

Ansche Chesed

160 years

just  
the  
beginning...



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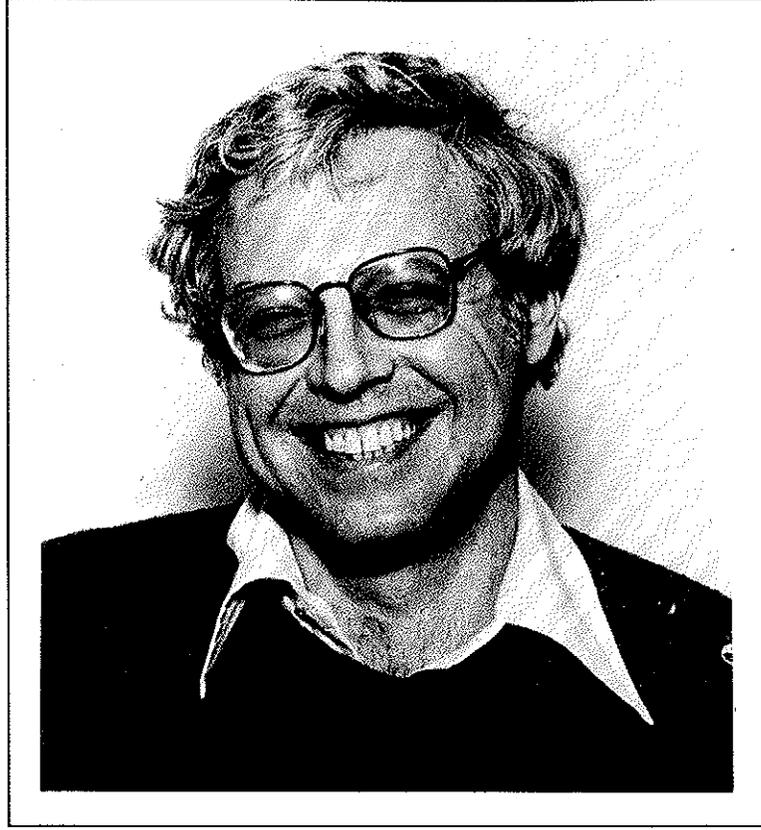
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Ansche Chesed  
160th Anniversary  
Journal



*In Memory of Paul Cowan*

## ANSCHE CHESED'S 160TH ANNIVERSARY JOURNAL

When Paul Cowan helped commence the revitalization of Anshe Chesed, we are sure he had no idea of what a bustling and exhilarating place it would be ten years later. Nor could he have known that the first post-revitalization journal would be dedicated to his memory. But, knowing Paul, we can be certain that, given a choice, he'd prefer that this journal chronicle the joy, life, and energy in Anshe Chesed rather than the sorrow losing him caused us all.

And that we have done. With the help of so many members and friends, we think this journal has turned out to be an inspiring history, past and present, of 160 years of a special American-Jewish community. We hope that the reunion weekend, too, will be characterized by a sense of community, by a combination of fun and seriousness, and that it will be a spur to further growth, not only in numbers, but in the ways that really count.

We want to especially thank those whose efforts have made the journal and the weekend happen:

### On the journal:

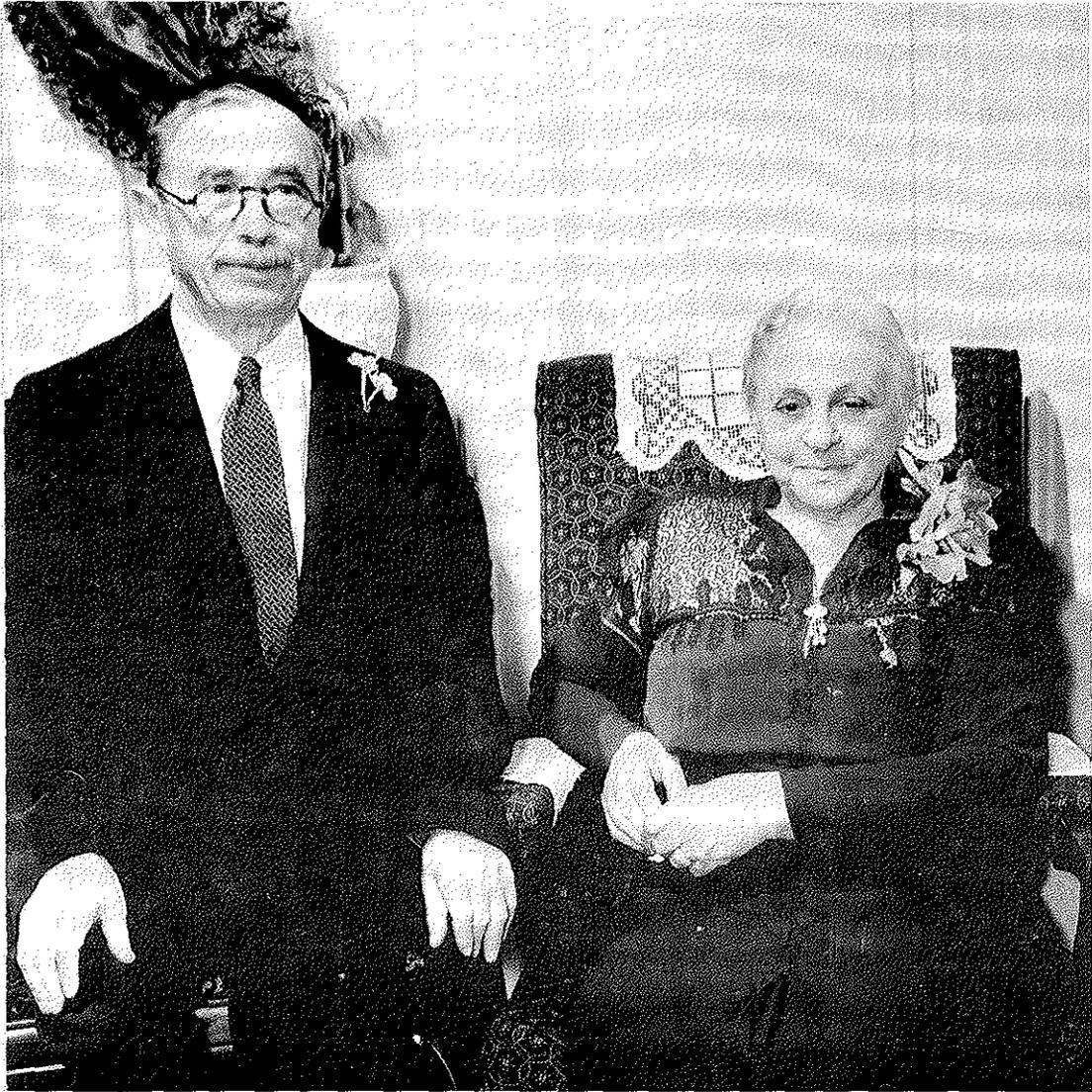
- \*Adrienne Weiss for her inspired design, and countless other contributions to the 160th.
- \*Michael Brochstein for his skillful desktop publishing, frequent hospitality, fine photography, and never-ending willingness to take on -- and accomplish -- difficult tasks.
- \*Ruth Salzman for heading the photo-phonathon committee.
- \*Randy Rosenthal, Barbara Fleck-Paladino, Salem Alaton, and Sharon Strassfeld for their lively writing and editing.
- \*Friends and family of Paul Cowan for their moving memories.
- \*Past presidents, Emil Lehman, Allen Nadler, Iris Korman, and incumbent Jerry Raik for their wise words.
- \*Ad sales coordinators Michael Fluss and Bernie Tenzer and sales phonathoners Fred Hans, Shirley Lowenstein, Mike Mantel, Laurel Oppenheimer, Barbara Rothenberg, Dr. Deborah Wallace, Eillene Leistner, Laura Smith, Debbie Cassel, Ken Amron, Bernie Gelb, Esther and Walter Hautzig, Martin Green, and Alex Ross.
- \*Ellen Alt for her striking cover.
- \*Martin Green and Ilene Zatal for their invaluable proofreading.

### On the reunion weekend:

- \*Kate Gonzer for her indefatigable work in locating and contacting former members, and Debbie Cassel and Selma Deutsch who helped her.
- \*Vivian Awner for curating the fascinating exhibit of memorabilia.
- \*Herta Shriner for coordinating the old-timers brunch, for her frequent hospitality, and for always being there.
- \*Mark Lawrence for his ideas, support, and the excellent photos he took of the 114th street site.
- \*Barbara Spiegel and Mimi Gelb for so capably overseeing the food for the weekend.
- \*Wing Lee and Jerry Raik for the "Memories" videotape.
- \*Sarah Jacobs for her early efforts which were only interrupted by motherhood - and Vicky Gould to whom the torch was passed, who lighted the fire under everybody and made it all happen.
- \*Helayne Gordon, Abby Cahn, LaRhonda Soto, Amelia Ender and Tom Arnold for their support from the A.C. office.
- \*And, of course, Michael Strassfeld for his inspiration which started it all.

Happy 160th to all!

Arlene Eisenberg, chair 160th committee  
Howard Eisenberg, journal editor



*Max and Leah Hirsch, parents of Harold Hirsch*

# In The Beginning

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*Two members of Anshe Chesed, circa 1989, flew off in search of its past. One went to written records, the other to oral histories. (The latter apologizes to those who weren't home when she called, or with whom she somehow missed connections.) The two accounts, by no means definitive, follow.*

## WHAT HISTORY BOOKS AND HISTORIANS SAY

By Randy Rosenthal

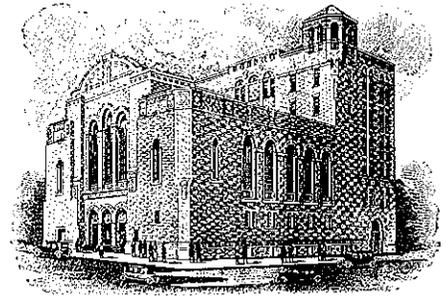
It began, as so many synagogues do, with a secession. Was it a stormy fight over the choice of a siddur? A hazzan? High Holiday seating? We may never know. In 1828, for reasons unknown, a group of disgruntled German, Dutch, and Polish Jews seceded from B'nai Jeshurun -- which had splintered off earlier from Shearith Israel, the Spanish-Portuguese synagogue -- and took the name we bear today: Anshe Chesed.

Such secessions were the norm in pre-Civil War Manhattan, and the new improved Anshe Chesed did not escape them. But it was "still in the 1850s the largest synagogue in the country," even after dissident groups left to found, among others, Shaarey Zedek and Rodeph Sholom. In a pattern still familiar, Anshe Chesed began life in rented quarters -- first, at 202 1/2 Grand Street, and later, in 1836, in rooms on Center and White Streets above the New York Dispensary.

### First Ever

In its formative years, Anshe Chesed claimed a number of remarkable "firsts" in what might be called the Ginsberg Book of Records. The "very first rabbi to settle in the United States," Rabbi Abraham Rice, arrived in New York in 1840. Only after stopping to address the prominent young congregation, Anshe Chesed, did he leave for his rabbinical post in Baltimore. The early 1840s saw the arrival of the first ordained rabbis, who came to America from Germany. Dr. Leo Merzbacher, first among them to settle in New York, was a native of Furth who had studied rabbinics with Moses Sofer of Pressburg. In 1843, two years after his arrival, he "became preacher at Anshe Chesed at a salary of six dollars a month." He served simultaneously at Rodeph Sholom, but the details of his earnings and duties there are unknown.

The second ordained rabbi to settle in New York also served Anshe Chesed: Dr. Max Lienthal, who held a rabbinical degree from Rabbi Hirsch Aub of Munich and a doctorate from the University of Munich. Soon after his arrival in 1845, he was named rabbi of three synagogues of the "United German community" -- Anshe Chesed, Rodeph Shalom, and Shaarey Hashamayim. Dr. Lienthal "delivered opinions on Jewish law, supervised ritual slaughter and the baking of unleavened bread, spoke at weddings and funerals, and was expected to visit the sick. He attempted to improve the decorum of the services at his congregations..." His salary: a princely \$1,000 per year.



*Anshe Chesed circa 1927*

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*In Honor of  
Arlene Eisenberg*

# In The Beginning, continued.

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## A Trained Voice

Probably the first cantor with professional vocal training, Rev. Leon Sternberger arrived from Warsaw in 1849 and was named Anshe Chesed's hazzan. He seems to have swept all before him. Then hazzan, Rev. Jonas Hecht, was "reassigned" to the post of assistant hazzan, and Rev. Sternberger took over instruction of the newly-formed choir from Mr. Levy Cohen. The new hazzan was responsible for another premiere at Anshe Chesed -- the organization and direction of the first mixed Jewish choir -- and he had distinct opinions about how his choir was to be taught.

The hazzan "had the congregation purchase a violin for use in teaching the choir, which he built up to a membership of 16 adults, both men and women, and 11 children. Notebooks were purchased; a copyist was engaged to write out the notes from Sulzer's Shir Zion." For choir participation, some members received free seats, others were paid -- \$25-50 a year in 1850, soaring to a soloist's \$63 in 1855. The group sang every Shabbat, inspiring a Battle of Choirs among some New York congregations.

The choir's memorable debut, however, took place at Anshe Chesed's Norfolk Street synagogue. It was an elaborate event attended by the Right Honorable Cale Woodhull, Mayor of the City of New York, as well as "some aldermen and a great many other persons of distinction."

## The Little Blue Pushke

The active collection of funds for charity in Palestine has a long history at Anshe Chesed. As early as 1832, urged on by Chief Rabbi Hirschel of London, Anshe Chesed and two other congregations established the Hevra Terumat Hakodesh, "to minister to the wants of our poor and oppressed brethren residing in the Holy Land." The fund existed for two decades or more.

Communal celebrations in the mid-19th century included gatherings in the Sukkah, and "learnings" on Hoshanah Rabbah and Shavuot. Catering was uncomplicated. "In 1843," for example, "for a Shabuot (sic) night of study, the trustees of this synagogue purchased 1 barrel small beer, 4 shillings worth crackers and 4 shillings worth apples."

In the late 1860s, innovations at Anshe Chesed included the introduction of family pews and the acquisition of a pipe organ. In 1873, the congregation built a new synagogue at 63rd Street and Lexington Avenue; but a year later, it merged with Adas Jeshurun to become Temple Beth-El. Subsequently, Beth-El merged with Temple Emanuel.

## Regeneration

Was the original Anshe Chesed lost? Opinions differ, but it seems not. In 1876, a group calling itself Chebra Anshe Chesed was formed on the East Side. It relocated to Harlem in 1893 (following a general German-Jewish migration in that direction) and two years later incorporated as Congregation Anshe Chesed. It seems likely that Chebra Anshe Chesed was a "re-starting" of the original congregation by members dissatisfied with the merger.

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Chorosh**

*In Memory of  
Cecilia & William H.  
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In 1907, Ansche Chesed purchased land on 114th Street and Seventh Avenue from David A. Cohen, a businessman known for his strong support of Jewish organizations. His son, Elias A. Cohen, was a member of the board of directors of Ansche Chesed, and, like his father, was closely involved with many Jewish philanthropic and religious groups. (A plaque honoring Elias hangs in the synagogue lobby today.) The Cohens supplied an important link between the "old" and "new" Ansche Chesed. According to their family tradition, the organ acquired in 1867 was later moved to the first Harlem building at 160 E. 112th (it may have been 110th) Street. Ultimately, it found its way to Tranquillity Farm, a summer camp sponsored by the Cohen family.

### Uptown

The construction of that first Harlem synagogue was poignantly described at the laying of the cornerstone of the current building. A.U. Zinke, then vice-president, wrote: "In the years of the memorable panic of 1907, (the) undertaking was begun. About 70 members made up the whole congregation. The undertaking cost roundly \$275,000. Funds were utterly inadequate and resources were little better. In a situation so unfavorable, some held back, some went into the new plan hesitantly, while a small but determined group -- as is always the case -- remained to do the hard work. In 1908, the new building was formally dedicated in the presence of a large assemblage, the honor of laying the cornerstone having been given to the late Isidor Straus, philanthropist and one-time Member of Congress."

Among those invited to the ceremony was Prof. Solomon Schechter, founder of the Conservative movement. A letter expressing his regret at being unable to attend is in the Ansche Chesed archives. In answer to a call from Dr. Schechter nearly a decade later, Ansche Chesed was one of the first congregations to join United Synagogue.

The congregation hosted many elegant fetes, the annual Purim-ball among them. Its board minutes for Monday, June 5, 1911 read: "The following letters of thanks were ordered send (sic) in connection with the ball: to Bro. David Steckler, Chairman; to Bro. S. Saenger who procured the talent and sold the most tickets; to Mr. Joseph Strauss our esteemed seatholder who procured advertisements and sold a good many tickets...The record of Bro. Monheimer as champion advertisement solicitor was not broken by anybody...Bro. Hess was instructed to secure either the Hotel Astor or the Waldorf-Astoria for the Purim-ball of 1912 at such terms as to insure a financial success."

In the decades that followed, the German-Jewish population moved again, leaving Harlem for points south and west. As its membership moved to the Upper West Side, Ansche Chesed followed.

The cornerstone of the magnificent \$1.5 million building at 100th Street and West End Avenue was laid in 1927, and dedicated the following year, a century after the congregation's first stirrings on the Lower East Side.

The stock market crash only a year after the dedication forced the congregation to spend more than a decade settling accounts with contractors. The recently restored decorative work in the main sanctuary dates only to 1948. Financial hardship early on undoubtedly contributed to the delay.

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# In The Beginning, continued.

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## Happy Days

The 1930s, 40s and 50s were the new synagogue's heyday. Services, led by renowned cantor Adolph Katchko, were elegant, and crowds filled the sanctuary to capacity on the High Holidays. Ansche Chesed's Sylvia Gilbert spearheaded the formation of United Synagogue Youth, and the temple was home to Beit Hayered, a progressive Jewish school, boasted an active sisterhood and brotherhood, and was filled with activity, day and night.

As the face of the West Side changed, so did Ansche Chesed's. Shifting demographics contributed to the synagogue's general decline. In the late 60s and early 70s, membership shrank, the members who remained were aging, and with little money for maintenance, the building, too, began to show its age. Then, in the late 70s, help arrived -- new life for the synagogue in a group of dynamic young newcomers who, joining those whose lives were joined to Ansche Chesed's earlier, have helped fulfill a prediction made by Elias Cohen some 60 years ago.

