

B'er Chayim Bulletin



January 2021

Tevet - Shevat 5781

107 West Union Street, Cumberland, Maryland 21502

301-722-5688

Reminiscing - David Shapiro is writing a series on the history of the Keyser, West Virginia, business community. The first article in this effort is shared below, "Keyser was home to many flourishing businesses." It appeared in the December 15, 2020 Cumberland Times-News and other local publications.



◆ When you drive down the business section of Keyser today, especially Main and Armstrong Streets, you see many empty buildings. At one time, most of those buildings had flourishing businesses. Some people remember these businesses; some do not. I plan to write a series of articles to bring these businesses back to life, starting with my own business: Shapiro's Stores.

Part 1: Shapiro's Stores Inc. My father, Robert Shapiro, was born in the Province of Lithuania, which was part of Russia, probably in the town of Vilna. His birth name was Rubin, but he later changed it to Robert. He came to the United States in about 1901. He would have been about 10 to 12 years old. He came to the U.S. with his brother, Joseph Shapiro, and his father, Louis Shapiro, whom I met one time. Also, they had one sister, Rose. They all settled in Baltimore, Maryland.

In Baltimore my father met my mother, Esther Rachael Cohen. They married in 1922. My mother was born in 1901 in Baltimore. She had two sisters, Lena and Sara, and one brother. Her mother (my grandmother) was Ella Strausburg and she was from Russia.

My father and mother later came to Cumberland, and my father worked for his uncle, Louis Kline, who had a store on Baltimore Street. That store went out of business, so my father came to Keyser and opened his own store, Shapiro's Stores, in about 1923, on the west side of Armstrong Street close to where the News-Tribune was at the time.

Shapiro's Stores moved to the middle block of Armstrong Street sometime in the late 1930s or early 1940s. They later built a new, ultra-modern building, which was the envy of the area, in about 1948. The new Shapiro's Stores was designed and built by contractor Ray C. Coffman. The store came to be a fabulous building in the late 1940s and '50s.

Another building was built alongside the ladies' store, a men's store, that occupied that space and opened in 1958. The stores flourished. In fact, Robert Shapiro was recognized by Mineral County Chamber of Commerce as a major contributor for helping build retailing in the downtown area of Keyser.

My parents died in the 1960s: Esther Shapiro in 1964 and Robert Shapiro in 1967. My sister, Marion Shapiro Hartman, became a key player in Shapiro's Ladies Store as an excellent saleslady and buyer. Her husband, Ervin Hartman, was a buyer and salesman in Shapiro's Men's Store, along with me and my son, Steven Shapiro. During the 1990s, the corporation opened a satellite store for casual wear called Zippers and a children's store called Guys and Dolls. Zippers was first managed by my son, Allen Shapiro. Guys and Dolls was first managed by Marion Hartman; after she retired, it was managed by Allen Shapiro. The stores did a fabulous business through the 1970s. The stores did not do as well in the '80s and '90s and closed completely in 2002. ◆

From Cantor Bessman

Dear BCT Members,

As this new year begins, a new decade begins. I would rather look ahead to better times than recap the last year, though the last several weeks have been pretty good from my standpoint: BCT gave Rabbi Perman a heart-warming and well-deserved sendoff to warmer climes; my move to Cumberland wasn't so bad; and I received a most gracious welcome.



Tu B'Shevat is the notable holiday that will take place in the first month of the new year this year. On January 28th, 2021, we celebrate the Talmud-mandated "New Year for the Trees." In the Jewish calendar, this occurs on the 15th (Tu) day of the month of Shevat (15th of Shevat = Tu B'Shevat). Some may have attended or heard of a Tu B'Shevat seder. It is a recent innovation. Rabbi Isaac Luria of Sefad, the great 16th-century kabbalist (mystic), modeled this ritual based on the Passover seder (the Torah-mandated ceremony that happens exactly three Jewish-months later). At the Tu B'Shevat seder, we eat foods associated with Israel's agricultural riches, as referenced in Deuteronomy 8:8: "a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey." As we do for Passover, we drink four cups of wine; however, unlike Passover, the four cups of wine are different combinations of white and red. Why?

