabbi Kamenetzky, Dean Skelos

When the new building was built, again on a residential block, in nearby Hewlett, every one of the local politicians showed up to with a shovel to attend the groundbreaking.

I am sure that Uncle Pete had something to do with it, as do his protégés who once ruled the Town of Hempstead.

Today, of course, in this world of mass communication and transparency, and rumors and accusations that spread like wildfire, things have to be on the up-and-up and legal enough to withstand challenges from crabby neighbors who are willing to file legal briefs and throw up any roadblock to stop a institution from opening its doors.

Even back then the wrath of organized neighbors were enough to put a roadblock in the way. Back in the 1988 an organization named LIFE the Long Island Foundation for Education bought a private home and attempted to convert it to a Holocaust Center. Debate ensued as to whether Holocaust education fell under the purview of religious education and thus there would be more leeway as far as zoning rules were concerned. LIFE lost and the center never opened.

When the new building was built, again on a residential block, in nearby Hewlett, every one of the local politicians showed up to with a shovel to attend the groundbreaking.



New York Senator
Al D'Amato with
Rabbi Kamenetzky

But it is always good to have a friend in local government. Indeed, for our personal lives in simple suburbia, the fellow who can help get the roads paved, the garbage picked up and the snow shoveled can be much more significant to the average citizen—whose car is stuck in the driveway or whose garbage is piling up—than the fellow who is just one vote in the decision whether or not to not to privatize Social Security.

Despite the ubiquitous murmuring about politicians, and all the politician jokes that mimic the lawyer ones, the public servants out here are, for the most part, truly very helpful.

And it's wonderful to have known some of them and to have gotten them to really understand your needs ever since they began their careers on the lowest rungs of power. Some began as local municipal employees or town clerks, then became town supervisors, and then grew into national leaders. One of those politicians was Alfonse D'Amato, who was a true protégé of Uncle Pete. "Al" became a dear friend and advocate, not only of our community but for Israel and the greater Jewish community in the Soviet Union. My father knew him as the local guy from nearby Island Park, first as an Administrator for the Nassau County Receiver of Taxes of Hempstead. They stayed close when he rose from Hempstead Town Supervisor to become a United States Senator. During all those years, he never missed a Yeshiva Dinner or event, and was there for any need from potholes to policy that helped our Yeshiva.

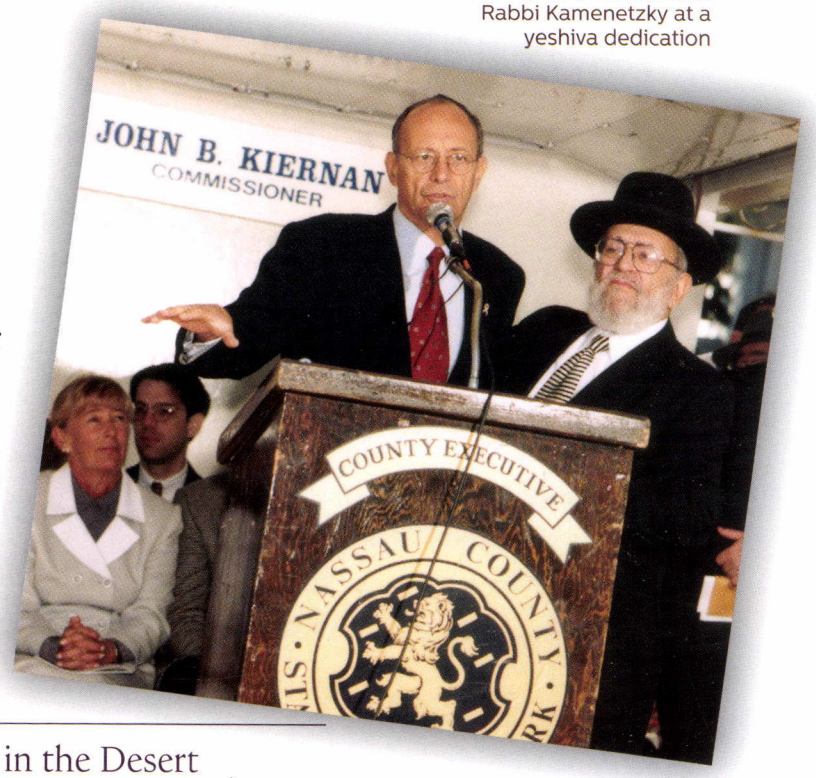
He was instrumental in exposing the swiss banks fraudulent seizure.

I remember his dismay when he was defeated by then-Congressman Chuck Schumer, who won with a majority of the Jewish (albeit not Orthodox) vote. The man who stood up for Israel's bombing of Iraq and exposed the Swiss bank Holocaust scandal felt betrayed.

Our district had wonderful representation all the years in both the New York State Senate and Assembly and ultimately in Congress.

There were quite a number of household names I heard as I was growing up. Each county was broken up into districts and we were in the Nassau County's 6th Congressional District, which was also considered that way for the New York State Assembly as well.

N.Y. Senator Al D'Amato with
Rabbi Kamenetzky at a
yeshiva dedication





(L-R): Anthony Santino, County Exec. Tom Gullota, unidentified, Esther Wachsman, Bruce Blakeman, Rabbi Shaya Richmond, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky

A name I remember vaguely was Palmer Farrington, who was Member of New York State assembly for Nassau County's 6th District, from 1955-1961. He got in trouble over tax fraud charges in the late 1960s. There was Republican leader, Joseph Margiotta who served in the New York State Assembly in the 1960s was the political boss of Nassau County. He was the man you had to go for his blessing before you could make any major political move. Unfortunately he was convicted in 1981 on some corruption charges and the leadership role was passed to Joe Mondello, who is currently the party leader. Other names included Eli Wager, a Jewish Democrat who lost his seat to Robert Blakemen, whose son Bruce would prove to be a very involved and engaged politician on the local level, always attending yeshiva and community functions and a real go to person for problems that needed solutions. Bruce was actually elected to the first session of a new Nassau County governmental body, its creation dictated by a Supreme Court decision, the Nassau County Legislature. Presently the Five Towns is split into two sections one of them represented by Chaim (Howard) Koppel and observant Jew and member of the Lawrence community.

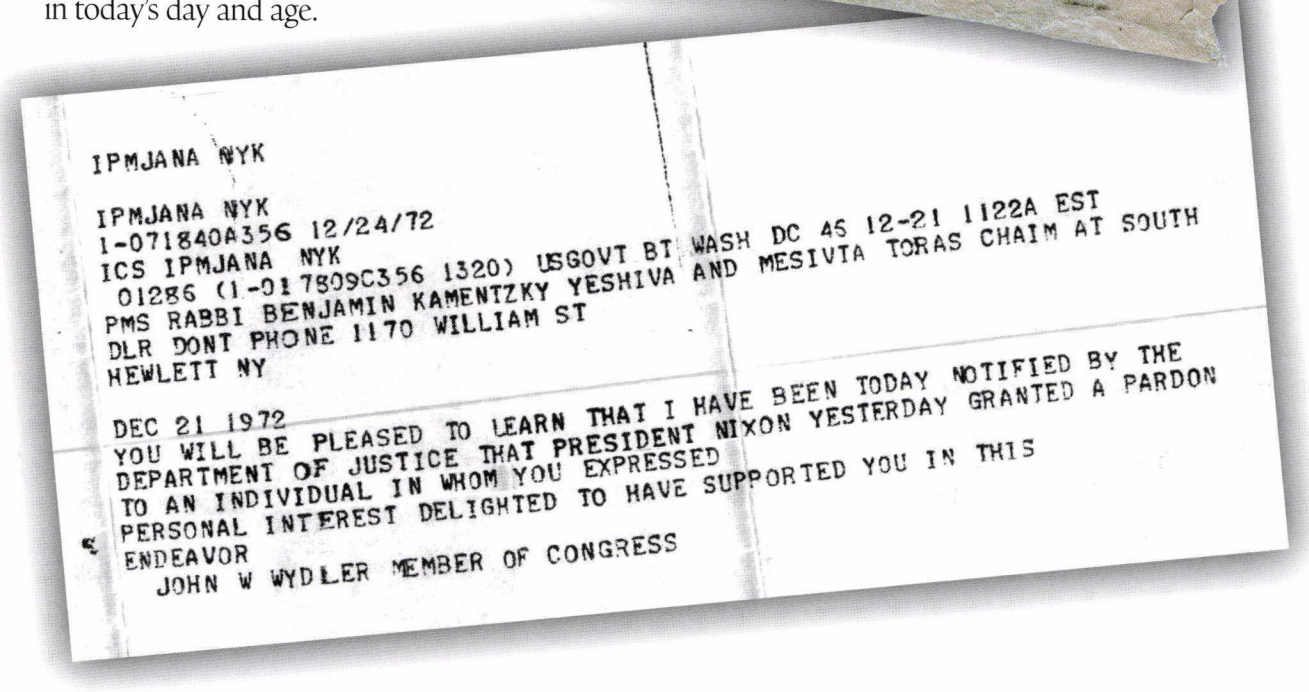
But Rabbi Kamenetzky's reach extended to Washington as well, where his influence helped many institutions and individuals.

John W. Wydler, 63, was a New York Republican member of Congress who served nine terms in the House of Representatives before he retired in 1981. He was extremely close with Rabbi Kamenetzky and even interceded on behalf of a Jewish person to obtain a presidential pardon.

Something that would take Herculean efforts and thousands of manpower hours in today's day and age.



MAN OF THE YEAR: Rep. Ray McGrath (center), who was named "Man of the Year by the Yeshivas Toras Chaim of the South Shore in Hewlett, visits third grade students to discuss his recent trip to the Soviet Union. Seen here are from left: Felice Klein, a teacher; Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetsky, dean, and Henry Kash, school principal.



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PMS RABBI BENJAMIN KAMENTZKY YESHIVA AND MESIVTA TORAS CHAIM AT SOUTH
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HEWLETT NY

DEC 21 1972
YOU WILL BE PLEASED TO LEARN THAT I HAVE BEEN TODAY NOTIFIED BY THE
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE THAT PRESIDENT NIXON YESTERDAY GRANTED A PARDON
TO AN INDIVIDUAL IN WHOM YOU EXPRESSED
PERSONAL INTEREST DELIGHTED TO HAVE SUPPORTED YOU IN THIS
ENDEAVOR
JOHN W WYDLER MEMBER OF CONGRESS



L-R: R' Yeruchom SIlber, Meir Krengel, R' Shmuel Lekowitz, R' Mordechai Kamenetzky, NYS Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan, and former NYS Senator Jack Martins watch as Rabbi Dovid Schulman teaches a class at YOSS (circa 2017)

John W. Wydler, 63, a New York Republican member of Congress who served nine terms in the House of Representatives before he retired in 1981

Most of the names of the local politicians are fleeting in my memory like their political careers. But others moved up to prominence, Raymond (Ray) McGrath, a Valley Stream native was one. He followed Mr. Wydler, after he had served in the NYS Assembly in the late 1970s. He was elected to Congress in 1981. He served for over a decade and retired in January, 1993, after serving six terms. McGrath was very close to Rabbi Kamenetzky and attended every Yeshiva function as well.

There was as always redistricting and the seat which now include parts of Queens and the North Shore is held by Gary Ackerman, a Jewish Democrat who has made his mark in politics.

Another local politician who rose to become one of the most powerful men in New York State, was from Rockville Centre, a small village about five miles from where Woodmere. He is not Italian, but actually Greek Orthodox. My father was encouraged by Mr. D'Amato to introduce this man to the community back in 1980, and indeed Dean Skelos was a true friend to all the local and statewide institutions as New York State Senate Majority Leader.

Mr. Skelos was extremely helpful to the local and broader Orthodox community, fighting for private school tax reductions and other pressing issues that affected the community. Unfortunately, he fell from grace and power after he was indicted and later convicted on corruption charges. Those charges were overturned by a federal appeals court in September of 2017. At the time of this publication he is awaiting a retrial.

And the more local the elections are, the hotter the topics and the issues. The local school board elections

in what is known as District 15 became a national focal point when the hundreds of families whose children are in yeshiva finally said, "Enough is enough." For years there had been allegations of fiscal mismanagement, financial irresponsibility, and diminishing returns on state exams. The scores kept getting lower, and taxes kept getting higher. And the salt on the wound was paying exorbitant school-property taxes and receiving meager services from the school district. The entire District 15 school board, save for one member, Dr. David Sussman, a public-school parent who was extremely sympathetic to yeshiva parents, didn't seem to care.

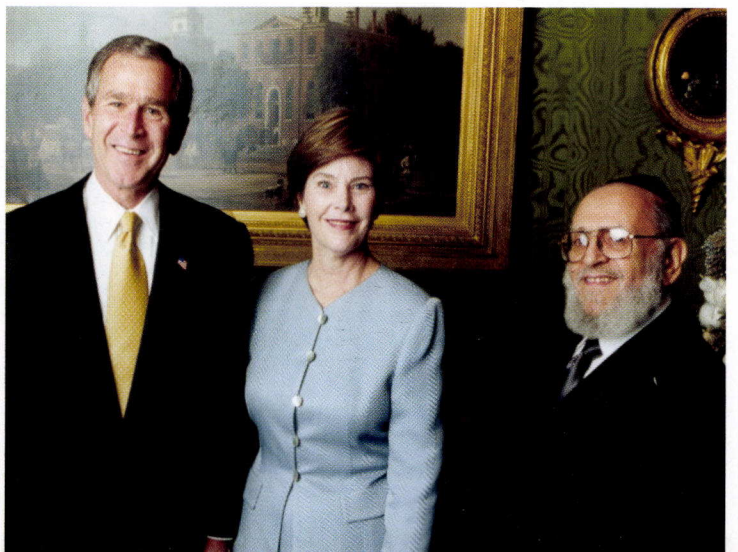
And in an election covered by the national press, and through subsequent elections, now the entire District 15 Public School Board is comprised of Shabbos observant, yeshiva parents, save again for Dr. Sussman, who was always deemed a true yeshiva parent advocate.











Above L-R:
Hempstead Supervisor Ralph Caso, D.A. Ed Silver, unidentified, Louis Goldwyn, at YOSS Groundbreaking, 1964

Right Column 1st:
Vice President Richard M. Nixon is shown with Mr. Morris Morgenstern. To his right, Mr. Morgenstern's daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Melvin E. Kevin and son Gary. To the left of the Vice President is Mrs. Celia Morgenstern. Washington, D.C. May 27, 1955

Right Column 2nd:
Councilman Bruce Blakeman on a visit to Yeshiva of South Shore

Right Column 3rd:
L-R: Rabbi Kamenetzky, YOSS President, Norman Newman presenting Senator Joseph Biden with a plaque at the 1996 YOSS graduation

Right Column 4th:
Rabbi Kamenetzky with President George W. and Laura Bush at a White House Chanukah celebration, 2001



Congresman Herbert Tenzer

A community is built with leadership.
Rabbinic leadership.
Lay leadership and even Political leadership.

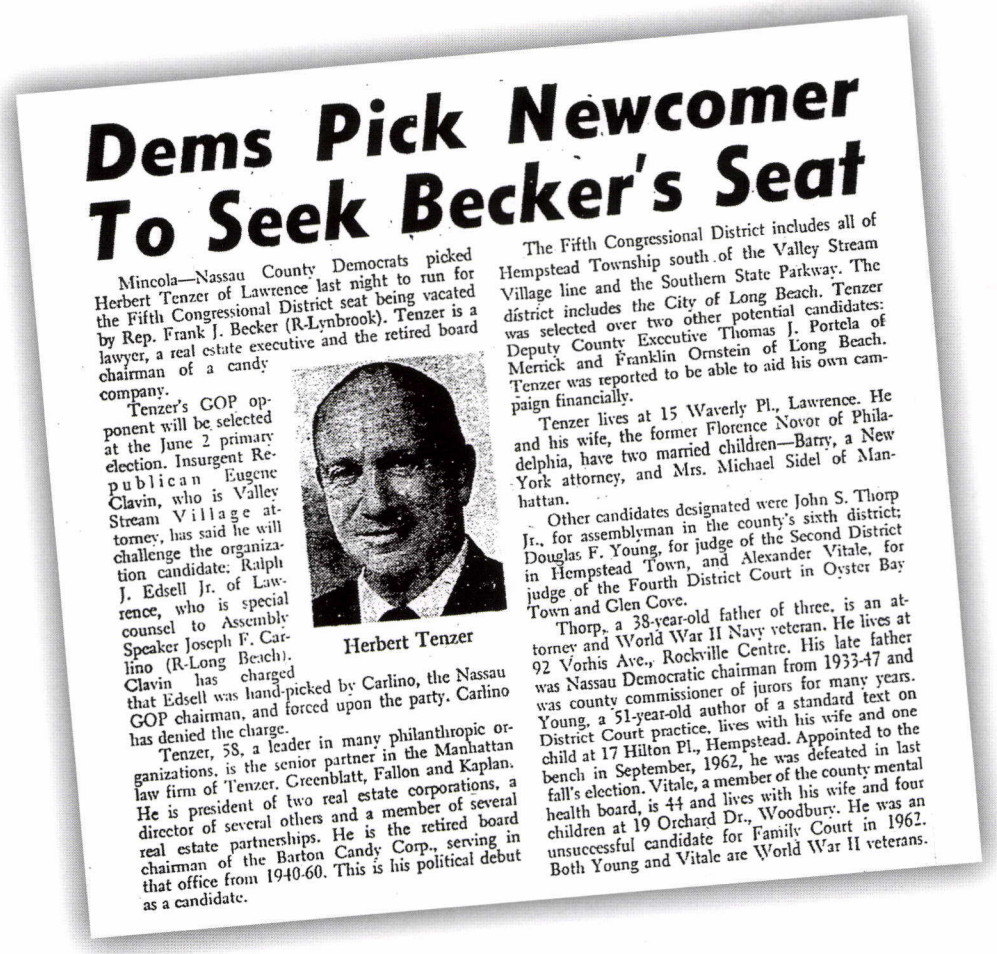
Among the political personalities that I believed forged the character of our community was one that transcended the mundane and was elevated to the distinguished even amongst the very distinguished was Herbert Tenzer.

Somehow, his presence was so powerful that his persona remains etched forever in my mind.

Orthodox Jews, revel or as they say in Yiddish, *barimtzach* in Senator Joe Lieberman as the first Orthodox Jewish Senator. Indeed his ascendency to the position of Vice Presidential candidate was a marked step for those who measure our success with influence within the spheres of power.

But that dance of Orthodox Jewish commitment to God and to country to did not begin with Lieberman. As far as I know, it began with Herbert (call me Herb) Tenzer. I remember Mr. Tenzer from my youth, and although he was involved with far greater and more prominent causes than the founding of our local yeshiva, his name was quite prevalent in our home, as the go to man, the man who could help solve the problems of last resort.

Left: Congressman Herbert Tenzer,
at a Yeshiva of South Shore graduation in 1963



Dems Pick Newcomer To Seek Becker's Seat

Mincola—Nassau County Democrats picked Herbert Tenzer of Lawrence last night to run for the Fifth Congressional District seat being vacated by Rep. Frank J. Becker (R-Lynbrook). Tenzer is a lawyer, a real estate executive and the retired board chairman of a candy company.

Tenzer's GOP opponent will be selected at the June 2 primary election. Insurgent Republican Eugene Clavin, who is Valley Stream Village attorney, has said he will challenge the organization candidate: Ralph J. Edsell Jr. of Lawrence, who is special counsel to Assembly Speaker Joseph F. Carlino (R-Long Beach). Clavin has charged that Edsell was hand-picked by Carlino, the Nassau GOP chairman, and forced upon the party. Carlino has denied the charge.

Herbert Tenzer

Tenzer, 58, a leader in many philanthropic organizations, is the senior partner in the Manhattan law firm of Tenzer, Greenblatt, Fallon and Kaplan. He is president of two real estate corporations, a director of several others and a member of several real estate partnerships. He is the retired board chairman of the Barton Candy Corp., serving in that office from 1940-60. This is his political debut as a candidate.

The Fifth Congressional District includes all of Hempstead Township south of the Valley Stream Village line and the Southern State Parkway. The district includes the City of Long Beach. Tenzer was selected over two other potential candidates: Deputy County Executive Thomas J. Portela of Merrick and Franklin Ornstein of Long Beach. Tenzer was reported to be able to aid his own campaign financially.

Tenzer lives at 15 Waverly Pl., Lawrence. He and his wife, the former Florence Novor of Philadelphia, have two married children—Barry, a New York attorney, and Mrs. Michael Sidel of Manhattan.

Other candidates designated were John S. Thorp Jr., for assemblyman in the county's sixth district; Douglas F. Young, for judge of the Second District in Hempstead Town, and Alexander Vitale, for judge of the Fourth District Court in Oyster Bay Town and Glen Cove.

Thorp, a 38-year-old father of three, is an attorney and World War II Navy veteran. He lives at 92 Vorhis Ave., Rockville Centre. His late father was Nassau Democratic chairman from 1933-47 and was county commissioner of jurors for many years. Young, a 51-year-old author of a standard text on District Court practice, lives with his wife and one child at 17 Hilton Pl., Hempstead. Appointed to the bench in September, 1962, he was defeated in last fall's election. Vitale, a member of the county mental health board, is 44 and lives with his wife and four children at 19 Orchard Dr., Woodbury. He was an unsuccessful candidate for Family Court in 1962. Both Young and Vitale are World War II veterans.