A souvenir journal was published for ceremonies marking the start of Ansche Chesed's new life on the Upper West Side. In an essay, "Our New Temple," building committee chairman Cohen concluded: "Everything has been provided for, and I believe that the builders will find in time that they have builded (sic) even better than they knew..."

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\* With acknowledgments (throughout this history) to The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654-1860, Hyman B. Grinstein, The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1947; When Harlem Was Jewish, 1870-1930, Jeffrey S. Gurock, Columbia University Press, New York, 1979; "A Brief History of Ansche Chesed's 160 Years," Michael Strassfeld, Ansche Chesed Bulletin.

## WHAT EARLY MEMBERS REMEMBER

By Barbara Fleck-Paladino

Surely it was families then as it is families now. For sisters Judith Kohn Endelman and Louise Kohn Gabel, memories of Ansche Chesed are memories of close relatives: Uncle Jacob Kohn, its rabbi from 1910 until 1931. Mother Cora Goodfriend Kohn, whose adoptive parents -- her aunt Carrie and uncle and board member Meyer Goodfriend -- raised her to consider Ansche Chesed a second home. Father Leon, whose romance with Cora blossomed in the temple. "Our families and friends," the sisters recall warmly, "lived for Ansche Chesed."

Memories of Ansche Chesed's elegance are vivid for Pauline Rosenberg Barkman, whose family joined the temple in 1918. "It was top hats and tails. It was formal," she recalls with fond regret for "when I was a teenager." Adds Miriam Levinson Haies whose home was across the street, "The front was of Italian marble. You knew there was a wedding because then they put a canopy over the steps leading to the curb." Whenever 10-year-old Miriam spotted that canopy, she would beg her mother for permission to go over and sit in the back pew with friends. Then, "we would watch the most beautiful wedding ceremonies ever performed in the city of New York."

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Paladino

### School Days

Her family attended an orthodox synagogue, but Miriam attended Ansche Chesed's Hebrew school. "It met Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturday afternoons, and Sundays. There were several hundred of us. Sunday school was for five- to seven-year-olds. Hebrew began at seven."

The principal was Cantor Marcel Katz, and the janitor's name was Maus. "The joke," recounts Judith, "was that Katz chased Maus." Henrietta Wolf was a respected Hebrew teacher of long standing. "Milton Steinberg, who later became rabbi of Park Avenue Synagogue, taught at Ansche Chesed, too," says Miriam. "It was really up-to-date. Downstairs the classroom doors rolled back to form one large room for services and assemblies. Everyone dressed in costume for Purimspiels. Young adults put on shows."

Henrietta and another Miss Wolf devoted the girls' final school year to preparation for confirmation, "including how to kosher meat and how to be Jewish young ladies." Mr. Katz ("who brooked no nonsense") prepared the boys for bar mitzvah. In 1925 when Miriam was confirmed during Shavuot, "the whole synagogue was a bower of white flowers." Selma Norwalk Friedman remembers, "We all wore white dresses." Continues Miriam, "Each of us had to give a dissertation on a rabbi. Mine was Rabbi Akiva."

By 1923, Leon and Cora Kohn had met, married, were well along on their own family, and moved with four-year-old Judith into her great-uncle Meyer Goodfriend's brownstone on 113th Street. Sunday board meetings hosted by her great-uncle Meyer and peopled by "Dickensian characters" left "smoke-filled rooms," says Judith. One of the first words the little girl learned was "meeting." It was "before I knew what a meeting was," she says.

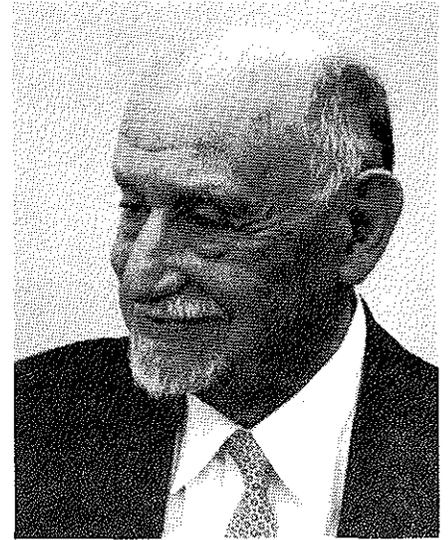
Services (led by Rabbi Jacob Kohn and Cantor Katz, accompanied by a choir of professional singers with organ on holidays and Shabbat afternoons) "were beautiful," Judith recalls. "The officers sat up on the bimah in their morning suits. On their way out, they wore black silk high hats.

"In 1928, we moved downtown to the west side because Harlem was changing," she continues. After the move, the Harlem building became a Baptist church.

Judith (who says, "My uncle Jacob was the rabbi, but I didn't know the meaning of nepotism!") was one of those chosen to address the congregation. "I was eight. I had a crush on a little boy named Irwin Wolf, and suffered agonies when he forgot his speech. It was a Sunday afternoon in May. We children presented a big basket of flowers to the congregation." Other speakers included Louie Marshall, a prominent lawyer and philanthropist and John Finley, editor-in-chief of The New York Times. The building lacked finishing touches. "It was all white plaster inside," says Judith. "I thought it looked nicer then, before they added the gold. The seat covers and carpet -- wine colored -- were new. The Torahs with their gold and silver and white were magnificent."

### A Growing Membership

Ansche Chesed flourished. Those on the board who had invested "were given their seats in perpetuity. We always had the same seating;



**Jacob Kohn was rabbi of Ansche Chesed from 1911 to 1931 through the transition from 114th St. and Seventh Avenue to our present location.**

#### *In Memory of*

**LEON A. KOHN**

Board of Trustees 1927-1956  
Chairman School Board 1929-1956

**CORA GOODFRIEND KOHN**

Active Member  
Sisterhood President 1960's

**MEYER GOODFRIEND**

President Ansche Chesed 1910-1927

**CARRIE GOODFRIEND**

Longtime Active Member 1905-1940

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& Barbara Kaufman**

**Edith Barschi  
& Robert Jackson**

**Happy Birthday  
Ansche Chesed**

## In The Beginning, continued.

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*The Sewing Circle on the fifth floor, now home of the West Side Minyan*

the Mutterperls were fourth row on the left. We were fifth row on the left. The Wolfs were in the third row. Their son Julian later married the daughter of Edward I. Shire, the architect of both the 114th and 100th Street buildings. Guards kept people from coming without tickets. Uncle Jacob was annoyed about people coming just for Yizkor. He called it family worship -- said they only came to pray to their ancestors."

Much like today, there were many children. "On Simchas Torah we marched around," recalls Judith. The gym was used by a theater group as well as for basketball. On the sixth floor was a big youth lounge.

The Bella Heine Sewing Circle, named in honor of a member from the 114th Street temple, met Mondays in the Sisterhood room, to sew layettes for orphans. "At that time, we had a janitor whose apartment was on the same floor or below it. The janitor's wife, it seemed, cooked pigs knuckles and bacon, and somehow all the nice Jewish hausfraus plying their needles recognized the smell!" Most days, something was going on. Says Judith, "Tuesdays was Hadassah, Tuesday nights my father -- chairman of the board for many years -- went to school board meetings. Just after World War II, he helped establish the first Conservative Jewish nursery school in the country at Anshe Chesed: Beit Hayaed. Wednesdays, the Sisterhood met." Footnotes Louise, "Our mother, Cora, was president of the Sisterhood into her eighties." Sundays were invariably busy, too; and in early Fall selling High Holiday seats took up lots of time. Both Judith and Louise licked and stamped envelopes in the office to help out.

With the Depression, Judith heard a new refrain around the house: "The note is due...the note is due..." People sold things to pay off the notes for the temple. There was sometimes bitterness. It was terrible. By 1931, they could no longer pay the rabbi's salary. My uncle Jacob left with his wife and four children to become rabbi of Temple Sinai, the largest Conservative temple in Los Angeles."

It was a great loss. "Rabbi Kohn was very well loved," says Selma Norwalk Friedman. "When he moved away, we were all heartbroken."

After a succession of mostly student rabbis, Anshe Chesed's fortunes took an upward swing lasting through the rest of the thirties, forties, and well into the fifties. Real estate businessman Elias Cohen, son of philanthropist-member David Cohen, became an active leader. To 18-year-old Eleanor Friedman, briefly a switchboard operator at his office, "Elias Cohen was big, strong, never wore a coat in the coldest weather; he was charming. He brought a lot of people over from Europe and was very active in HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society). He loved Tranquility Camp (a youth camp in Earlton, New York, that his family helped sponsor)." "At one time," says Helaine Friedman Todd whose family joined in 1934, "Elias Cohen was the temple!" Helaine's father, Irving, eventually succeeded Cohen as temple president. Among Helaine's favorite memories: the young marrieds group, Elvin Nichols' affection for all the children (including her own young son, Alan), and her mother cutting the challahs at weddings and each year in the Sukkah. "Once they raffled off a Cadillac," she recalls, "and my father won it! That was fun, but the aggravation my father had hiring and firing rabbis wasn't."

Member Sylvia Wollan Gilbert was active with the youth groups, the school, and with fundraising. Annual dinner dances were held at the Ritz Carlton and the Waldorf," she recalls. Among members, says Sylvia, were "Sol Mutterperl, a pocketbook manufacturer; Victor Wouk,

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**The Shawn Family**

---

brother to novelist Herman; Irving Geist, also a manufacturer." After Rabbi Zeitlin was hired, she recalls, "Benny Goodman, a friend of his, dedicated a classroom." Rabbi Zeitlin, who became Ansche Chesed's spiritual leader, encouraged formal dress; orchid corsages adorned evening gowns.

By the time David Siegel came on the scene as executive director in 1950, Ansche Chesed was beginning to see signs of general decline. "There were problems," he says. He cites unwillingness of long-time officers to let him read the records at first, a decline in finances, and differences of opinions about the running of the temple. In time, to help neighborhood youth and to bring in some, by then, needed income David recommended renting out the gym to the city for use by community youngsters; it was agreed to reluctantly and regretted immediately by some. "Many old-timers resented the presence of noisy young outsiders; they couldn't stand the kids around the building." Despite the objections, Sylvia credits the gym basketball program of those days with putting an end to "trouble with a gang of tough kids who would rough up some of the members' kids."

Both building and members aged; "but most board members," says Siegel, "didn't want to be aware of the deterioration. In their minds, they still saw the old splendor."

#### Another Split

Disagreement over the politics and comportment of Rabbi Zeitlin divided the membership. Finally, says David, "I remember a very acrimonious meeting after which the rabbi was dismissed. By order of the board, I had to sit in his office with him and watch while he packed his things. It was the most embarrassing half-hour of my life."

Seeking a place with more liberal views than the Orthodox temple where his father chose to remain, Walter Hautzig and his mother Rosa had joined the synagogue in the early forties when high holiday tickets cost ten dollars for each seat jammed into the back and the aisles of the already crowded sanctuary. He remained at Ansche Chesed until the split. "I joined the revolution and went with Rabbi Zeitlin and many others; he was an ardent Zionist and many wealthy Ansche Chesed members were not. We followed Zeitlin to the Riverside synagogue on 103rd Street. I was young. We were used to him. He was a personal friend. After some years, Riverside ran out of money and folded. We returned to Ansche Chesed and have been there ever since."

Ansche Chesed was sometimes a bridge between Orthodoxy and the more liberal reforms of Conservatism, but at times the going proved thorny. Al Schwartz, its shammes for many years, had strong Orthodox leanings. "He ruled the place and was often autocratic; he believed he had a straight line to God," says his niece Betty with wry affection. Because she thought Ansche Chesed extraordinarily beautiful, she chose in 1946 to have her wedding there. It also enchanted her little sister Loretta: "When you're seven years old and in a room that beautiful...the sun streaming in through the stained glass windows, highlighting painted frescoes, designs, and lettering, you remember," says Letty Cottin Pogrebin. "It was one of the most perfect days of my childhood, being the flower girl and walking down the aisle dropping my little petals. My mother -- who died when I was 15 -- was thrilled, too."

When the time came, Letty went out of her way to arrange for her own wedding to take place at Ansche Chesed. "I wanted to feel my

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## In The Beginning, continued.



*Panel restoration in the Sanctuary,  
1988*

mother's presence walking down the aisle with me." Her Uncle Al's orthodoxies complicated matters. "He did not permit playing any musical instruments, or photography, though it was a Sunday. He sang. So I had my mother's spirit and my uncle's reality," she says ruefully, adding that "although the sanctuary wasn't in quite the shape it had been in for my sister's wedding, it was still beautiful for mine."

Effie Schwartz Apelast, Al Schwartz's daughter, sees things from a different perspective: "When my sister and I were kids, we used to chatter during services. During World War II, the sanctuary was mobbed. They had to put extra chairs in the front row. A man named Phil Holman, the head usher, was always coming around shushing us when we giggled. As we got older, we'd sit in front and sing along with the choir. Cantor Katchko would get annoyed.

"My father was the shammes during the Depression and for 36 years. It was a livelihood; but he was orthodox in a conservative synagogue, and carried the burden of not being sure he was doing the right thing. It may explain why he used to get angry when he saw infractions; he was uncomfortable at times and felt a tremendous need to be certain the members didn't do anything wrong. But he blew a wonderful shofar, and, of course, he read the Torah. And, like my mother, Dorothy, who was a Sisterhood member, he worked very hard for the synagogue -- on the journal, bringing in money.

"We walked home from shul on Saturdays a little later than everyone else because we had to lock the ark. On the way, we'd run into members who had been shopping on their way home or had been smoking. Many a member palmed a lighted cigarette into his pocket because of not wanting my father to see. The young boys remembered him for chasing them when they played ball against the synagogue wall. It was kind of hard for us to be friends with these people; the circumstances kept us in a class by ourselves."

Cantor Adolph Katchko was conscientious to the point of minimizing his personal needs. "One year he fainted in the middle of the Yom Kippur service," recalls David Siegel. "Though he had been feeling ill, he'd refused to take any food because he didn't think it was fitting for the Shaliach Tzibbur, the intermediary between the congregation and God."

In those days during the annual Kol Nidre appeal, says Siegel, "Elias Cohen would be behind the bimah with an adding machine on his lap, totaling pledges." But David's happiest memories are of his own small son and daughter waiting for him to finish up and take them home on Friday afternoons. They would imitate Cantor Katchko and the rabbi by parading around the sanctuary with the Torah while custodian Elvin Nichols and his companion Ross cleaned. That little boy, Danny Siegel, says his father with quiet pride, "is now chaplain of Dartmouth college, rabbi of that community, and he looks in on Hillel."

David Kaplan's family joined Ansche Chesed in 1958. His mother, with a degree in social work, insisted on praying upstairs in the balcony with a few other women although there was officially no mechitzah. Born in eastern Europe, she preferred the old familiar ways. Furthermore, though David knew his mother didn't believe in such stuff she told him tales a-la the old country to the effect that "at night ghosts of the dead who had been wronged in life would rise up and haunt the synagogue, crying out for justice." He doesn't believe it either. "Still,

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when I pass the office, especially at night, I sometimes get a chill," he says.

He found his Hebrew classes in the late fifties and early sixties to be chaotic; "teachers were scholarly but had little empathy for adolescents." His mother, hospitalized with a fatal illness, and his sister, then a student at the University of Wisconsin, were absent from his Bar Mitzvah. "My grandparents came though and stayed at the Hotel Paris. A buffet catered by Rosenblum's Delicatessen (then located at 100th Street and Broadway) was held in the lobby of Hirsch Hall."

In those days, David found high holiday services to be rather elitist: "...a very formal upper class atmosphere. The distinction between upstairs and downstairs services was not ideological; it was financial: downstairs was cheaper. It was led by a rabbinical student from the Jewish Theological Seminary."

#### Following the West Side Downhill

"People had started to move away," says Sylvia Gilbert. "We lost our children. We couldn't keep the school going. We finally had two classes left. In the late fifties came deterioration."

Walter Hautzig married Esther in 1950. "We were back at Ansche Chesed during the hard times when we were down to 60 members." At one point, their son David asked, "Tell me; do only old people go to temple?" His parents saw to it he learned otherwise. Eventually he was a Bar Mitzvah at the Western Wall in Jerusalem and read haftorah at a special service at Ansche Chesed; "double jeopardy, he called it!" says his proud father.

But for a long time, the symptoms of Ansche Chesed's downspin continued: peeling paint and falling plaster; thefts; the brutal mugging of custodian Elvin Nichols; poor attendance; low morale.

#### Scaling The Heights

The congregation limped along. But the seeds of renewal were already being planted. In the late seventies, Nahma Sandrow, an active member today, was lured by "aromas." She hadn't been in a temple for many months. "One Sukkot I just dropped in. I took the elevator toward the roof and it smelled so good -- the sukkah smell and the branches."

Nahma soon became actively involved. One of her contributions to the rebirth of Ansche Chesed: giving birth herself. "I belonged to the West Side Minyan," she says. "So did the Mowshowitz family and the Cheskis-Cotel family. Between January and May of 1979 we all had babies. We nursed them on the fifth floor; we'd schlep them around the building and change their diapers. As they got older, they started running around; they were conspicuous. For at least five years, if there was any noise, it was our kids."

Child care arrangements, at first paid for individually and arranged by a few became more commonplace; for, with Ansche Chesed's comeback of the eighties, the growing numbers of babies and young children swelled the minyanim that replaced the one large congregation. "Eventually," marvels Nahma, "on yontif there would be rooms and rooms for child care."

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Congratulations!  
We didn't think we'd  
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Lina Schiff,  
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and representing the  
younger wave of Ansche  
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## In The Beginning, continued.

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Elvin Nichols, formerly custodian and presently retired and working just part time at Anshe Chesed, has been a sympathetic observer of high times and low. He saw times of elegance when the help wore uniforms and a canopy arched the entrance. He was there when the canopy was demolished by a hurricane in the seventies; when he was seriously hurt in the mugging, he was tempted not to come back. He did come back and he's seen Anshe Chesed come back, too. He is often there these days to shake hands and wish a member "Good Shabbos" after services.

Anshe Chesed's appearance has not necessarily always kept pace with its spiritual rebirth. Judith Kohn Endelman, who through the years returned nearly annually for one holiday service or another, always considered it, no matter how far away she lived, to be, "my temple." However, a few years ago she couldn't help feeling disheartened. "I saw the net in the sanctuary...and I said, 'I'm not coming back.'"

