

**YASHER KOACH!**  
**Convention Tribute**  
by **MARLENE SCHIFFMAN,**  
**Cataloger, Mendel Gottesman**  
**Library, Yeshiva University**

To Liza and Elana,

You pulled it off! It went so smoothly  
Each facet in place, a real class act.  
How can we thank you for such  
an effort?  
All was attended to, nothing lacked.

We had great food,  
great entertainment,  
A great hotel in Brooklyn's center spot.  
The sessions were stimulating  
with knowledge set forth,  
All who attended surely gained a lot.

Your able stewardship led us  
through all crises  
(And with our hotel I think there were  
a few).  
You carried it off with humor & grace.  
We are certainly all in debt to you!

Continue your work at AJL, though  
After Convention, no challenge  
can compare.  
We hand on our *mesorah* to the  
next committee  
And with Oakland our expertise  
we'll share.

Thank you for being on top of  
all things  
Volunteering, appointing, arranging  
& such.  
The 2004 Convention was great for all  
who attended,  
So all we can say is, "Thank you  
so much!"

*From the President*

Congratulations and many thanks for a job well done to all the NYMA and AJL-LI members who worked on the wonderfully successful 2004 AJL Convention in Brooklyn last June. In this first issue of the Newsletter after the convention, I would like to particularly thank Elana Gensler, Co-Chair of the Convention and most stalwart Exhibits Manager with whom it was a great pleasure to be associated. Everyone should have the privilege of working with Elana at some point.

At the AJL Midwinter meeting in January the convention was very well reviewed, particularly for the caliber of its programming, chaired by Shuli Berger, Rachel Glasser, and Rita Lifton. Lending their talents to the monumental R&S and SSC programming efforts were Shelly Feit, Beverly Geller, Edith Lubetski, Marlene Schiffman, Sara Spiegel, Naomi Steinberger, and Bruchie Weinstein. In addition, Sara Speigel was in charge of the continuing professional education sessions. Joyce Levine worked tirelessly, publicizing the convention and the Booklovers' Judaica Festival. Marsha Labovitz had her hands full with Registration for months before the convention and spent the entire convention at the Registration Desk. Leah Adler was our brave and capable treasurer, while Esther Nussbam and Eileen Shmidman arranged the very popular Authors' Luncheon.

A special thanks to Sondra Winder, president of AJL-LI, who made the convention an inter-chapter cooperative endeavor. AJL-LI donated the goodies for the hospitality suite, which were purchased and organized by Rachel Glasser and Rita Lifton. In addition, AJL-LI was in charge of the meal hospitality (a.k.a. security). Steven Siegel, with the help of Tina Weiss on transportation, was responsible for the excellent menu of tours offered. We also thank Shuli Berger, Julia Bock, Marion Stein, and Naomi Steinberger for their generous help in planning the events that made the tours so special. Marlene Schiffman took on the tasks of volunteer wrestler and *gabbai* – very successfully, I should note.

Marsha Labovitz, Hudas Liff, and Marion Stein lent Liza their expertise with fund raising. We can thank Chaya Wiesman for the excellent entertainment provided. Lani Droz, with the help of Tova Friedman and Marsha, worked on the Registration Bags. The program book was compiled by Lynn Feinman, who benefited from Steven Bernstein's expert help. In addition, Leah Adler, Tzivia Atik and Marlene Schiffman were responsible for proof-reading the program book. Ina Cohen's definitive list of Judaica bookstores made the program book a handy reference source to keep for years. Leslie Monchar was the liaison with Avi Chai.

Stanley Nachamie coordinated the *minyanim*, working with Marion Stein, while Rachail Kurtz and Leah Moskovits

(cont'd on Pg. 8)

# COINCIDENCE?

**The titles exist. And the authors.**

**The combo, though, is . . .**

**well, a bit too much.**

**Compiled by MARLENE SCHIFFMAN, Cataloger,  
Mendel Gottesman Library, Yeshiva University**

*Animal life in Jewish tradition* / Elijah Judah Schochet

*A coat of many colors* / Abraham Lavender

*The life and death of Adolf Hitler* / R. Payne

*The answers lie below: essays in honor of  
Lawrence Edmund Tombs*

*The Jew pays: a narrative of the consequences of  
the war to the Jews of Eastern Europe* /

Marcus E. Ravage

*Philo's perception of women* / Dorothy Sly

*The position of women in Judaism* / Raphael Löwe

*Merchants and Jews in the struggle for*

*British West Indian commerce, 1650-1750* /

S.A. Fortune, published in Gainesville, Fla.