Despite his association with the secular world, he was instrumental in the founding of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the Binyamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University, Congressman Tenzer still had a powerful feel for Yiddishkeit and for Torah study.

He was the President of the Crown Heights Yeshiva, and locally the President of Congregation Beth Sholom. But he an ardent spokesman for Torah Jewry. Having been extremely close with Amos Bunim, the relentless activist who was a right hand man of Rav Ahron Kotler, I believe Tenzer was influenced to became a fierce advocate for Torah learning in a very traditional manner, clearly with the influence of Rav Ahron's ideals.

Amos Bunim in his wonderful work, A Fire in His Soul: Irving M. Bunim, 1901-1980, the Man and His Impact on American Orthodox Jewry, tells of Tenzer's passion and sincere commitment more than 20 years before he was elected to capitol Hill. Bunim, president of the Rabbi Jacob Joseph School and Tenzer president of the Crown Heights Yeshiva working diligently to overturn a ruling of the New York State Board of Regents that would have required yeshivas to teach secular studies in the morning or else lose NY State accreditation. More than two dozen yeshivos including RJJ and Torah Voda'ath would have been affected.

The hearing was on Tisha B'Av and Bunim and Tenzer appeared unshaven and unkempt and in sneakers before the Board of Regents, members of which included a daughter of Justice Louis Brandeis.

She reacted sharply to their appearance, "Is this the way you gentlemen appear before the Board of regents?" Tenzer sprang to his feet and lent an impassioned plea about the nature of the day and the sadness it evoked. To wit, another member of the panel, Owen D. Young, the highly intellectual Chairman of General Electric with honorary degrees from 20 Universities, turned to Brandeis and said softly, "You owe these gentlemen an apology."

Indeed, Tenzer and Bunim articulated their points, showing statistically the high marks of Yeshiva students, Gemara learners, and the lack of any negative impact of delaying the study of secular subjects for the afternoon. Their victory has been upheld until this very day.



Vaad Hatzala Testimonial Dinner honoring Hon. Henry Morgenthau Jr., Hon. William O'Dwyer, Hon. John Pehle at the Astor Hotel, December 1945. *Left to right*: Bunim, Hon. Henry Morgenthau Jr., Hon. John Pehle, Hon. Herbert Tenzer.

Left: A Fire in His Soul: Irving M. Bunim, 1901–1980, the Man and His Impact on American Orthodox Jewry Feldheim Publishers © 1989

Although Herbert Tenzer was involved with far greater and more prominent causes than the founding of our local yeshiva, his name was quite prevalent in our home, as the go to man, the man who could help solve the problems of last resort.

His involvement with Bunim had him ardently advocating and supporting the Vaad Hatzalah, and rescue the Children organizations founded by *gedolei Yisrael* for the sake of the survivors of the Holocaust. He was instrumental in helping the agricultural development of the fledgling State of Israel by organizing shipping thousands of chickens to the fledgling state.

Even on the simplest local level, Mr. Tenzer was a powerful advocate for Orthodoxy. In 1956, when my father wanted to start a shul (in addition to the yeshiva), he wanted to use a model home in an area in Cedarhurst known as Park Circle. Indeed, it was a great location. Situated next to a Garden Center, it was the perfect place. Young families were moving into the Park Circle area and other areas north of Peninsula and this would be really a great place for a shul.

An announcement was posted in the local papers and the few *baalei batim* waited for the calls to come.

Indeed the calls came. Unfortunately they were not reservations for the *davening*, rather they were reservations about the shul! They were irate. "I just moved away from a synagogue! What are you doing to this neighborhood? You fellows have the nerve to make a shul in my backyard?" Calls and protests came from all sides, and the committee had no choice to begin a precedent that would repeat itself for the next 50 years – a meeting with the neighbors about the growth of Orthodox Jewry.

David Koss, a lawyer, who had a very warm understanding heart realized that the opposition was strong and he decided that he would employ the help of the noted *askan*, Herbert Tenzer. Mr. Tenzer decided to engage the help of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations. They decided to stand firm in the face of the opposition and state their position directly and openly in a meeting held in the newly acquired Yeshiva of South Shore on 4 Oak Street.

The meeting began with the opposition voicing their concerns loudly, angrily and confrontationally. Mr. Tenzer, one of the most respected members of the community across all religious persuasions and affiliations stood in the presence of the opponents and spoke. "It is our right in this wonderful country the United States of America to practice as we see fit, where we see fit."

He did not hold back from stating his opinions, but he was a master of compromise and after a long evening a compromise was reached and the shul volunteered to find another location after the *Yomim Tovim*.

Personally, I remember his imposing presence and his aristocratic demeanor as my father would bring me along, only sometimes, when meeting with him. I remember him speaking on occasion at the yeshiva, and for some reason his words carried much more weight and meaning than much of the stuff we hear from current politicians.

One of my fondest childhood memories was handing out flyers and stuffing mailboxes with large round Barton's Chocolate coins stamped with a "Vote for Tenzer" on it. Mr. Tenzer was the chairman of Barton's Chocolate, one of the first companies of that size that was Shomer Shabbos in America.

Mr. Tenzer was running against a fellow named Ralph Edsell. I recall the name vividly because my father said he was named after a Ford car, which in my mind made him an anti-Semite. After all we all know about Fords attitude toward Jews! So, in my mind, Tenzer was running for our people and their pride as well. In those days, the area had less than 30 percent Jews and had never elected a Jew and Mr. Tenzer would not campaign on Shabbos! In fact, Kurt Stone a historian who has written extensively on Jews in politics, wrote about the time President Lyndon Johnson came to Long Island for a major speech on a sweltering Shabbos day in mid-summer. As a Democrat candidate for Congress, Tenzer wanted to be there and get a push from the President. He spent Friday night in a motel about a mile away from the spot where Johnson was to be speaking.

He arrived the next morning, a bit disheveled and *shvitzing* and was introduced to the President by a campaign manager who had no choice but to introduce tenser to the president, while explaining the reason for his rumpled appearance. "Mr. President, this is Mr. Tenser, he is an observant Jew who walked here a mile because he would not desecrate his Sabbath by driving in a car."

Johnson shook his hand warmly and publicly declared. I want to commend you for adhering to your faith. It's a great thing." Tenzer won the election receiving 65 percent of the vote.

It was not the first time Shabbos and Politics went head to head. About 9 months into his first term in Congress, in late September of 1965, the Democratic and very Irish-Catholic, Speaker of the House John William McCormack was informed that he would not have Tenzer's vote on the passage of what the Speaker deemed to be a very important bill, as Congressman Tenzer had to return home for Rosh Hashana. When McCormack pressured him to stay in Washington for the Yom Tov, Tenser told him that he would not do so without the permission of his Rabbis. It took a ruling from



ELECTED president of Congregation Beth Sholom, Lawrence, Herbert Tenzer of 15 Waverly Place will succeed George Fischbein. An attorney, Tenzer is president of Barton's Bonbonniere Inc., is a director of the Jewish Community Council of Queens-Nassau; co-chairman of the New York University Hebrew Chair Endowment Fund and a director of the Metropolitan Industrial Bank. A testimonial dinner will be



Ralph Edsell Jr. Herbert Tenzer

It Takes Two to Argue

It's That Time Of Year Again

By Alice Murray

Freeport—Candidates in two of Nassau's top election races were running hard last night, and sometimes running roughshod over each other's sensitivities.

Assembly Speaker Joseph Carlino (R-Long Beach), referring to his opponent's post-nomination change from the Republican to the Democratic party, sounded angry enough to mean it when he said: "I'd rather fight than switch." Carlino repeatedly dug into the Democratic nominee, Jerome R. McDougal, calling him a "Johnny-come-lately" and "a political turncoat" at a face-to-face debate here last night. He said he knew how the Democrats decide on a candidate. "The main consideration," Carlino said, "is how much money can you provide to get this nomination?"

McDougal, who said later he had made no contribution to any Democratic organization and was not paying for his campaign, had apparently raised Carlino's ire by attacking the watered-down version of the ethics bill passed during the last session of the Legislature. "Who is the person who deprived us of an adequate ethics bill?" McDougal asked. "Who is the person who deprived us of adequate state aid? Who is the person who deprived us of the rightful representation we should have?" he asked, and in each case answered himself by saying, "Joe Carlino."

Carlino retorted: "The main voice in Albany for increased state aid came from my office and the Nassau group." He said he had directed that the ill-fated vote be taken on the stronger version of the ethics bill, recommended by the LaPorte committee, although "the Democratic leader in the Assembly pleaded with me not to let that bill out of committee." On increased representation, Carlino said the federal court which ordered immediate reapportionment had no right to reduce the term of office of duly-elected officials from two years to one year. The court ruled that assemblymen and state senators would serve one year pending new elections in redrawn districts. McDougal, a

—Continued on Page 99



Right:
Congressman Herbert Tenzer, presenting a flag to a student at HALB in 1966

Reb Yoseph Dov Soleveitchik and his own Rabbi Klaperman, to allow him to stay, provided he hear shofar and have a *minyan* and not write, ride or do anything that would desecrate Yom Tov. McCormack flew in a Rabbi from New York, a *baal tokeiah* who blew shofar, a *minyan* and a Sefer Torah, all within walking distance of the vote, and set up a shul in the office with a *mechitza* made from plants!

Toward the end of his life, Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky would visit him. He related the following story: "A few months before his passing, some years ago, he related to me the following story. During his involvement with the Vaad Hatzalah, he joined with the energetic and often outspoken Rabbi Eliezer Silver of Cincinnati, Ohio to ask the very powerful Ohio Senator, Robert Taft for a very big favor. Rabbi Silver enjoyed a personal relationship with the Senator. But Rabbi Silver's request needed much political pressure and persuasion to accomplish.

"Mr. Tenzer related: 'Rabbi Silver asked me to accompany him to the Senator.'

'*Shenator* Taft!' exclaimed, Rabbi Silver, mixing his distinct accent in which the "s" would sound as "sh", with a high pitched intoning of emotions. "I have a very important and difficult *requesht*!'

Rabbi Silver went on to plead his case of obtaining a certain number of visas for some refugees who may not have met all the criteria. Senator Taft looked nonchalant and non-committal. The Senator thought for a while then grimaced. He slowly and carefully stretched his response. "It would be arduous and burdensome," he began. "but technically," he continued, implying all the while that he was not the least bit anxious to get his hands dirty, "it can be done," he sighed. Rabbi Silver did not hear anything except the last three words. "IT CAN BE DONE?" He shouted with joy. "*SHO* DO IT!" Needless to say the stunned Senator got to work immediately and obtained the visas for the beleaguered Jews.

Tenzer had a motto printed on a card, it was cherished and displayed by many of the prominent leaders he shared it with: "There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go, if he doesn't mind who gets the credit."

Indeed he may have not minded whether he got it or not, but the credit is all his.

"There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go, if he doesn't mind who gets the credit."

Rav Eliezer SIlver (in top hat) sitting next to Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky at a wedding.





Above: Rabbi Kamenetzky with Morris and Sadie Morgenstern



Below Right:
At the groundbreaking for Hebrew Academy of Long Beach



Morris Morgenstern

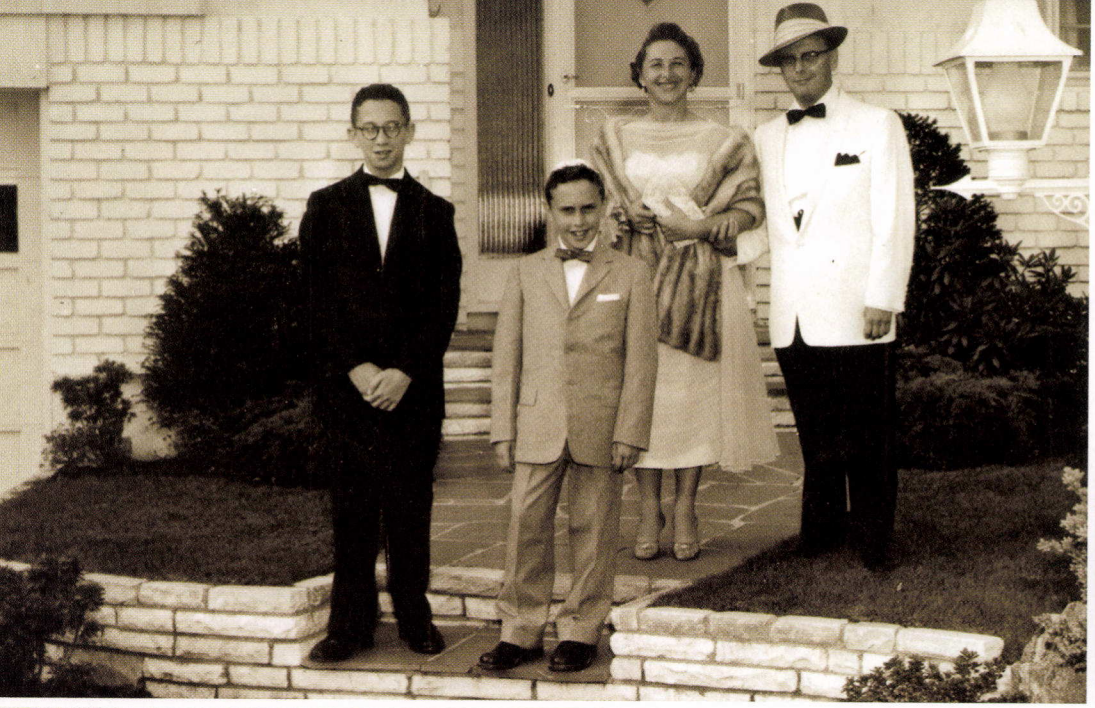
Was a resident of the Five Towns whose philanthropic reach, facilitated the growth of the Jewish community and Torah education across the entire region.

Morgenstern grew up on the Lower East Side and became a successful financier and philanthropist who contributed to numerous causes, Jewish and non-Jewish.

His philanthropy reach helped found local Yeshivos such as Yeshiva of South Shore and HALB, and yeshivos in Brooklyn and beyond such as the Mirrer Yeshiva Central Institute an institution that still proudly bears his name. Together with his second wife, Celia, he established schools in Israel, among them the Morris and Celia Morgenstern Chinuch Atzmai Torah School in the ancient city of Jaffa Israel. Involved in almost every Jewish educational endeavor, he was the honoree at the first dinner of Yeshiva South Shore and pledged to name their girls' school the Sadie B. Morgenstern School for Girls in memory of his beloved first wife.

He moved to Woodmere in the 1940s and in addition to donating generously to local synagogues and Yeshivos as well as cultural and social institutions in the area. In 1949 he established the Morris Morgenstern Foundation to provide financial aid to religious, educational and charitable institutions of all faiths. He was not only involved in synagogues, but served as a *chazzan* on the *Yomim Noraim*, the High Holy Days.

Mr. Morgenstern owned several important historical documents, among them George Washington's famous letter to the Touro Synagogue of Newport, R.I., which included the phrase "to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance." Morris Morgenstern passed away on June 9, 1969.







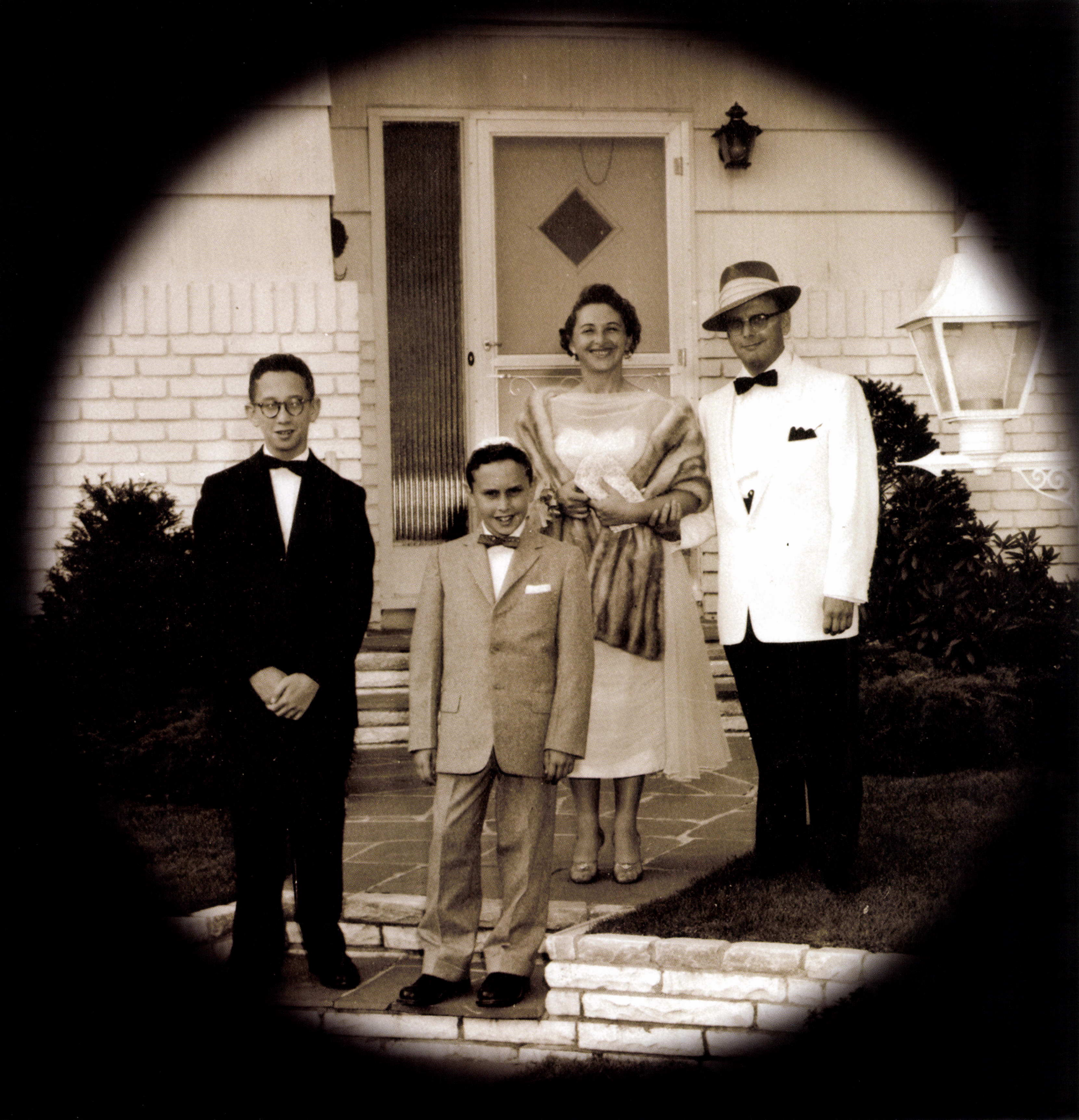






— SIX —

PIONEERING FAMILIES



— THE —

SCHULMAN FAMILY



Milton and Molly Schulman with Rabbi and Rebbetzin Kamenetzky, establishing a Scholarship at Yeshiva of South Shore

It was early autumn of 1956

and there were not too many people who were interested in an Orthodox shul. Rabbi Kamenetzky was anxious as to whether this Woodmere-Cedarhurst community would ever grow and attract people. All he needed was one family to make the move. One day a man by the name of Milton Schulman stopped by the shul.

Milton and his wife Molly had been living in Lynbrook and were members at Congregation Beth David, where Rabbi Morris Friedman served as spiritual leader. A traditional Jew, Milton would walk to shul on Friday and Shabbos with his two sons Howard 10 years old, and Robert, 12 years old. They had been enrolled in the Hebrew School of the synagogue, when Rabbi Friedman called Milton in one day and declared, "Your children should not be in Hebrew School." Milton was slightly shocked before the rabbi continued, "They should be in a Jewish Day School." He urged Milton to place them in HILI, the school that would eventually become HAFTR.

Ultimately, Milton and Molly's decision made an impact not only this community, but on shuls and Torah institutions throughout the entire region.

Milton was looking to move out of Lynbrook when he noticed the shul in the storefront. As soon as Milton stopped into the shul, Rabbi Kamenetzky made overtures to try to convince him to move to the area. Taken in by Rabbi Kamenetzky's warmth and effusiveness, Milton, together with his wife Molly, agreed to make the move. Ultimately, their decision made an impact not only on this community, but on shuls and Torah institutions throughout the entire region.

They enrolled the boys in the Hebrew Institute of Long Island. With the help of Mrs. Edith Teitelbaum *a"h*, an elementary school teacher who tutored the boys after school, and Rabbi Mandel, the first grade *rebbe* at HILI, the Schulman boys quickly reached and surpassed their grade level.

Their son Fred, who was born three months after they had moved to Cedarhurst, went to Yeshiva of South Shore for elementary school and graduated from HILI's high school.

First Grade at YOSS circa 1964.
Bottom row L-R:
Fred Schulman, Mordechai Kamenetzky, Yaakov Thaler
2nd Row: Unidentified, Gerald Bamberger, Avi Weinberg
3rd Row: Joseph Fox, Chaim Katz, Stuart Wax
4th Row: Evan Lipschutz, Sandy Klein, Avi Samuels
5th Row: Unidetified, Gerald Bamberger, Avi Weinberg
Top Row: Ozer Bergman, Ronnie Lipstein, Avi Leib

With their move to Cedarhurst, the Schulmans became builders and ardent supporters of the most pivotal Orthodox institutions within the community.