On the weekend of May 19 to 21st, when a refurbished Anshe Chesed celebrates its 160th anniversary, many will attend. Judith Endelman is coming back; she'll find the net is gone and the sanctuary looks sparkling and new. And she'll be in good company. Families of Anshe Chesed past will join families of Anshe Chesed present to commemorate and cheer it. Perhaps they'll share some anecdotes and look forward to stories the next 160 years will have to tell.

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### Eugene Klein, an appreciation by Rachel Cowan

Eugene Klein was the shammus of Anshe Chesed when we began the revitalization of the shul. He ran the morning minyan; he bought candy for the children on Simchat Torah and Purim; he yelled at people to turn the lights out if he thought money was being wasted. If someone missed minyan, or went off on a trip, he called to make sure they were all right. He was in charge of his realm.

A survivor of years in a concentration camp and a slave labor brigade, he had promised God that he would serve His people if he came out alive. He told many stories of life in Budapest. He loved Bartok and his weekly card game. He also, though rarely, told stories of life in the camps. He once told me that whenever he got an extra piece of bread, he would share it with someone else. I am sure it was his toughness, his generous spirit, and his faith in God that enabled him to keep fighting for life.

To me he was a teacher and a model. He was the zayde I never had.



*Eugene Klein*

# The Odyssey

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## ANSCHÉ CHESED'S LONG (AND SOMETIMES PAINFUL) ODYSSEY

by Sharon Strassfeld

In 1979, Dr. Emil Lehman, then president of Anshe Chesed, realized that it was all too likely that Anshe Chesed would no longer be able to survive without drastic change to alter the inexorable decline of the congregation. He turned to Rabbi Wolfe Kelman. Wolfe called Paul and Rachel Cowan and Michael and me. Everyone agreed that the situation had reached a critical stage and that the task of bringing young people into the synagogue would not be an easy one. Everyone also agreed, however, that the institution was too significant to be allowed to die.

A meeting was scheduled and every young Jewish group on the west side was invited to attend. This included the West Side Minyan, Project Dorot, the New York Havurah, the Havurah School, and Derech Reut Havurah as well as other west siders who were involved in and cared about Jewish life. The meeting was attended by well over fifty people and that ad hoc group committed itself to joining the synagogue (the dues were only \$100 in those days!) if the synagogue board were willing to invite members of the "young folks" to join their board. Dr. Lehman was (and continues to be) a man of considerable vision and he was able to convince his board to open itself up to new members.

Considerable mistrust (on both sides, I believe) abounded during the next year's meetings of the board. I particularly remember the very first expanded board meeting when the young folk arrived in jeans and tee shirts and ranged themselves along one side of the board table in the now defunct board room on the fifth floor (I well remember the fight at the board when we decided to rent out that room!). The older members of the board, clad in raiment far more appropriate to a meeting of a synagogue board, sat on the other side. Dr. Lehman opened the meeting by introducing the new members and expressing the fervent hope that we would all be able to work together harmoniously to save the synagogue. That prayer for harmony was not destined to be realized immediately, but gradually the mistrust on both sides lessened. The success of the integration became apparent when we all realized that at some unknown point in time, both the younger and older folk on the board had begun unconsciously to adjust the seating arrangements at board meetings so that people sat next to people they liked or felt politically allied with rather than in chronological order.

The board, early on, decided to ask Harold Hirsch, Allen Nadler, and Joe Fuhrman to tackle the fiscal problems. The three financial whizzes introduced a series of revenue producing and belt tightening measures that managed to bring the budget into balance.

By the next year, Rachel Cowan was hired as part-time program coordinator. "Part-time" became a synonym for "every waking moment" as Rachel introduced new programs which included the fellowship program, the revolutionary notion of a Hanukkah Arts Festival and a whole panoply of classes.

*In honor of  
Michael & Sharon  
Strassfeld  
from  
their loving family*

# The Odyssey, continued.

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## Harold Hirsch Comes Through

During this period, Harold Hirsch decided to make a very generous donation to the synagogue so that the basement could be renovated and non-working mechanical systems replaced. Harold might not like this story being repeated, but it is certainly a measure of the extraordinary generosity and humility of the man that when Allen Nadler met with him to tell him that the board, in recognition of his efforts on behalf of the synagogue, had decided to name the reception hall in his honor, he seemed puzzled and asked, "Why would they want to do that?" Allen, nonplused, explained that the synagogue was grateful that the building had been saved through his generosity and wanted to publicly acknowledge their gratitude, and Harold replied mildly, "Well, thank them very much but tell them it's not at all necessary." Allen, stymied, ingeniously hit upon the happy notion of naming the room after Harold's parents who had been extremely involved in Ansche Chesed's growth, and to this notion Harold graciously acquiesced.

It was Herman Sands, Phyllis Sperling, and David Pollock who oversaw the work in the basement during that truly horrendous project. Every uncovering of a pipe led to a new and unforeseen set of complications. And every set of unforeseen complications cost \$20,000 to solve. Certainly the renovation would never have been completed without the three of them spending all of their spare time at the synagogue. I remember being astounded when David Pollock told me he had spent one entire week just familiarizing himself with the building. I scoffed at him, telling him that if it had taken him an entire week, he must have been walking pretty slowly. He then took me on a private guided tour of the building, and uncovered rooms and spaces I had never even dreamed existed!

Other more subtle changes were also taking place. Jerry Raik became the central figure first in the morning minyan and then in the Chapel Minyan. He became a role model for many people making their way back to Ansche Chesed when it became clear that he had quite deliberately changed the entire structure of his life to make the synagogue central to it. He never missed a morning minyan and made sure that anyone saying kaddish could expect to find a minyan waiting for them. He remembered people's Hebrew names, the names of their children, and even their birthdays when he called them for aliyot. He willingly and quietly undertook the many important but often overlooked jobs that need to be done around the synagogue. He introduced me to Adele Hilsenrath and Eugene Klein who became important people in my world. (May their names be for blessings.)

In fact, Jerry's the person who told me the story of how Adele Hilsenrath became the first woman at Ansche Chesed ever to be counted in a minyan. It happened in a perfectly natural fashion and it was Dr. Lehman who made the decision. Someone had come to the shul for shaharit to say kaddish and there were nine men and one Adele there. Elvin had the habit of going to West End Avenue to solicit a volunteer when he knew that someone needed a minyan to say kaddish and the group was short one person. No one could rustle up a minyan that day, however, and the time was getting closer and closer to the end of the service. Dr. Lehman looked around and mused, "Adele Hilsenrath comes for shaharit every morning and we don't count her. Maybe it's time." He thought for a moment, and ordered the service to proceed with kaddish.

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Rabbi Wolfe Kelman  
and his crucial role in the  
rejuvenation of  
Ansche Chesed*

### Growing Pains

Next, however, came the nitty-gritty of institution building. We had to work out ways for the different groups using the building to get along. Issues like kashrus became focal points for the often uneasy marriage of different notions and goals and interests (some of you will remember the origination of the term "cosmic kashrus" during those violent arguments about how to validate kashrus in the building without destroying the ability of minyanim to have pot-luck lunches, and tenants to have their children eat lunches brought from home). We weathered the crisis of Yaldeynu's birth, Dorot's move from the building, and the shifting needs of the West Side Minyan, Minyan M'at, and the Chapel Minyan. We're still weathering the storms of conflicting loyalties in the building, and there are moments when I think to myself, "This shul is a crazy place! Who can live like this?" But then I think back to where we began, with everyone ranged on their own side of the table, and I realize that everything is, when all is said and done, only a matter of time.

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# The Presidents

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Dr. Emil Lehman

## MEDIATING THE CHANGE:

Emil Lehman, President, 1977 - 1981

*[Editor's note: To read the articles about the rebirth of Anshe Chesed in New York newspapers, you'd have to believe that it was about to be carted off to the nearest cemetery for burial. Its transition president doesn't remember it that way.]*

It has been my good fortune to have been involved in mediating the change of Anshe Chesed from a single congregation to a sprawling community. This came about in my capacity as the congregation's president, gratefully responding to the suggestion of long-time friend, Rabbi Wolfe Kelman. Out of this initiative, a splendid partnership developed to effectuate the change.

Let me first demythologize some misconceptions that at times still rear their Janus head of error. Anshe Chesed was never at the point of closing. It functioned properly, regardless of the tremendous problems besetting it during that period. Approaches of real estate operators for purchase of air rights were rejected out of hand. Services continued without interruption. A Rosh Hodesh series, conducted by Cantor Charles D. Bloch and myself boosted sluggish Shabbat morning attendance strikingly. Overpowering as the administrative odds seemed, they were overcome by true helpers, among them, prominently, Mayer Cavalier as treasurer, Sam Schiff as secretary and Bulletin editor, Lester Shriner as gabbai and that walking miracle of technical inventiveness, Elvin Nichols. My personal indebtedness to them as well as to the over-worked and heroically struggling "Guardians of the Office," Mrs. Muriel Kissner and the late Eugene Klein, endures in unwithered appreciation.

Then, at Wolfe's behest, contacts with the young people began. Two meetings stand out in my memory. The first took place at Richard and Jeanne Siegel's home, where Mrs. Lehman and myself had a first opportunity to observe cautious interest, justified curiosity, and vocalized hesitancy to embark upon a responsibilities-fraught undertaking. The second get-together took place in our own home. There, an onrush of "Ifs," "Buts," and "Supposes" broke loose, conjuring up all kinds of hypothetical situations. To everyone's surprise, our meetings didn't turn out to be encounters between a prejudice-encrusted defender of communal obsolescence and a passionate shock troop of barricade stormers. And flashes of mutual relief smiled at the parties, who quickly found common ground of self interests. Out of that scintillating give-and-take, I recall with pleasure the participation of, among others, Sharon Strassfeld, David Teutsch, and David Roskies, who in particular, got quite enthused over my suggestion to invite Alfred Kazin to a lecture appearance at Anshe Chesed.

The ice was broken. It melted into rapids of transition, without any formality stamping the seal of agreement. Quickly, I appointed some of the young to the congregation's board. Its meetings were now marked by

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a new kind of liveliness. The term "process" became a password in the exchange of opinions -- as if process, with its inherent slow-down of pace would be a precondition of congregational democracy. Nevertheless, all necessary measures were processed without delay. And the generosity of Harold Hirsch began to underpin the new construct. I had contacted him long before and had been greatly encouraged by his readiness to come to the rescue. No one could have been more appreciative than myself to see his gracious assistance given permanent acknowledgment in "Hirsch Hall," emerging to new glitter and to an ever-widening functional expansion.

My heart rejoices at the signs of a renewed Ansche Chesed -- at the many young eager faces that show so glowingly at Shabbat services; at the many-faceted programs that attract people within and beyond the neighborhood; at the variety of talents that sparkle at the tasks undertaken, whether they pertain to conducting services, reading from the Torah, Haftarah, or Megillah, daring a D'var Torah (these darers often prove as insightful of the text as of themselves), or volunteering post-worship refreshment as tasty as it is ornamental.

I am not unaware of what's missing in substance and form. But hope blossoms that in due course, a conceptual framework, firmly anchored in our tradition, alive to the postulates of modernity, alert to its pitfalls, and actively interlaced with our people's future in the State of Israel, will emerge and will lend solidity and elegance to this enthralling venture of ours. It could then well serve as a model of personal and collective Jewish living for many a community.

## A PERIOD OF TRANSITION

Allen Nadler, President 1982 - 1984

We tried to co-exist, but not always successfully. Just a few years earlier, men still wore top hats. Now young people wore blue jeans and sometimes sat on the floor.

I was president from June 1982 to June 1984 -- a period of transition in the life of the congregation and in my own. My predecessor, Emil Lehman, had been a strong and effective president. Toward the end of Dr. Lehman's tenure, I was one of a group of new members invited to join the Board.

I remember an enormous battle with the president of the Sisterhood because we wanted to clean and paint the dilapidated room on the fifth floor where we davened every Shabbat. The lady opposed the clean-up because she didn't want to lose control over the space then known as "the Sisterhood Room." Eventually, Dr. Lehman solomonically resolved the issue. We cleaned and painted but left the Sisterhood plaque untouched.

The good doctor asked me to chair a small committee to try to balance the synagogue's precarious budget. Joe Fuhrman and I had dinner with Harold Hirsch at his apartment and spent the evening slashing expenses. (Among our draconian measures: the elimination of all paid staff except custodian Elvin Nichols and office manager Muriel Kissner.) When we were finished, the operating budget was balanced. At

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*"mediating the change  
of Ansche Chesed from  
a single congregation to  
a sprawling community"*

---



Allen Nadler

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The Raik Family  
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Barbara & Sol  
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*In Honor of our  
son and grandson,  
Michael Brochstein*

## The Presidents, continued.

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that point Mr. Hirsch decided to make a substantial contribution, wisely stipulating that the money be used only for capital expenditures.

We had plenty of capital projects for Mr. Hirsch's very generous gift. The social hall (later renamed Hirsch Hall to honor his parents) was often under two feet of water. The floor had buckled so badly that sections rose above the water line like little volcanic islands. Our insurance company warned us that the entire basement was so dangerous that we were not covered if anyone was hurt down there. Or drowned.

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*"The floor .... sections rose above the water line like little volcanic islands"*

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Eventually, we got the water out of the basement and made Hirsch Hall and its lobby the wonderful usable spaces they are today. (This must have confounded one engineer who'd suspected that a subterranean stream flowed through the basement. Fortunately, he was wrong!) After installing an efficient new boiler, we discovered that the ancient pipes for distributing heat and hot water through the building, unaccustomed to experiencing genuine pressure, crumbled into dust. Naturally the walls were soaked and also crumbled. We went from crisis to crisis, but finally the building was stabilized, largely thanks to the talented design and architectural work of Herman Sands and Phyllis Sperling, and the boundless energy of project coordinator David Pollack.

When Diane and I decided to marry in the sanctuary on Oct. 24, 1982, our wedding reception was to be the first function held in the newly-renovated Hirsch Hall. But there were grave doubts that the room would be finished (or even almost finished) in time for the ceremony, and when the kitchen was still unusable four days before the wedding, the caterer threatened to quit. Of course, we got our happy ending.

The congregation made its final payment on the old Anshe Chesed mortgage early in 1983, and in June, several former presidents joined me in a joyous ceremonial burning of the mortgage. We didn't have much money, but at least we had no debt.

The number of people coming to Anshe Chesed increased so dramatically that it became clear that volunteers could no longer provide the programming we needed. But we had virtually no money to spend. So we hired Rachel Cowan as half-time program director, with a quarter-time salary. Ignoring her paltry compensation level, Rachel worked full-time. Soon we could proudly claim that we had renovated a fine old building and rebuilt the spirit and programming of a fine old congregation.

Shortly before midnight on June 9, 1984, our daughters, Susannah and Reena, were born. Twelve hours later, I was back at Anshe Chesed to participate in the annual meeting at which Arlene Eisenberg was elected to succeed me. I had been president for two tumultuous years, and Arlene's calm effective leadership was now the perfect approach to reconcile the interests and needs of the diverse constituencies coexisting in the revitalized Anshe Chesed. And what could better symbolize the changes that had occurred? The old formal top hats were still on the shelf in the closet behind the Chapel, but the new president of Anshe Chesed was a woman.

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## RON AND GEORGE SHOULD BE SO LUCKY

Arlene Eisenberg, President, 1984 - 1986

Memoirs of an Anshe Chesed president don't bring the kind of bids from publishers that a Reagan or Bush get for theirs, but then we don't spend millions campaigning for office. In fact, we usually have to be persuaded to take the reins, and end up doing so only when nobody else can be talked into it. That's the way it was with me. Allen Nadler, my predecessor and respected leader (I was veep while he was president) first broached the idea as we walked home from a board meeting. It was, of course, a crazy idea, and I told him so. A few months later, as Allen and Diane were delivering their twins, I became what I'd said I could not be.

Fortunately, presidenting Anshe Chesed doesn't involve as much stress, or expose one to as much media criticism as the top US office. (When was the last time the A.C. Bulletin attacked an A.C. president?) That's not to say that the job is angst-free. As we try to create something that is new in Jewish life, our problems are probably a little more like George W's than George B's. Doing something for the first time is a kind of trail-blazing. Sometimes you head down the wrong trail; sometimes the trail is right but the way is tangled and difficult.

How do we create a Jewish community that is both less than a typical synagogue and more? During the two years I was president we wrestled with many issues. Should we have a rabbi? And, if so, what kind of rabbi? Who makes religious decisions? How do we treat the issue of who is a Jew? Can we raise money to refurbish our building to be as beautiful as other shuls, without becoming just like other shuls? Can we make a cavernous sanctuary into an intimate davening space? Are we a Jewish institution first, or is our role as community center an equal priority? How should the various Jewish groups in our building relate to one another and to Anshe Chesed? Can we continue our participatory nature if we hire more and more professional staff? What are our responsibilities toward the larger Jewish community as well as to our non-Jewish neighbors?

We made some progress on these issues. We debated "Who is a Jew?" and reached a compromise position. We began to get involved in social issues, opening a shelter for homeless men, officially welcoming Gays and Lesbians to worship with us, exploring the needs of Central American refugees in our area, starting hevrot to comfort mourners and visit the sick. We established a library and, with B'nai Jeshurun, a two-afternoon-a-week Hebrew school, as well as a beginner's minyan. And we embarked on a fund-raising program the success of which was to surprise everyone -- including us. Much is still evolving, and will continue to as we do.

Maybe ex-AC presidents don't get paid for their work with big book contracts, but the rewards are nevertheless great. The greatest is working with so many truly wonderful people. I can't name names, because then I would be sure to forget someone. But I can recall what I've seen them do: Devote themselves selflessly to seeing that night after night year round ten homeless men have a meal to eat and a place to put their heads -- and to go beyond that to begin a citywide effort to wipe out homelessness. Transmit our Jewish heritage to those among

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*"our problems are probably a little more like George W's than George B's"*

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*Arlene Eisenberg before assuming the presidency*

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The Strassfeld Family

## The Presidents, continued.

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Iris Korman

us less learned, or not learned at all. Help those who have chosen Judaism to find a niche in the Jewish community. Provide programming for children to enrich their lives at AC. Take time out of busy schedules to visit a sick member, cook a meal for a mourning family, counsel a couple contemplating marriage.

Or learn to read from the Torah, lead a service, do a d'var Torah -- in spite of a weak Jewish background. Approach fellow (and sister) members for money for the building fund though doing so was against their normal grain. Be understanding of another's religious point of view though it differed from their own. Do the dirty work that others might shun but without which we couldn't function -- setting up for an event or cleaning up afterward, folding and stamping mailings, serving up food from hot stoves, or manning a ticket table in a frigid lobby. Give up precious family time to go to meetings or programs just to support AC.