*Der deutsche Weg der Judische Emanzipation,  
1789-1938* / Walter Grab

*A winter pilgrimage being an account of travels  
through Palestine, Italy, and the Island  
of Cyprus, accomplished in the year 1900* /

H. Rider Haggard

*Women and water* / ed. Rahel R. Wasserfall

*The Tanks of Tammuz* / Shabtai Teveth

*Questions of interest: a presentation of true-life  
situations governed by the prohibition against  
lending at interest* / Yisroel P. Gornish

*Old Testament formulas about death* /

Karl-Johan Illman

*The Books of Judges: an integrated reading* /

Barry G. Webb

*Administrative detention in the occupied  
West Bank* / Emma Playfair

*Smoking and damage to health in the halachah* /

Menachem Slae

*One kind of freedom: the economic consequences  
of emancipation* / Roger Ransom

*Von Shtetl an di Lower East Side* / Klaus Hödl

*The politics of virtue* / Elizabeth Mensch.

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## Look What's Happening . . . .

### Announcing

From The Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary – addition of a Guide to the JTS Archives on its website. This Guide includes preliminary information about 88 archival collections housed at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary. The Guide and information on the Archives can be found at [www.jtsa.edu/library/archives/jtsarchives/index.shtml](http://www.jtsa.edu/library/archives/jtsarchives/index.shtml).

Also at JTS Library: "Radical Visions: Graphic Satire in the Yiddish Press, 1894-1939," at the Goldsmith Gallery on the first and fifth floors. This exhibit approaches the Jewish experience during the era between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of World War II through the unconventional lens of the Yiddish-language cartoon. For a view of exhibit and selections, go online at: [www.jtsa.edu/library/exhib/cartoons/index.shtml](http://www.jtsa.edu/library/exhib/cartoons/index.shtml).

"Echoes of Auras: Memorbuch of a Jewish Community." On display through June 2005 at the Mendel Gottesman Library, of Yeshiva University, 2520 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10033, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor. For more information call **Shuli Berger**, at 212-960-5451.

"Printing the Talmud: From Bomberg to Schottenstein." Opening April 10, 2005, at the Yeshiva University Museum.

Cataloging Workshop, Tues., Mar. 15, 2005, 9:30-a.m.-12:p.m., Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute for Religion, 1 West 4<sup>th</sup> St., Rm. 507, New York, NY 10012. Topics: RLIN 21: Is it a good bet?; Tehiyat ha-Metim: Death and Rebirth of a Music Database.

### Happy B-Day 2 Us

On April 27, 2004, "350 Years of American Jewish History" was hosted by the Ivan M. Stettenheim Library, of Congregation Emanu-El, with the Herbert & Eileen Bernard Museum of Judaica. Presented by **Elizabeth F. Stabler**, the celebration featured a lecture by Jonathan D. Sarna, one of America's foremost commentators on American Jewish history, religion, and life, and the Joseph H. & Beile R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University. On December 13, 2004, Ivan M. Stettenheim Library and the Herbert & Eileen Bernard Museum of Judaica hosted "Looking at Ourselves: The American Jewish Experience on Film." Eric A. Goldman, founder and president of Ergo Media and professor of film at Fairleigh Dickinson University and Queens College, spoke at length about the trials and tribulations of American Jews as portrayed on film. Dr. Goldman is also the author of *Visions, Images and Dreams: Yiddish Film Past and Present*, and he is currently writing a book on the American Jewish experience through film.

Which ocean liner did Bubbie arrive on? What was Uncle Moishe's last name on his birth certificate? These and other questions were answered at Introduction to Jewish Genealogy, a one-hour workshop held at the Center for Jewish History

Genealogy Institute. Presented by director **Robert**

**Friedman**, the workshop covered general principles and procedures of family history research. Topics included oral history, "family archives" of treasured photographs and documents, and selected Internet sites. The workshop ended with a tour of the CJH library.

### Yid Kid Lit

Once again it was a time to schmooze, network, and whip out the laptops. The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Jewish Children Book Conference, held November 21, 2004, at the Bottenweiser Library of the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y, gave writers, illustrators, editors, and enthusiasts of Jewish children's books a chance to gather around, exchange ideas, and simply inspire. Hosted by **Steven Siegel** and Anna Olswanger, the conference featured manuscript workshops and discussions on the current trends in the Jewish publishing world.

### Changes

**Basya Karp** is using a different e-mail address: [Jewishlibrarian@yahoo.com](mailto:Jewishlibrarian@yahoo.com). Please direct all e-mail correspondence to this address.