With their move to Cedarhurst, the Schulman's became builders and ardent supporters of the most pivotal Orthodox institutions within the community. They were instrumental in the founding of the Young Israel of Woodmere where Milton served as president in 1960. They were a driving force in the building of Yeshiva of South Shore where their son Fred attended.

Throughout his years in Woodmere, Milton was a mainstay of the daily and Shabbos *minyanim* at Young Israel of Woodmere and through their growth in *Yiddishkeit* they became involved in a myriad of Torah and *chessed* institutions throughout the world. Their devotion to the building of the shul and the community manifested itself in their children, Robert, Howard and Fred, each who are prominent *askanim*, builders and mainstays of their own *kehilos* in the Five Towns, the Rockaways and Brooklyn.

Milton passed away in November of 1991, leaving behind a legacy of children and grandchildren who are the pride of their communities in the United States and in Israel.

His wife Molly, who passed away in May of 2003, was a matron of the Five Towns Community and to the hundreds of children that she helped through Ohel's Milton Schulman Foster Care Program. Milton and Molly's children continue their legacy. They serve on the board of Mesorah Heritage Foundation as well as OHEL and many other vital institutions.

Their son Robert, is a prominent internist who is married to Dr. Susan (nee Kuhr) a prestigious pediatrician. Both of their practices are in Brooklyn. One of their sons-in-law, Rabbi Shalom Rosner, served as the founding Rav of one of Woodmere's most vibrant and fastest growing *kehillos*, Congregation Bais Ephraim Yitzchak, the Island Shul. The Rosner's made *aliya* in 2008 and R' Shalom now serves as Rav in the Nofei Hashemesh community in Beit Shemesh.

Their son Howard is a founder and active member of Congregation Toras Chaim / Anshei Chessed, of Hewlett. He is married to Tzila (nee Rendel) and works in the retail store display industry.

Their son Fred, is married to Cindy (nee Beck). In addition to serving on various national charitable boards he is a past president of Congregation Knesseth Israel, the White Shul, in Far Rockaway, NY. Fred owns and operates several internet properties, as well as an internet marketing company. At the time of this publication, Milton and Molly of blessed memory have four married great grandchildren currently living in Woodmere and *b'eh*, numerous great-great-grandchildren who are being raised in the tradition that they so ardently supported and nurtured to become a way of Jewish life for the ever-expanding community.



Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky presenting an award to Fred Schulman



Milton and Molly Schulman in front of their home on 23 Park Circle, Cedarhurst.
Robert is on the left and Howard is to right.



Milton and Molly Schulman



Howard and Tzila Schulman receiving an award at a Yeshiva of South Shore Dinner



L to R: Irwin Luxembourg, Murray Eisenberg and Milton Schulman receiving an award at a YOSS Dinner



L to R: Moshe Friedman, Milton Schulman, Adele Goldstein, Leonard Goldstein receiving an award at a YOSS Dinner



DR. MANFRED & SARAH ANNE LEHMANN

There is hardly a couple that has so strongly influenced the growth and spiritual development of the Five Towns as Dr. Manfred Raphael and Anne Lehmann.





Anne Lehmann dedicating the Helen and Feish Moskovitz Wing of a Mother & Baby convalescent home and medical center in Jerusalem.



SOUTH SHORE RECORD

Thursday, July 19, 1962

Lawrence's Manfred Lehmann Makes His

It would be an understatement to say that Lawrence's Manfred Lehmann has a unique stamp about him. The fact is, there are hundreds of unique stamps about him, from Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Togo, Dahomey and Somalia–all independent African countries,–as well as Surinam, formerly Dutch Guiana, in South America, and the sultanate in the Indian Ocean called the Maldive Islands.

Because he acts as philatelic agent for them, his Inter-governmental Philatelic Corp. of 34th Street, in Manhattan, is actually a branch of their postal department, or Ministry of Posts, from which the stamps are sold to dealers in this country at face value, as if they had been bought in these foreign post offices to begin with.

Why are they so obliging, these foreign countries? Why, to build good will, of course, and except for the commission which Lehmann's firm earns, they end up getting a virtually free public relations job for their tourist attractions, their natural resources, their colorful animal life, etc. The little paper rectangles also reflect to the world their international friendships and political alliances, like last month's Togo output. President Olympio had just recently been to

eradication campaign of the organization. Under this program, over 100 nations–an unprecedented number–have all come out with stamps expressing the solidarity of all nations in the fight against

There is hardly a couple

that has so strongly influenced the growth and spiritual development of the Five Towns as Dr. Manfred Raphael and Anne Lehmann.

In reality, their impact has been felt in every corner of the world, from the bastions of Jerusalem Torah centers to the remote outposts of Africa. They have influenced those who sit in the halls of power, whether it be Jerusalem, Washington or Rome.

Their impression on the worlds of Torah have enlightened scholars in *Batei Midrashim* around the world, as Dr. Lehmann, in addition to his own Torah novella was a prime force in bringing the sacred texts of *rishonim* and *acharonim* to the light of day.

Their philanthropy helped build and support myriad centers for Torah scolarship, *mussar, chessed*, prayer and healing across the world. A powerful advocate for Israel, Dr. Lehmann's voice was heard both in the halls of power in direct meetings with world leaders and constantly on the pages of distinguished newspapers and journals, advocating for the historical truth of the Jewish rights to the Land of Israel.



With Prime Minister Menachem Begin



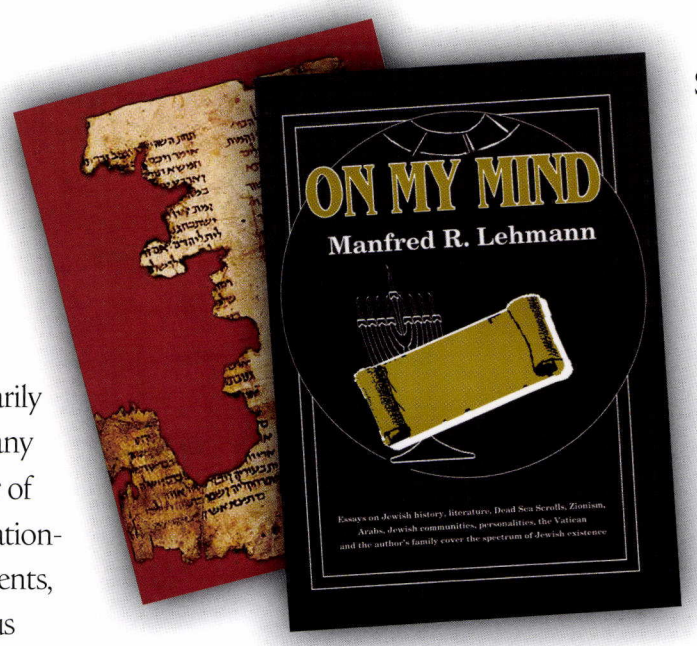
In disputation with Cardinal Stickler, Librarian Emeritus of the Vatican about Hebrew manuscripts wrongfully held by the church



With Rav Aharon Soloveitchik (l) at Mosad HaRav Kook dinner

A morsel of his vast influence can be gleaned from the pages of "On My Mind", a book of personal memoirs and essays of Dr. Manfred R. Lehmann, (as well as his website, www.manfredlehmann.com).

But as the focus of this work is primarily the Five Towns, and though their many accomplishments in our small corner of the world may seem negligible in relationship to their myriad global achievements, they definitely have been of enormous impact to all of those who call the Five Towns their home.

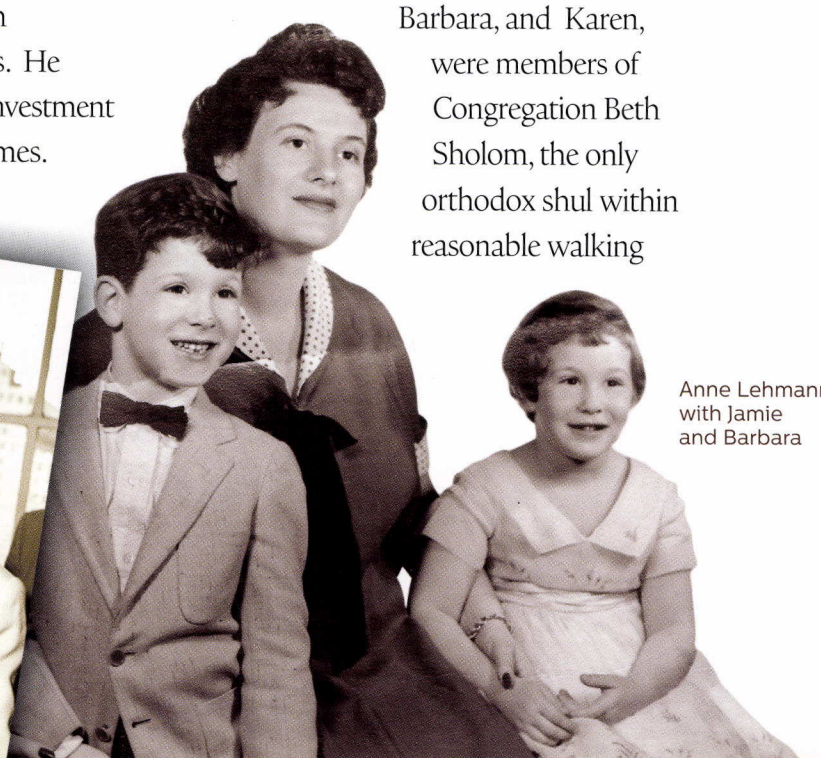


Similarly, when Rabbi Kamenetzky moved to the area in the mid 1950s, Manfred Lehmann, who had been his roommate in Yeshivas Ner Israel of Baltimore (from where he obtained a smicha), knew that the community was ripe for another shul and even the founding of an all-boys yeshiva. Together with his wife, Anne who stood by his side in every venture, he made it happen. Together they helped build three new shuls and two new Yeshivos.

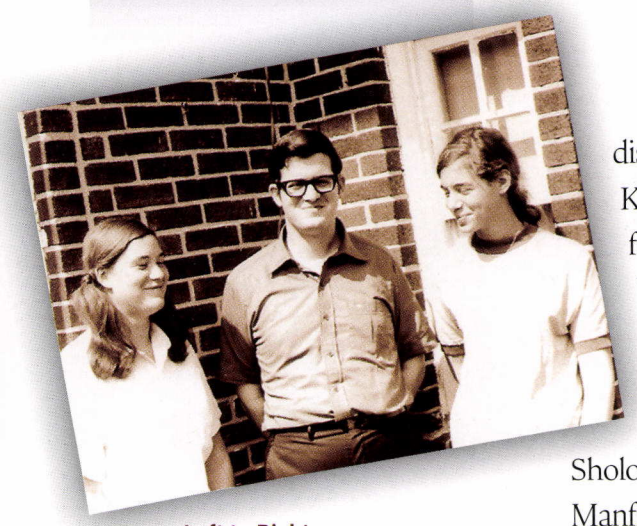
Dr. Lehmann was a visionary. Recognizing the importance of emerging African nations, he testified, as early as 1961, before Congressional committees to encourage American support and trade with those newly independent nations. He understood the ramifications of investment and action in years beyond his times.


With Communication Minister of Kenyan Government

Dr. Manfred and Anne Lehmann (nee Moskovits) had moved to Lawrence in 1951. The Lehmanns, eventually the parents of Jamie (ob"m) and *yibadel l'chaim tovim*, Barbara, and Karen, were members of Congregation Beth Sholom, the only orthodox shul within reasonable walking



Anne Lehmann with Jamie and Barbara



Left to Right:
Barbara, Jamie o"bm
and Karen

distance of their home. But when Rav Binyamin Kamenetzky who studied together with his friend Menashe, under the great sage Rav Yaakov Yitzchak Ruderman in Ner Israel of Baltimore, announced that he was opening a shul in Woodmere, Dr. Lehmann was one of the first to respond. Though actively involved in Beth Sholom, a traditional modern orthodox synagogue, Manfred wanted the community to expand as well, with rabbis and congregations that would cater to the style of Orthodoxy that was conveyed to him by his teachers in Ner Israel, and more like the spirit of the old country as he knew from his father-in-law, Reb Feish (Jack Phillip) Moskovits, a close confidant of the Satmar Rebbe.

Initially, before the Young Israel of Woodmere was born, Manfred helped organize a Shabbos *minyan* in Woodmere in a private home. Regardless of the weather, whether a winter storm, torrential rain or even in a hurricane, Manfred Lehmann walked over two miles to Woodmere. Before the arrival of Rabbi Kamenetzky, he often acted as the Rabbi for the *minyan*. The *minyan* was often held in the home of the Bienenfelds. However, for Yom Kippur services, there were more congregants and thus they rented a room in a machine shop on West Broadway for the *minyan*. After the fast, Anne came with whiskey and coffee, juice and cakes. It was not long before Manfred together with the group hired Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky and eventually that little *minyan* grew into what is today the Young Israel of Woodmere.



At *Kabalas Panim* of Dr. and Mrs. Lehmann's wedding.

Left to Right:
Rav Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman, Rosh Yeshivas Ner Yisrael, Baltimore;
Rav Laizer Yehuda Finkel, Rosh Yeshivas Mir Yerushalayim;
Manfred Lehmann; R' Faish Moskovitz, father-in-law

Together with his wife, Anne who stood by his side in every venture, he made it happen. Together they helped build three new shuls and two new Yeshivos.



Walking to Chupah
Hans Lehmann (l)
Feish Moskovitz (r)



Dr. Manfred and
Anne Lehmann at
their wedding






NEWS OF THE WORLD OF STAMPS

By KENT B. STILES

Ghana Sets Up Agency In City to Serve U.S. Dealers

GHANA, the former Gold Coast in West Africa, which has issued thirteen varieties of stamps since becoming an independent country within the British Commonwealth last March, announced last week that it was planning to curb the quantity of future issues. Ghana's Ministry of Communications in the capital, Accra, also announced that, as its stamps already released have become unexpectedly popular, a Ghana philatelic agency has been established in New York.

This stamp-selling bureau will not directly solicit individual collectors but will cater to wholesale and retail dealers. In this way Ghana will avoid competing with the stamp firms. The bureau will import stamps from Accra for sale to American dealers in perfect condition. Thus, collectors will not have to spend postage and time writing to Accra.

Ghana's postal officials have appointed Manfred R. Lehmann president of the agency here. He is president of the Lehman Trading Corporation, 91 Wall Street, New York 5, N. Y., which also becomes the agency address.

Maritime Theme

One more Ghana series is to be issued this year. Designs are based on the theme "History of Navigation" and the [illegible] appear on Dec. 2[illegible] rate "Inauguration Star Line"—so in[illegible]

The Black Star shipping enterprise thirds by Ghana and by Israel. Vessels w[illegible] tween Ghana's port o[illegible] and European and M[illegible] ean points. The first to[illegible] Volta, is due to weigh[illegible] at Takoradi shortly Christmas Day and he[illegible] Europe.

A Viking sea craft a[illegible] tropical angel fish are pict[illegible] on 2½-pence green in the c[illegible] ing series. A medieval galle[illegible] and a sword fish are shown [illegible] 1-shilling 3 pence. A 5sh purp[illegible] illustrates a modern freighte[illegible] with Ghana's flag aloft, and a[illegible] flying fish. Each fish is within a shield topped by a five-pointed [illegible] star. The designs were made C[illegible] by Willie W. Wind, who has ur[illegible] produced numerous postal be[illegible] vignettes for the United Nations ma[illegible] and Israel.

Mr. Lehmann is informed Relat[illegible] that Ghana at present plans Spec[illegible] only two series for 1958. One Washing[illegible] will comprise definitives to re- ters hav[illegible] place the current stamps. The destroy r[illegible] other will mark, on March 6, 10-cent, [illegible] the first anniversary of independence. Mr. Lehman, adds

Ghana's galleon.

handling stamps, which have not won popularity with the public; stocks of 10c, 15c and 20c special delivery stamps, inasmuch as the rate is now 30 cents and a 30c special delivery has been issued; and stocks of 15c certified mail stamps, as the fee for this service has been advanced to twenty cents. The Post Office Department has decided not to issue at present a 20c certified mail item, but to let people use ordinary stamps for a certified mailing.

APPOINTMENT

When Franklin R. Bruns Jr. was appointed director of the Post Office Department's Division of Philately recently, he resigned his post as a member of the department's Stamp Advisory Council which Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield established to consult on new stamp issues, their subjects and design. Now Bernard Davis of Philadelphia has been chosen to replace him on the Council.

Mr. Davis is a well known figure in the stamp world and is the director of the National Philatelic Museum in Philadelphia.

WORLD OF STAMPS

New African Republic of Somalia Moves Into Gallery of Philately

By KENT B. STILES

THE first postal series issued by independent Somalia, formerly British and Italian Somaliland, on the East African coast of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, arrived in New York last week. The independence of the combined former protectorate and colony was established July 1. Italian Somalia had been in Italy's possession since 1936. The Somaliland Protectorate (British Somaliland), formerly a powerful Arab sultanate, had belonged to Great Britain since early in the nineteenth century. The new union embraces a population of 2,000,000 people.

The 1961 philatelic catalogues are destined to include this African entity. The hobby's albums and reference books will continue to carry also the titles "Italian Somaliland" and "Somaliland Protectorate," but will relegate the two titles to history, as their philatelic chapters are now closed.

With the new republic comes a new unit of currency—the somalo. The somalo equals approximately 14 cents in American money, according to Manfred R. Lehmann of New York, Somalia representative. On the the denomination is ab- "So." The series red by the inde-

will appear in Mexico's red and green national colors. Los Angeles will be the place of first day sale of the American 4c.

Illustrated is Mexico's independence bell now set in a niche over the entrance to Mexico City's National Palace. Representing cooperative efforts by Leon Helguera of Mexico City and Charles R. Chickering of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing at Washington, the design shows the bell, which was conveyed to Mexico City from Dolores, a Mexican village, by the "father" of Mexican independence, Miguel Hidalgo, after he had rung it to inaugurate his country's freedom. It is rung every Sept. 16.

Above the crosspiece, three lines read "Mexican Independence 1810-1960," and below the niche are "4c Joint Issue Mexico-United States" and "U. S. Postage" in dark Roman capital letters.

Printing is done on the Giori sheet-fed press at Washington.

Collectors desiring the stamp with the Los Angeles Sept. 16 cancellation may send addressed covers to the Los Angeles postmaster. Remittance must equal the postage to be affixed.

BIRTHDAY

Finland's President, Urho Kekkonen, will be 60 years old n next Sept. 3, and the Hel- tal administration has the design of a honor, a portrait. nnounced. ession, Dr. ted to the 956. Prior to n Parliament emier and as ce.

OMEY

du Dahomey" Dahomey), part of Africa, has issued red 25 francs stamp the flags of the rican republics of Ivory Coast, Niger oltaic Republic. This observes the first anni- of the entente arrange- among the four.

OLYMPICS

France has issued a horizontal 30-francs black, claret and blue stamp commemorating participation in the international Olympic Games at Rome. Pictured is an interior of a stadium, with an athlete's head at left.

States be issued on memorate the sesqui of Mexico's national inde- dence was made public yester- day by Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield. The same vignette will appear on a 30- centavos being simultaneously Mexico. Each stamp

Later on, in 1964, Manfred, and a group of community activists brought in the revered sage, Rav Nachum Zvi Kornmehl, to lead a new Congregation that would serve Lawrence and Cedarhurst, the Young Israel of Lawrence and Cedarhurst.

Dr. Lehmann, together with his wife, Anne, had business interests in Africa and the Caribbean. Initially, Dr. Lehmann represented the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications of the newly independent Ghana (Gold Coast) - marketing that country's postage stamps to stamp collectors. Their success with promoting Ghana's stamps resulted in more than 20 new countries appointing their company as their philatelic agents. Eventually, Manfred and Anne sold the agencies and entered the broader telecommunications business, building modern telecommunications networks in the Caribbean, East Africa, and in Kenya. Manfred also modernized their port, shipping and airline industries. As early as 1963, together with the UN's WHO (World health Organization), he and Anne created the world -wide "Stamp Out Malaria" program – to combat malaria, a disease that still wreaks havoc in Africa.



Above: Dr. Manfred, daughters Barbara and Karen, wife Anne, and son Jamie, ob"m

Below: RBK with first cousin Rav Volbe (son in law of Rav Avrohom Grodzinski)

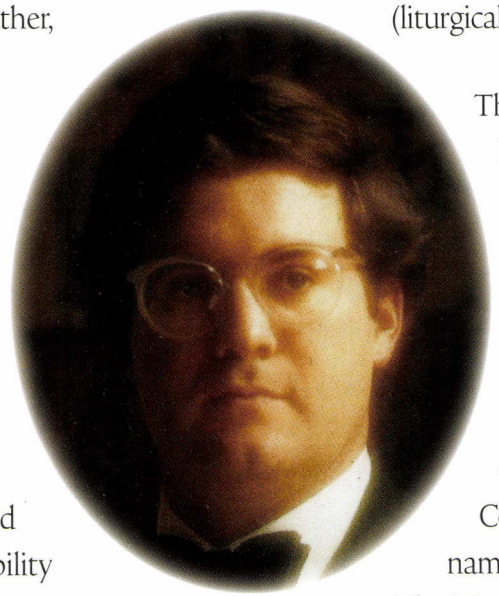


Rabbi Kamenetzky would fondly reminisce how Manfred would return from his overseas trips and deliver fascinating talks to the members of the shul, Eitz Chaim Jewish Center, named in memory of his father, Reb Chaim (Hans) Lehmann.