Let Ronnie get his million dollar advance. I'll take the Ansche Chesed team.

### DOING 'SHUL THINGS' DIFFERENTLY

Iris Korman, President, 1986 - 1987

My term as president was at a turning point for Ansche Chesed. The rapid membership growth which marked the late 1970's and early 1980's had waned. We were no longer creating an innovative type of synagogue. It was created. Now we needed to figure out how to be that place, on a day-to-day basis.

With that change came a new challenge -- how to be an institution serving our now stable community, while continuing to be an exciting, innovative "havurah" style synagogue. This was particularly hard when so many of those who had flocked here had been suspicious of Jewish institutions. Yet we discovered that we had become that dreaded institution. We were faced with the question, how to be that institution without being the same kind of place we had fled? By doing all those "shul things" in a way that was a little bit different -- a way that reflected our diverse membership and sensibilities.

As an institution, we recognized our responsibility to contribute to the larger Jewish community. We chose to do so by joining with other groups in creative, innovative programs, rather than by competing with them. The programs included the Lehrhaus, the Learning brochure, the West Side Purim Parade, and the West Side Jewish Community School.

Ansche Chesed members had long taken responsibility for our own Judaism and worship. Now we began taking responsibility for our synagogue's continuity. We had recently begun the fundraising campaign to rebuild the physical building, just as we had rebuilt it spiritually. At the same time, we fought the temptation to simply assess our members -- that was what other synagogues did. Instead, we held a successful classical music concert series at which our own gifted members performed and we galvanized our members for a fundraising phone-a-thon to win the voluntary support of members and others.

The growing responsibilities and desire to maintain Ansche Chesed's character even pervaded the Board. We tried to establish more profes-

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sional, business-like Board meetings. To continue the tradition that our Board members are volunteers, not just big donors, they were required to be involved in at least one committee. But we recognized that volunteerism could no longer meet all the needs of a community of over 400 members. More of the day-to-day administrative and programming duties had to be left to our growing staff.

While developing as a strong institution, Anshe Chesed did not forget its central purpose. For members who were seeking more creativity and spirituality, we established the experimental minyan (an intimate, creative davening group), the Minyan Manners program (to teach practical home and synagogue skills), and a discussion program on "Who do we pray to?" And in the midst of the political corruption and insider trading scandals, we held a series of Shabbat lunches focusing on ethics.

A synagogue is like a person. It grows and changes. Anshe Chesed passed into adolescence while I was president (something none of us fully realized until a year or so later). What does it mean to come of age as a synagogue? In our case, it meant many things. Accepting the need to professionalize while trying to maintain a participatory volunteer community. Not accepting dirty hallways or broken light fixtures, but no longer waiting for "them" to take care of it.

The challenge of rebuilding Anshe Chesed was great. The challenge of not losing what we love about it, now that we are "established," may well be greater.

## FOND MEMORIES

Jerry Raik, President, 1987--

An article like this is much easier to write when things are terrible. It's a snap to wisecrack about plaster falling on heads or the infamous net. It's no trouble at all finding something droll to say about the ceiling falling and the water rising.

But things are no longer terrible. We no longer put life and health in jeopardy merely by attending services at Anshe Chesed and I must write about things that just don't lend themselves to humor. I'll have to bite the bullet.

In fact, as we celebrate our 160th anniversary, I am not moved to be funny; I am simply moved. I feel truly gratified and fortunate to have played a part in the rebuilding of our community and of our house. Put differently, it has been a sustaining and fulfilling pleasure to have been there as our house, faded and empty of all but echoes of the past and the faith of a few tenacious and prayerful "old-timers," transformed again into a home, filled with the hopes and prayers of a new generation of Jews in our neighborhood and filled again to the bursting with the laughter of children.

An almost endless stream of moments and pictures come to mind which highlight and typify my experience at Anshe Chesed during this time. Eugene Klein and Adela Hilsenrath, may they rest in peace. He, as he led the introductory prayers or took such pleasure in giving an aliyah to a young woman or man new to Anshe Chesed or equal pleasure in slipping a piece of candy to one of the new kids. She as she

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*"What does it mean  
to come of age as a  
synagogue?"*

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*Barrie and Jerry Raik*

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## The Presidents, continued.

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*"The first time I asked for money and was knocked over when someone said 'yes'"*

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smiled, hands folded, and occupied her seat in the morning minyan, never missing a day, delighting just in being counted. Hilda Lesser, weeping as she embraced and carried the Torah for the first time in her 90 years. Kids in the aisles, on the bimah, and into everything. The first time I asked for money and was knocked over when someone said "yes." Bnei mitzvah where kids got up and said what they wanted rather than what was expected, and made us all sit up and listen. Prayer, at times so together and so personal and so loud and so sweet and joyful that the Heavenly Hosts must surely sit up and listen.

And Ari's wacky smile.

And Paul.

All these combine with some more personal memories. Rebecca running with the kids and making the shul her own. Joey walking up to the ark, and reaching for the "little" Torah. Molly being named at the very first service in the newly restored sanctuary.

If among all these and more I had to choose two moments or extended moments, they would be these: First, this past summer starting with the feeling of challenge and excitement the day the net came down, continuing with the feeling of awe as the plasterers, painters, and artists did their work, and the sanctuary began to take shape, and ending at Kol Nidre when it was completed and full and truly glorious.

Second, would be the first meeting, just weeks ago, of the Chesed committee, signifying that Ansche Chesed has come of age as a community and that we, the members, have pledged to fulfill our responsibility to ourselves and to each other.

I wish to thank Ansche Chesed for all that it is and has been to me and to congratulate all of us on our 160th anniversary.

*Hanukah Arts Festival, 1988*



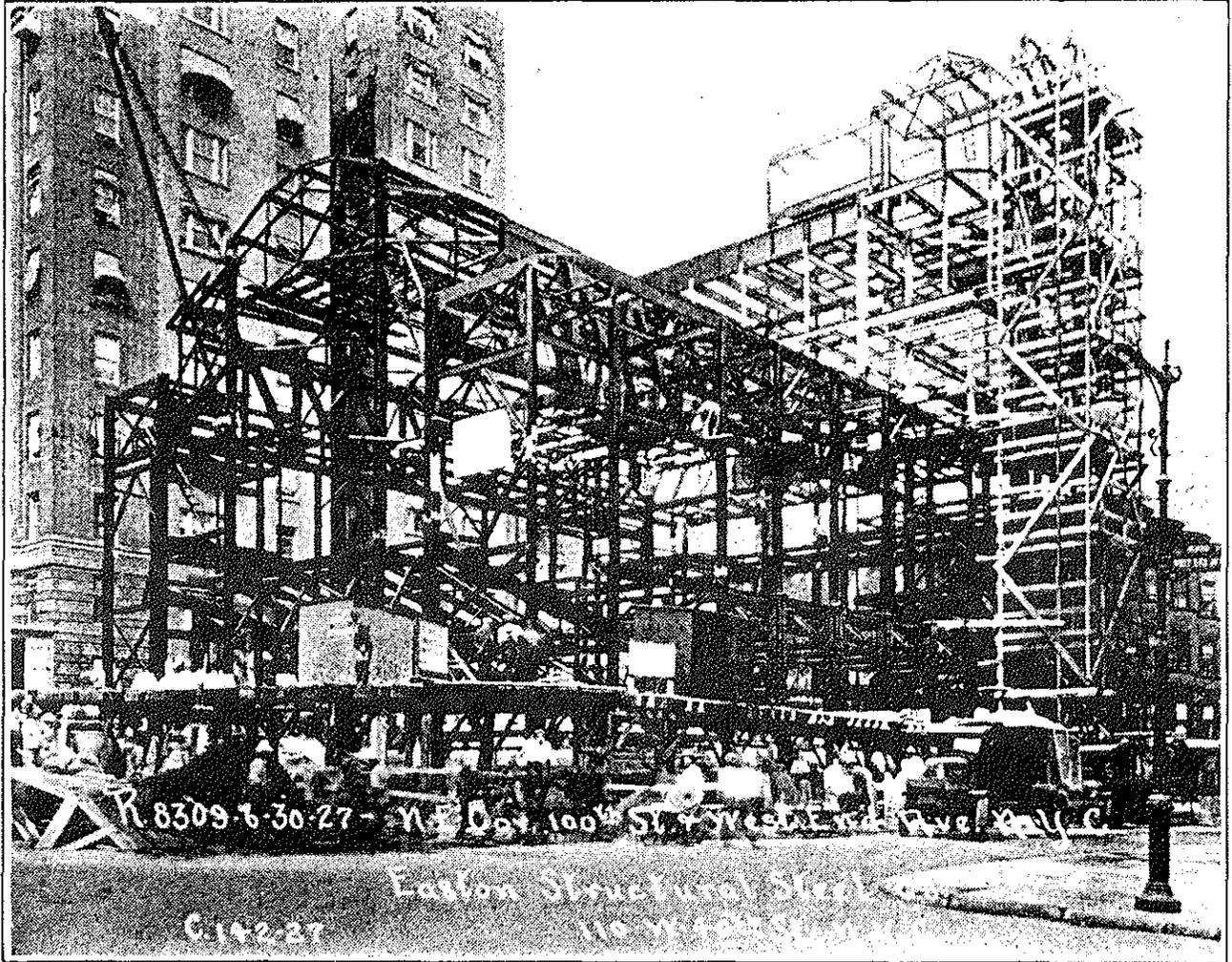
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# Paul Cowan

## UNFORGETTABLE PAUL COWAN

*EDITORS' NOTE: Why is this 160th anniversary journal dedicated to Paul Cowan? It may be exaggerating to say that if it weren't for Paul, Anshe Chesed would be a parking lot today. But his energy and enthusiasm had much to do with this congregation's survival and revival. And certain it is that in all of its 160 years, there have been few mornings more special, more spiritual, than the weekday last fall when more than 1,000 of Paul's friends came to bid him a sad, yet somehow unabashedly exuberant, farewell. His family's tributes to Paul then, and colleagues' loving eulogies reprinted here from a spread in the Village Voice, say as much about Paul Cowan as it is possible to put into words:*

### Making Poetry out of Life

Paul was the best of us.

He was the bravest, the gentlest, the funniest, the purest of our gang. He taught us how to live. And he taught us how to die.

Paul taught me how to take risks in my writing. He taught me how to laugh at myself. He taught me to ignore fashion in writing and in politics. He taught me to be kinder in my judgments. He taught me to feel more pride in being Jewish, but he also helped me reach a forgiving catharsis in my feelings toward Jesse Jackson, when Jesse called Paul in the hospital.

Paul did what he set out to do in life. He said family, writing, faith, and friendship were the most important things in life. And every day he kept the faith with those values.

He also kept faith with his early heroes -- James Agee, George Orwell, and Bob Moses of SNCC.

Although Paul went to Choate and Harvard -- probably because he went to those elite places -- he preferred to write about the lives of ordinary people. He had the gift of universal empathy. He could hear the pain of people he didn't agree with. He could be fair to book burners and George Wallace voters.

Paul seemed to like everyone he met. I eventually came to envy this spirit. But as Paul and I first became friends, in the polarized climate of 1965, I found this quality a bit unnerving.

Paul wrote one article that was quite understanding toward General Hershey, the director of the draft during the escalation of the Vietnam War. Then he wrote another piece sympathetic to William Buckley, who was then running for mayor. At that point I asked Paul, wasn't there anybody he disliked? He said he couldn't think of anybody.



*Paul and Lisa at a siyyum after completing Bereshit at the Havurah School*

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## Paul Cowan, continued.

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Rachel, Matt, Paul and Lisa

In 1968, during the Democratic convention, as we were both being chased by two fierce but fat Chicago cops, Paul smiled, and said, "By the way, I don't like these guys much."

Like Agee and Orwell, Paul was able to make sense -- and literature -- out of daily personal experience. From the freedom summer of 1964 to his defiance of leukemia in his last article, Paul made poetry out of life, because he loved life.

From the Mississippi Delta to the Lower East Side, Paul was our Woodie Guthrie.

Good-bye, Pablo.

Now your gang are orphans in history.

-- JACK NEWFIELD

### He'd Ask a Question

Last week I sat by Paul's hospital bed massaging his feet. He was talking about being scared of dying. He asked me if I thought there was some reason this was happening to him, if God had some grand plan. He asked me this in his usual ingenuous way, although he knew perfectly well I didn't believe in a god in the sense that he did. But when Paul was looking for answers, he asked questions. You always tried to answer them seriously because his eyes and voice conveyed he was not fooling around.

He'd call sometimes, during some years almost every week, other times out of the blue, after we hadn't spoken for months. And he'd ask a question. "I was just wondering," he'd begin. And it would take an hour or more to respond. He was on a story. Searching for meaning. And you were drawn into the search.

When he first got sick, he called me one day to ask what I thought might be the psychological aspect of his disease, about his need for attention, and mine. We talked about our mutual sense of orphanhood which we'd assuaged in such different ways.

We met in 1971 as parents building a day-care center, and ignorant of his work at the time, he was "Rachel's husband" to me. But when he heard I was a writer he asked me what I wrote about. He listened to my answers. Then he helped me get my first articles published in the *Voice*. The next year, he gave me money when I needed it so I could finish something I was working on. I never published a single piece of work he didn't call me about, with congratulations, praise, or criticism; with attention. During one of his battles with chemotherapy, he called to tell me there was a good review of my novel in the *Voice*.

I got angry at him at times, especially when his search for his Jewish roots took him, Rachel, and their children, Matt and Lisa, farther and farther away from me. I fought for a place in their lives by trying to understand their passion for religion. But I didn't have to fight. My place was there, whenever I wanted it. At every seder, for more than a decade, I was asked to speak. I played my expected part with fervor and honesty -- the house cynic, atheist, judge of gods. Once my son, a half-black, half-Jewish 10-year-old, asked what happened to the people who were half-Jewish and half-Egyptian when the time came for the

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Hebrews to leave the promised land. Paul, our friend Jerry Raik, and Rachel led all the children in a Talmudic argument in response, good questions being the foundation of their notion of faith.

Sometimes I wonder, now that my place is habitual in that huge, warm living room where it sometimes seems hundreds of people gather to ask questions of all kinds on every possible occasion, why I fought so hard. Certainly, Rachel has been one of the precious women in my life. And I have come to see why this strong, intense, and brilliant woman has loved Paul for so long -- how rare and valued he made her feel even as he leaned on her, sometimes too hard, I thought. He leaned hard, but then, when he embraced me, he hugged so hard he hurt my neck. He was fighting to keep all of us, too. Last year, I was walking with Paul's son, Matt, by then almost 18 and rebelling against his father's ideas. "I was just wondering," he said. And he asked me a question it took five blocks to answer about my own history as a Jew.

I had no trouble answering Paul's question in the hospital. No, I said to my religious friend. God is not doing this to you for a reason. It's just shitty luck. Do you think I'll be going somewhere after this, he asked me. And I, the atheist, answered, yes, I do.

-- JANE LAZARRE

### Witness on the Side of Life

Paul was my friend for almost 30 years; my oldest friend. I think one reason this could happen was that already at 20 he was sweet-tempered and honest, his way with his passions was infectious, and he knew his calling: witness to life and death and decency. He was already himself. Already he was filled with curiosity -- curiosity which was the very opposite of idle. Already he wanted to be a voice for the voiceless. And already he needed to see for himself. I think that he must have disbelieved that evil was possible; he kept writing about it to convince himself that terrible things really happened in the world.

He was a great enthusiast -- the word once meant "filled with God." He changed his mind, since he was thoughtful, but he never changed his heart, which was a great heart. He loved to "hurl the little streets against the great" -- Yeats's words -- and to do it for sheer pleasure as well as because it might help suffering people if he told their stories and took their sides.

Paul made a lousy un-American. He was as American as borscht and stir-fried Szechuan eggplant.

I never heard him say a cruel word, which for a writer working in New York is some kind of miracle. His honesty helped me more than he knew. There are those who care about justice out of love and those who do it out of hate, and there is no question but that he did it out of love.

I don't think anything was abstract for him. Certainly friendship wasn't.

When I think of the last terrible and glorious year of his life, I think of him laughing, his diffident and innocent laugh -- bemused and amazed as well as appalled at what was happening in his body; always the witness on the side of life. Taking notes as always.

-- TODD GITLIN

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*In Memory of  
Paul Cowan*

# Paul Cowan, continued.

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## Another Kind of Heroism

Years ago, in a softball game at the annual Voice picnic, Paul was sent up to pinch-hit in the bottom of the ninth with the bases loaded and two out. "What's the score?" he asked, swinging his bat with that beaming but embarrassed grin, that goofy radiance. When told that the score was tied, he stopped grinning, stopped swinging, and backed out of the batter's box almost paralyzed with perplexity. Everyone could see how torn he felt -- relish for the heroic moment, yet aversion to imposing himself on others, even in something as trivial as a softball game. Then the solution suddenly occurred to him. "Everything should end in a tie!" he said joyfully, stepped back to the plate, took a feeble swing at the first pitch, and grounded out to end the game.

What a perfect parody of the '60s, I remember thinking, how quintessentially Paul -- turning even an at-bat into a Be-In, an occasion for reconciliation, a demonstration of sharing. As his editor at the Voice, I used to tease him about coming on so strong in his persona as ameliorator, not because we were friends -- we weren't at the time -- but because it occasionally affected his writing, giving it a touch of self-congratulation even in its modesty. Paul listened -- he listened to everyone -- because in some sense, as those of us who worked with him and became his friends learned, his life was an act of transforming his need to be loved into love for others.

Paul had a huge personality -- an abundant ego, overflowing needs, voracious insecurities, and it'd be dishonest to his memory not to acknowledge that one sometimes felt, in his presence, that he sucked up all the air in the room, that on occasion there was something almost bullying in the intensity of his concern. But Paul also had huge convictions, and since they could be summed up in the simple phrase that summed up so much of his life, "compassion for others," that meant he often had to fiercely repress his own turbulent feelings. At one time, to see him struggle with this conflict was to see a man impose his will on his spontaneity, but the longer he struggled -- the more successfully he struggled -- the clearer it became that we were witnessing a man integrating his values into his life.

We often think that the measure of our worth will be our achievement -- our work, our renown, our impact on the world -- but as we become more aware of our frailties, as we begin to understand the fragility of our lives, we learn to value other measures more, the measures of decency, kindness, generosity, and caring that Paul so robustly exemplified. Others have memorialized Paul's achievements in the world, but I will remember him even more for the heroism with which he won the struggle within himself.