### Mazel Tov

To **Edith Lubetski**, on the marriage of her son Uriel to Shani Brukner; and on the birth of her granddaughter Talia Sara. Parents Ari & Leah Feldman.  
 To **Marlene Schiffman**, on the marriage of her daughter Estee to Jeremy Lavitt.  
 To **Leah Adler**, on the birth of her grandson Yonatan. Parents David & Mali Brofsky.  
 To **Marion Stein**, on the marriage of her daughter Daphne to Gary Steinberg; and on the birth of her grandson, Avishai Ben Zion. parents Yehuda & Naomi Najman.  
 To **Shaindy Kurzmänn**, on the marriage of her daughter Elisheva to Gabriel Jacobson.  
 To **Zalman Alpert**, on his engagement to Sarah Beck.  
 To **Shulamith Cohen**, on the birth of her grandson Tzvi Hersch Raphael; parents Menachem & Devora Linzer. May they all *schep nachas*.

### Condolences

To **Marion Stein**, on the death of her stepmother Eva E. Mandel.  
 To **Hallie Cantor**, on the death of her father Harvey Cantor, M.D.  
 To **Elana Gensler**, on the death of her grandmother Emily Pearl.  
 May they be comforted among the mourners of Zion in Jerusalem.

# CONVENTION

Thanks to a NYMA dream team, who made AJL Convention 2004,  
(Photos courtesy of Tova Friedman & Stanley Nachamie.)

**FOR OPENERS**  
MARION STEIN (l) &  
STANLEY NACHAMIE (r)  
usher in Torah Scrolls  
for the hotel *minyanim*.



**IT'S IN THE BAG**  
Holding up some of  
their handiwork,  
TOVA FRIEDMAN (l)  
& LANI DROZ (r) were two  
among many who put together  
AJL souvenir bags.

**EVERYTHING'S COMING UP ROSES**  
A special thanks to convention chairs  
ELANA GENSLER (l)  
& ELIZABETH F. STABLER (r)  
for their spectacular success.



# EXTRAVAGANZA!

held June 20th-23rd at the Brooklyn Marriott, a real blockbuster.

HONORABLE MENTSCHEN  
Former AJL President  
PEARL BERGER (l)  
& CEU coordinator  
SARA SPIEGEL (r)  
greet the camera.



RECIPE FOR SUCCESS  
Committee member  
SHULAMITH BERGER (l)  
discusses Jewish cookbooks.

CURTAIN CALL  
NYMA/NYC crew takes a bow at the grand banquet.



## IN MEMORIAM

**LIBRARIAN EXTRAORDINAIRE****In Loving Memory of Edith Degani**

Photo Credit: John H. Popper & the Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism.

**O**n August 22, 2004, Mrs. Edith Degani, founding member as well as longtime leader of AJL, passed away. Mrs. Degani served as Assistant Librarian at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, where she worked for more than 24 years before her retirement in 1996. In addition, she was mentor and advisor to hundreds, perhaps, thousands, of Judaica librarians around the world.

Edith Degani discovered her calling quite early in her adult life. While attending Queens College (class of 1942), she heard a rabbinical student teaching at her synagogue, the Astoria Center of Israel in Queens, who spoke at length about the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Soon, in her own words, "I found myself caught up in his enthusiasm and dreamt that someday I also, would be connected with that great institution." She enrolled in the Pratt Library School, and, assigned to visit a few libraries for a term paper, she made JTS her first choice.

After graduating from Pratt in 1943, Mrs. Degani went to work as a cataloger at the New York Public Library. In the meantime, determined to work at JTS, she enrolled in the Israel Friedlander adult education classes held at the Seminary. In between changing jobs, marrying, and raising two children, she kept up with Hebrew studies at various *ulpanim*. However, she grew discouraged when she realized she would not be proficient enough in the language to secure a position at JTS.

Then came the Library fire on April 18, 1966. Mrs. Degani described what happened: "Suddenly, experienced catalogers were needed and I applied for a position at the Seminary's library, scarcely daring to hope that I might be accepted. I arrived at my interview with trepidation, carrying my *ulpan* Hebrew textbook and saying to Dr. Menahem Schmelzer, then Librarian at the Seminary, pointing at the book I was holding, 'this is my level of Hebrew,' to which he responded, 'we have many people here who speak fluent Hebrew, but what we need in these critical days for the Library are your 25 years of library administrative and cataloging experience.'"

The rest is history. Mrs. Degani became a permanent presence, moving up from Cataloger to Technical Services Librarian to Assistant Librarian. Under her guiding hand the Library blossomed into the computerized powerhouse it is today. Her warmth, firmness, and encouragement provided a model for so many librarians. A strong and

dynamic person, she guided a generation of librarians and served a role model, a supervisor, and most of all a lesson on how to be a *mentsch*.

Naomi Steinberger, Director of Library Services at JTS, offers her personal recollections of this remarkable person.