"No matter how captivating were his tales of Africa, Europe and the Orient," Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky related, that in addressing the *kehillah*, Menashe focused on one theme: "There are Jews all over the world. No matter where you go and no matter where you are, you will find your fellow Jews. And you must do everything in your ability to help them."



Reb Chaim Lehmann



Jamie Lehmann

Dr. Lehmann was *niftar* on May 30, 1997. He was 74 years old. At the time he was survived by his beloved wife of 48 years, Anne, his daughters Barbara Lehmann Siegel (Yitzchok) and Karen Lehmann Eisner (David), grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He was predeceased in 1982 by their son, Jamie, who was a brilliant Talmudist and author of many scholarly papers. Dr. Manfred was buried next to Jamie on Har Hamenuchot, Jerusalem. His wife, Sarah Anne, passed away in March of 2017.

The family continues Manfred's love for scholarly works with the constant publication and dissemination of edited hand-written manuscripts from *rishonim* such as Ralbag (R. Levi *ben* Gershon, Rab Avraham Pinso, who lived from 1740 to 1820 as well as volumes of unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls. They also published Yemenite and North African *piyutim* (liturgical poems) among others.

Through the generosity of his beloved wife Anne, the Campus of the Yeshiva of South Shore, housing the Hollander Early Childhood Center, The Toras Chaim Elementary School, The Gedaliah Maidenbaum Preparatory School, Toras Chaim Mechina Division, and Congregation Anshei Chesed, is named in their memory, known as The Manfred and Jamie Lehmann Campus.





Kevarim of Dr. Manfred Lehmann z"l
and son, Jaimie z"l



Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson
with Dr. Lehmann



כ"ג אייר

This Day of Torah Study is
dedicated in memory of:

Manfred R. Lehmann

HaChaver R' Menashe Rafoel
ben HaChaver R' Chaim, a"h
by The Lehmann, Eisner
and Siegel Families

Parnes Hayom

פרנס היום





Dr. Manfred Lehmann

A Prince in Israel

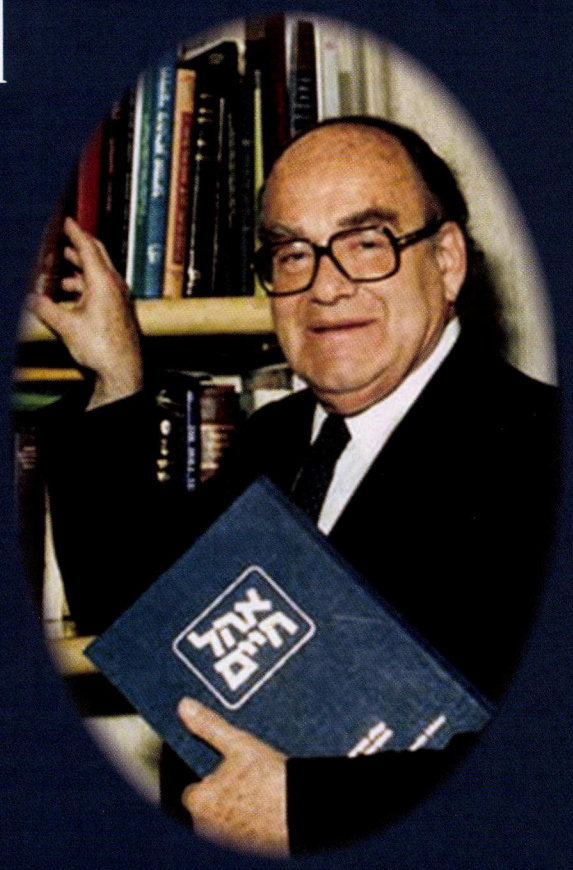
By Hillel Goldberg

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I cannot absorb the loss.
Because I could not absorb the life.
How could one absorb Dr. Manfred Lehmann?

Everything you knew about him was circumstantial.

He hardly talked about himself.
His achievements.
His international business.
His philanthropy.
He talked about goals.
For Jews.
For Israel.
For scholarship.
For truth.
For humanity.
And, truth to tell,
he didn't talk much altogether.
He acted.
Bought and sold.
Published.
Promoted.



Advanced others' efforts.
And what a diversity of efforts!
As said, I cannot absorb the loss.
Because I cannot absorb the life.

Dr. Manfred Lehmann – a man who brought telecommunications to Africa and seemed to know everyone, past and present, yet had no air of the business mogul he was.

He owned one of the largest collections – perhaps the largest private collection – of Hebrew manuscripts in the world, yet acquired it for the sake of bringing it to the public.

A man of telecommunications
and manuscripts.
Communication.
Past and present.
A man of history and of the cutting edge.

Of retrieving and preserving and clarifying the greatest thought of the people of the book.

And of lifting the Third World countries from poverty.

But, as he didn't talk much about his business, he didn't talk much about his manuscript collection.

What was important was that it exist, that it be catalogued, accessible top scholars – not that he talk about it.

More than he talked, he acted.

One thing he did talk about:
his deceased son Jaime.
I never knew Jamie, but I knew of him.

Dr. Lehmann kept his memory alive through an endowed lecture on matters of high Jewish concern. And he talked about the lecture and promoted it.
Dr. Lehmann loved his son.

He was the kind of person who exuded love, not by making a big deal out of himself or his feelings and projects, but by being natural, unaffected, unpretentious.

With Manfred Lehmann,
what you saw is what you got.
No masks.

No big words when little words would do.
No self-aggrandizement.
No attempt at self-fulfilling prophesying.

Manfred Lehmann built up other people. He built institutions, founded synagogues, sustained organizations, but you never saw his name in the forefront. That wasn't important to him.

But you also never saw false humility. Some make a fetish out of being humble, consciously hiding their contribution and privately deriving a self-satisfied enjoyment from being the anonymous key player that makes things happen.

That's its own form of arrogance.

Dr. Lehmann wasn't that way either.

He was unaffected.

Manfred Lehmann – the biography still boggles my mind. I can't for the life of me figure out how he did all he did. He headed Telecom Development Corp. and was on first-name terms with African heads of state. He made Kiddush in the White House when he was asked by President Clinton to visit him. He dug out unknown biographical information on the mystery years of the late, pre-eminent Talmudist, Rabbi Joseph B. Soleveitchik. He took a degree under the legendary semiticist, William Foxwell Albright. He fled the Nazis, studied in yeshivas, published articles on the Dead Sea Scrolls, campaigned for the rights of Christians in Arab lands, backed the settlers in Judea and Samaria, wondered on the relation between Rashi and the rare Yemenite manuscripts of Rashi, traveled the world to help Jews, helped revive the Musar movement in 1982 by funding Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe's Bet Ha-Musar, came to the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations in Denver in 1994 to dialogue on the peace process, chaired the Committee for the Return of Jewish Manuscripts from the Vatican...the list goes on in its diversity, caring and ingenuity.

Born in Stockholm, 1922.
Died in New York, 1997.
Buried in Jerusalem.
74 years of creativity, quest and giving.

With the passing of Dr. Manfred Lehmann, people the world over lost an advocate.

Of Judaism.
Of humanity.
Of Israel.
And more than an advocate.

A role model – a man who embodied what he believed, practiced what he preached unified the worlds of business and scholarship, Judaism and universalism, high ideals and human sensitivity.

With Manfred Lehmann, what you saw is what you got. No masks. Manfred Lehmann – the biography still boggles my mind. I can't for the life of me figure out how he did all he did.

We have lost a man who could think, strategize, joke, enjoy and always make you feel part of that great, unassuming warmth he carried.

Dr. Lehmann, our moments together, in retrospect, were all too few.
Their shining memory must carry me and all who loved you at this dark time of your sudden passing.

These moments have staying power because they were filled with the sincerity and graciousness of the true prince you were.

A PRINCE IN ISRAEL.



LEONARD & ADELE
GOLDSTEIN



L-R: Sheldon, Leonard, Marvin, Adele, Rena Goldstein

Lenny & Adele Goldstein, zt"l

Woodmere had a small town feel in 1960 when Adele and Leonard Goldstein moved from East New York, said their son, Marvin, now a corporate lawyer living in Riverdale.

And Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky's efforts to build a shul and yeshiva in the area were definitely a motivating factor for the move from what had been a strong but shrinking Jewish community to one almost barren of Orthodox Jewish life.

Lenny Goldstein could not help but begin to focus in on the needs of a shul that was beginning to be too small for its membership.

Leonard Goldstien's father was involved in the real estate and insurance industry in Brooklyn, and Lenny, as he was affectionately known, was an up and coming real estate lawyer in the Brooklyn area. His parents were honest, hardworking people, who were involved in the local community shuls of that neighborhood. They spurned the advances of a corrupt draft board member who offered Lenny's exemption in return for a bribe, and thus on the very day of Lenny's eighteenth birthday, he was drafted to fight in World War II. After seeing action in Europe, Lenny returned to New York where he earned his law degree and ultimately served as the President of the Brooklyn Real Estate Board and was the Chairman of its Residential Rent Committee. Throughout his career in law and the real estate industry, Lenny used his good-will, charm and business acumen to further the cause of Jewish life wherever he went.

In 1947 he married Adele, nee Lowenhar in what would be a partnership that would raise a beautiful family and support and build the future of a vibrant Orthodox community.

For the first years of their married life, Lenny and Adele lived in East New York together with Lenny's parents. Their oldest son Marvin attended Yeshiva Toras Chaim in East New York and Rena went to the Bais Yaakov in Brooklyn. But the family was growing and they began to look toward the suburbs. Rabbi Kamenetzky, who they knew from East New York as a rebbe in Yeshiva Toras Chaim, had moved a few years earlier to Woodmere and he was looking for more people to join him in the new frontier.



"He told my father that he was starting a yeshiva and my father got

involved with the yeshiva," recalled Marvin. "Rabbi Binyamin got the shul going and brought in a full time rabbi; the yeshiva was more than a full time job for him." Marvin said that Rabbi Binyamin's shul, the Young Israel of Woodmere, then in a house on Forest Avenue, was "tiny" and a tent was put up in the side yard on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur to house the overflow crowd. He also pointed out that it was the era before air conditioning.

At the time, a new neighborhood, Saddle Ridge Estates, was being developed and Lenny and Adele decided to be pioneers in that area. When they moved to South End Avenue in Woodmere in November of 1960, the community was slowly beginning to take off.

Saying that he would only buy it if it was a mile or less from the fledgling Young Israel of Woodmere on the corner of Forest and Peninsula Boulevard, Leonard drove from the shul to the new house, clocking the distance on the odometer. It came in at exactly a mile.

By his own admission, Lenny, wanted to sit "in the last seat of the last row" of the newly formed Young Israel of Woodmere on Forest Avenue, he could not help but begin to focus in on the needs of a shul that was beginning to be too small for its membership.

The new Rabbi Sidney Lebor was working hard to make everyone comfortable and continue to help the shul grow. The recent *Yomim Noraim* had been particularly stressful because there was no room in the little house on Forest Avenue and a tent was erected to fit the overflow. Some of the members were upset and wanted to make a "break-away" shul – something that the fledgling community could ill afford.



US Army c.1942

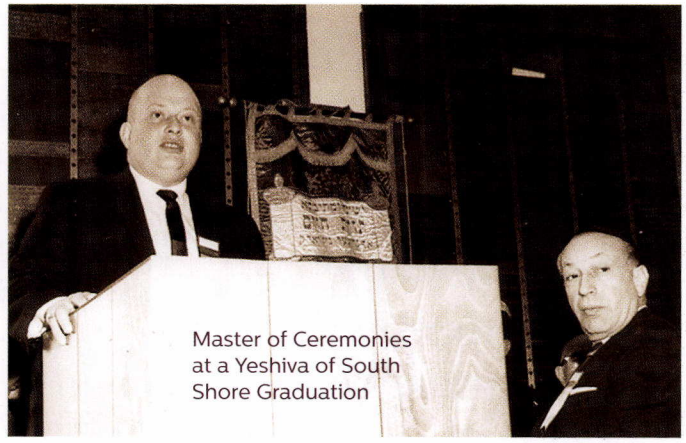




Being presented an award at the Yeshiva of South Shore's 18th Annual Banquet circa 1974



Above:
At the dedication of the YOSS William Street Building (l-r) Louis Goldwyn, Morris Morgenstern, L. Goldstien



Master of Ceremonies at a Yeshiva of South Shore Graduation



L-R: Sheldon, Adele, Leonard, Rena, Marvin





Pictured at Left:
YOSS 7th Grade, circa 1964

Bottom Row (L-R):
Shimon Spirn, Haskel Erps, Sholom Parnes, Bernard Rimler Marvin Goldstein, Avi Freilich

2nd Row: Sheldon Fox, Jerry Glassman, unidentified

3rd Row: unidentified

4th Row: unidentified

5th Row: unidentified, Jody Bergman, Myron Cohen

6th Row: unidentified

Top Row: Michael Lipschutz, Michael Solomon, Eliyahu Kestenbaum

Pictured at Right:

Sheldon Goldstein holding shovel with Rabbi Kamenetzky at YOSS Groundbreaking.

Robert Schwartz, President of Paragon Oil, with hand on his shoulder.

As a well-respected real estate lawyer a member of the Brooklyn Real Estate Board, Lenny rubbed shoulders with many bankers and mortgage committees. Together with other shul members Lenny used his connections to secure a mortgage on a property on Peninsula Boulevard in Woodmere. It would be just one in a long line of many mortgages and real estate transactions that Lenny would secure on behalf of the new community. Lenny would become President of Young Israel, and the reluctant attorney helped spearhead the campaign that helped Young Israel of Woodmere move into their permanent home.

Leonard was a lawyer with his own practice and, from the time the Goldstein's move to Woodmere, devoted much time and effort, using his legal skills pro bono to facilitate the growth and success of the Young Israel of Woodmere, Yeshiva of South Shore and the South Shore *Mikvah*.

The new shul was later built on land near the water pumping station on Peninsula Boulevard, a location closer to the Goldstein home. It opened for business on Rosh Hashana of 1964.

In the early years Marvin recalled that Five Towners had to travel to nearby Far Rockaway to buy challah and it was "years until a kosher store opened on Central Avenue. Sabra Pizza and Zomicks Bakery were the first to open in the Five Towns. He also recalled Sari's bakery, a kosher take-out store and a kosher pizza store in Far Rockaway in the early years.

"In 1960 it was a very small community and it slowly grew," he said. "It was a small town" and the Orthodox community was a subset of the small town, making it feel smaller, since those who went to yeshiva were on a different schedule from those who attended the vaunted public schools in the area. The yeshiva students had a longer school day and different vacations preventing the children from playing with each other.

Lenny and Adele's communal activities did not stop at the Young Israel. When the Goldsteins moved to

Together with other shul members Lenny used his connections to secure a mortgage on a property on Peninsula Boulevard in Woodmere.



Woodmere, they enrolled their oldest son Marvin at Yeshiva of South Shore on Oak Street in Woodmere, and their daughter Rena at Yeshiva of South Shore's Sadie B. Morgenstern School for Girls the next block over on Pine. Their baby, Sheldon would ultimately join the ranks of South Shore students as well. However, Leonard did not just drop off the kids at school; he really cared and tried his best to get involved anywhere he felt he could help. In the early days the Yeshiva on Oak Street, the building was quite run down and there was little money for maintenance. In addition, during the winter months, Rabbi Kamenetzky would turn the heat off from Friday dismissal until early Sunday morning. The radical changes of temperatures caused the plaster ceilings to expand and contract and eventually pieces would be found on the floor every Sunday morning.

One Sunday when a falling chunk narrowly missed a desk, Lenny decided that the yeshiva needed to get itself a new building. Once again, it was Lenny who worked on obtaining a mortgage and doing all the legal work, free of charge on behalf of the Yeshiva. He was



meeting with a group of officials from Valley National Bank and after a big deal, he mentioned that, "My Yeshiva needs a mortgage."

Lenny," came the reply, "You got it!"

Lenny always quoted Rebbetzin Kamenetzky, who said 'If I am leaving Brooklyn to a *midbar* (desert) we will take in any child who wants to learn.'"

Marvin recounted that some of the students attending the yeshiva were not observant but became *shomer Torah U'mitzvot* (Torah observant). "They would have gone to public school. The public schools in the area were, really good – it was not uncommon for Orthodox kids to go to public high school, so the grounding in grade school was very important." He pointed out that in the city, parents wouldn't send their children to the public schools because of safety issues at the time but that wasn't the case with the schools in the Five Towns. He also recounted that there was a Talmud Torah for high school students in Far Rockaway. "Parents moved to the island because of the schools so it was no mean feat to get them into yeshiva," he said. "It had a huge positive effect on these kids in religious terms. But keeping the school open was a challenge."

Marvin graduated from the yeshiva in 1965. The locations of the girls and boys schools were sold, the buildings were demolished and other homes built in their place. The money from the sale helped pay for the Yeshiva of South Shore (YOSS) building at its current location on William Street. The land there was owned by the town and had been used to store trucks. It was an ideal place for a school, with two public schools nearby, close to Peninsula Boulevard and since the school was



replacing a truck storage yard, it was an improvement in the community and probably accounted for the minimal opposition of the community to its building, explained Marvin. Leonard was once more very involved in the legal aspects, again gratis, for the yeshiva.

Adele worked along with Rebbetzin Tziril Kamenetzky to raise money for the yeshiva by organizing theatre parties and bazaars.

The push was on to found a *Mikvah*, and Marvin recalled the first meeting to establish this vital Jewish institution for the Five Towns. Leonard suggested a home that had recently had a fire, a property abutting the Woodmere Middle School parking lot and fronting Peninsula Boulevard across from Yeshiva of South Shore. "My father said that it was a great spot and the owners were looking to sell," said Marvin. "This was tailor made for a *Mikvah*. It was damaged by the fire but they would have to gut the house anyway to convert it into a *Mikvah*." At the time they thought to make it a part of YOSS but Leonard thought that would be a mistake, that it should be a community *Mikvah* and form a new entity. Rabbi Binyamin also thought that it was important for the entire Orthodox community to support the *Mikvah*. However, the unorthodox community was very against the *Mikvah*, assuming that this addition would increase the flow of Orthodox moving into the Five Towns. This hindered its construction. The yeshiva and shul went up pretty quickly though. Yet again, Leonard handled the legal work for the *Mikvah*.

Leonard also helped the Hebrew Institute of Long Island (HILI), then located on what is now Yeshiva Darchei Torah. The school later merged with Hillel in Lawrence to form HAFTR, the Hebrew Academy of the Five Towns and Rockaways.

One incident of money saving *hashgacha pratis* (Divine intervention) involved in the yeshiva's construction was an asbestos issue. At the time when the yeshiva was built, the code required that heating pipes be covered with asbestos so the yeshiva hired someone to insulate the pipes with the material. Later, regulations required the removal of the asbestos. When the walls were opened to remove the material the workers discovered that no asbestos had ever been put on the pipes. The yeshiva saved money, said Marvin, since there was no asbestos to remove. They skirted a health issue as well.

Marvin pointed out that his mother, Adele worked along with Rebbetzin Tziril Kamenetzky to raise money for the yeshiva by organizing theatre parties

and bazaars. Marvin explained that in those years there were many people in the garment business and the women would collect the previous year's left over styles to sell at the bazaars.

Marvin noted that although some of the children of that era did stay in the Five Towns, most moved to other areas. He talked of the small town feel of those days, when everyone knew each other. He lives in Riverdale now, but said his youngest daughter is thinking of moving back. The Young Israel of Woodmere in those days was a "shul of characters," he said, that moving out to the community then was unusual. "People were a little different — it was a fun place, it was a small group of people who knew everybody else and it grew from there. Some said 'the desert will bloom.' It seems to have worked."

On May 8, 1999, during the reading of the Torah's ominous predictions in Behar-Bechukosai, Leonard Goldstein was sitting in his usual spot in the back of Congregation Toras Chaim. He suddenly suffered a massive heart attack, and passed away in the yeshiva and shul that he loved so dearly.

His wife, Adele, and the entire family continue to be ardent supporters of the Yeshiva and all of the community institutions he helped build.





ROSE & GEORGE BLUMENTHAL



George as a child



Groundbreaking for the "White Shul," 1963

Rose and George H. Blumenthal

"In my house, when you say George I don't mean George Washington; there is only one George, and that's George Blumenthal."

— Rabbi Dovid Spiegel, Congregation Bais Medrash of Cedarhurst

There is hardly anyone who lived in the Five Towns community during the nineteen sixties and seventies who were not well-acquainted with George H. Blumenthal and his wife Rose. They were instrumental in the founding, support and promotion of some of the major institutions in Far Rockaway and the Five Towns and their philanthropic touch impacted institutions across the globe as well.

Instrumental in the building of the White Shul-Congregation Kneseth Israel, Camp HILI White Lake, the Shteibel-Bais Medrash of Cedarhurst and the Hartmann Y, they were also involved in Shaare Tefillah and Yeshiva of South Shore. In addition to a warm relationship with Rav Avraham Kalmanowitz and the Mirrer Yeshiva, George was involved along with Dr. Yashar Hirshaut in the founding of ICRF, the Israel Cancer Research Fund. Their sons, Dean, Jack and Joseph reminisced about growing up in the area and their relationship as friends and relatives of Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky and Rebetzin Tzirel, their mother's cousin.