-- ROSS WETZSTEON

## Friends Forever

I have to say I really love the title of oldest friend, back to the age of three, in fact, and the brotherhood of buck teeth, early glasses, and totally crazy behavior we vowed to continue into maturity. With some extraordinary successes, certainly on Paul's part. Was there ever anyone so unbelievably earnest -- "this guy'll ask you anything," someone once said...so earnest and at the same time capable of being so totally zany?

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*We remember Paul with  
warm feelings...We  
endorse the Strassfelds'  
efforts in sustaining the  
Anshe Chesed  
Community*

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I don't know why one episode out of a million jumps out, just to giggle. Such was Paul's marriage of inquiry and looniness that once -- at a very fancy Plaza Hotel high school ball we'd crashed -- he waded through clusters of dancing debutantes and frozen escorts, found one quintessentially self-admiring couple, sat down beside them right there on the floor, and so scrutinized them from their knees down that they retreated, self-conscious at last, to the hors d'oeuvres, as our boy grinned on. A decade later, this came to be known as activist journalism.

Not so, really. In fact, just the opposite, zaniness notwithstanding. He understood self-consciousness -- having a small measure himself -- but he disarmed so much of it, at least in others, simply through the utterly compassionate quality of his attention and his instinctive recognition of universal human worth. How special to have helped recognize and name so many.

Did ever an orphan in history make more people feel at home?

Including himself, at the end, I think. Rachel said the day after he died that he was happier than he had ever been, which may sound puzzling. I think I remember a moment where that became a little clearer, at least to me. It was at an illness party -- smile with me a little because Paul was a master of party opportunities, he loved to draw us all together. So it really was a kind of illness party at which he irradiated us with a clinical but wonderfully courageous description of his condition and plans. But he ended with some remarks that sort of spilled out; he said he'd finally come to believe he was worthy of the love so many of us wanted so much to offer. In this moment, if I'm to speak of friendship, I think Paul befriended himself. As he said it, it flashed through my mind -- we all think differently -- that he was somehow accepting God's love, befriending God. And I thought, OK buddy, that's some kind of real progress, and more than enough for one round.

So, in the privileged role of oldest friend, let me sing of friendship and how Paul helped us grow together. Helped us grow...and grow together. Helped us grow because he took the trouble to really understand our storylines, who each of us really was, where we were coming from. And therefore we could really accept his affirmation of our accomplishments -- large or small -- because they had been so carefully witnessed through eyes of truth and love. In Paul we grew. Grew separately and grew together -- because with him it was: "How are we all doing, how's it with you, did you hear about her, isn't it interesting how we're..." We're. So much of Paul lived in the first-person plural. He made us feel all the more like...us. He needed that, and we needed that...and he helped make it and write it -- and his writing was always an act of friendship, not just journalism. Read Orphan in History now -- as I did the day he took off -- how magnified it's already become as a journey on behalf of others.

So he helped us see who we are. He helped us be more at peace with who we are. And he helped us fall more in love with one another... because he called us by our true names as an ever-faithful friend.

I hope you're having a great time, buddy. We'll really miss you bad. It'll never be the same, but it never is. We really love you. And we really love you, Rachel -- it was quite a year of seminary, darling, and



*Paul and Rachel at Richie and Jeannie Siegel's wedding*

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## Paul Cowan, continued.

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you sure were a rabbi -- and you kids, Lisa and Matt, are terrific. We're all friends forever. Stay light.

-- PAUL GORMAN

### My Dad Was A Klutz

My dad was a klutz. And he loved the Statue of Liberty. He had an unbelievably bad sense of direction. He could whistle really loud. He walked fast. He never wore matching socks. When we were little, we learned to eat quickly, because if he finished first he ate off our plates.

He loved his family fiercely. We were so important to him -- and he showed us that in a thousand ways, every day.

Dad was so interested in the world around him, walking down the street with him was an experience. We used to play this game -- to see who knew the most people on Broadway. He always won, because if he didn't see people he knew, he'd greet strangers. He found stories where most of us saw nothing. Everyone had something to teach him -- he was always, always learning.

He had insomnia. He always slammed the front door. He put away the ice-cream in the refrigerator instead of the freezer. He could cook three things: gefilte fish, latkes, and fried egg sandwiches. He had the most beautiful smile. I keep thinking I hear him around the apartment or around 101st Street, and for a while I thought I was just crazy, but I realized that he gave us so much -- me, Matt, Mom and all his friends, all those strangers he greeted on the street -- that the voice I keep hearing is part of us now. Just one more thing he gave us.

He liked Bob Dylan and the Red Sox. He never could figure out how to use the stereo.

He was lucky to know us, and he knew that. He celebrated us every day.

I celebrate him.

-- LISA COWAN

### A Letter to My Father

I don't have any kids, but I can imagine what it is like to have children. That's why I want to talk about this letter that I wrote this summer, and hope it makes as much sense as it did to me.

I wrote a letter about when he was in New Hampshire this summer -- talking about how much I learned this year and how much I've grown and changed and matured this year, and I really felt that I have become a better person.

It wasn't until I was finished writing the letter that I realized that I was just trying to make myself become more like him, and I think as a father that really meant a lot to him.

I hope that I can be the person that he wants me to be, as he was.

-- MATTHEW COWAN

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& Linda Bronfman

*In loving memory of our  
friend and teacher,  
Paul Cowan.*

*"Who is wise? One who  
learns from all people...  
Who is honored? One  
who honors all living  
things." --Pirke Avot 4:1*

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## A Passion for People

After our parents died in 1976, Paul said at the funeral that Mom uniquely combined elegance with a passion for social justice. Paul never did get the hang of elegance. But he sure had a passion for social justice.

And from Dad, he acquired a passionate interest in people -- all people -- in all of us -- in everyone. In the people Lisa mentioned on Broadway. In the hospital nurses whose family sagas he learned with intimacy. In the descendants of textile workers in Lawrence, Mass. and in the book-burning fundamentalists of Kinaw County, W. Va. And Paul poured that passion for people into his friendships and into his unique brand of reporting.

Not long ago, Paul was astonished and delighted to find that a panel at an academic conference had been devoted to papers dissecting his work -- and treating him as a Gramscian intellectual. I had to look it up. Paul, of course, knew what it meant, but he'd never thought of himself as a Gramscian intellectual. But he did think of himself as an extremely serious reporter with a unique and important belief in the worth, as well as the values and cultures of ordinary people.

Paul was a wonderful husband, and he had -- he has -- an amazing wife. He was a wonderful father and he had -- he has -- two amazing children. Rachel and Lisa and Matthew enriched his life in ways that I can't begin to express without shedding tears.

But I want to say a few things about Paul as a brother. With Paul's death, I have lost a large part of myself -- of my past. There are memories that no one else will ever share. He was my best friend.

My biography could almost be Paul's. I followed him to Dalton. To Choate, including the Choate News. To Harvard, including the Harvard Crimson. To the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi. To the Village Voice. I even followed his lead in marrying a beautiful WASP.

The truth is I would have followed him anywhere.

But I know that Paul was also a part of your lives -- as truly as he was of mine, of Holly's and Liza's, of Rachel, and of Lisa's and Matt's. Because Paul had that unusual gift of friendship, he was in reality a brother to many of you as well. He loved you, cared about you, listened to you as a brother would. If he were here, I suspect that he would go around the room, pointing to each of you, remembering an anecdote, telling just how much each of you meant to him.

But this last year he also learned how much he meant to you. Probably, nobody really believes that they are loved, but Paul's insecurity may have been reinforced by the childhood fear that, coming from a family of privilege, people might have some ulterior motive for their friendship. So the discovery that he was deeply loved, by so many, for himself, came as more than a surprise. It was a gift -- a yearlong gift, a profound gift -- that you gave him. And by the time he died, he had learned to believe it.

That last year proved something else important to Paul. He proved that he had courage. For some reason -- Paul would no doubt have attributed it to something that happened at Choate -- Paul never be-

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## Paul Cowan, continued.

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lieved that he would have courage under stress. But did he have courage! He didn't have anything to prove to any of us -- but his remarkable guts proved something to him.

His doctor, Julia Smith, considered it something of a blessing that he died as he did, since she was certain that he would have continued to insist on having any possible treatment -- no matter how long the odds, no matter how painful the procedure.

Instead, he fought a great fight. He died at peace, surrounded by his family, without pain.

This year brought us all closer together and made Paul more proud of himself, and more content with himself, than anything else ever could have. The leukemia may have won the battle. But in some respects we -- Paul and all of us -- won the war.

It is hard to see anything good in the death of one you love so much. But something good will come out of Paul's death.

After Mom and Dad died, Paul spent years struggling with their past -- with his and our family's past -- and in the end, he and all of us were enriched by his spiritual journey.

All of us were enriched by knowing him.

And I believe that even in death, his meaning for our living will continue to grow.

Even in death, Paul will continue to affirm life.

-- GEOFFREY COWAN

### A Clean Pair of Socks

I am Rachel's sister. I gave a little speech at Paul and Rachel's wedding in 1965. I believe it was in place of giving away the bride, and I said quite fiercely that Rachel couldn't be given away because she belonged to herself.

I guess I felt that she belonged a little bit to me, and my family, and over the years I worried that I would lose her, or she would lose herself to that husband of hers -- that Paul, who was so big, so enthusiastic, so hungry for love, and so little able to feel that love was there that he was sometimes overwhelming in his demands. And he was very strong-willed. When the three of us were visiting Cuba in 1969, Rachel decided to stop washing his shirts and socks out at night, and he was really mad at her. He thought she had no right to make a unilateral decision about something that concerned them both.

So I looked at Paul over the years with a feminist eye, fondly, a bit guardedly. After he got sick, I knew the ground my world was built on was shaken. Over the last year, I spent a lot of time with him in the hospitals, at home, and on the phone. There are many things to say about Paul during the last year. I saw what Rachel gave to him day by day, and what Lisa and Matthew gave him, and I saw him finally able to take in that love and accept it.

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Tenzer

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He wrote in the Village Voice: "From the day I was admitted into the hospital until the day I left, I felt a small child's joy whenever Rachel arrived in the room, kissed me, and began to bustle around as if my hospital room were home."

But what I also saw was what he gave to Rachel. As his needs and demands were huge, so was his love, which was boundless and unconditional. He believed in her and supported her, cared what she thought and felt about everything. He shared buoyant energy, his crazy off-the-wall sense of humor, his playfulness. His life was on a larger scale than most, and as long as he lived it, the quality of it never changed or flagged. Rachel was deeply nourished by Paul, as he was by her. She'll never be without him, because he's in her and in Matt and Lisa.

And for me the same is true. Paul, who was at one and the same time a bouncing eager Saint Bernard puppy and a loving great-souled wise man, became not just a brother-in-law but my darling older brother. He let me help him and he helped me. We won't look upon his like again.

--CONNIE BROWN

## An Orphan In History

BY PAUL COWAN

*(Random thoughts, chosen by Joe Berger,  
from Paul's autobiography: An Orphan in History)*

An Orphan in History is my story as an American Jew. I have spent years retrieving the religious and cultural legacy which had evaporated, in my family, under the pressure of assimilation. But, with only slight variations in personal and cultural details, it could be the story of...millions of immigrant families who left the economically and culturally confining Old World towns where they were raised and paid for the freedom and prosperity this country offered with their pasts.

At first, it must have seemed like a marvelous bargain. For most of the twentieth century, melting-pot America was like the pot of gold at the end of history's rainbow. In this land of limitless possibilities, one's past seemed to be an encumbrance: something that was filled with atavistic superstitions, that was anathema to enlightened people, that presented an obstacle to personal progress.

But now, America's power is waning; we are living in a post-Copernican age, where we are no longer the center of the world. The country no longer seems to promise my generation -- or my children's -- the degree of social or physical mobility it promised my parents and grandparents.

As a result, many people who might have once explored the nation's physical or economic frontiers are journeying inward: they are Kit Carsons of the soul....

This is an account of my effort to recover my ancestral legacy -- through journalism and politics, by uncovering the details of my family's past and becoming involved with the religion I inherited; and by accepting the emotionally difficult realization that life defies reason: life unfolds

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## Paul Cowan, continued.

unpredictably; it contains treasures and sorrows that none of us can foresee. I hope the story of my search will help other orphans in history find their way home. (from the foreward)

\*\*\*\*\*

I kept thinking, this is Shabbos, part of my specific past. Why not refrain from working and make its rhythms part of my life? There wasn't much I could do that day except to observe the prohibition against writing on Shabbos by putting down my pen and dog-earring the pages I liked. It seemed like an absurdly small symbolic act. But I was unaccountably proud of myself for taking it. (P. 211)

\*\*\*\*\*

I don't believe there are Epiphanies in Judaism. Since it is a religion that insists on concrete deeds, not on blinding revelations of Divine Power, a newcomer like me who decides to become part of it has to do so slowly, one mitzvah at a time, in order to transform himself without losing himself. (P. 212)

\*\*\*\*\*

There is a phrase in Hebrew, tikkun olam, which means repairing the world. Without knowing those words, Rachel and I had been trying to practice the concept most of our adult lives. We'd been doing it on a universal scale, in Mississippi, in Ecuador, in the anti-war movement. It was inevitable that our energy -- that our generation's energy -- would begin to ebb. For, when you try to rebuild the world for everyone, you don't build it for anyone -- least of all for yourself. So now we were starting once again, in our own home, in our neighborhood, in our place of worship, and hoping that from that very finite, concrete base we could reach out to all sorts of people everywhere -- reach out in person and by example -- and become what we'd always hoped to be: part of a force that had the practical wit and the spiritual will to repair the world. (P. 224)



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# Beyond Shelter

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## GOING BEYOND SHELTER

by Randy Rosenthal

"Let your voice resound like a Shofar...share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house. Your people shall rebuild the ancient ruins, and lay the foundations for ages to come. You shall be called 'Repairer of broken walls, Restorer of dwelling places.'" (Isaiah: Ch. 58)

Beyond Shelter, a coalition of West Side synagogues for permanent housing for the homeless, grew out of a challenge issued by Mayor Koch, calling on the city's synagogues to become more active in the battle against homelessness. Since 1983, Upper West Side temples have provided thousands of nights of lodging, hot meals, and assistance in locating jobs and housing. But a permanent solution to homelessness must go "beyond shelter."

To that end, about two years ago, Beyond Shelter was founded by Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform synagogues, merging otherwise disparate elements for a single purpose -- to provide permanent housing for the homeless. Its members: B'nai Jeshurun; Lincoln Square Synagogue Community Action; the Society for the Advancement of Judaism; Rodeph Sholom; Stephen Wise Free Synagogue; The Jewish Center; West End Synagogue; Shearith Israel (Spanish and Portuguese); Young Israel of the West Side; Kehilath Jacob; Shaare Zedek; Ansche Chesed; and the West Side Jewish Community Council.

The coalition watchdogs the City's efforts to provide permanent housing, testifies before government committees, and educates itself and its constituency. Fred Hans, who finds time to serve on the Coalition, as a shelter volunteer at Ansche Chesed, and as a member of Ansche Chesed's Board of Directors and its Social Action Committee, observes, "When you say to communities, 'We're going to build a shelter in your area,' people panic. They respond more positively when you say you're building individual homes and apartments. Once the homeless have permanent addresses, they can apply for Medicaid, pay rent, and begin to put money back into the community. And, of course, then communities no longer fear. The homeless become part of their community."

Beyond Shelter's Statement of Principles calls upon the City to: "Dedicate its in-rent housing stock and vacant land to vastly increase the number of housing units which can be occupied by people who are now homeless; Spend far more money for the building and rehabilitation of permanent housing; Provide substantial grants and other support to community groups ready and willing to build, rehabilitate, and manage such housing; Encourage other interested persons and groups in our community to donate their expertise and resources to this effort...The money required to accomplish this is available."

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*We wish Ansche  
Chesed another 160  
years and more*

## Beyond Shelter, continued.

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Beyond Shelter has created a Housing Trust Fund, which is investigating the purchase of a building with funds to be raised by member synagogues. But Fred acknowledges the frustrations of "a small band trying to take on, monitor, and battle the City, find out how it spends its money, and see the problem getting worse." Fortunately, there are hopeful signs, too: "The City is finally beginning to redo this in-rem housing, rehabilitating and converting it into low-income housing for the homeless and those perpetually on the brink of homelessness. Some of our lobbying, we think, has helped. But we won't stand aside and wait and see. We'll continue to testify, to send our letters to Congress and city officials. Our local representatives are familiar with what we're doing. We're getting there, and it's a good feeling. It's fascinating when you realize how the synagogues got together on this. And we are together."

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**MAY THEY CONTINUE**  
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# Michael Strassfeld

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## MICHAEL STRASSFELD'S JOURNEY TO ANSCHE CHESED

by Salem Alaton

It is an experience that Michael Strassfeld calls, "transferring the liberal spirit into the religious realm." At age 39, he has already been occupied with it for more than half his life.

Now Ansche Chesed's executive-director, he was, in 1974, one of the self-described "young whippersnappers" who led the tumult in which the shul would eventually be remade, running the West Side Minyan on the fifth floor, above the heads of an aging and skeptical congregation on the main floor.

But that's getting ahead of things. By then, he had already co-edited (with wife Sharon and Richard Siegel, later to become active in AC himself) The Jewish Catalogue, soon to be renamed, The First Jewish Catalogue. Together with two follow-up volumes, Strassfeld's do-it-yourself guide to Judaism would sell 500,000 copies.

The initial idea was to model the guide on The Whole Earth Catalogue, as a kind of reference to Jewish community resources. But the realization soon dawned that, to really open another window to the Jewish tradition, "the book itself would have to be the resource."

All over the continent, numberless whippersnappers were inspired by the catalogue's heady proposal that Judaism could prosper among small groups and in home settings. Not surprisingly, the work was in part "a reaction against the classic American synagogue, with a Jewish professional telling you when to stand up and when to sit down."

Strassfeld grew up in Boston as the son of an Orthodox rabbi. Yet even as he attended Hebrew day school, and prided himself on his strict adherence to traditional Judaism, his father was becoming restless with tending the small, aged, inactive flock at Agudath Israel. Meyer Strassfeld started exercising an unexpectedly strong political liberalism by lending himself to such actions as the Civil Rights marches in Selma, Alabama.