**I**t was the summer of 1987 when Esther Nussbaum suggested that I call Edith Degani regarding a job at the JTS Library. One hot and humid morning I came to the Seminary and met with a small, white-haired woman. Mrs. Degani was direct and told me that the job that I was inquiring about had been filled, but that she had something else in mind.

This was my first lesson in creative management that I learned from Mrs. Degani. She evaluated a situation, looked at opportunities, always “out of the box,” and devised a way in which she could make something work.

Mrs. Degani was a true leader in the field of Judaica librarianship. She was also a wonderful storyteller, who told me many tales of her professional life. She was in the first graduating class of Queens College and then went on to graduate school, during World War II, to become a librarian. She mentioned her career at the SUNY Maritime College and at the Pforzheimer collection, which had a complete Gutenberg Bible.

**She evaluated a situation, looked at opportunities, always “out of the box,” and devised a way in which she could make something work.**

She also told me about her arrival at JTS shortly after the fire in 1966. Mrs. Degani at that time was instrumental in bringing the devastated library and its collection into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She initiated the recataloging of the entire collection, the restructuring of the technical services operations in the pre-fab temporary library stacks, and moving the Library’s collection into its current location. She proudly said that the Library was closed only a very few days during the entire move.

Mrs. Degani spent an enormous amount of time mentoring me. We discussed supervision of staff, fair and equitable treatment of people, personnel issues, and on a more personal note, the knack of balancing careers and families. We brainstormed on ways to accomplish, on a shoestring budget, enormous projects in the Library.

We did project planning and implementation. We worked together on the computerization of the Library’s catalog, in the late 1980s, when this was an entirely new venture in all libraries. Always at the forefront of the cutting-edge technology, Mrs. Degani, then in her late sixties, was already planning for the library of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. She embraced with a vengeance the new computers in the library and quickly learned how to use her e-mail.

We worked on getting government funding for networking libraries long before the Internet even existed. We also talked about improving customer service, about meeting the research needs of the students and the faculty, and about bringing more students to library bibliographic instruction programs. She always reminded me that an academic research library was a dignified place.

Mrs. Degani’s strength, determination, and commitment to the library and to the Seminary never wavered. Her compassion for library staff members was overflowing. She always had time for everyone who wished to speak with her. Her door was always open, and she treated each staff member with respect and in confidence.

She often told me about the hundreds of Judaica librarians whom she had advised on careers, job moves, job leads, and on personal matters. She impacted on so many of our lives and our careers, and for this I am personally grateful. She was very much our leader, our teacher, and our mentor, who will be missed by all those whose lives she touched.

*(President, cont'd from Pg. 1)*

coordinated the awards luncheon and banquet. Our photographers, whose work you will see in this issue, were Tova Friedman and Stanley Nachamie. The catering committee was chaired by Shaindy Kurzman, who was also the force behind the signage at the convention. And a most heartfelt thank-you to all of you who pitched in when we needed you. Despite a number of challenges, particularly from the Brooklyn Marriot, we should all be very proud of a job well done. And now, we are ready to resume our regular programming.

AJL-NYMA has renewed its cooperative relationship with AJL-LI, whose members are now invited to attend NYMA events at member costs. We will inform each other of our events. NYMA has also extended this privilege to our neighbors to the north, the new Westchester chapter, chaired by former NYMA member, Irene Seff.

The Board membership has changed slightly. We are reluctantly announcing that our long-time treasurer, Julia Bock, has decided to resign. We will miss Julia's presence; however, we are happy to announce that Judy Fixler, of the Leo Baeck Institute, has agreed to take over Julia's role. Tina Weiss has also joined the Board and will be in charge

of Membership Outreach. We are delighted that Joyce Levine will also join the Board as a liaison to the Yeshiva Cluster Group, based in AJL-LI. Sara Marcus has agreed to contribute as NYMA Listserve mistress and will be working on a web page for us. *Acharon acharon chaviv* – I wish to thank Hallie Cantor, whose patience is supreme and to whom we are indebted for a consistently excellent Newsletter.

As I speak, plans are being made for the Day School/High School Workshop, chaired by Roz Friedman and Elana Gensler. In addition, Ina Cohen and Rachail Kurtz are organizing an excellent Reference Workshop, taking place at the end of March. It will feature Julia Bock speaking about resources for Holocaust education and Faith Jones discussing resources for Yiddish language materials. Marlene Schiffman is working on a Cataloging Workshop program, focusing on both RLIN21 and Jewish music, to be held March 15<sup>th</sup>. The Spring Conference, to be held in May, is still in the planning stages.

Look for these announcements in your mailboxes and in your e-mail.

**Elizabeth F. Stabler**