Rose grew up in the East New York neighborhood of Brooklyn and attended Tilden High School. She began her studies at New York University but met George and married and left NYU to start a family, not completing her degree then. In the 1960s she became a certified professional decorator and later attended Adelphi University, graduating magna cum laude with a degree in psychology in 1980. Rose used her art affinity to benefit HILI. She would visit artists at their homes or galleries to solicit donations of their work to be sold at the annual art auctions for the school. Later she was enlisted to take groups to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art to share insights into the artists' works and lives.



Above:
Senator Kenneth Keating at the White Shul groundbreaking



Below (R-L):
Senator Keating, Rabbi Ralph Pelcovitz, George Blumenthal

George grew up in Bensonhurst, also in Brooklyn. His middle name, Chaim, was added when he was sick as a child. George attended Textile High School in Manhattan and continued his studies, becoming a textile engineer after studying in Philadelphia Textile, now Philadelphia University in Pennsylvania.

But more so, George will always be remembered for his key role in the growth and development of the Lion Bran Yarn Company the Blumenthal family business that thrives until this very day.

George joined the business in 1944 when he initially sold to department stores. But with the advent of large discount stores in the 1950s and 1960s like Walmart and Kmart and others, George saw the future and took the company in that direction. He began selling to discount stores, starting with Target even though they only had four stores in 1962. Dean noted that distribution continued to evolve, first with the advent of big box specialty retailers, later Target and now Internet purchases.

"When Dean recited Kaddish for George he would daven at a Chabad shul in Kauneonga Lake, in upstate New York. Rabbi Fishbein there said to Dean "that camp HILI must have been a special place; fifteen years after it closed people still come by to talk about the place." "It was a special place," affirmed Dean. "I went there for ten years – every year from 1958 to 1967."

Rose and George moved to Far Rockaway in 1952, a mile away from the original White Shul, on the corner of Nameoke Street and Dinsmore Avenue. The building was built in 1911 and according to Jack Blumenthal, it was termed "white" because the original building, the home of a Reform congregation, Temple Israel, was covered with a chalky white substance that left white dust on your suit when you leaned against it.

Congregation Knesseth Israel, an Orthodox congregation founded in Far Rockaway in 1922, moved in to the building in 1930 and it became known as the White Shul.

In 1962, George chaired the cornerstone ceremony at the new property on Empire Avenue for the White Shul. Jack said that light colored bricks were used to try to copy the light color of the original "White Shul." George helped obtain the parcel of land for the new shul and was able to host United States Senator (R-NY) Kenneth Keating at the dedication. (Keating was later the United States ambassador to Israel.) "It was so exciting," recalled Dean. "I was 12-years old. There were four of us in the car including Harry Margareten, my father's friend, the senator and me.

George was also a founder of HILI day camp and its two sleep away camps, HILI White Lake in White Lake, New York near Woodstock, and HILI International in Livingston Manor, New York.

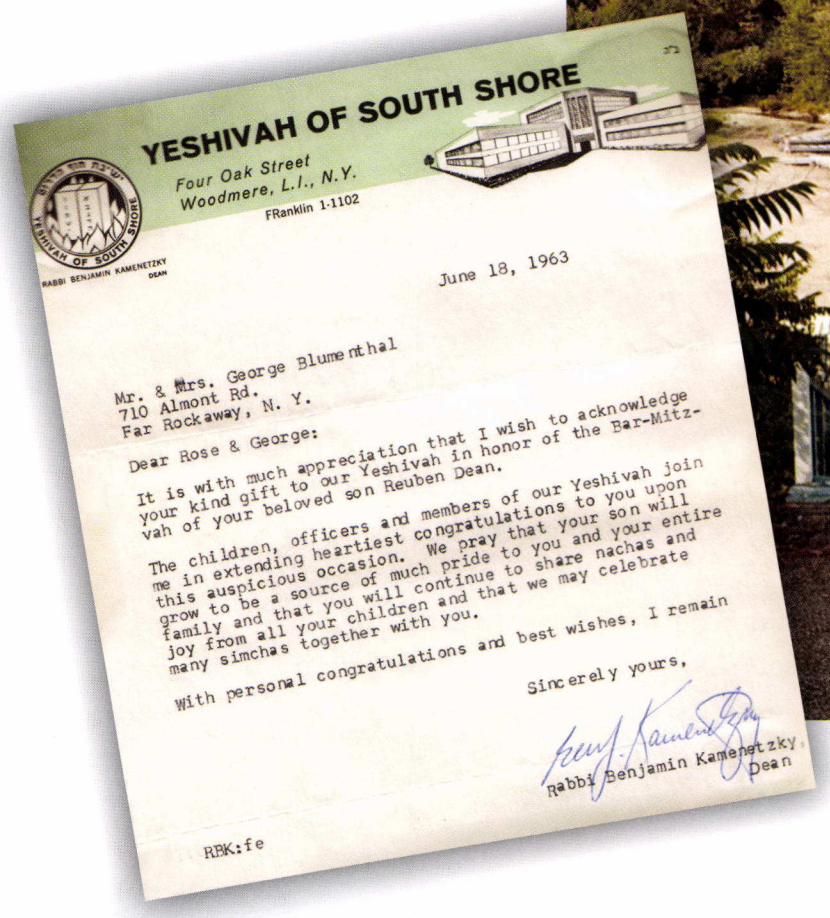
I spent an hour and a half with a United States senator in the car and asked him if we can go through red lights when he's in the car and he said yes."

George was extremely close with the rabbi of the White Shul, Rabbi Refael Pelcovitz, currently Rabbi Emeritus and he also encouraged Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky and his wife Tzirel to move to the Five Towns.

George traveled the country 32 weeks a year for the company, featuring products to retailers during the day and visiting with Orthodox families in cities at night to recruit their children for Camp HILI. As he stopped in various cities for Shabbos he became close with members of the Orthodox communities. "He had a place for Shabbos wherever he went," noted Jack. He stayed in Los Angeles in the same person's house and "I still have the telegrams sent back and forth in honor of my bar mitzvah," said Dean. In his travels to Seattle, Washington, George met and became friends with Joe Russak, spending Shabbos there four times a year. Jack pointed out that they became "best friends." The Russaks even had a room in the house they called "George's room."

In a twist of fate, Joe helped introduce the Russak's daughter, Bobby to a young up and coming





YESHIVAH OF SOUTH SHORE
Four Oak Street
Woodmere, L.I., N.Y.
FRanklin 1-1102

RABBI BENJAMIN KAMENETZKY
DEAN

June 18, 1963

Mr. & Mrs. George Blumenthal
710 Almont Rd.
Far Rockaway, N. Y.

Dear Rose & George:

It is with much appreciation that I wish to acknowledge your kind gift to our Yeshivah in honor of the Bar-Mitzvah of your beloved son Reuben Dean.

The children, officers and members of our Yeshivah join me in extending heartiest congratulations to you upon this auspicious occasion. We pray that your son will grow to be a source of much pride to you and your entire family and that you will continue to share nachas and joy from all your children and that we may celebrate many simchas together with you.

With personal congratulations and best wishes, I remain

Sincerely yours,

Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetzky
Dean

RBK:fe







opthomologist named Lenny Feiner. The Divine payback manifest a half century later, when Rabbi Eitan, the son of Lenny and Bobby Feiner became the Rav of the White shul, the congregation that George worked so diligently to support and build.

"My father was very involved in the White Shul," said Jack. "I watched every brick laid for that building. It was built around the corner from where we lived. He believed passionately in community.

He was also instrumental in getting Rabbi Dovid Spiegel started in the Five Towns. "In the 1970s, Rabbi Spiegel taught my brother Joe his Bar Mitzvah *parsha*," said Jack, remembering him as a "fun, lively guy. I remember like it was yesterday. My father would speak to him, discussing his living in Lakewood, New Jersey with his family but teaching in Brooklyn and staying with the Kamenetzky's and other friends



Right: At the wedding of Dean and Gale Blumenthal

Both Dean and Jack recalled the closeness of their family with the Kamenetzkys, playing baseball with Mordechai, the love and friendship between the cousins.

during the week." George saw the difficulties in that and started a *minyan* in the house he helped Rabbi Spiegel purchase, ultimately bringing him and founding the "Shteibel" *minyan* in 1970 in the Five Towns as well. George's son, Dean was the building chairman of Rabbi Spiegel's shul.

"My father worked with Rabbi Binyamin to get the Rebbe the mortgage," said Dean. "The house Rabbi Spiegel lived in was an extension; it had been a lawyer's office. I *daven*ed there after I moved in 1979. In the 1980s the shul was remodeled and in the 1990s we started the project and built the current building. Two of my sons and my grandson *daven* there."



Dean and Gale Blumenthal

George was also a founder of Camp HILI White Lake in White Lake, New York near Bethel. On his business trips across the United States, George would "talk up the camp," explained Jack, bringing an infusion of campers from Jewish communities country-wide, the Berens of Denver, Colorado, the Werbers and others from California. "It made the camp a more interesting place. All my cousins would go, as campers or staff, as a nurse, a waiter, head counselor. It became part of the modern Orthodox experience, the opportunity to go to sleep away camp." George would attend meetings frequently "for years." The camp, said Jack, had a "good run" from 1958 through 1973. "It was beautiful."

George was also involved with the Far Rockaway's Hartman Y. He was on its board of directors and was its vice president. "I played on the Hartman Y basketball team."

Dean and Gale, who moved to the Five Towns continue their father's tradition, with meetings almost every Sunday for various organizations. "My dad went to HILI on Sunday mornings," recalled Dean., "as did many others. My father was the vice president of HILI, now HAFTR, and was very active for 30 to 40 years. He was the lay chairman. My father had a broad reach, shuls, school, camps, the Y."

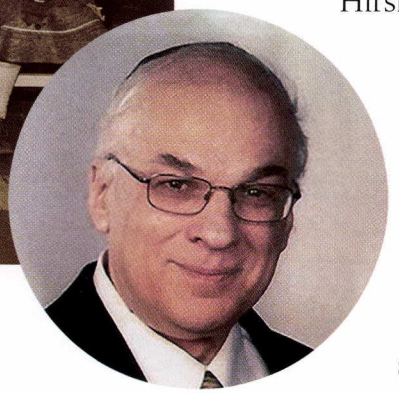


Jack attended Yeshiva of South Shore from 1963 through 1968, when the buildings were on Oak and Pine Streets. "I remember the classes well—in the two old mansions," recalled Jack. The relationship of the Kamenetzky family with the Blumenthals spans generations as Rabbi Binyamin attended the wedding of George and Rose and his illustrious father, Rabbi Yaakov would make an annual appeal for Torah Vodaath in the White Shul, staying by Rose and George on those visits for Shabbos. Rebbetzin Kamenetzky, ob"m, reminisced about those visits. Rav Yaakov, who was a great sage in Torah, did not try to discuss or pepper George with *divrei* Torah, instead he would speak to him about yarns and fabric, the field in which George was most knowledgable." In addition George was a relative with the illustrious Rav Avraham Kalmanowitz, Reuben's father Max Maron, who had married was the doctor for all the Mirrer Yeshiva *Rabbeim* and *bochurim*.

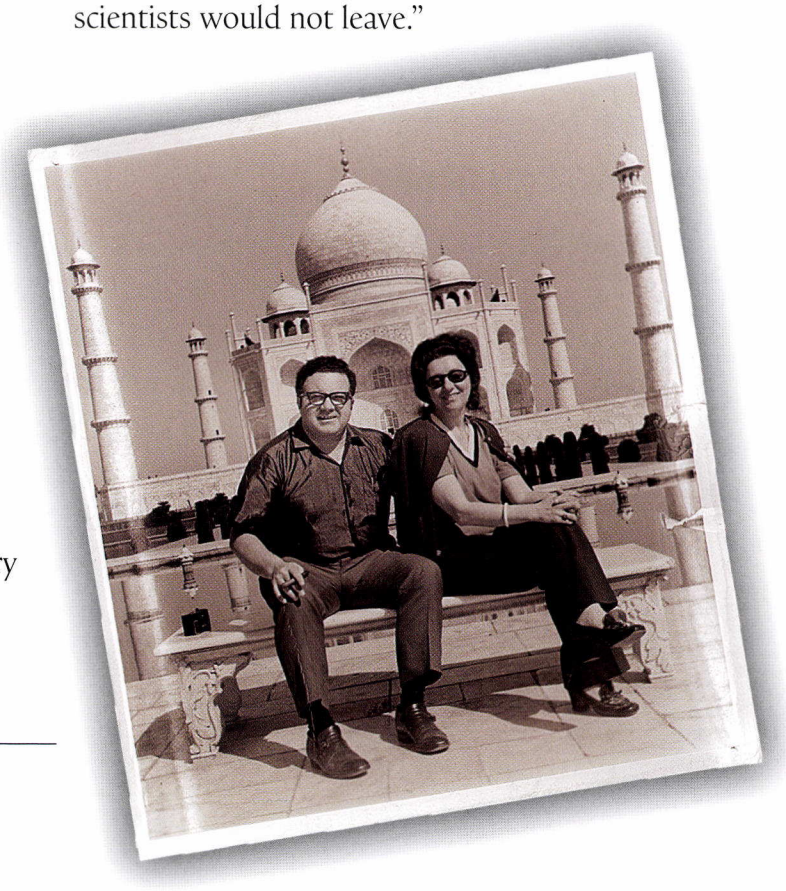

Rav Avraham Kalmanowitz

Both Dean and Jack recalled the closeness of their family with the Kamenetzkys, playing baseball with Mordechai, the love and friendship between the cousins. Their sister Lorraine, who passed away from cancer in 1998, was the eldest child in the family and was very close with the Kamenetzky sisters, Sarah and Esther.

Dean said that as his father got older, he became even more charitable. As a result of Lorraine's illness, George became one of the first five donors to give to the Israel Cancer Research Fund initiated by Five Towns oncologist Dr. Yasher Hirshaut.


Dr. Yashar Hirshaut

"Dr. Yashar Hirshaut got my father involved in ICRF. It was my father's passion for the last ten years of his life," said Jack. "Dr. Hirshaut saw Israeli scientists leaving Israel and was upset. He felt that Israel was a wonderful place to study and research and got American patients to donate so that the scientists would not leave."





Rabbi Kamenetzky presenting the Blumenthals an award at Yeshiva Toras Chaim's, Chai Anniversary Dinner

As a result of Lorraine's illness, he became one of the first five donors to give to the Israel Cancer Research Fund.

Dean concurred. "There was a brain drain from Israel. There are people in Israel from all over, and research is much cheaper there." Lorraine Blumenthal Friedman passed away in 1998. She is survived by her daughter Cara, married to Ari, and their four children in Boca Raton, Florida and her legacy of involvement in Amit.

The three brothers continue in the footsteps of their father. Dean, the eldest was vice-president of Beis Medrash of Cedarhurst and served as the building chairman for the current beautiful new structure. He is also a member of the Young Israel of Lawrence Cedarhurst, a board member of Lander College for Men and is involved with AIPAC and NORPAC. His son Aryeh sits on the board of the Yeshiva of South Shore and took his place as vice-president at the Shteibel-the Beis Medrash of Cedarhurst.



George with Dr. Yashar Hirshaut and Rabbi Kamenetzky at an ICRF DInner

Jack is also involved in AIPAC and UJA. Joseph is on the JCRC executive board and has been serving for 20 years on the board of the Boca Raton Synagogue in Boca Raton, Florida. Rose currently lives in the Five Towns as well.

Lion Brand Yarn:

A Century-Old Legacy



Lion Brand Yarn Company, the five generation Blumenthal family business, is one of the oldest and most prestigious businesses owned and operated by a Shomer Shabbos family in the United States.

Lion Brand was founded in 1878 by a group that included the patriarch of today's family proprietors, Reuben Selevan. Reuben, the sexton of the famed Eldridge Street synagogue on the Lower East Side of New York, was a pious, Sabbath Observant Jew who was proud of his old world traditions and religious observance.

Together with his son-in-law, Joseph Blumenthal, Reuben founded a business marketing knitting yarns to meet the growing need of the many immigrants who could not afford to purchase sweaters, scarves, blankets, and many other home items.

Initially Joseph had moved to a small town in Connecticut, but his father-in-law warned, "Move back to New York! If you continue to live up there, your children will no longer observe the Shabbos and will marry out of the faith." Indeed his prediction came true, as the Blumenthal progeny today are committed Jews.

During the 1930s under the leadership of Joseph and his son Isidor, Lion Brand imported yarns from Europe, supplementing production rather than manufacturing yarns in the U.S. This was considered to be an unusual business strategy at the time. In those days, the brands were named for different animals. Lion, as king of the jungle, was the right choice – Lion Brand is still here, and those other companies (including Bear, Fox, and Tiger) are long gone.

Joseph Blumenthal had three sons who managed the company from the 1940s through the early 1990s. Isidor Blumenthal served as president of the company from 1958 to his death in 2003. George Blumenthal was Vice President of sales, and Bernard Blumenthal oversaw logistics and distribution.

According to David, Isidor's son, George Blumenthal had a prescient ability to see new opportunities. "My Uncle George, my cousin Dean and Jack's father, was visionary and saw the emergence of the discounters. Lion Brand sales were catapulted by entering this market, spearheaded by the exclusive distribution of yarns for Target stores – starting with Target's fourth store."

Many people ask what has been the success of having so many generations in a family business. According to Lion Brand President and CEO David Blumenthal, in an interview with Inc. Magazine, "Family businesses aren't always easy. My father's Yiddish phrase was *Sholom bayis*, which translates to 'Peace in the house.'" And this mission has guided Lion Brand over the generations.

Lion Brand's charitable endeavors include support of Yeshiva of South Shore and many other congregations and Yeshivas, as well as a number of Jewish and Israeli organizations.

The company currently produces yarn in the U.S. and all over the world. The fourth generation consists of Isidor's son, David, President and CEO, and his first cousins, Dean (COO/EVP), Jack, Senior VP of sales, and Alan, Senior VP of logistics and distribution. Several fifth generation Blumenthals work at Lion Brand as well: Adam - Director of Corporate Strategy, Shira - Brand Ambassador, Evan - Director Global Business Development and Dave Paul - Director of Operations.

ESTHER & NATHAN
MAIDENBAUM





Nathan Maidenbaum with his mother, Ida; sister Norma (Levitt) Maidenbaum; brother Jack, in Warsaw getting visa

Left:
Nathan and Esther Maidenbaum at their wedding

Esther and Nathan Maidenbaum

The tone of a great element of the vision and outlook of a large portion of the Five Towns, was set by community leaders like Nat and Esther Maidenbaum.

Nathan Maidenbaum was a fascinating blend of the world of the pre-War Polish "Modern" religious Zionist, and the American entrepreneur. Although he was a fervent, fiercely loyal Zionist and observant Jew, a scholar of Tanach, Talmud, and the Hebrew language, he was a proud and loyal American. He was an open-minded man who rubbed shoulders with the widest array of Jews and non-Jew imaginable. His inner circle included distinguished rabbis, Zionist poets, Zionists and businessmen of all strokes. He built several successful businesses and passed away dramatically among friends and family while involved with one of his favorite pastimes, reciting a Hebrew poem. Together with his wife, Esther, he created an indelible impact that forged the outlook of the Five Towns as he built a family that is perpetuating his ideals.

Nathan's wife, Esther Rosenman, was born in Meah Shearim in 1917, prior to the establishment of the State of Israel. Her great-grandfather and grandfather were known throughout Meah Shearim as Moshe Yehuda Chaim Leibish "Taleysnik." They also had seasonal matzoh factories in Jaffa and Meah Shearim. Esther's father, Alter Mordechai David (known as Albert) was sent by his father to America in 1917 to avoid conscription into the Turkish army as they controlled Jerusalem. He returned to Jerusalem after WWI, but returned to America a few years later, to track down a partner who had fled there after cheating him. The rest of the family joined him a few years later, escaping the daily Arab riots of the 1920's and severe food shortages at that time.

The new immigrants settled in Brownsville, Brooklyn. Esther, a native Jerusalemite whose only languages were Yiddish and Hebrew was placed in the first grade in public school. She felt humiliated, but quickly learned English rising to her age appropriate grade level. In later years, following graduation from Thomas Jefferson High School, she earned certification as a teacher at Herzliya Teacher's Institute. But financial need led her to take a position with the Jewish National Fund as she was now fluent in Hebrew, Yiddish and English. Esther


Y. Toporowsky, Nathan Maidenbaum

and Nathan's mutual love of the Hebrew language provided the impetus that brought them together happenstance one evening at a gathering in Borough Park at Ulam Poalei Tzion, the Zionist Workers' hall.