"He felt that he wasn't going anywhere," recalls Strassfeld, "and in some part his political activism was because of his frustration with his congregation." When a Conservative congregation in nearby Marblehead approached him to become their rabbi, Meyer Strassfeld "made them take out the organ" and crossed town.

In reaction, Michael clung all the more tightly to his own Orthodoxy. The boy who first transcended his natural shyness as a teenage officer in the National Conference of Synagogue Youth entered Yeshiva University in 1967 to study Talmud. But the intellectual challenge had slackened for him, and new possibilities were in the air; he joined a small group on campus that opposed the war in Vietnam, and he was stirred at the end of the term by the student rebellion that erupted at Columbia.



*Michael Strassfeld*

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Strassfeld*

*Thanks for everything*

*Victor Shargai  
In Honor of  
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## Michael Strassfeld, continued.

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"It was a feeling I couldn't put my finger on, but a feeling of being more and more religiously out of place," says Strassfeld. "I switched the next year to Brandeis, which is a very Jewish university with a lot of ambivalence about its Jewishness. I was the only student on campus there who wore a yarmelkeh all the time."

It was during his first visits to Havurat Shalom that year that Strassfeld received the first clues to resolving his own ambivalence. Still, it took three years before he joined, and that step would come only after a "last attempt to be Orthodox," living in Brookline with wife Sharon.

"The Boston Havurah was a mix of liberalism, of social action, and of an involvement in Judaism and the tradition -- while still being involved in an ongoing struggle with that tradition," says Strassfeld. "When we joined, it was very much a spiritual commitment, and for most of the people in the group the Havurah was the most important thing in their lives."

A number of the 20 to 30 members lived in the house the Havurah owned in Somerville, while others moved into the neighborhood. Shabbat was spent together; there were classes during the week, a pot-luck lunch, various "agenda-less meetings," and opportunities to discuss interpersonal relationships. Hasidism and Jewish mysticism were a focus, but so were political issues in American society. "It was a very Jewish place, but it was not insular."

And if rabbis visited, no single person led. It was the same ethos which would animate The Jewish Catalogue and which, by 1979, made Strassfeld the founding chairperson of the National Havurah Committee, tying network lines among small fellowship groups all over the country. Meanwhile, Sharon got a job in New York. Although the city had its own Havurah group, "the stereotype was that the Boston Havurah was religious, and the New York Havurah was intellectual," recounts Strassfeld.

The alternative that was created was the West Side Minyan, and thus began several rocky years at Ansche Chesed. Paying no dues, engaged in an enterprise the long-time congregants little understood, Strassfeld and friends met on the fifth floor of the shul each week, eventually outnumbering the Sabbath gathering in the Chapel below.

"It was a kind of territorial struggle, and I don't think it was very easy for them to see what we were doing," says Strassfeld. "I often ask myself now: 'Why did we think we had the right to be in this space and not pay any money or contribute?'"

When the revitalization fully came to flower, with the whippersnappers all joining the synagogue, "it was an issue of trust, and there were enough people on either side who trusted."

Incidentally, just as Strassfeld took the position of Director of Program and Development at the shul five years ago, he was completing *The Jewish Holidays: A Guide and Commentary*, which has been called the finest available contemporary volume on the subject.

Now, the 160th anniversary of Ansche Chesed is "a kind of bringing something to a close," says Strassfeld. "It feels odd to stop and say that something has been accomplished. There's never been a moment in which we've said that in this kind of way to ourselves. What happens the day after, I think, is an interesting question."

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Rabbi & Mrs. Meyer  
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*In Honor of our  
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and grandchildren,  
Michael and Sharon,  
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Rhoda Kessler  
*In Memory of  
my grandfather,  
Emanuel  
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Rhoda Kessler  
*In Memory of my father,  
Jonas Reutlinger,  
a former treasurer*

James, Ilona, Seth &  
Robin Goldstein  
*We wish Ansche Chesed  
a Happy 160th  
Anniversary*

# Elvin Nichols

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## KEEPING FAITH: A LOYAL CUSTODIAN AND A SYNAGOGUE

*(excerpted from a Douglas Martin "About New York"  
column in the New York Times)*

Four decades ago Anshe Chesed was one of the grand synagogues of the Upper West Side. More than 1,000 families came to worship in its orange brick temple, including the lords of the building and rag trades. Limousines were parked out front. Top hats, striped pants and cutaway coats were de rigeur. Elvin Nichols, a black Baptist working as the temple porter, stood at the door with a smile and "gut shabbos" for each worshiper....

By the mid-70s...the congregation was down to 60 families. But Elvin Nichols -- who by now was superintendent, a dubious honor in those dim days, when he could go unpaid for weeks -- was still there with a warm "gut shabbos."....

Mr. Nichols, now 67 years old, is retired and taking the time to stroke calloused hands through the strands of his memories. He was 25 when he blew into town from Richmond, Va., to tend his ailing mother. What he knew was the ice cream business, but jobs in that were all union. "So my aunt took me to an employment agency in Harlem and bought me a job for \$15," he said. Pay: \$35 a week.

The employer was Anshe Chesed, and the work was cleaning and the like. As the years rolled by, Mr. Nichols's knowledge deepened and so did his responsibilities: He learned to arrange the sacred books for holidays. Then, with the temple's decline, he was often the only one around to draft burial certificates or scour the Saturday streets for a tenth Jew -- the minimum for a minyan -- to say nothing of holding intact the plumbing and lighting.

Life, never easy, was sometimes harsh. In 1977, Mr. Nichols was mugged in the synagogue's lobby, losing most of his teeth. The financially strapped temple could not pay him enough so that his wife could ever stop working before she died in 1984. But they put their two sons through college; one is a lawyer, the other an engineer.

On Sunday afternoon came the time to honor Mr. Nichols, and more than 200 people turned out, a standing-room-only crowd...Mayor Koch sent a letter proposing a toast, and the State Attorney General, Robert Abrams, an Anshe Chesed member, turned up in person.

Four members had the gumption to get up and sing a song that included the following line: "His judgments are unerring, who'll catch our pickled herring?" And there were the children who have become such a part of the synagogues' new life --cavorting behind speakers' as if they were the stars of the show.



*Elvin Nichols*

*Sponsored by*

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## Elvin Nichols, continued.

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Ibi, Issac, Sara, Jerry  
& Kimberly Wertman

Anonymous

As Mr. Nichols watched shyly, a congregation member, Rachel Cowan, sneaked up, touched him gently and said, "Elvin was the glue that held it all together -- if it weren't for Elvin, this place would be gone." Mr. Nichols shrugged and replied: "People keep telling me that."

Gazing on were some of Mr. Nichols's friends from Co-op City in the Bronx, where he lives. Henry Coleman, a dress shop manager, said Mr. Nichols "shows something you very seldom see -- how to show love by just being yourself."

When all was said and done, Mr. Nichols, whose immediate plan is to rest (and then take a temple-paid Caribbean cruise) had only this to say: "I didn't realize I was so well-liked."

Happy Birthday Ansche Chesed

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# In The Schoolyard

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## THE HAVURAH SCHOOL

Most were assimilated. Some were alienated. All were unaffiliated. The parents who founded the Havurah School about 15 years ago had discovered that they wanted a Jewish education for their children after all. But they wanted it to express their progressive values and be sensitive to their doubts and concerns about traditional Jewish education and established Jewish institutions.

So the Havurah School was born as a pioneer in alternative Jewish education. The curriculum, consisting of Bible and holidays and a wide variety of other subjects -- ranging from Jewish life in Eastern Europe and immigration to the Golden Age in Spain and the Inquisition to the Holocaust and the modern state of Israel -- is taught utilizing open classroom techniques. The school is made up of mixed age groups which stay together over time. We teach through the arts, and all our classes are team-taught. Havurah School teachers have always taken this "little" job very seriously, discussing, arguing and trying to understand the subject matter themselves before trying to teach it. Philosophically, we believe questions are more important than answers.

The Havurah School is completely independent but shares many of the values and much of the vision of the new Anshe Chesed. Seeing this, we moved from the space we previously occupied and took up residence at Anshe Chesed in 1981 at the beginning of the synagogue's revitalization. Since then we have been fellow travelers and many members of the Havurah School have chosen to become members of Anshe Chesed.

The Havurah School wishes Anshe Chesed the very best on its 160th anniversary. We look forward to many more years of friendship and mutual benefit. Congratulations and good luck!

## THE WEST SIDE JEWISH COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Four years ago, a group of parents from the Anshe Chesed and B'nai Jeshurun communities came together with a common vision - to establish a dynamic afternoon Hebrew/Judaica program for children and parents. Today, the West Side Jewish Community School is a thriving educational institution with 66 students ranging from pre-kindergarten through post-B'nai Mitzvah.

Children make up a vital part of the A.C. community. We celebrate their birth and rejoice in their every step: from recognizing the letters of the aleph bet to learning to "lain" Torah. We are at their sides as they mature to become responsible Jewish members of the community. Their openness provides us with a renewing energy and freshness in celebrating our Jewish identity.

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Anshe Chesed*

Toni & Rosi Grunschlag  
*In Memory of our  
parents Morris  
Grunschlag & Celia  
Grunschlag nee  
Reichmann-Reinharz*

Rabbi Neal Kaunfer  
*Continue showing  
kindness to many  
generations*

Ralph Seliger  
*Happy Birthday  
Anshe Chesed*

Susan  
Rappaport-Williams  
& Michael Williams  
*Happy Birthday  
Anshe Chesed*

## In The Schoolyard, continued.

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Here at the W.S.J.C.S., in an atmosphere that attempts to combine creativity and intellectual challenge, children learn about themselves as they meet and question the Bible, the siddur, their thoughts on God, ethical dilemmas, our people's past and future. Their Jewish education is a joint partnership between parents and educators, between home, school, and synagogue. We look to a bright future of continued growth, inspiring and creative projects and expanded community outreach.

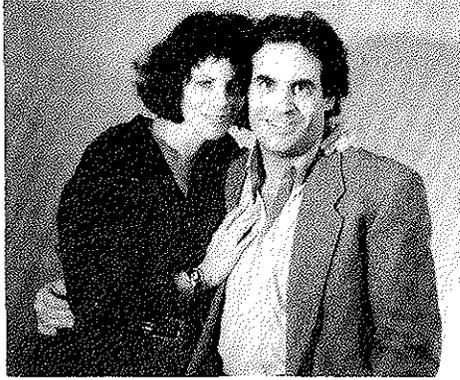
On this, its 160th anniversary, the children and staff wish Anshe Chesed a happy birthday and for the community to continue to journey from strength to strength.

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Congratulations and Best Wishes  
to  
Anshe Chesed  
from  
The Havurah School  
"Old Friends and Fellow Travelers"

# The Class of 1989



**Mimi and Bernie Gelb**

What a wonderful blessing Ansche Chesed has been to us since we moved to the neighborhood almost three years ago. For all the gifts of friendship, laughter and tears, we are proud and grateful to be members of the Ansche Chesed community.

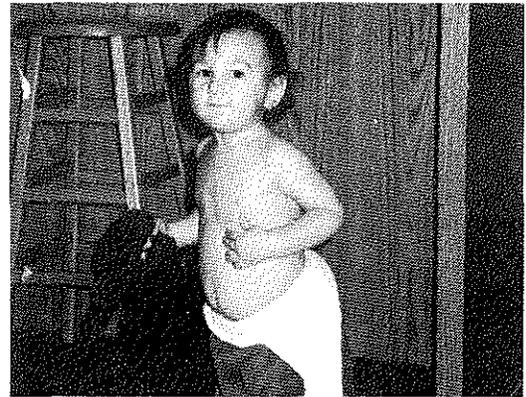


**Esther and Walter Hautzig, and daughter Deborah** We have been Ansche Chesed worshippers since 1951 - and have loved each and every year of it! Our son had his Bar Mitzvah here, our parents attended all services with us. Ansche Chesed is our spiritual home! (Esther: Author; Walter: Concert Pianist; Deborah: Novelist and Children's Book Author)



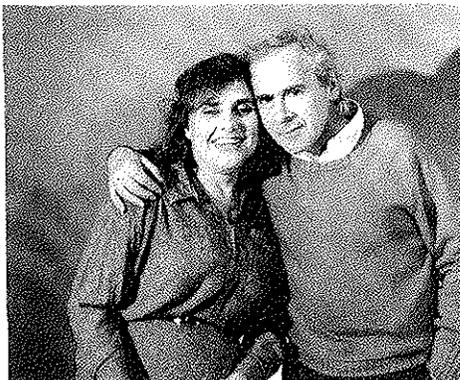
**Ken Gorfinkle, Doris Ullendorff and Gabriel**

We're excited about the future of all the children at Ansche Chesed; we see Ansche Chesed as a great place to have kids. Since 1983 we've been a part of the Chapel Minyan. What brought me in 1984 was Paul Cowan's book, An Orphan in History. We three became very close friends. We now do workshops for interfaith couples.

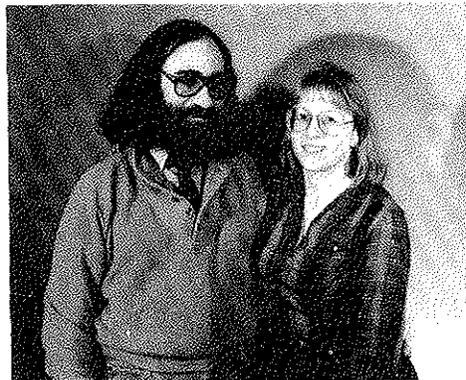


**Ari Ullendorff Gorfinkle**

October 15, 1986 - February 23, 1988



**Arlene and Howard Eisenberg** A classic case of environmental infection. Howard was the first family writer. With the mortgage overdue, desperate wife Arlene finished a magazine piece due the next day when he "blocked." And now Evan, Heidi, and Sandee write books, and married-in Freda and Erik write, too. Whether grandchildren Emma and Wyatt, Rachel and Ethan have caught the infection it's too soon to tell.



**Iris Korman and Nos Sher**

One holiday we were headed, very late, toward a synagogue downtown; our choice was to be nearly on time at Ansche Chesed - three blocks from home - or very late where we were headed. It was worth a try. People our age were enjoying themselves. We went back and found we liked it.

# The Class of 1989

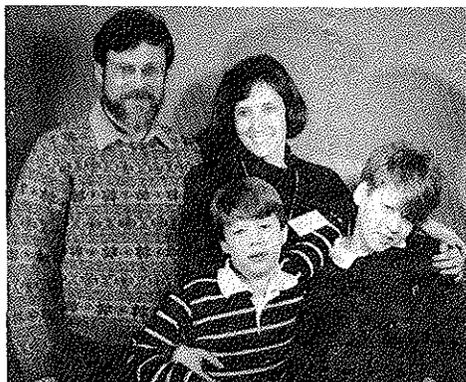


**Jay Fridkis** Minyan Makif member drafted by Chapel Minyan in only his 3rd year as a pro. Played same Bimah as Jackie Mason - high holidays 1988 - and led davening without a net. Can be found at Wednesday night basketball in Anshe Chesed gym setting moving picks at the top of the key. Once brought kiddush in honor of receiving parking spot at his building.



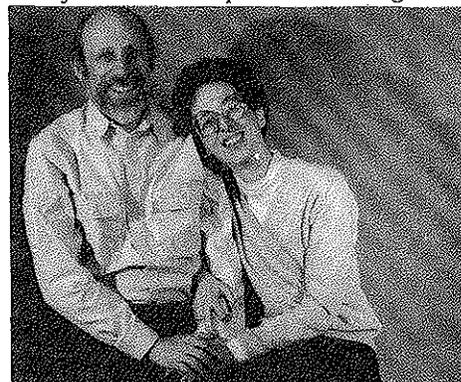
**Jay Greenspan and BJ Gluckstern**

I was a teacher in the Havurah School with Jerry Raik. We in the New York Havurah used Anshe Chesed for davening space; it was open to anyone. I was a good friend of the Cowans. Now I pop in to AC occasionally. I'm involved in the Hanukah Arts Festival. I know a lot of people at Anshe Chesed; I feel comfortable with it. My wife and I are pleased it's doing fine.



**Ellen Tucker, Alan, Joshua and Aaron Rosenstein**

In 1980 we had a two week old baby; we decided it was time to try the shul around the corner. Alan started going to services by himself or with Josh. Rachel Cowan asked me to help out at Hanukah, then at Purim. I got into running the Hanukah Arts Festival; the community piece of it got me in.



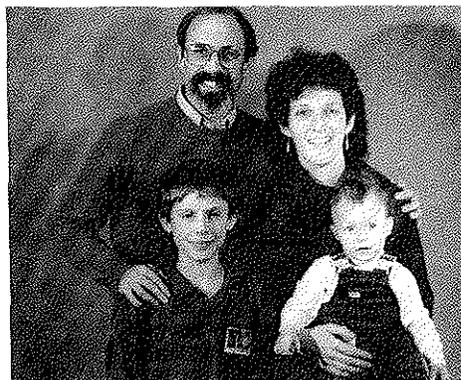
**Martin and Tamara Green**

We've been members since 1982. Reading about Anshe Chesed in Paul Cowan's book brought us. We love it! The people. The excitement. The energy. The davening. We're both active. (Martin is on the board; he has been secretary for three years). We're active in the Chapel Minyan itself. Happy Birthday Anshe Chesed! We should all live to 160.



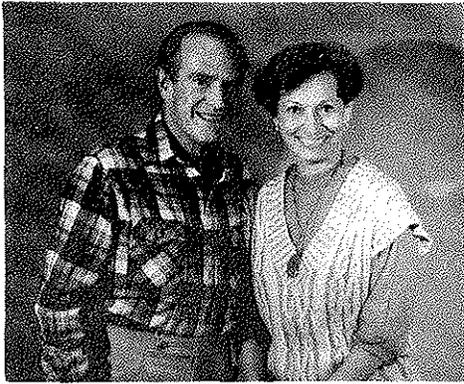
**Daniel Schweber and Ellie Schweber**

Just two more years to go 'til my Bar Mitzvah at Anshe Chesed!



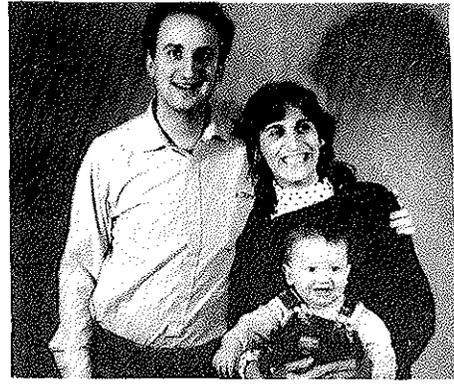
**Robert Goldenberg and Nina Wacholder, Alex and Shifra**

Nina joined Anshe Chesed about ten years ago. Bob has been davening with Minyan M'at off and on since it began. Now that they live in Queens, they have to watch it from afar but they come in to join their favorite activities as often as possible. Anshe Chesed: Once you make it past 120, you live forever.