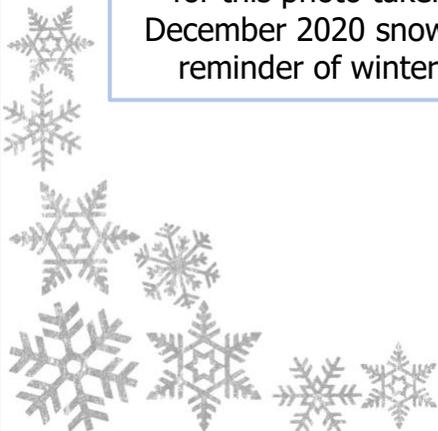
The easiest way to find out is to attend our first Tu B'Shevat seder of the decade, to be held on Friday, January 29th, 2021. We will start this Friday evening service at 6:30 pm, giving an opportunity for those who work to attend. Also, the service will be shorter so that we can start our Tu B'Shevat seder at around 7:15 pm. I will let everyone know what to have at hand as the time approaches. Fortunately, it's not nearly as complicated as the Passover seder in terms of food. I'm happy to assist anyone who needs help.

Until then, stay warm and safe. Spring and the vaccine will be here before you know it.

Labriut (to health),

Cantor Richard Bessman

Thanks to Betsey Hurwitz-Schwab for this photo taken after the December 2020 snowfall - a little reminder of winter's beauty.



From the President

Dear B'er Chayim Congregants,

This has been an eventful year for our congregation and for the world. There is no way I could envision that in my first year as B'er Chayim's president that I would have to deal a pandemic as well as search for a new spiritual leader for our community. The Coronavirus has drastically changed our lives. We wear masks in public, try to stay a minimum of 6 feet away from one another, and attend Shabbat service on Zoom.

At first, we were relatively isolated from the stark reality of the pandemic. Then our area began to experience the reality of this devastating virus. In our B'er Chayim family, it resulted in the passing of Sandy Shapiro and the infection of David and Steven Shapiro. This family is one of the pillars of our Jewish community and beloved by all. During the year, we also lost another pillar of the Jewish community, Seymore Sallerson. His warmth, humor, and intellect will be missed.

I am so proud of our community in not letting this virus take away our spirituality and sense of community. We have shown that as a community we can adapt to even the most difficult situation, while retaining our religious zeal, and becoming spiritually closer as a Jewish community. To protect the congregation the board created a Temple Opening committee which developed and implemented a set of guidelines that minimized the congregants' chance of exposure to the Coronavirus. This enabled members to attend services if they so wished.

For congregants who felt uncomfortable attending in person services, the Board decided to develop online services. With the help of the Rabbi, the Ritual committee, headed by Debbie Lang, and several of our technically savvy congregants, Doug Schwab and Brian Lang, we made our services available on both Facebook and Zoom. As we developed our expertise for online services, we decided to use the Zoom Platform for Shabbat and High Holiday services. We also purchased state of the art video equipment to enable B'er Chayim congregants to easily view and participate services online. This was invaluable in delivering High Holiday and Shabbat services to our congregants.

With the recent uptick in Coronavirus cases, B'er Chayim has again been closed for in-person services. Fortunately, we have Zoom. It really is the next best thing to being there.

This year we had a community Passover Seder on Zoom and we currently have virtual Onegs after Friday night services. During the pandemic we were also treated to a Zoom concert by Nefesh Mountain, which was sponsored by Betsey and Doug Schwab. It gives me such a warm feeling to see so many congregants taking advantage of these online religious experiences. Although it is not quite the same as being there in person, it is a wonderful substitute.