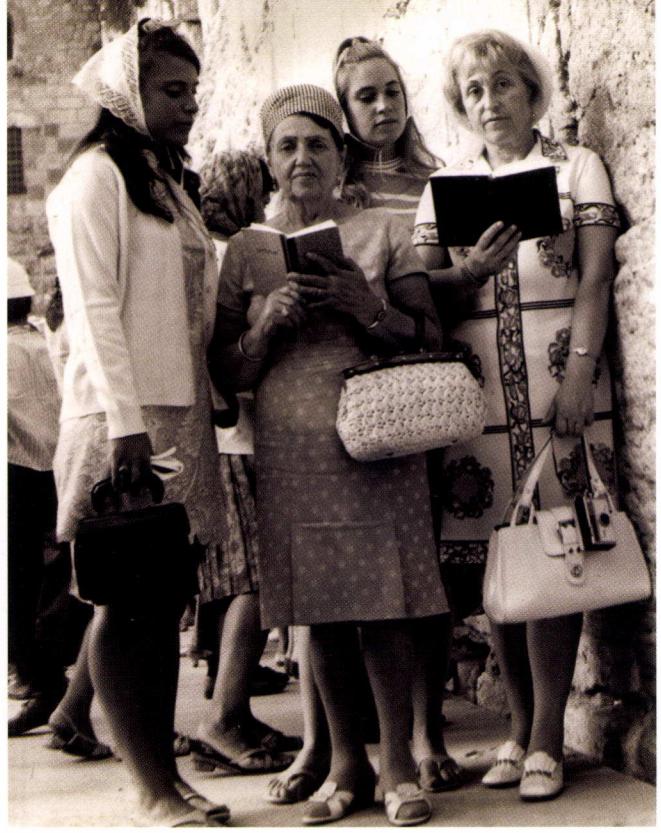
In a diary that Nathan kept up regularly, he discusses his disdain for those secular Zionists whose goal was to create a Communist Zionist State, free of Soviet style anti-Semitism. At the event, the flag of the communist party was hanging from the wall and there were pictures of Lenin and Marx prominently displayed. Paraphrasing Biblical writings, Nathan wrote, "They have absconded with the true faith and have "created new gods which we have not known." It was at the meeting Nathan decided to marry his "Bat Yerushalayim."

Nathan and Esther's son Shalom, a prominent attorney and Zionist activist in the Five Towns, together with his wife Iris, continue in their tradition and share the family interests and passion with Religious Zionism. When interviewed for this book, Shalom sat at his sunlit kitchen table in Lawrence – surrounded by mementos from his parents' life, photo albums, while he recounted tidbits of his Nathan

At the Kosel Maaravi, days after liberation in 1967. Nathan Maidenbaum is fourth from right, next to Joe Schorer in black hat. Rabbi with beard appears to be Chief Rabbi, Yitchak HaLevi Herzog



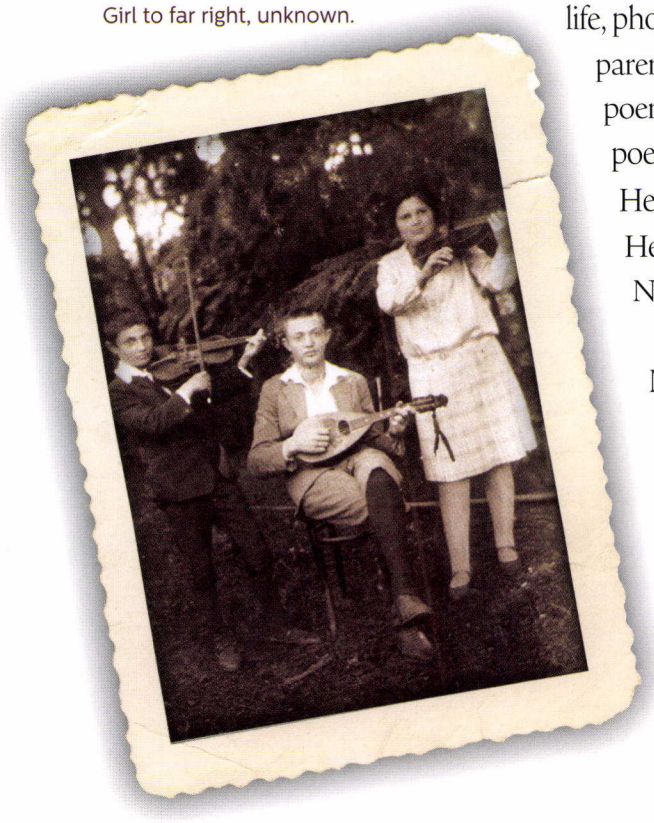
The tone of a great element of the vision and outlook of a large portion of the Five Towns, was set by community leaders like Nat and Esther Maidenbaum.



Left (L-R): Tamar (Maidenbaum) Peterseil, Ida Maidenbaum, Rachel maidenbaum, Esther Maidenbaum at Kosel Maaravi

and Esther's son, Shalom, a prominent attorney and Zionist activist in the Five Towns, together with his wife Iris, continue in their tradition and share the family interests and passion with Religious Zionism. When interviewed for this book, Shalom sat surrounded by myriad mementos from his parents' life, photo albums, while he recounted tidbits of his parents' legacy. They included albums of Nathan's poems, eulogies and inspiring *mussar*. Nathan's poems and diaries are written in elegant cursive Hebrew script, a style reminiscent of the early Hebrew revivalist, iconic author and poet, Chaim Nachman Bialik.

Below: In Ostrove Maziviezk, (L-R): Nat Maidenbaum on violin, brother Jack on Ukulele. Girl to far right, unknown.



Nathan, or Nachum as he was called by his family, was the son of Gedalia and Chaya Rivka. He was born and spent his early years in Ostrow Mazowiecka (*Ostrove-Mazivyetzk*), Poland, an hour from Warsaw and but 20 kilometers from Treblinka. The Maidenbaum's were connected to both the old and new worlds. They were close with Rav Naftali Aryeh Spiegel, the Ostrove-Kaluszyner Rebbe. In an amazing twist of Divine Providence, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky, the grandson-in-law of Rabbi Spiegel, spent one of his first weekends in the Five Towns at the home of Nathan Maidenbaum. That weekend in 1956 would be the but the first step in what turned out to be a lifelong friendship between the Maidenbaum and Kamenetzky families — both of whom had migrated from the "Old World" and planted roots in a new land.

Like many other Orthodox men of the time, Gedalia was enveloped in the world of commerce. His wife Chaya, had wanted a broader education for their children and enrolled them to study in the town's Tarbut school. Unlike the traditional Cheder that only taught Torah studies, the Tarbut School combined a Jewish and secular education and included more subjects than a solely Talmud-focused program. Nathan mastered the Hebrew language and Tanach in addition to his studies in Talmud. He was a counselor at the summer camp of the Tarbut School, where his mother served on its Parents Board. Nathan became the business manager of the Library cooperative and later received an outstanding education in the famed Tachkemoni School in Warsaw headed by Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik.

The Maidenbaums owned a successful porcelain and silver store in Ostrove and Nathan, even while in school, served as a buyer, traveling back and forth from Warsaw and dealing with businessmen. But the dark clouds of anti-Semitism were casting a pall on the horizon and, sensing the dire future for European Jewry, Nathan's oldest brother Harry moved to America. A few years later in 1932, after finishing high



L-R: Gedalia and Chaya Maidenbaum, Esther and Nathan Maidenbaum

school and gymnasia at age 19, Nathan followed with his parents, brother Lou and sister Norma; his older brother Jack ultimately joined them after originally trying to settle in what was then Palestine.

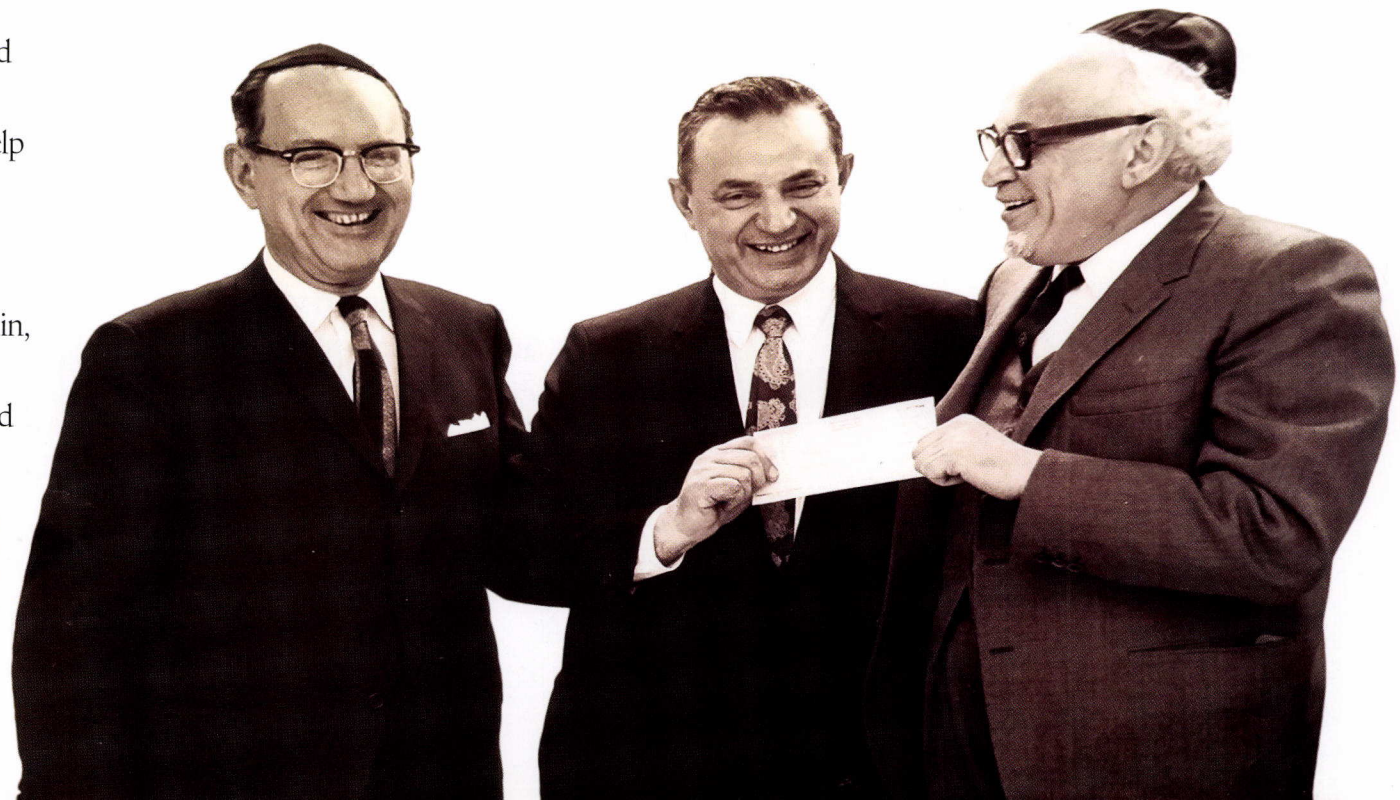
Like thousands of their co-religionists, the Maidenbaums began life in the United States on New York's Lower East Side. Nathan gained admission to Hebrew Teacher College (now Yeshiva University), but did not end up studying there as he could not afford the tuition nor room and board. Unable to secure enough financial aid, Nathan turned to the world of business where he became quite successful. In that role, he was able to help the Jewish community at large. Indeed, years later, when conferred an honorary degree by YU, he joked with Yeshiva University President, Rabbi Samuel Belkin, "I have to thank you for turning down my request for financial aid. After all, had Yeshiva offered me a scholarship, I would probably have ended up either a poor rabbi or teacher with no means to help the Jewish community nearly as much."

Following his attempt to study at Yeshiva University, Nathan joined his father Gedalia, in the family grocery store that he had started on Suffolk Street on the Lower East Side, serving Italian and Jewish neighborhood families. The family later moved to Borough Park and Nathan opened a grocery store there as well. Nevertheless, according to Shalom, "my father disliked the retail business, it felt like a prison to him. My dad used to tell me 'never go into retail, you are a slave to your business.'"

His business involvement did not preclude Nathan's passion as an intellectual and ardent Zionist activist at heart. In 1937 he was inspired by Zionist author of Hamedaber Ivrit, Daniel Persky, to convene a Zionist youth organization convention in Philadelphia. It was a turning point in which he found purpose in his new home in America. Until the end of his life, Nathan's was passionate about everything in the Hebrew. He would read Hebrew books and newspapers, study *Tanach*, compose Hebrew poems and write Hebrew articles and remonstrations, often scribbled on the back of envelopes as he went about his daily business running a huge wholesale grocery operation. His essence was always driven by intellectual curiosity, creativity and passionate Zionism.



Nat Maidenbaum with his first car



L-R: Rabbi Emanuel Rackman, (left) smiling as Nathan Madenbaum presents a check to YU President, Rabbi Dr. Samuel Belkin as a gift to Yeshiva University.







Top: Louis, Ruth, and Nat Maidenbaum in Bialystok, Poland

Middle: Nat, Jack and Louis in Poland

Bottom: Family in Poland L-R: Three cousins with last name Poksheebas; Nathan, Norma (sitting) Ida and Harry Maidenbaum

From his youth in Poland, and continuing in America, Nathan frequented and was a member of many Zionist organizations – including Mizrachi and Herut. Though Orthodox in practice, his philosophy and outlook aligned with that of Ze'ev Jabotinsky and Menachem Begin. He served as vice president of the Mizrachi organization (RZA), and throughout his life he was a strong supporter Jabotinsky's "Revisionist" movement. Beginning from Israel's War of Independence and beyond, he generously contributed to publications that propagated Jabotinsky's philosphies. Shalom recalls the wide array of personal friends and visitors to the his parents' home that included a wide array of Likud luminaries, from acclaimed Israeli author and poet, Uri Zvi Greenberg to revisionist philosopher and author, Israel Eldad to JDL founder, Meir Kahane. Always inspired by religious education, Nathan was also friendly with members of the Knesset, Yosef Burg and Zevulun Hammer.

"My father was a unique individual — a complex person, with an incredibly strong character who cannot simply be categorized in one particular category" said Shalom with a smile. He was always confident in his own abilities and supported diverse causes in the Jewish world. Notwithstanding any particular organization's political positions, he marched to his own drumbeat. In this context, Shalom mused, "he never "thought" he was right about anything—he "knew" he was right in his belief that while organizations had differing political goals, they all deserved his support as long as they furthered the cause of Israel."

Nathan, as President of Met Food Corporation, was an innovative, farsighted, gifted and intuitive businessman. Their wholesale grocery business catered to small, individually operated, grocery stores. To help for these individual grocers compete with the large chain stores that were beginning to dominate the grocery business, Nathan assembled a large group of individually

The parents of Nathan's wife Esther Leah and Alter Mordechai (Albert) Rosenman. Man standing is unidentified.



owned stores to form what is known as a "voluntary group" in New York. It was basically, a cooperative marketing and buying organization. He named the stores Met Foods – ultimately comprising of well over 100 stores throughout the metropolitan New York area.

The cooperative name, Met Foods, gave the impression it was a large chain store operation – an arrangement that benefited both store owners and Nathan and his brothers' company. Within this framework they organized a committee of representative store owners. Jointly, they would meet once a week to choose sale items and then advertise them in major newspapers like the New York Post and Daily News. The cooperative enabled them to compete with larger stores by collectively advertising sale items in newspapers that no one store could afford on its own. In turn, the cooperative stores were committed to purchase their other groceries through the Met Food private label.

Shalom explains that "throughout my father's early years in the wholesale food industry, every 'greener' who was interested in buying groceries from my father got two truckloads of groceries, was given two weeks of credit which enabled them to open a store in their neighborhood." Credit was extended by a handshake and belief in the word and character of his customers.



At a Family Wedding


מאפית מלאכת יד
למצות מצוה, שמורה ובלתי
של ר' לייביש רוזנמאן (מלייתניק)
Gidale Majdenbaum
Gidale Majdenbaum
Ul. 3-go Maja Nr. 11.
Pocztówka
W. D. 37
Sokół
Rembertów
za Warszawą
בית מדרש למורים
NOV 1 3 1932
תר"צ
לחודש
יום
מאורים
לקבל את
מיד
בבקשה
אהרי הלמוד
לשלח אל הלשכה
ההעדר
האיחור
זמן
נשלח
לא נשלח
מוכיר

In 1955, Nathan and Esther moved to the Five Towns, one of the first Orthodox families to settle in Lawrence – at that time a village that still hosted a country club restricted to Jews.

Probably the most important supplier during the early years was the Del Monte food corporation. Based in California, they operated a family farm canning business. They trusted Nathan, and extended credit to his company, making Metropolitan Foods, the first New York wholesaler to bring in the Del Monte label. One of Nathan's cross country purchasing trips, during the early years of World War II when supplies were scarce, brought him to Seattle. There, Nathan sought out an Orthodox Synagogue on a Friday evening and met Ben Genauer, a total stranger. Ben, a scion of a prominent Orthodox family, invited him to join his family at their Shabbat dinner and Nathan stayed with his family for the week. They became lifelong friends.

Ben Genauer introduced Nathan to the canneries in the Northwest, enabling Nathan to purchase and sell goods that were difficult to obtain during the war. He also was granted military deferments, first for having a first child and then for working in what was considered a vital industry. The other Maidenbaum brothers, Jack and Lou, and Norma's husband Aaron Levitt, were drafted, but, at the request of their father Gedaliah were brought into the business after the war. Each were given a share of the business, a job and steady work. Nathan's dad explained to Shalom that one listens to their father and takes care of family.

Over the years, Nathan and the family did very well – all the while supporting Jewish causes – especially the foundation of the Jewish State. Nathan was "rumored" to have allowed the use of his food warehouse to support the transfer of guns and ammunition to the Haganah, the predecessor of the Israel Defense Forces. Because of their strong support in those early years, he and Esther were often invited to meet with Israeli dignitaries, and members of Knesset. Indeed, their connection to and love of Israel went back way before the State, as they Esther traveled before 1947 to see her parents, uncles, aunts and cousins who remained while she went to America. She had kept in touch with them by mail throughout the years. During this visit, they formed close ties with these relatives and Nathan met old friends from his years in Poland. They were connections that lasted the rest of their lives.


Louis and Esther Maidenbaum



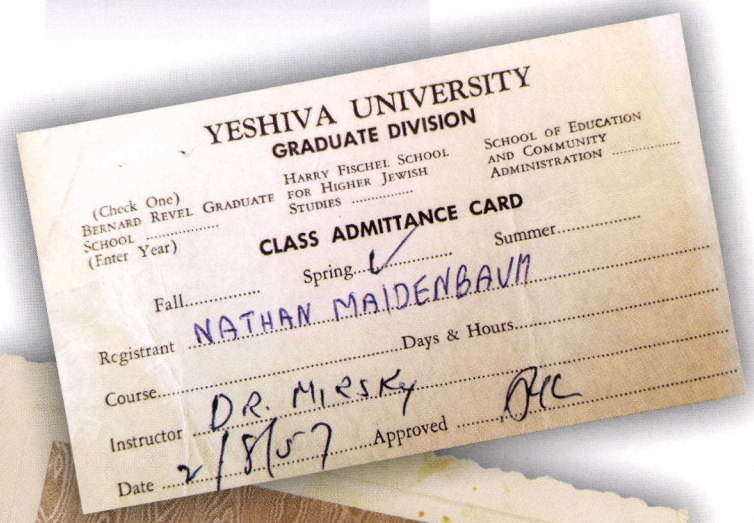
In 1955, Nathan and Esther moved to the Five Towns, one of the first Orthodox families to settle in Lawrence – at that time a village that still hosted a country club restricted to Jews. Upon settling in Lawrence, they became members of Congregation Beth Sholom, all the while supporting Congregation Knesseth Israel and Shaarei Tefilah – both in Far Rockaway. They were also founders of Young Israel of Lawrence Cedarhurst, the Hillel School and supported all of the institutions among them Yeshiva of South Shore, and HILI. Their love for study of Torah was palpable. Shalom recalled his father telling him "I won't get you a fancy car, but I'll pay for as much education as you want."

Until 1960, Nathan and Esther, the proud parents of six children- all with Hebrew names, rare for children of that era. Aryeh was the oldest, Shalom the youngest, and their 4 sisters Dassie, Rachell, Tamar and Ora were in between the two brothers. They lived in a large house on Washington Avenue, situated on an acre of land. When Esther Maidenbaum built a Passover kitchen in the Washington Avenue basement's home, the Village of Lawrence issued a summons cited them for violating the law by establishing a "rooming house." Herbert Tenzer, then a young lawyer, who would soon be elected to Congress, represented them and cleared the citation citing kashruth law as the impetus for having a Passover kitchen.



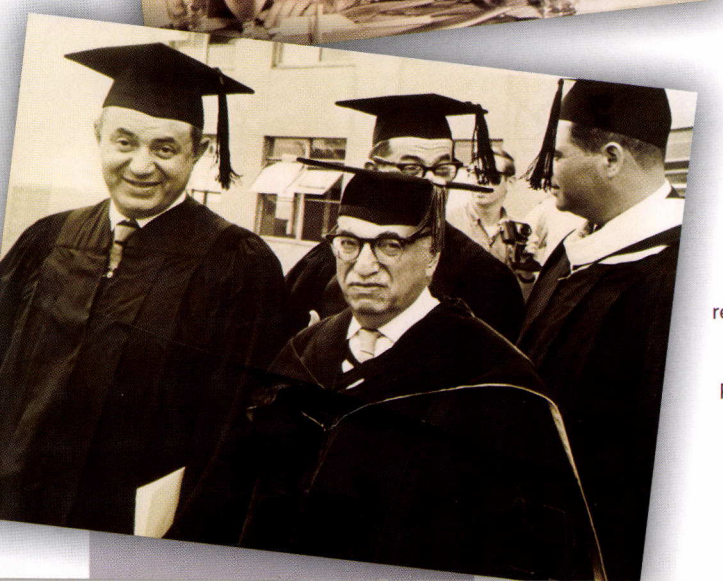
Nathan on right with son, Aryeh




YESHIVA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE DIVISION
(Check One)
BERNARD REVEL GRADUATE SCHOOL
HARRY FISCHEL SCHOOL FOR HIGHER JEWISH STUDIES
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ADMINISTRATION
(Enter Year)
CLASS ADMITTANCE CARD
Fall
Spring ✓
Summer
Registrant NATHAN MAIDENBAUM
Days & Hours
Course
Instructor DR. MISKY
Approved
Date 2/18/57







Nathan Maidenbaum (r) receiving Honorary degree from Yeshiva University, together with Israel President, Zalman Shazar

Nathan Maidenbaum (right) with Congressman and neighbor, Herbert Tenzer



Esther always had architecturally interesting ideas to put Jewish ritual into practical, applied practice. They had one of, if not the first Sukkah, that was built into their home. It had a retractable roof, in the United States. "On Sukkot, the roof moved off of that part of the house. We added *schach* and presto, we had a Sukkah," said Sholom.