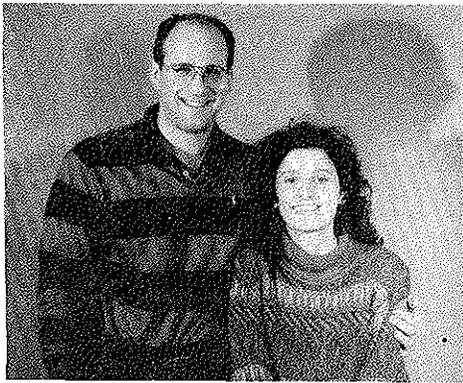
**Alfred and Shirley Lowenstein**

We met at Hebrew Arts School in 1980 studying chazanut. Married seven years, we have four sons between us: David, Jonathan, Glenn, Wayne. Alfred is a tenor in the Metropolitan Opera Chorus. Shirley is a teacher in the New York City Schools.



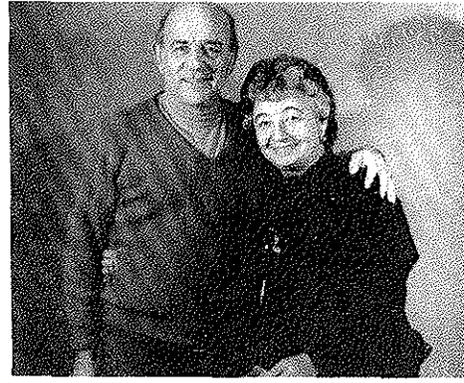
**David Fisher, Pearl Beck and Ariel Fisher**

Pearl and David met in the West Side Minyan and were married in the sanctuary of Anshe Chesed...Ariel is the result.



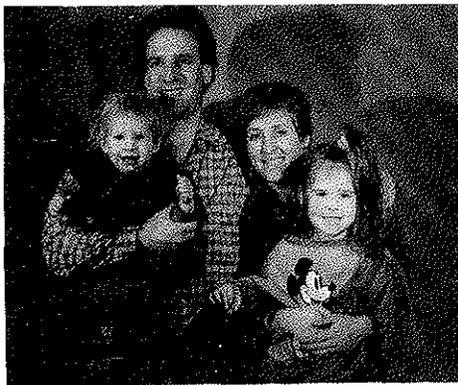
**Linda Greenbaum and Michael Plotnick**

I've been a member for four or five years. I'm here because it's completely egalitarian. I like it that there's no rabbi. It's a very warm community.



**Bernard and Rochelle Tenzer**

I've been a member five or six years. Paul Cowan's book was instrumental in bringing me. The services are very important to me. I'm involved on the Building Committee; I'm on the Board. I helped establish the first shelter at Anshe Chesed. I find Anshe Chesed vibrant and involved in social action, which is important to me as a person as well as a Jew. We've found our special Jewish home.



**Janet Heetner, Peter Silverman, Yona and Merav**

As "fellow travellers" with the New York Havurah for many years, we first came to Anshe Chesed when the New York Havurah started davening the high holidays there. It sure looks different from when we began!



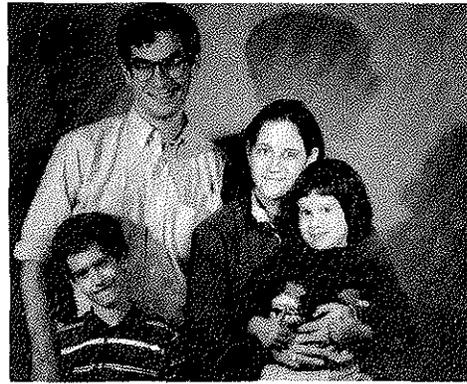
**Sarah Jacobs, David Kronfeld and Dena**

Anshe Chesed is an incredible community of good people, caring, smart people. I never would have worked at any other shul. It's grown up a lot; it's become a community across many lines. I love that I'm friends with people in their eighties and with little kids too.

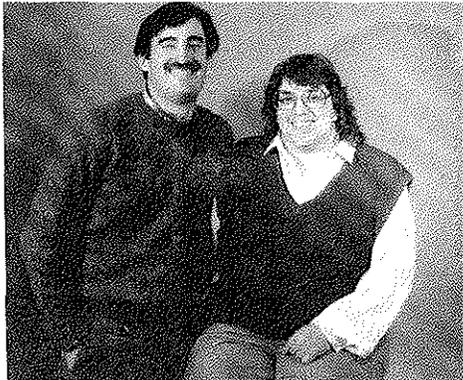
# The Class of 1989



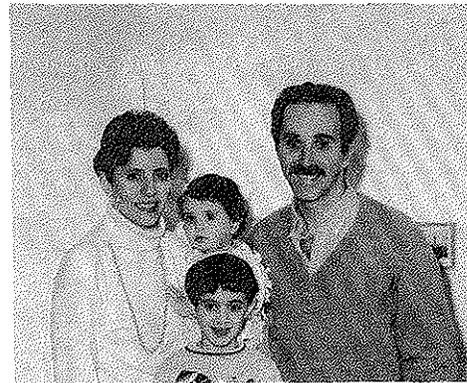
**Barrie, Jerry, Rebecca, Joseph and Molly Raik** I was looking for a place to pray. We were both looking for a place to bring our kids. AC gives us something solid. It's what keeps us in the neighborhood. Our hopes and wishes for AC are that it grow and become even stronger yet always remain sensitive. It should continue to be a place where we can listen well to each other and listen for other voices as well.



**Ruth, Ira, Rachel and Josh Salzman**  
Congratulations to Anshe Chesed!

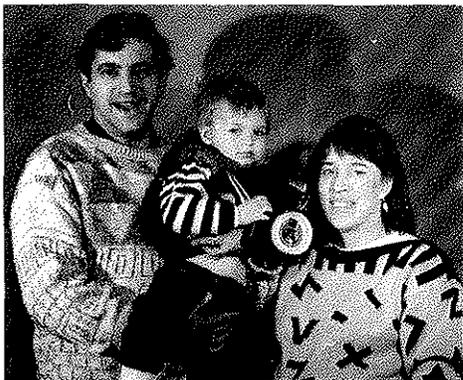


**Debbie Cassel and Michael Rand**



**Barry M. Winiker, Eillene Leistner, Evan Winiker, Amy Leistner**

After attending the New York City Havurah, we came to Anshe Chesed with very close friends and relatives who decided it was time to join a synagogue in our area. We've been members now at least five years - we attend the West Side Minyan and the Chapel Minyan.



**Eve Coulson, Nelson Obus, Eli Obus**

The day of the photo session was my due date; since that day I have given birth to a daughter, Lucy, whose Hebrew name is in memory of Paul Cowan. Our involvement came about because of our friendship with Paul and Rachel Cowan who ran a workshop we attended over four years ago. What keeps us here is the feeling of being part of the community of people.



**Elaine and Ronald Morris**

Praying community: each of those words is important to us. It's a joy to see the number of babies. It looks like there's a future. L'Chaim!



**Marion Shulevitz** Marion Shulevitz is a member of the West Side Minyan, is a senior rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary. She and her husband Bill live on the Upper West Side. They are the proud parents of Debby, who with her husband Ori Schwartzburg also belong to the West Side Minyan, and of Michael, a Peace Corps alumnus and Judith, a writer.



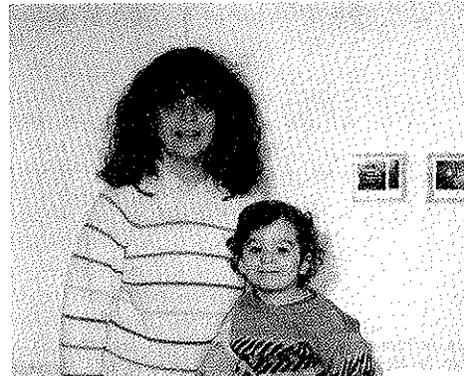
**Sylvia L. Weber and Andrew Weber**

The first year I came to high holiday services in the sanctuary, I was sitting in the back. Andrew, four, went to childcare. Towards the end of the service Rachel Cowan brought him back to the bimah. He announced very loudly, "There's my mommy way in the back!" and basically made a spectacle of himself. It's a very hospitable, supportive congregation.



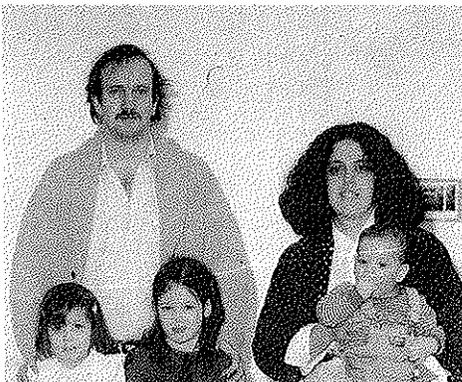
**Nancy Schafer, Ken Sachar, Arielle and Jonah**

We joined the congregation in 1987. Ken teaches at Evander Childs High School, Bronx, and coaches track. Nancy is a school psychologist. Jonah goes to PS 87 and the West Side Jewish Community School. Arielle will join him in both schools next year.



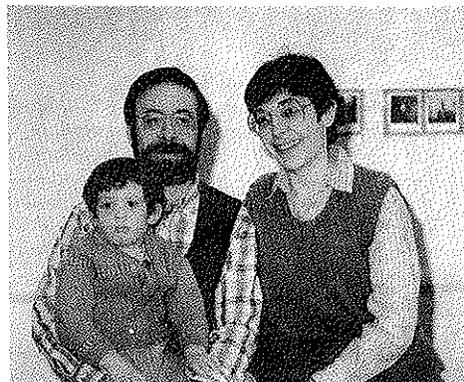
**Paula Galowitz**

Years ago I went to the West Side Minyan. I've recently started going again. I hope for Ansche Chesed's continuing involvement in social action issues.



**Melvin Bukiet, Jill Goodman, Madelaine, Louisa, Miles**

Although we first attended high holiday services at AC 6 or 7 years ago we joined 3 years ago. When one of our daughters was named in the Chapel, my father was amazed. While he found the participation of women disconcerting, the service itself was closer to those he remembered as a child in Europe than any he had attended since then.



**David, Shana and Aryeh Roskies**

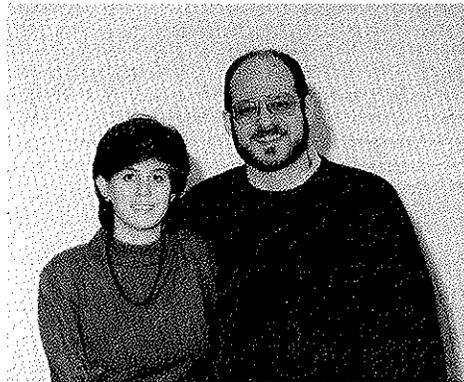
Minyan M'at  
I've been involved since the dramatic takeover the year the charter was rewritten and all the independent groups joined with the shul. I feel that the rebuilding of Ansche Chesed will in the end be the most lasting accomplishment of all of our groups.

# The Class of 1989



**Baruch M. Bokser and Ann F. Wimpfheimer, Yonatan Simha and Benjamin Meir Wimpfheimer-Bokser**

We've been members of Minyan M'at for at least six years and involved with the ongoing vibrant Jewish life of Anshe Chesed from the beginning of its revitalization. We hope Anshe Chesed continues to flourish as an active center of Jewish life religiously and culturally.



**Eric Peterman and Ellen Resnick**

People recommended Anshe Chesed to us. We found Minyan M'at to be the type of minyan we liked; we've been members for about one year. We like the people, the service. We wanted something truly traditional but egalitarian. Our wish for Anshe Chesed is that it remain a viable institution.



**Emma and Wyatt Murkoff**

Wyatt: First President of the Galaxy.  
Emma: First Ambassador to Mars.  
How do Arlene and Howard Eisenberg know?  
Hey, What are Grandparents for!



**Ed Greenstein** Ed has been a founding member of Minyan M'at, and joined AC when it was revitalized. He has served as Chair of the Ritual Committee. He helped begin and has been leading the Children's Tefilla. Ed's daughter Batsheva had her bat mitzvah service in Hirsch Hall. Ed is married to Beverly Gribetz, a member of Minyan M'at. Ed is a professor of Bible at the Jewish Theological Seminary.



**Alexander I. Ross** Director of Public Relations for the American Committee for the Weizmann Institute of Science. Former newspaperman and advertising executive. Joined Anshe Chesed, 1985. Member, Chapel Minyan. Member of the Board. Anshe Chesed does not stand still; it's constantly in evolution; growing. I hope it can preserve the intimacy, the do-it-yourself spirit and the tolerance that have been its characteristics.



**Andrew Caplan, Linda Jaffe Caplan, Nancy Caplan**

Happy Birthday Anshe Chesed!



**Joseph Friendly** Popular household mover, is an independent scientist and video artist. Investigating the biological significance of birthdates, his yet unpublished discovery of birthdate's role in early development relates solar energy features in the environment to patterns of neural organization. Joe's computer graphics Cable-TV show presents plans for peaceful revolution.



**Ronald Meltzer and Barbara Spiegel** Ronald first joined the West Side Minyan in 1981. About 1983 he started attending the Chapel Minyan. Barbara joined the Chapel Minyan around 1984 and we joined - Ronald and Barbara - that is, became a married couple, in 1985. While joining the diaspora from the expensive Upper West Side in 1988, we still feel part of Anshe Chesed.



**Chuck Simon, Mary Katzin, Samuel Katzin-Simon and Pidge**

We started coming to Anshe Chesed when Sam was seventeen months old; he'll be eight in July. It is such a great mix of people, age-wise, such a varied congregation. My wish for its future is that there our children will grow Jewishly together.



**Alex, Roberta, Benjamin Bruner** We were looking for some Jewish affiliation. We heard about AC being revitalized. We don't belong to a minyan yet; we may go to the Learner's Minyan. Little by little, it's a slow immersion for us. People are very friendly, eager to welcome new congregants. Our wishes are for actively enlightened Judaism.



**Marjorie and Ernest Hort**

I went to Anshe Chesed with my grandmother when I was pretty small. Time elapsed. I went away to school. After a while I started to go back to services. I like a conservative synagogue. I like the service at Anshe Chesed. I like the people. I enjoy it.



**Michael Meric, Rivka Widerman-Meric**

A veteran Westsider and her husband fresh from Los Angeles. We love the Chapel Minyan and feel wonderful being part of a 160 year tradition. We look forward to many more extremely long walks to shul in the future.

# The Class of 1989

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**Michael Brochstein**

Started coming to Minyan Ha-Makif in 1983. Anshe Chesed is still the only place like it; nothing even comes close. I wish it prosperity and a continuation of its unique ways. If I ever decide to leave the Upper West Side I will have to recruit some AC people to come with me to start a "branch".



**Andrew Schulman**

Best known for his brilliant if short-lived career as an Anshe Chesed basketball player; also seen occasionally at the morning minyan but only if he hadn't gone to sleep the night before. Good haftorah reader.



**Marty, Debbie, Kate-2, Ben-5 Greenberg**

We still shlep down from Riverdale!



**Ellen Alt and Janice Rous**

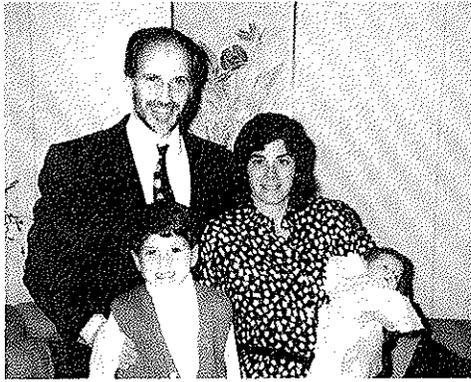
Good friends - met at Anshe Chesed during Adon Olam.



**The Three's (1987-88)** salute their sponsor, Temple Anshe Chesed.



**Bob Trestman** from New Orleans. **Rosanna Trestman** from Southern Florida. Both avid cyclists who met on Halloween (on bicycles). Married 11 months later at Anshe Chesed (the 1st marriage in the newly restored sanctuary). Two cats: T-Max and Sherpa. Bob: research psychiatrist at Mt. Sinai hospital. Rosanna: captures architecture in words and photographs.

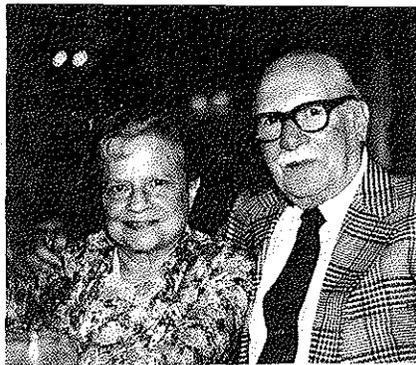


**Susan Brecher, Michael Weintraub, Eric and Rebecca** Ansche Chesed has been a very special part of our family life. We truly appreciate the sense of community that has developed for us with many of the people at the temple, especially the Chapel minyan.



**Ely and Evelyn Zimmerman**

Ely became a member in 1946; parents Anna and David, earlier. Ely, a member of the board from 1952 to 1965, is a retired lawyer and businessman. During World War II he was among the first American troops into Tokyo. He married Evelyn, a woman's clothing designer, in 1946. A Zimmerman family memorial window hangs in the sanctuary.



**Pauline and Julius Barkman** Married 5/36 by Rabbi Joseph Zeitlin of AC. Julius: Member of Board and Treasurer. Pauline: P.T.A. Secretary of Hebrew School; Secretary of Sisterhood; Editor of Sisterhood Bulletin; Painted "Tree of Life" in 1964; Family has belonged to Ansche Chesed since 1918 at 114th St. & 7th Ave.



**Monique Breindel, Jonathan Oberman, Hannah Rachel and Naomi Deborah Oberman-Breindel** are glad to be a part of this community and congratulate Ansche Chesed on 160 years.



**Jonathan Levin** (son of Susan Levin) Born 9-16-84. Favorite Holiday-Chanukah; Favorite Bible Story-Jonah and the Whale; Favorite Movie-Wizard of Oz; Favorite Nursery Program-The Threes at Ansche Chesed; Career Goal-to be a father.