Unfortunately, during the year we saw the resignation of Rabbi Perman. Mark did a fantastic job as our Rabbi. He enriched us with his magnificent voice and love of Judaism. We had a wonderful going virtual going away party for Mark in which we were able to share many warm memories with him and present him with several gifts and some gelt. We of course wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

On a positive note, we had a very successful search for a new spiritual leader. The search team, led by Betsey Hurwitz Schwab, was able to identify four able candidates. Of these the committee presented two to the board. The prospective candidates then interviewed with the board and members from the community.

This collaborative process gave us excellent results. We were able to offer Cantor Bessman a two-year position as our spiritual leader. Richard started in mid-December and has proven to be personable, knowledgeable, and has a wonderful voice. He is an excellent fit for our congregation and an asset for B'er Chayim. For those of you who haven't experienced Cantor Bessman's Shabbat services on Zoom, you really should. It is a treat. I would like to thank the Schwab family, Doug, Betsey, Amy, Sam, Tadd,

their spouses, and the other congregants for their generous donations that have enabled us to hire Cantor Bessman. It is generosity like this that allows B'er Chayim to have a full-time spiritual leader without a huge congregation.

Well, 2020 is drawing to an end. Hopefully, 2021 will be far better. With the creation of the Coronavirus vaccine and its impending distribution, we should soon be able to return to some type of normalcy. This means our community will be able to attend services face to face, enjoy actual Onegs, and participate in person in many of B'er Chayim's many religious and social events. Until that time, I look forward to seeing you on Zoom. Stay healthy and have a wonderful 2021.



Bruce



Donation Acknowledgements

B'er Chayim is eager to acknowledge those who contribute through yahrzeits and other donations. When sending a donation, please include your name as you would like it to be listed in the bulletin. Thank you!



Donations

Yahrzeits

Donor
Emerson Miller
Judi Lazarus-Haag

In memory of
Phillip G. Miller
Margaret Markley

Tree of Memory Leaves

Deborah & Henry Feinberg

Ghita Hill Bessman

Thank you to

Jane Schaffer, for a donation in gratitude to Rabbi Perman for the internment ceremony of Harold Maxwell Hersch
Louise Mirkin, for a donation in memory of Harold (Sonny) Hersch
Barry & Helene Mankowitz, for a donation in memory of Harold Hersch
Doreen Kostel, for a donation in memory of Ghita Bessman

Stuck at home? Looking for enjoyable and worthwhile activities to fend off the winter blahs? Check out the virtual tours and other great experiences available at

Tenement Museum
<https://www.tenement.org>

The Jewish Museum
<https://thejewishmuseum.org>



The Jewish Museum of Maryland is offering a digital tour
January 13, 2021 from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.
to explore how Jewish people have looked up in wonder at the sky, made up their own stories about the mysteries of space, and even explored the furthest reaches of our universe:
<https://jewishmuseummd.org/events/jews-in-space-virtual-tour-3-2>

January 2021

Friday, January 1		New Year's Day
Saturday, January 2	10:00 a.m.	Shabbat Morning Service
Thursday, January 7	7:30 p.m.	Adult Education
Friday, January 8	7:30 p.m.	Erev Shabbat Service
Thursday, January 14	7:30 p.m.	Adult Hebrew
Friday, January 15	7:30 p.m.	Erev Shabbat Service
Saturday, January 16	10:00 - 11:30 a.m.	Torah Study
Monday, January 18		Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Thursday, January 21	7:30 p.m.	Adult Hebrew
Friday, January 22	7:30 p.m.	Erev Shabbat Service
Thursday, January 28	7:30 p.m.	Adult Hebrew
Friday, January 29	6:30 p.m.	Erev Shabbat Service and Tu B'Shevat Seder
Saturday, January 3	10:00 - 11:30 a.m.	Torah Study



We Remember

Yahrzeits for week ending

January 2, 2021/18 Tevet 5781

Catherine Elizabeth Shofer
Joseph White
Ruth Baron
Simon Kline
Richard Elias Schindler
David S. Hurwitz
Gertrude Schmitt
Jeanne D. Newman
Richard Schwab
Paul Steinberger
Marion Lippel Willis