Over the years, Esther Maidenbaum made her own contributions to the Jewish community at large, and the Five Towns in particular. She was the First President of Women's Hapoel Hamizrachi now the Emunah and Amit organizations, made speeches throughout the country and raised significant funds for the State of Israel. Coming from a poor family in Meah Shearim, Esther was especially proud of the fact that she and Nathan succeeded both financially and in gathering respect from the Jewish community at large. They would often quote the saying "*tov shem tov meshemen tov*"- a good reputation is worth more than wealth. Nevertheless, Esther took special pride in being able to afford giving all her four daughters weddings at the famed Waldorf Astoria Hotel in Manhattan- with each wedding attended by over 600 guests.

On another note, the warm relationship that began with the Maidenbaum family supporting the Ostrove-Kalushineh Rebbe in Europe continued in the New World with Reb Naftali Aryeh's children and grandchildren – Rabbi Dovid Spiegel and Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetzky. Nathan always cherished the ties with the Kamenetzky's the "landsman" connection, he called it and continued to maintain the link forged between the Maidenbaum family and the Spiegel family. In fact, Nathan's brother, Lou Maidenbaum, contributed generously and together with his brothers dedicated the Preparatory Division of the Yeshiva South Shore in memory of his father Gedalia.

Shalom himself attended the newly formed Hillel school near Beth Sholom. It placed more of an emphasis on Hebrew and Zionism than the South Shore Yeshiva established by Rabbi Kamenetzky. His older siblings went to HILI. He and his wife and their children are all Hillel/HAFTR graduates.

"Deeply committed to Beth Sholom, Shalom remembers, "Our family first lived on Washington Avenue and then on Manor Lane. Although most of our neighbors were not observant when my parents moved to Lawrence, my father would joke

Left Column, 2nd from bottom:
At a Yeshiva University Banquet. Rabbi Joseph B. Soleveitchik is sitting (right) next to Mayor Abraham Beame. Nathan Maidenbaum is standing behind Rabbi Soleveitchik.



Left: Nathan Maidenbaum (right) with
Rabbi Moshe Chait, Rabbi of Young Israel of Bayswater



Nathan Maidenbaum (right) sitting with Rabbi Meir Kahana

that "one day you'll see Manor Lane will be an all 'frum' block" and the street will be closed on *Shabbat* like in Meah Shearim!"

Shalom felt out of place calling his parents Ima and Abba. "When we first moved to Lawrence, I felt like the Jewish 'Beverly Hillbillies' of the Five Towns," he reminisced. "We were out of place."

Despite his allegiance to Beth Sholom, his father insisted on attending the White Shul on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as it reminded him of the style of services in the Synagogue in Poland where he grew up.

Himself a master of the Hebrew language, Nathan was a prolific writer in both modern and Biblical Hebrew. On many occasions, he wrote many poems to his wife, children- some in praise, some in complaint. Additionally, he could not tolerate deviations from what he considered a high level of truth and ethics by government, rabbinic or community leaders. He would often write critical poems and essays – in 1956 comparing and contrasting Israel in the days of Bilaam and Balak to Israel's treatment in the United Nations. Ironically not much has changed!

Nathan had no problem rapidly firing off letters of criticism and incorporating passages of Tanach. One poem, published in an Israeli newspaper, extolled the Entebbe rescue in 1976 and another, acknowledged by Menachem Begin as well as Elie Wiesel in personal letters to Nathan, was a poem in praise of Yom Yerushalayim. In the Yom Yerushalayim/ Yom Hatzmaut Machzor by Koren Publishing in 2016, Nathan's last major poem was published with an English translation describing his first trip to Israel in 1947 and to the eternal capital of Israel, Jerusalem. Nathan was outspoken in his praise and criticism - criticizing lapses in ethics and Jewish values by others. Despite being at times a critic, he did not leave the community but stayed and endeavored to improve it - firmly believing in the Biblical warning "*Hochayach Tocheach*" admonish and reprove" your fellow Jew.

An example that comes to mind is a dinner invitation Nathan received in Yiddish from a prominent yeshiva in Brooklyn, which contained not one word of Yiddish or Hebrew in the invitation. He immediately wrote to the Rosh Yeshiva, scolding this institution of Torah study for inviting guests to their dinner in a pagan language, ending with the Hebrew expression, "They did not change their tongue!"



Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky
presenting award to
Lou Maidenbaum

Nat Maidenbaum

PAGE TWO

At last Shabat Bar Mitzvah, I saw a display of a "pocket-book brigade" and I'm not mentioning the type of dresses which were worn in Shul; maybe you saw it also. You can readily see that those minutes of the Ritual Committee were never enforced.

I know, that I, as an individual, cannot help any more as far as the orthodox conduct of Bar mitzvahs and other matters pertaining to rituals are concerned. Frankly, I believe there is no need of a Ritual Committee at all because the administration and leadership are very well pleased with running of things by an individual who is an ardent worker and covers the "field".

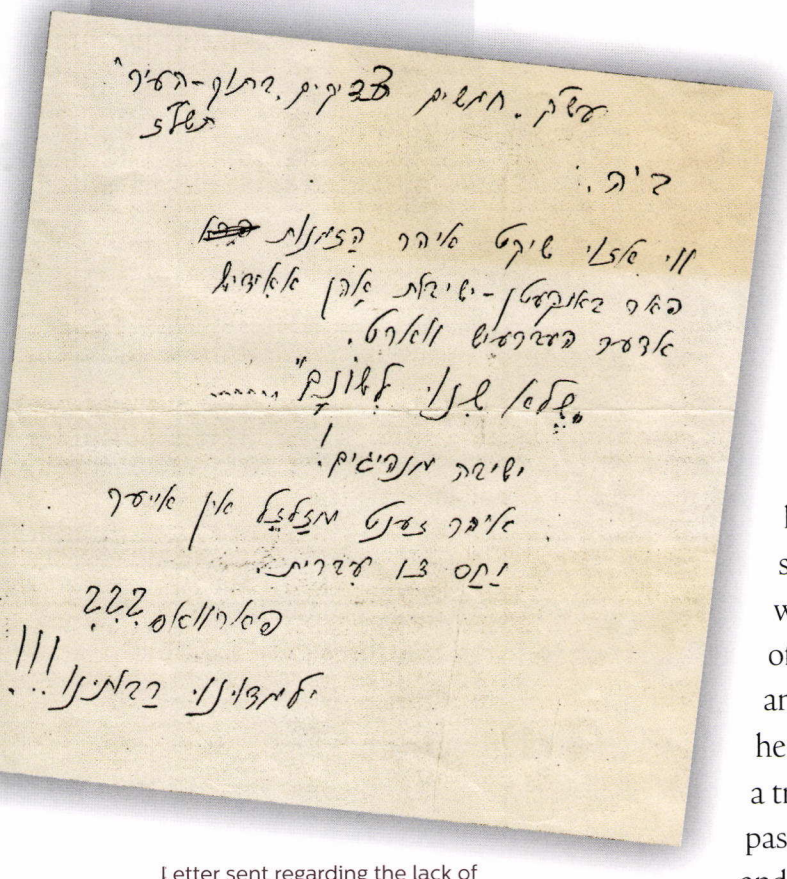
Based upon my reasons for quitting the Ritual Committee, you will understand that it is the only way I can relieve myself of the moral and religous responsibilities of that Committee.

I will endeavor to refrain from participating in the Sabbath services at Bar Mitzvahs because I am very much concerned with the impressions they make upon my young son and his young sisters and they will be spared to observe → רואינ ציבור קבלנים —

With great admiration for your devoted and idealistic work for Beth Sholom, I am,

שלום וברכה!

תום איידנבוים



Letter sent regarding the lack of any Yiddish or Hebrew wording in a Yeshiva invitation

Nathan's poems were regularly published in such journals as the Hebrew language *Hadoar,* where he served as a Board member; *Panim El Panim,* and other Hebrew publications. He also wrote obituaries for friends and influential Jews. Ultimately, his children privately published some of his poems which he had written over the years. This book of poems, accompanied by photos and memories of the many years he and Esther had been married, is a treasure that has been given and passed down to his many children and grandchildren.

Nathan and Esther Maidenbaum were paradigms of religious observance in the modern era. In 1963 the Long Island Press, a newspaper with a large circulation on Long Island at the time came to their home during the week before Pesach. The paper published an extensive photo spread of a model Seder that the Maidenbaums proudly created to raise awareness of the Pesach holiday to everyone on Long Island. Nevertheless, while enjoying a well-deserved reputation of community supporter, at times following a particular sermon of the Rabbi, or a questionable activity of the community, Nathan often locked horns with his rabbi, complaining about the lack of observance in the synagogue. He would send his protests in strong, yet eloquent letters and poems, most often in Hebrew and liberally sprinkled with Talmudic and Hebraic adages and quotes from the *Tanach*.

In the last year of his life, Nathan became a trustee on the Board of Yeshiva University – the very institution that had denied him a need based scholarship.

Despite his objections to happenings in his synagogue, "He didn't resign from Beth Sholom or move out of the community," explained Shalom. "He was a fighter who stayed and battled for those values he held most dear."

On the evening of June 19, 1979, Shalom remembers sitting in his first CPA review course. That evening, his father Nathan, who was at home recuperating from a recent heart attack, insisted on venturing out to witness the installation of his son-in-law Rabbi David Schreiber as president of HALB. Against his doctor's orders to stay home and rest, he attended the event and ended up reading aloud, a Hebrew poem he had composed. Present at the event was a crowd of several hundred people. Nathan, in mid-sentence, had a massive heart attack, fell in Sam Ottensoser's arms, and died instantly. In his son's words, "My dad was only 65 and far too young and vibrant with many unfulfilled and ambitious dreams, to leave a world in which he had been so active and a family he loved so dearly."

It was a tough time for me," Shalom recalled. "I had majored in accounting and finance and was just admitted to Yeshiva University's Cardozo School of Law but losing my father at such a young age was a huge loss and hurt for me. I was 20 at the time when he died," Shalom mused. "I think about him very often; I was very attached to him. I had a wonderful, special father. He inspired me to never lose hope and never give up and to respect and engage with anybody and everybody!"

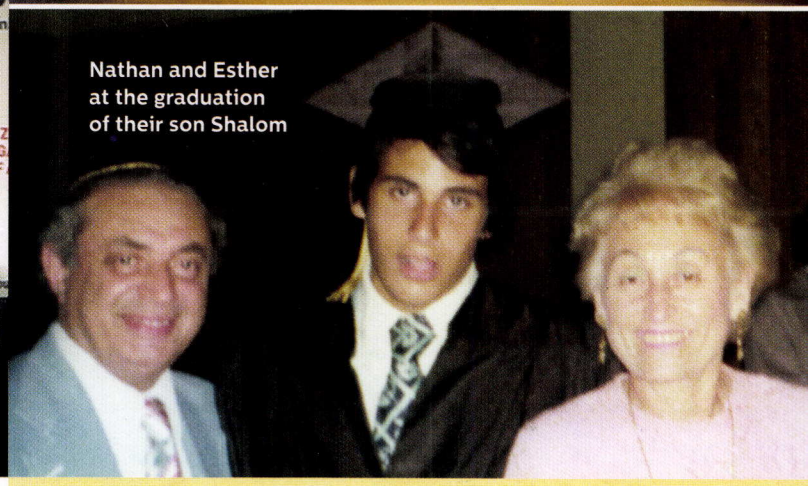
In the last year of his life, Nathan became a trustee on the Board of Yeshiva University and was recognized as a "Master Builder". He took great pride in having



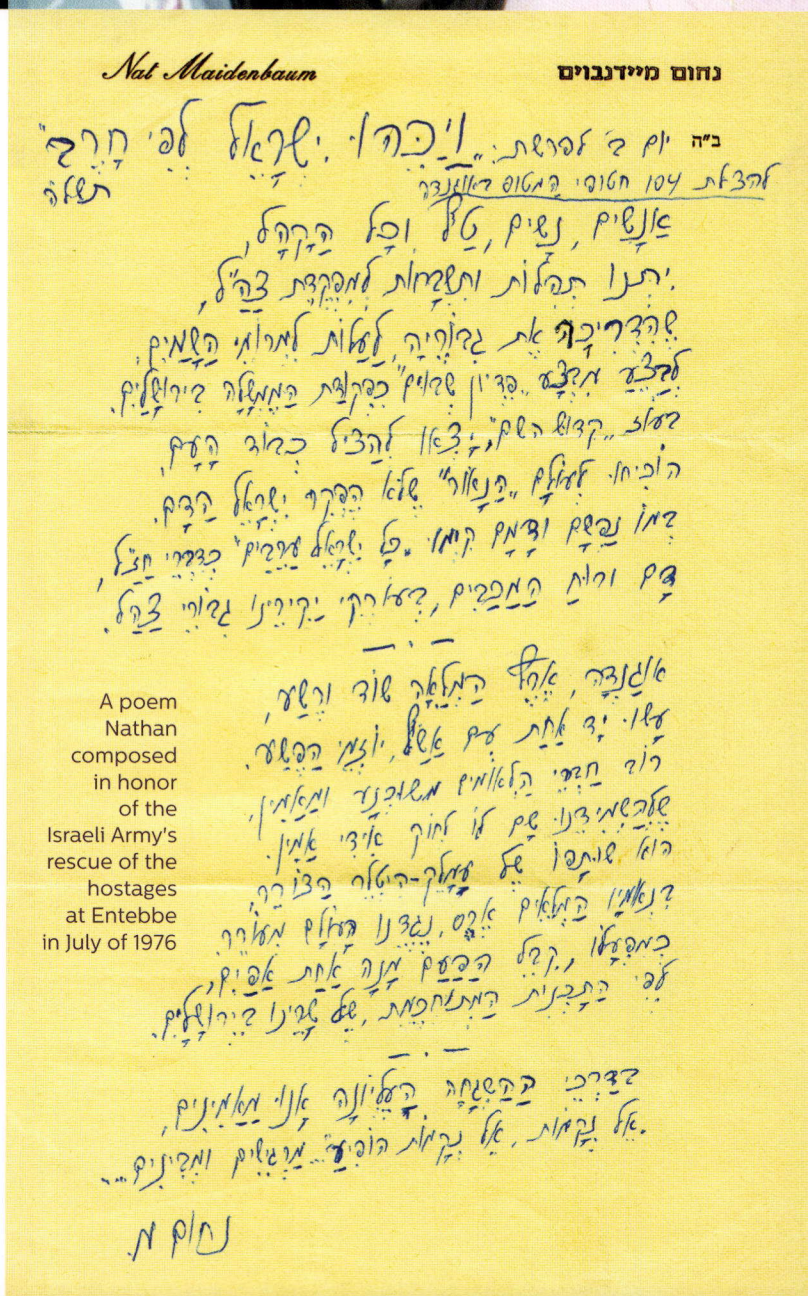
Rabbi Kenneth Hain of Congregation Beth Sholom in Lawrence presents the Louis D. Brandeis award to Shalom and Iris Maidenbaum at a Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) event, November 12, 2017.



Joe and Esther Peterseil with Esther and Nathan Maidenbaum with grandchildren, the children of Tamar and Jacob Peterseil



Nathan and Esther at the graduation of their son Shalom



A poem Nathan composed in honor of the Israeli Army's rescue of the hostages at Entebbe in July of 1976

grown from a would-be student in need, to honoree by the same institution.

Several years following Nathan's death, Esther married Aaron Schreiber, her *mechutan* and father of David Schreiber (who is married to Nathan and Esther's daughter Dassie Maidenbaum). When Esther passed away at the age of 87 in 2004, she left behind an impressive legacy of her own as a supporter of Jewish causes and proud grandparent of many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Nathan and Esther Maidenbaum's impact on the Five Towns, melding the world of the love for Torah and Israel with the world of successful commerce and industry, remains eternal. Their spirit and love of Hebrew and Jewish causes, while simultaneously embracing modernity, continues to reverberate in a professional community known for its love for both Torah and the land of Israel. Although they are no longer with us, their mark lives on through their deeds, reputation and accomplishments. Their legacy has been served well and carried on by their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren (many of whom live in Israel) as well as the continual presence and leadership in the Five Towns and by their children Shalom and his wife Iris, who live in Lawrence, and Dassie and her husband David Schreiber who live in Woodmere and have greatly impacted the Five Towns.



DR. YASHAR & PERIE
HIRSHAUT



Rabbis Kamenetzky and Schmidman presenting the Hirshaut's an award at a Yeshiva Toras Chaim Dinner.

Dr. Yashar and Perie Hirshaut

One of the early mainstay families in the Five Towns, Dr. Yashar and Mrs. Perie Hirshaut moved to the area in the late 1960s and settled in a home in Lawrence in 1973.

"There was nothing then," said Perie Hirshaut of the early years in the Five Towns. "You had to build it. If you want it you do it."

One of the early mainstay families in the Five Towns, Dr. Yashar and Mrs. Perie Hirshaut moved to the area in the 1960s. They moved into the Lawrence home in which they now live in 1973.

"The community was very small but warm and welcoming. My husband chose to *daven* in the White Shul and the service was very warm, especially for women," said Perie. "You can see and hear everything from the *ezras nashim*, and…" she quipped "they *davened Ashkenaz*." But it was not so easy back then, "There was no *eruv* then so I couldn't get out of the house because of our babies."

"Our community has grown to the extent that everything is available right here in town. I shop at all the local stores," said Perie. "I watched how our community stores and businesses supported all of our institutions throughout the years, so I support them in kind. I used to go to the local stores to get ads in support of all of the local yeshiva and shul dinners so I repay them. I learned that growing up in a small town. One hand washes the other. You support us, we support you."

The family planted deep roots in the community and Dr. Yashar Hirshaut worked incessantly here, in Manhattan and Israel to battle the scourge of cancer with his wife Perie as his *ezer knegdo*.

Perie (Katz) Hirshaut grew up in Mountaindale, New York in the Catskill Mountains, where her father Louis, served as the postmaster among many other

unofficial jobs. Unlike many of their co-religionists who arrived in the Catskills for summer vacation, the Katzs lived there all year and were an integral part of the fiber of the community, often mentioned in the local press. Her grandparents had arrived there in the early 1900s from Russia following "landsmen," friends from the "*alta heim*" who had already formed a community there. Her mother was from Manhattan and met her father in the "country" when she went there in the summer. Perie's mother was an activist, she said, one of the founders of Nshei Agudath Yisrael. Her father's parents were Lubavitch. "My family still has a house there, in Russia," noted Perie. She attended Fallsburg Central High School and Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women where she was chosen as valedictorian in 1965.

Yashar was born in Berlin and when he was a year old his parents and older sister were able to escape to the Philippines. Perie explained that in 1939 the Pacific 7,000-island nation was trying to attract business people, anyone with a skill. Yashar's father, R' Zvi, was originally in medical school but under the Nazis the Jews were forced out of medical schools. He then retrained and became an accountant and worked in an import-export company. His mother studied in a school called a gymnasium, a teachers' college, and later taught in Poland with Sarah Schenirer, the founder of the Bais Yaakov girls' schools.