**Julia Lukomnik** (daughter of Lynn Davidson and Jon Lukomnik) Minyan M'at. Happy Birthday Ansche Chesed!

# The Class of 1989



**Selma Kolatch Margulies**  
 Chief of Speech Pathology Services at St. John's Queens Hospital. Singer of Hebrew and Yiddish, was also soloist at Rego Park Jewish Center for 20 years; presently member of the Hebrew Arts Chorale. Proud mother of two special daughters.



**Klez-meydlekh Plus Two** Congratulatoons to Anshe Chesed from Klez-meydlekh Plus Two: (l-r) David Meer, David Krakauer, Laura Liben, Janet Leuchter and Vicky Gould.



**The Melker Family**  
 These are the Melker children in front of the table set for Rosh Hashannah celebration. Jared (Rosenbaum), 11, an enthusiastic student in Jerry's Havurah; Shari, 4, who likes to draw Queen Esther; and Shulamit, 1, whose name is befitting her personality. Parents: Ilona and Neil Melker



**Dan, Janice, Anya and Eli Rous**  
 Best wishes to Anshe Chesed from the Rous house for 160 more years.



**Michael, Sharon, Kayla, Noam and Benjamin Strassfeld** We've been members since the revitalization. We hope Anshe Chesed continues to grow and expand the kinds of things it does and become more and more fully a community for the people who participate; and while it continues to grow, we hope it doesn't lose its special character.



**Amanda Hirsch & Doug Slotnick**



**David, Linda, Jessica, Elliot Shriner-Cahn  
Lester and Herta Shriner**  
Three generations at Anshe Chesed.



**Arleen Stern, Albert Gal and Penina Stern Gal**  
Long time A.C. enthusiasts...wanderers through  
many minyanim. Currently enchanted with both  
Chapel and Children's Minyans.



**Rafel-Frankel Family**  
HELLO TOMORROW! For those of you looking  
at us on Anshe Chesed's 260th Anniversary,  
we are the Rafel-Frankel Family...Erwin, Ellen,  
Saul and Gideon...smiling across time -- as the  
ongoing waves of this wonderful institution  
continue to flow through the years.



**Kayla, Noam and Benjamin Strassfeld**



**Howard Eisenberg and Travis**  
"Travis is the mascot of Minyan M'at."  
(Photo sponsored by Salem Alaton)

# The Class of 1989

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## West Side Minyan

Debbie Cassel, Itzhak Epstein, Lisa Gittelman, Adina Epstein, Deb Kayman, Ben Epstein, Noah Kayman, Bonnie Epstein, Bruce Steiner, Pearl Beck, David Fisher, Arie Fisher, Ken Amron, Yael Adelsberg Amron



## Minyan M'at

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# The Way We Were



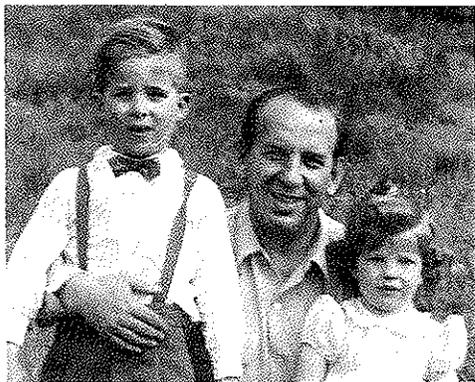
("Reverend") Alexander Schwartz, sexton at Anshe Chesed, and Dorothy Schwartz



## Lee Kaplan-Millman

Married to David. Mother and grandmother to six beauties. Career: Southeast Regional Director of the Weizmann Institute of Science. Heavily involved in Jewish Community activities. Love living in Florida. Daughter of Syd and Jos. Kaplan.

# The Way We Were



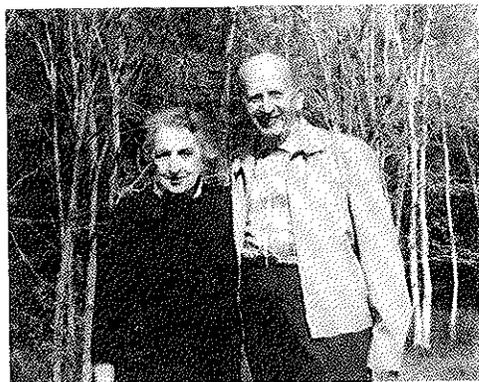
**Emanuel Greenberg** with son **Gary** and daughter **Marion** In loving memory of a wonderful husband and father. Manny was an active member of Anshe Chesed, a proud and good Jew, and a great human being.

-Erna (nee Hautzig) Greenberg-Podhaicer,  
Marion Greenberg and Gary Greenberg



**Emanuel Greenberg** 1899-1958

Member of Anshe Chesed during the 1940's and 1950's. -In loving memory from his children and grandchildren.



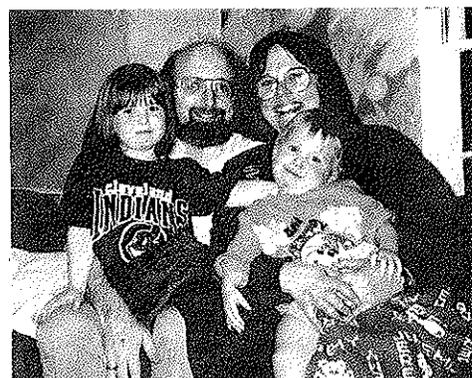
**Raya and Samuel Rudomin** My parents, members of AC during the 50's and 60's, davened in Hirsch Hall during Holy Days, sidestepping pomp and organ. The services were led by Dr. Abraham Chaikin, a dentist, with a sweetness and a voice never to be forgotten. Our 3-year-old Deborah asked to leave another shul, where we visited relatives, because "the man in Grandma's temple sings much nicer than the man here." -Esther Hautzig



**David Rudomin Hautzig** during his 1978 Bar Mitzvah at the Kotel. At his Bar Mitzvah at AC, he chanted the Haftorah during a moving service conducted by Rabbi Henry Glazer and Cantor Charles Bloch. Kiddush was in the lobby since Hirsch Hall was flooded. Our "caterer" Elvin Nichols helped make the party memorable for one and all. -Walter and Esther Hautzig



**Rosa and David Hautzig** My parents had reached a compromise in the 1940's. Mama was berated by the ladies in their Orthodox shul for carrying a purse on Yom-Tov. Almost an archetypical AC lady, of another generation, Mama said she was going to AC with the children (Greenbergs and us) and Papa fully supported her decision, while expecting, and receiving, her approval to remain in his. -Walter Hautzig



**Ann Appelbaum, Neal Borovitz, Abby & Jeremy**

I helped in the rejuvenation process and was inspired by the vision of what Anshe Chesed could become. I have great connections to and fondness for the people who helped rebuild it.

# The Way We Were

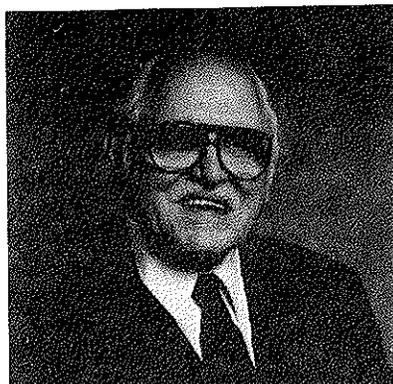


**Albert Cohen**

In memory of our father, Albert Cohen, Anshe Chesed President, 1967-1969. -Susan Cohen Donner and Kenneth Cohen



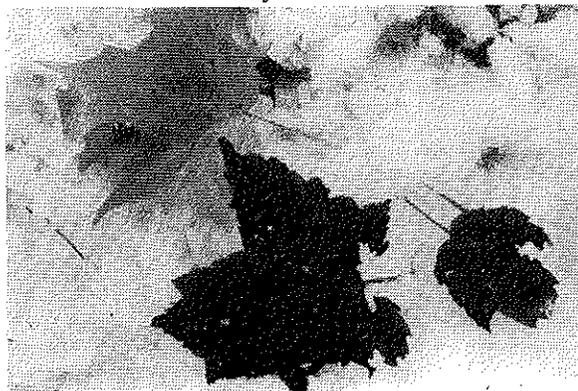
**The Lesser Family** Samuel and Hilda Lesser joined AC in 1930, remaining members throughout their lives. Samuel died in 1965 and Hilda just three months ago. Their son, Joseph, was trained for his Bar Mitzvah by AC's former Cantor, Marcel Katz. It occurred in 1937. Their daughter, Eleanor, was confirmed in 1942. Hilda served the Congregation with great distinction as a long-time member of its Board of Trustees. On Nov. 3, 1974, she was honored by Sisterhood as 'Woman of the Year' at a dinner reception in the Temple's ballroom.



**Leon Wolf Levy** Leon Wolf Levy arrived in the United States from Palestine, with his mother Rebecca Levy, during Chanukah, 1923, and attended services with his father, Rabbi Baruch Levy, at AC. In May of 1927, Leon became a Bar Mitzvah at the Synagogue and for that special day, read the entire Sedra of Bamidbar. The Levys extend best wishes in the observance of Anshe Chesed's 160th anniversary.



**Marion Winter** Age 88, emigrated from Germany with husband Nathan and 2 daughters in 1938. For 50 years she has been attending Holiday services. Her daughters, Edith and Sue, attended Hebrew School and were confirmed. She has a close affinity with the Temple and is a generous supporter. Nathan died in 1972. -Edith Winter Freshman



For Carol, who will never see the Fall leaves again. -A.R.

# Matriarchs and Patriarchs



**Lillian Goldstein with her great-grandchildren, Kayla and Noam Strassfeld**



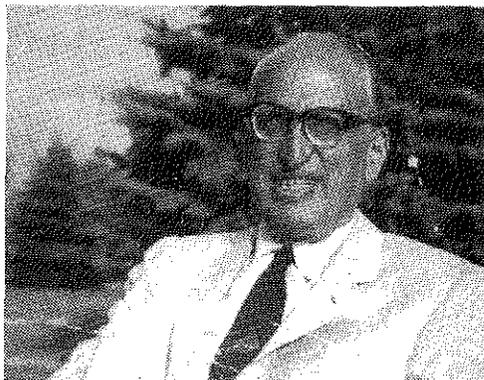
**Ralph and Kayla Shuster  
Ann and Yoel Finkelstein**  
Great-aunt and uncle, grandmother and grandfather of Sharon Strassfeld



**Bubbee and Zaydee Finkelstein**  
Grandmother and grandfather of Sharon Strassfeld



**Abraham Katzenelson**, grandfather of Barbara Rosen Fleck-Paladino. In May, with brothers Louie and Bela Fleck and many dear others looking on, my son Sascha will become a Bar Mitzvah. I like to think my late parents Mike and Emma Rosen and their late parents, most especially my Zayde (pictured here), would approve.



**Max E. Oppenheimer**  
In honor of the 160th Anniversary of Ansche Chesed, and in memory of my late husband, Max. E. Oppenheimer.  
-Mrs. Wally Ochs Oppenheimer

## SYLVIA WOLLAN GILBERT

Affiliated with Anshe Chesed since 1933



Two daughters-Confirmed and Graduated at Temple Anshe Chesed:

**Elaine Mates Spitz** Prof. Political Science, taught at Cornell, Colgate, Vassar, Montclair. Appointed to Texas University. Passed away Feb. 8, 1986. MA-Yale, PhD-University of City of New York. Two daughters, Karen and Jessica Mates.

**Gloria Wollan Zicht** London School of Economics, BA Antioch, MA Hunter College, St. Lukes - 17 years Social Work. Director- New York Association for New Americans. Husband deceased. Four children; Stefan, Melissa, Deborah, and Meredith.

### Saga of Sylvia

President Jr. Sisterhood 1935-38  
Leader of Girl Scouts 1940-43  
Vice President Sisterhood 1944-52  
Elected to Temple Board 1945  
President PTA Anshe Chesed 1945-50  
Chairman of Community Center 1945-63  
Chairman of School Board 1947-52  
Volunteer Teacher in Hebrew School 1957-59  
Sisterhood President 1966-68  
Honorary Trustee



Sylvia and Edward Gilbert

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# Alumni News Updates

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## **The Teutsch Family:**

Hello from the Teutsches. Since coming to Philly, we've added Nomi (11/87). Zachary is in kindergarten; David is writing his dissertation and working full-time at RRC; Betsy is still pen-dipping. Come visit!

## **Hortense Brown Ripin:**

Our family joined in 1915; my brothers were Bar Mitzvah, Aloyin in 1918 and Julian in 1921. My father was a trustee, my mother treasurer of the Sisterhood. Nellie Reif and Cora Kohn were Esther Brown's dearest friends. Our family life was always closely connected with Ansche Chesed. My parent's fiftieth anniversary, celebrated with fellow members and relatives at the Cottage Hotel, is one of many memories very dear to me.

## **Notes from Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Lee; Dr. & Mrs. Stanley Grayson; Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth R. Lee:**

### **An Ansche Chesed Family**

David L. Liebowitz and Evelyn Liebowitz joined the congregation in 1916 when it was located at 114th Street and Seventh Avenue in Manhattan's Harlem. They lived at 1884 Seventh Avenue, just across the street. When the Temple moved to 100th Street and West End Avenue, David and Evelyn moved with it to 99th Street and West End Avenue. David Liebowitz was a member of the Temple Board of Trustees and its ritual service committee chairman for 20 years. They had three children: Arthur Lee of Peekskill and DelRay Beach, Rhoda Grayson of Boca Raton, and Kenneth Lee of White Plains. Seven grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren later joined the clan.

## **Dr. & Mrs. Frank Goldstein**

I attended services at Ansche Chesed around 1930-35. Member of the sisterhood then and a close friend of Sylvia Wollan Gilbert. My son, Barnet Apfel, was Bar Mitzvah there, by Rabbi Zeitlin. -Beatrice Apfel Goldstein

### **IN RECOGNITION**

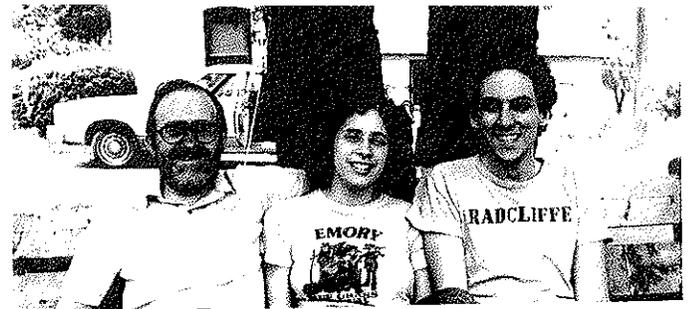
of his devoted service, exceptional leadership and warm friendship, the members of Ansche Chesed who left the congregation with him to join the Riverside Synagogue pay tribute to and recall the tenure of

**RABBI JOSEPH ZEITLIN**

# The Westside Minyan

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# The Westside Minyan, continued

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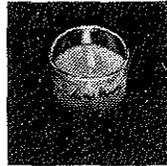
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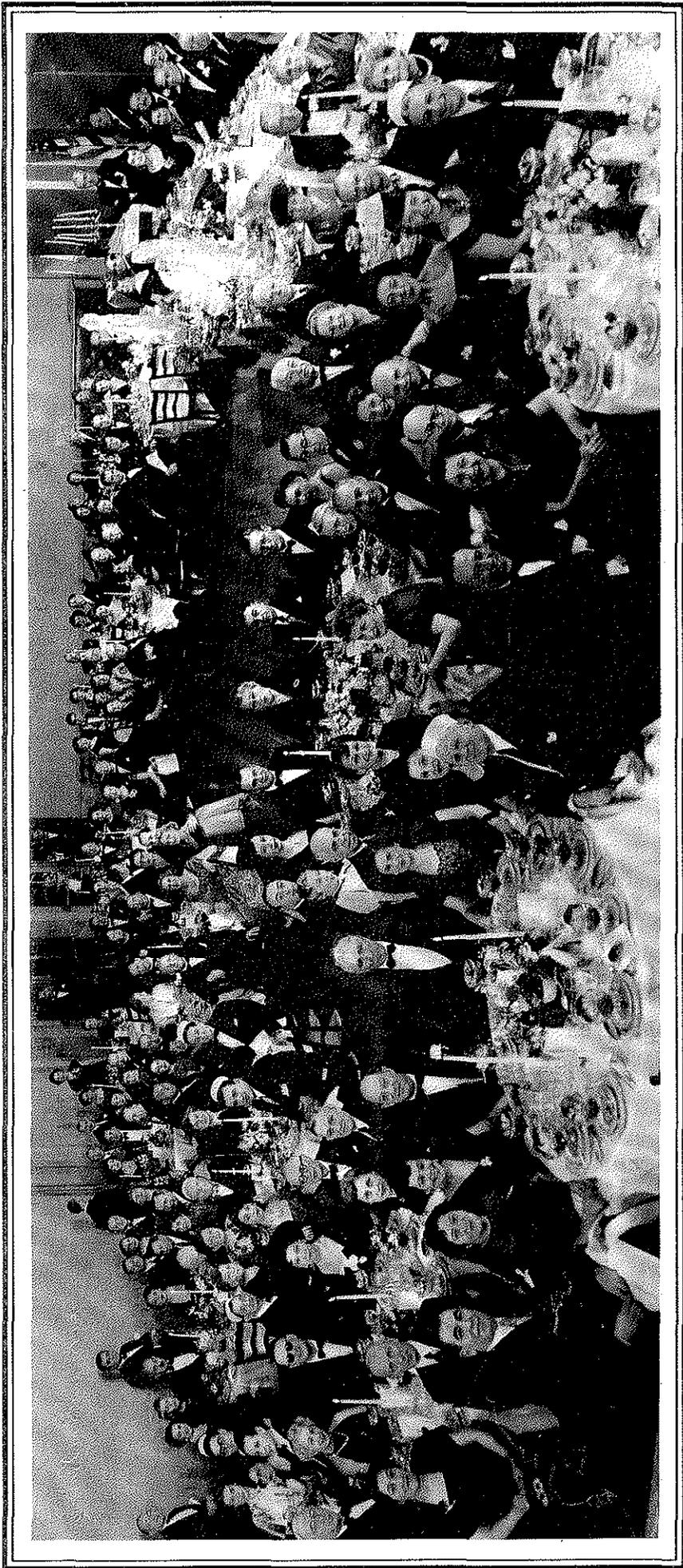
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*Ansche Chesed Dinner Dance at the Waldorf-Astoria, 1950*