Yahrzeits for week ending

January 9, 2021/25 Tevet 5781

Oscar Feldstein
Nina Lichtenstein
John Ridgeway
Rudolph H. Mendelsohn
Anna Waingold
Pauline Bamberger
Ira Rosenbaum
Benjamin Waingold
Sidney Craig Goodman
Morton Wm Peskin
Esther Eisenberg
Rose Price Rosenbaum
Ethel Schindler
Harold Maxwell Hersch
Betty Stein

Yahrzeits for week ending

January 16, 2021/3 Shevat 5781

Bertram K. Lazarus
Sarah Lewine
Elsie Sauer
Esther Beerman
David I. Levi
David Levy
Beatrice Yankelevitz
Joseph Sonneborn

Yahrzeits for week ending

January 23, 2021/10 Shevat 5781

Rachel Beerman
Sarah G. Bernstein
Betty Atkinson Favre

Yahrzeits for week ending

January 23, 2021/10 Shevat 5781

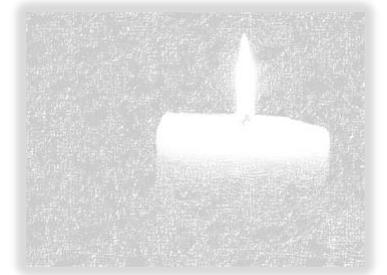
Goldie Kaplon
Fannie B. Margolis
John Franklin Atkinson
L. Lee Lichtenstein
Freda Vanetsky
Sara R. Gerson
Ellinor O. Hirsh
Edna Rosenbaum
Harvey H. Weiss
Eugenia Sack



Yahrzeits for week ending

January 30, 2021/17 Shevat 5781

Irving Goldstein
Max Mortkovitch
Abram J. Brumberg
Simon Isaacs
Ana Lipson
Emma Feldstein
Maury Feinstein
Phyllis Sarubin
Rose Spear
Daphne Castelle
Julie Ann Miller
Harry Parish
Sara Sommer
Meyer Olin
Johanna Rapp
Jean Schwartz
Bessie Beerman



Yahrzeits for week ending

February 6, 2021/24 Shevat 5781

Madeline Guggenheimer
Jay Brieloff
Charles Schwab
Basya Serebryanaya
Lillian Landauer
Anita Bauer
Dr. Harry Kalet
Yakov Gordon
Jane Schwab
Miriam Schindler
Rebecca Gerson



Directory: Whom to Call

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Recording Secretary Betsey Hurwitz-Schwab
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Board Trustees:

Stephanie Boggs Deb Litman
Elena Manasse Debra Schaaf
Lee Schwartz

Past President: Doug Schwab

Ways in Which You Can Help B'er Chayim

Endowment Fund

Western Wall Memorial outside of sanctuary.
Contact Gayle Griffith for more information.

Yahrzeit Plaques

Cost of plaque - \$250
Preparation of plaque – about 1 month.
Contact Gayle Griffith for more information.

Tree of Life/Memory Leaves

Cost of leaf - \$40 which includes engraving.
Preparation of leaf – about 2 weeks.
Contact Gayle Griffith for more information.

Building Fund

Contributions of any amount may be given for
general building use, or a specific building
project (subject to Board approval).
Contact Debbie Lang for more information.

Jane & Leonard Schwab Jewish Life Fund

This fund will be used to enhance Jewish life in
the B'er Chayim community. Please make
checks payable to the "Jane and Leonard
Schwab Jewish Life Fund."

eBay Fundraising Project

Do you have items you would like to donate to
be sold on eBay with the proceeds going to B'er
Chayim? Contact Larry Brock or Brian Lang
for more information.

<https://www.ebay.com/str/berchayimtemple>

Cantor's Discretionary Fund

This is a fund solely under the discretion of the
Cantor. Contributions can be made to the fund
by contacting the Cantor.