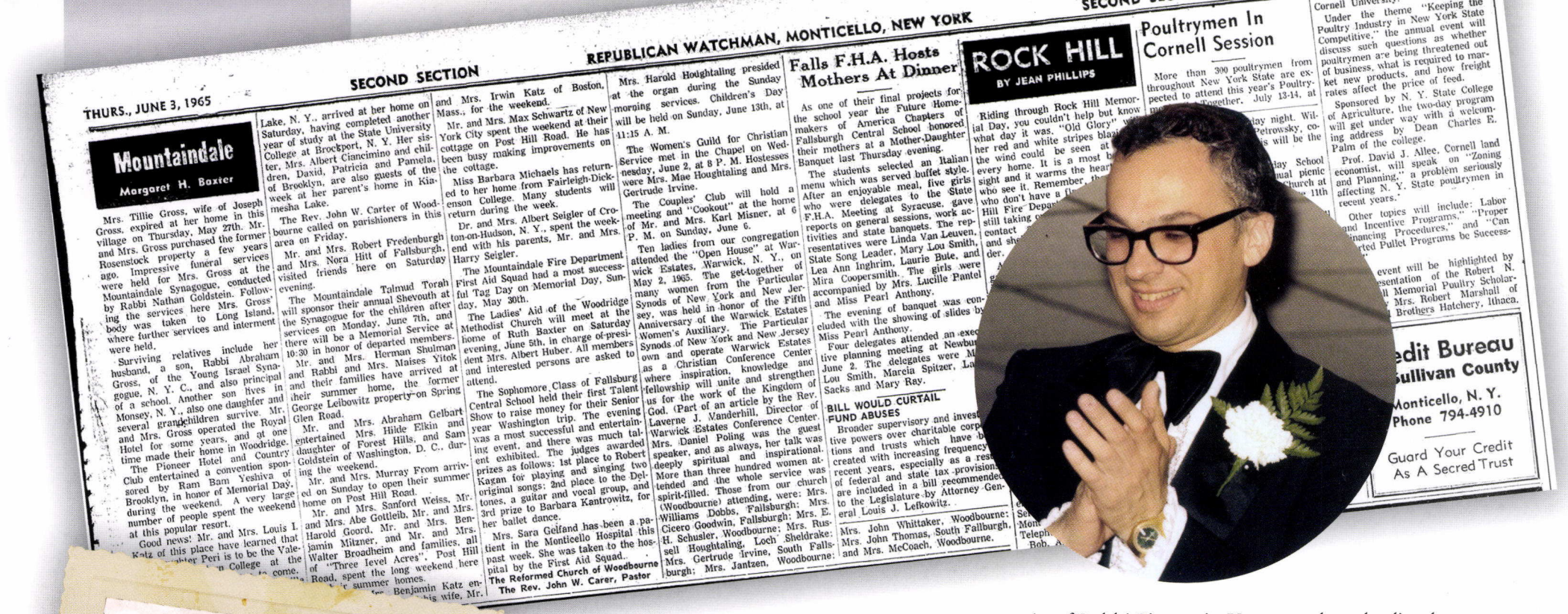
The Japanese attacked the Philippines the day after Pearl Harbor Day on December 8, 1941. They didn't bother the family since the Germans were allied with the Japanese and there was no anti-Semitism there at the time, Perie explained. The Filipinos "had it tough" recounted Perie, they were horribly abused by the Japanese. The Hirshauts suffered from the bombings of the Japanese along with the Filipinos. Putting their sefer Torah and family valuables in a wagon, they fled when their home was destroyed twice. After a third time, they were driven to live in rice paddies. They were also bombed by the Allies when the Allied forces fought the Japanese. Once the Americans arrived in the Philippines, the Hirshauts lived in the garage of the USO house and Yashar's mother cooked kosher food for the American soldiers; the family made the seder and built a sukkah. In 1947 the Hirshauts entered the United States at San Francisco, crossing to New York, settling first on the Lower East Side and then bought a house in Borough Park. Yashar attended the Rabbi Jacob Joseph School, received a B.A. from Yeshiva College in 1959 and an M.D. from Albert Einstein College of Medicine in 1963.

Perie and a friend "wanted to expand our social scene" so they invited 40 boys and six girls to a "*chashuvah* boys" party. Many more came and crashed—60 boys and eight girls. Yashar was one of the attendees. "It was an excellent party," she said. And the rest, as they say, is history.

Yashar and Perie lived on Pelham Parkway for a year while he was a resident at Montefiore Medical Center. When he was drafted into the United States Navy, Yashar was based at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland so they lived in Silver Spring and stayed three years. They then chose to move



The Hirshaut Family
(L-R): Perie, Zvi, Shira, Aviva, Navon, Dr. Yashar, Dovid



THURS., JUNE 3, 1965 — SECOND SECTION — REPUBLICAN WATCHMAN, MONTICELLO, NEW YORK

Mountaindale

Margaret H. Baxter

Mrs. Tillie Gross, wife of Joseph Gross, expired at her home in this village on Thursday, May 27th. Mr. and Mrs. Gross purchased the former Rosenstock property a few years ago. Impressive funeral services were held for Mrs. Gross at the Mountaindale Synagogue, conducted by Rabbi Nathan Goldstein. Following the services here Mrs. Gross' body was taken to Long Island, where further services and interment were held.

Surviving relatives include her husband, a son, Rabbi Abraham Gross, of the Young Israel Synagogue, N. Y. C., and also principal of a school. Another son lives in Monsey, N. Y., also one daughter and several grandchildren survive. Mr. and Mrs. Gross operated the Royal Hotel for some years, and at one time made their home in Woodridge.

The Pioneer Hotel and Country Club entertained a convention sponsored by Ram Bam Yeshiva of Brooklyn, in honor of Memorial Day, during the weekend. A very large number of people spent the weekend at this popular resort.

Good news! Mr. and Mrs. Louis L. Katz of this place have learned that [daughter] Peri is to be the Vale[dictorian] at the College at the [time] come.

Lake, N. Y., arrived at her home on Saturday, having completed another year of study at the State University College at Brockport, N. Y. Her sister, Mrs. Albert Ciancimino and children, Daxid, Patricia and Pamela, of Brooklyn, are also guests of the week at her parent's home in Kiamesha Lake.

The Rev. John W. Carter of Woodbourne called on parishioners in this area on Friday.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Fredenburgh and Mrs. Nora Hitt of Fallsburgh, visited friends here on Saturday evening.

The Mountaindale Talmud Torah will sponsor their annual Shevouth at the Synagogue for the children after services on Monday, June 7th, and there will be a Memorial Service at 10:30 in honor of departed members.

Mr. and Mrs. Herman Shulman and Rabbi and Mrs. Maises Yitok and their families have arrived at their summer home, the former George Leibowitz property on Spring Glen Road.

Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Gelbart entertained Mrs. Hilde Elkin and daughter of Forest Hills, and Sam Goldstein of Washington, D. C., during the weekend.

Mr. and Mrs. Murray From arrived on Sunday to open their summer home on Post Hill Road.

Mr. and Mrs. Sanford Weiss, Mr. and Mrs. Abe Gottleib, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Goord, Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Mitzner, and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Broadheim and families, all of "Three Jevel Acres", Post Hill Road, spent the long weekend here [at] summer homes.

[Mr.] Benjamin Katz en[tertained] his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Katz of Boston, Mass., for the weekend.

Mr. and Mrs. Max Schwartz of New York City spent the weekend at their cottage on Post Hill Road. He has been busy making improvements on the cottage.

Miss Barbara Michaels has returned to her home from Fairleigh-Dickenson College. Many students will return during the week.

Dr. and Mrs. Albert Seigler of Croton-on-Hudson, N. Y., spent the weekend with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Seigler.

The Mountaindale Fire Department First Aid Squad had a most successful Tag Day on Memorial Day, Sunday, May 30th.

The Ladies' Aid of the Woodridge Methodist Church will meet at the home of Ruth Baxter on Saturday evening, June 5th, in charge of president Mrs. Albert Huber. All members and interested persons are asked to attend.

The Sophomore Class of Fallsburg Central School held their first Talent Show to raise money for their Senior year Washington trip. The evening was a most successful and entertaining event, and there was much talent exhibited. The judges awarded prizes as follows: 1st place to Robert Kagan for playing and singing two original songs; 2nd place to the Deltones, a guitar and vocal group, and 3rd prize to Barbara Kantrowitz, for her ballet dance.

Mrs. Sara Gelfand has been a patient in the Monticello Hospital this past week. She was taken to the hospital by the First Aid Squad.

The Reformed Church of Woodbourne
The Rev. John W. Carer, Pastor

Mrs. Harold Houghtaling presided at the organ during the Sunday morning services. Children's Day will be held on Sunday, June 13th, at 11:15 A. M.

The Women's Guild for Christian Service met in the Chapel on Wednesday, June 2, at 8 P. M. Hostesses were Mrs. Mae Houghtaling and Mrs. Gertrude Irvine.

The Couples' Club will hold a meeting and "Cookout" at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Karl Misner, at 6 P. M. on Sunday, June 6.

Ten ladies from our congregation attended the "Open House" at Warwick Estates, Warwick, N. Y., on May 2, 1965. The get-together of many women from the Particular Synods of New York and New Jersey, was held in honor of the Fifth Anniversary of the Warwick Estates Women's Auxiliary. The Particular Synods of New York and New Jersey own and operate Warwick Estates as a Christian Conference Center where inspiration, knowledge and fellowship will unite and strengthen us for the work of the Kingdom of God. (Part of an article by the Rev. Laverne J. Vanderhill, Director of Warwick Estates Conference Center.

Mrs. Daniel Poling was the guest speaker, and as always, her talk was deeply spiritual and inspirational. More than three hundred women attended and the whole service was spirit-filled. Those from our church (Woodbourne) attending, were: Mrs. Williams Dobbs, Fallsburgh; Mrs. E. Cicero Goodwin, Fallsburgh; Mrs. Russell Houghtaling, Loch Sheldrake; Mrs. Gertrude Irvine, South Fallsburgh; Mrs. Jantzen, Woodbourne; Mrs. John Whittaker, Woodbourne; Mrs. John Thomas, South Fallburgh, and Mrs. McCoach, Woodbourne.

Falls F.H.A. Hosts Mothers At Dinner

As one of their final projects for the school year the Future Homemakers of America Chapters of Fallsburgh Central School honored their mothers at a Mother-Daughter Banquet last Thursday evening.

The students selected an Italian menu which was served buffet style. After an enjoyable meal, five girls who were delegates to the State F.H.A. Meeting at Syracuse, gave reports on general sessions, work activities and state banquets. The representatives were Linda Van Leuven, State Song Leader, Mary Lou Smith, Lea Ann Inghrim, Laurie Bute, and Mira Coopersmith. The girls were accompanied by Mrs. Lucille Pantel and Miss Pearl Anthony.

The evening of banquet was concluded with the showing of slides by Miss Pearl Anthony.

Four delegates attended an executive planning meeting at Newburgh June 2. The delegates were Mary Lou Smith, Marcia Spitzer, Lauren Sacks and Mary Ray.

BILL WOULD CURTAIL FUND ABUSES

Broader supervisory and investigative powers over charitable corporations and trusts which have been created with increasing frequency in recent years, especially as a result of federal and state tax provisions are included in a bill recommended to the Legislature by Attorney General Louis J. Lefkowitz.

ROCK HILL

BY JEAN PHILLIPS

Riding through Rock Hill Memorial Day, you couldn't help but know what day it was. "Old Glory" w[ith] her red and white stripes blaz[ing] the wind could be seen at [every] home. It is a most b[eautiful] sight and it warms the hear[t] who see it. Remember, th[ose] who don't have a fl[ag] Hill Fire Depar[tment] still taking o[rders] contact [any] and she[riff] der.

Poultrymen In Cornell Session

More than 300 poultrymen from throughout New York State are expected to attend this year's Poultry[men's] Together, July 13-14, at [Cornell] University.

Under the theme "Keeping the Poultry Industry in New York State Competitive," the annual event will discuss such questions as whether poultrymen are being threatened out of business, what is required to market new products, and how freight rates affect the price of feed.

Sponsored by N. Y. State College of Agriculture, the two-day program will get under way with a welcoming address by Dean Charles E. Palm of the college.

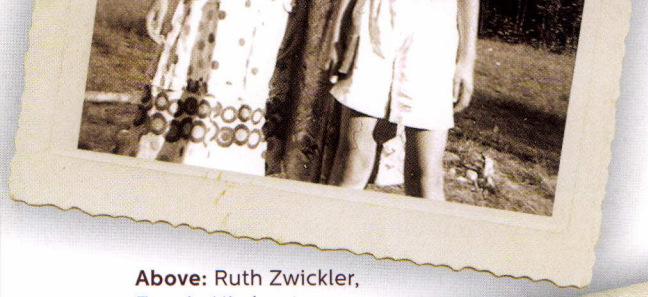
Prof. David J. Allee, Cornell land economist, will speak on "Zoning and Planning," a problem seriously affecting N. Y. State poultrymen in recent years.

Other topics will include: Labor and Incentive Programs," "Proper Financing Procedures," and "Can Started Pullet Programs be Successful."

[The] event will be highlighted by [the] presentation of the Robert N. [Hill] Memorial Poultry Scholar[ship] by Mrs. Robert Marshall of [the] Brothers Hatchery, Ithaca.

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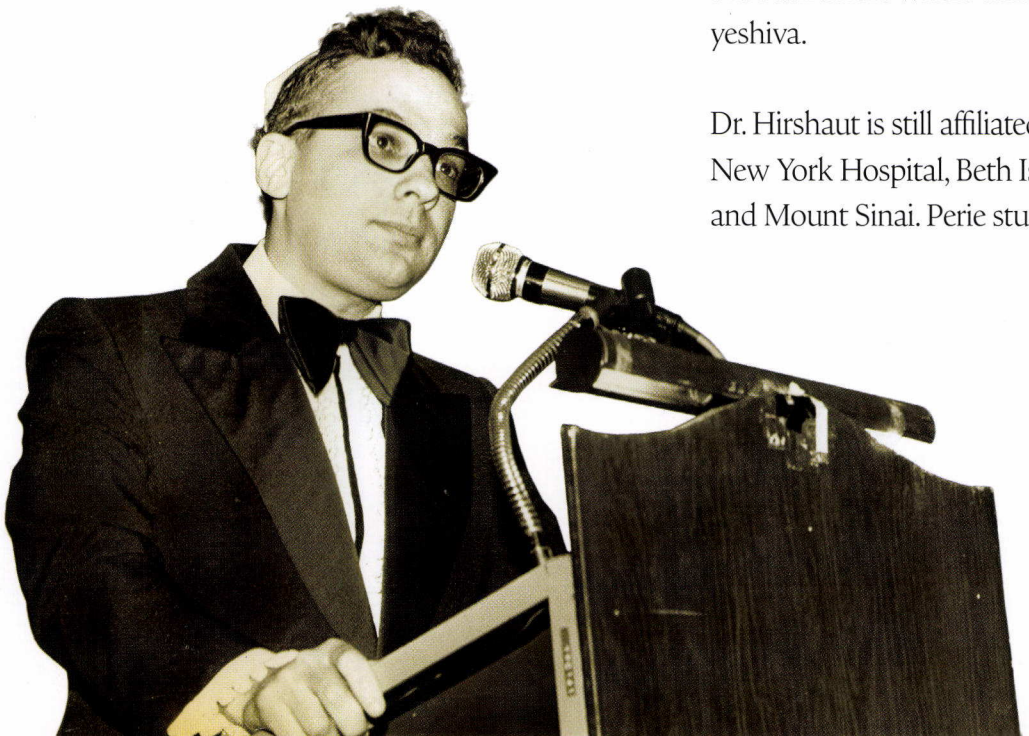
Above: Ruth Zwickler, Fannie Hirshaut, Yashar Hirshaut

to the "heart" of solid Jewish living in New York and in the late 1960s found two apartments in Far Rockaway, one for them and one for Yashar's mother. In 1973 they moved to a house in Lawrence but continued to *daven* at the White Shul. That shul was one of the reasons they stayed in the area, said Perie. "My son knew how to lain in second grade! My mother-in-law lived with us and had a lot of friends at the shul." Perie was a member of Mizrachi, Agudah, and Emunah women's organizations and almost every yeshiva in the area, primarily Yeshiva of South Shore and Torah Academy for Girls where the span of her daughters' education there was about 30 years. The Hirshauts were among those who provided the first seed money for Yeshiva Gedolah Ateres Yaakov. "I had the *z'chus* to take a trousseau to a cousin of Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky who lived in Israel," she said. "Rabbi Binyamin drove us to the airport. We told him 'when we come back safely you will get your first donation to Yeshiva Gedolah Ateres Yaakov, the first full time Yeshiva Bais Medrash in the Five Towns. They were also involved in the local Bikur Cholim, the Yeshiva of Far Rockaway and the Young Israel of Far Rockaway.

Dr. Yashar Hirshaut watched helplessly as his father suffered and died of throat cancer in his last year of college in 1959 and has focused his career and interests on battling the disease on many fronts. A board certified medical oncologist, he has affiliations with hospitals in the New York area. After his stint in the Navy, Dr. Hirshaut worked in what is now Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, blending research and clinical work, running a lab there and caring for patients. Dr. Joseph Gershbaum a"h, a surgeon in Far Rockaway, gave him free space to open a practice in the area. Yashar ultimately rented office space at 999 Central Avenue in Woodmere, an only Sunday private practice and in 1985 he opened a private practice in

Manhattan as well. While at MSK he met Dr. Daniel Miller who encouraged Yashar to join the Israel Cancer Research Fund founded by Dr. Miller in 1975. ICRF was founded to attempt to halt the brain drain of highly skilled Israeli research scientists and fund extensive cancer research in Israel. To date they have provided more than 2,200 grants, $56 million towards research and through its support has seen researchers produce cutting edge treatments, saving lives worldwide. They have garnered awards including a 2004 Nobel Prize awarded to two ICRF-supported scientists (Professors Avram Hershko and Aaron Ciechanover of the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology) in chemistry. George Blumenthal, another Five Towns area activist, also became active in ICRF and today, the Five Towns and Rockaways residents have become major supporters of the fund.

Some of the well-known medications produced through ICRF funding include Velcade, Gleevec and Doxil and the research has discovered cancer linkages tied to the p53 Gene, DNA Methylation and the RAD51 gene.



Dr. Hirshaut was ICRF's president for 20 years and has been chairman since 2005.

Together with oncological surgeon Dr. Peter I. Pressman, Dr. Hirshaut co-authored the book, "Breast Cancer: The Complete Guide," now in its fifth edition. He is the founder and editor of the journal *Cancer Investigation*. He was also the founder of the Raphael Society, a division of the Association of Orthodox Jewish Scientists. In his early years as a physician, he would ask Jewish legal questions related to medicine of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein zt"l through his connection with Rabbi Moshe Tendler. Explained Perie, "It was the first major generation that had halachic issues in medicine, and responsa for religious physicians and dentists were published. Most of the questions already have answers now; it was groundbreaking halacha at the time."

All the while, Dr. and Mrs. Hirshaut remained actively involved in the growth of the communities to the east and west of their home in Lawrence, actively involved in TAG where the girls attended school and Yeshiva of South Shore where their boys attended yeshiva.

Dr. Hirshaut is still affiliated with Cornell-New York Hospital, Beth Israel, Lenox Hill and Mount Sinai. Perie studied psychology,



taught Hebrew in Talmud Torah and for years has handled the financial aspects of her husband's business. Their children live mostly in New York, with one in Maryland and one in Israel.

"Everyone is related in this neighborhood," said Perie. "It was originally founded by four to six families who saw that it was *ki tov*, a good neighborhood, so relatives moved in and everyone here has someone. I've seen the neighborhood grow. It's beautiful; it's great to be a participant in this neighborhood.

"We're very happy here," she added. "I make it my business to welcome every new face I see. It's a wonderful neighborhood. Everyone should be welcome. We should be one for each other especially among the *yidden*. It's important to extend oneself."



About the Jewish Heritage Society of the Five Towns

The Jewish Heritage Society of the Five Towns, a 501(c) 3 charitable organization, was founded through the vision of Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky, who was one of the original pioneers of the Orthodox Jewish community of the Five Towns. At the 50th anniversary of the founding of Yeshiva of South Shore in 2006, Rabbi Kamenetzky commissioned a group of volunteers to collect and organize photographs, newspaper clippings, and other artifacts that documented the history of the growth of the community. That collection grew through the efforts of dozens of men and women, institutions, and organizations who were eager to share their wealth of knowledge and their cherished memories.

This volume is the second in a series on the history of the Five Towns, and hopefully will be a forerunner to more publications, exhibits and events that will mark the history of what is now one of America's fastest growing Orthodox Communities.

About the Author

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the scion of both Chassidic dynasties and Lithuanian *Roshei Yeshiva*. Rabbi Kamenetzky is the son of a pioneering founder of the Torah community of the Five Towns, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky and a grandson of the late, venerable *Gadol Hador*, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky, of blessed memory. He is a student of some of the world's most prestigious yeshivos, ranging from Talmudical Yeshiva of Philadelphia, Yeshivas Ponovez and Beth Medrash Govoah. Rabbi Kamenetzky assumed his first pulpit position in Pittsburgh, PA while serving a Kollel fellowship in that city. He later served as Associate Dean of Yeshiva Toras Chaim of South Shore and became the Dean of the yeshiva, with the retirement of his father, the founder of Yeshiva of South Shore, Rabbi Binyamin Kamenetzky.

Rabbi Kamenetzky authored his first book, Parsha Parables in 1997 and has expanded his gentle wit and piercing wisdom with five additional volumes and a Parsha Parables Anthology since then. He has also authored Streets of Life, a collection culled from his column in Ami magazine, where he opens a window into his life, sharing personal stories and perspectives and anecdotes about growing up in Woodmere in the turbulent '60s, and encounters with many of the personalities he has met along the way.

A noted educator, Rabbi Kamenetzky shares his keen Torah insights with his shiurim and lectures across the Five Towns and beyond, as well as with thousands of subscribers to his Parsha Parable *d'var Torah*, e-mailed weekly.

Rabbi Kamenetzky is a member of Yated Neeman's, Chinuch Roundtable and a weekly Parsha columnist in that newspaper as well. He is also a contributing editor in Ami magazine where his Streets of Life column appears weekly. He has authored three volumes of Minchas Mordechai, a Hebrew language compendium of Torah novella based on the weekly Torah portion.

A native of Woodmere, Long Island where he currently resides together with his family, Rabbi Kamenetzky's most cherished Torah teaching is done only a few blocks from his home at Yeshiva Toras Chaim of South Shore where he serves as Dean and Rosh Yeshiva.