



Association of Jewish Libraries

NEWS

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Chapter Chatter

Chapter news is sparse - please let us know what is happening in your Chapter so we can share it with your peers!

AJL SOUTH CALIFORNIA

SUBMITTED BY ELLEN COLE

Kudos to AJLSC member Jackie Ben Efraim who received our chapter's scholarship to the June Manhattan Conference. She is at the Ostrow Library of the American Jewish University in Los Angeles and a chapter board member.

Our spring meeting was an outing to the Loyola Marymount University campus with a special tour of the William H. Hannon Library. Their Librarian Rhonda Rosen runs a popular Jewish Studies Sunday Book and Discussion group, started 10 years ago with a grant from ALA for community outreach. This program is so in demand, a new near-by Jewish retirement home cites it as Jewish culture in the area. She shared founding and running her project, then spoke about Jewish life in China and showed slides from the Werner von Boltensern Shanghai Photograph and Negative Collection used in the university's Jewish studies classes. We toured the gorgeous, tech savvy Library (students can rent everything from laptops to video cams to small recording and movie studios) where every above-ground floor sports Pacific Ocean views; then down to its cellar storage and archival vault.

Our 2017 brochures recommending current selections of adult and children's books are mounted on the [AJLSC webpage](#). They are easy to access and handy to use. Don't forget to connect to AJLSC on Facebook! Look for "AJLSC" and "like" us. For other news, visit our fabulous chapter website run by member Barbara Leff. We are current and interesting!

AJL Online



Visit the AJL Web site at <http://www.jewishlibraries.org>.

To subscribe to Hasafran, please see instructions at <https://lists.service.ohio-state.edu/mailman/listinfo/hasafran>

AJL is now on [Facebook](#). Become a fan.

The Association of Jewish Libraries Recognizes a Major Achievement in Judaica Reference Works

SUBMITTED BY DR. RACHEL SIMON

VICE-PRESIDENT, THE RESEARCH LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DIVISION

CHAIRPERSON, THE JUDAICA REFERENCE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY AWARD COMMITTEE

The Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) recognizes annually major achievements in Judaica information science and literature published during the previous year. The information science awards include one in Judaica reference (sponsored by Dr. Greta Silver) and another one in Judaica bibliography (sponsored by Eric Chaim Kline). Among the literature awards are three Sydney Taylor Book Awards for children literature (sponsored by Jo Taylor Marshall): for younger readers, for older readers, and for teen readers, as well as a Sydney Taylor Manuscript Competition award for an as yet unpublished manuscript for children literature. To the literature awards has been added the Jewish Fiction Award (sponsored by Dan Wyman), to be first offered in 2018. The offering of these awards testifies to the AJL's mission to promote Jewish literacy and access to Judaica scholarship.

The Judaica Reference Award, established in 1984, was presented in 2017 during the Awards Banquet at the AJL's annual conference, which was held in New York, to the *Comprehensive English-Yiddish Dictionary*, edited by Gitl Schaechter-Viswanath and Dr. Paul Glasser (editors in chief) with Dr. Chava Lapin (associate editor), published by the Indiana University Press in 2016. The AJL's Reference and Bibliography Award Committee members agreed unanimously that this was a monumental achievement in Judaica reference works, and indeed it has already been enthusiastically praised in the press – and went immediately out of print!

The 847-page dictionary brings Yiddish to the 21st century while at the same time preserving the heritage of the language. It is twice as large as previous dictionaries, with nearly 50,000 entries and 33,000 sub-entries, emphasizing Yiddish as a living language that is spoken in many parts of the world. The entries include words and expressions reflecting contemporary as well as traditional and historical terms, used by all walks of life at home, at work and on the street, in synagogue, school, and the military. The enthusiastic reception of the dictionary pleasantly surprised the editors and the publisher alike: the initial run of 1,200 sold out almost immediately and there have been two additional printings to date.

Once spoken by some eleven million Jews worldwide, Yiddish is used nowadays only by some half a million, most of them Hasidic Jews; those living in Israel even abstain from speaking Hebrew on principle, so as not to desecrate the Holy Language in everyday, non-religious, topics. Still, Yiddish has experienced some revival since the late 20th century with the establishment of the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, MA, and the appearance of Yiddish clubs, theaters, university courses, newspapers, magazines, and blogs. With all this activity, the need for a comprehensive new, up-to-date dictionary, encompassing all aspects of life and appropriate for the 21st century, meeting the requirements of beginners and experts alike, became obvious.

Formally, the dictionary was sixteen years in the making, but in fact it builds upon a father-daughter collaboration, which goes back decades. Its origins rest with the late Dr. Mordkhe Schaechter (1927-2007), a renowned Yiddish linguist, who dedicated his life to the study, preservation and documentation of the Yiddish language. Dr. Schaechter taught Yiddish at Columbia University, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, the Jewish Theological Seminary, Yeshiva University and the Jewish Teachers Seminary/Herzliah. Fearing that Yiddish might fade as a living language, he dedicated his life to its preservation. He used a two-way approach, creating an inner and a broader circle. In order to sustain Yiddish as a living language and guarantee its vitality, only Yiddish was spoken at the Schaechter home in the Bronx, though the family was not isolated from the outside, English-speaking world. More broadly, and using his home as his base, Dr. Schaechter collected and researched spoken and

literary Yiddish in all its varieties, from obscure words and phrases to modern terms and kept a careful inventory of them on index cards which were stored in filing cabinets and shoe boxes. The dictionary was built upon these index cards which he prepared together with his like-minded Yiddish-language enthusiast daughter Gitl, who from an early age helped him in his project of documenting, preserving, and updating the Yiddish language. Following her father's death in 2007, Schaechter-Viswanath dedicated her after-work hours, together with one of Dr. Schaechter's eminent students and colleagues, Dr. Paul Glasser, as well as Dr. Chava Lapin, to the realization of her father's project: the creation of a modern, up-to-date dictionary.

The dictionary is built upon Dr. Schaechter's 350,000 cards containing nearly one million words, which were augmented with findings from earlier Yiddish dictionaries. Schaechter-Viswanath collaborated with experts, first and foremost among them Dr. Glasser, who also investigated other sources, including a 900-page Yiddish thesaurus from 1950, as well as Russian-Yiddish and Yiddish-French dictionaries. Some modern terms, such as those related to the internet, were collected from the spoken, not yet literally documented Yiddish or even creatively invented (e.g.: *zikhele* (selfie), *tselke* (cellphone), and *blitspost* or *blitsbriv* (email). Family involvement in the project continues to the present: Schaechter-Viswanath's son-in-law saved them when computer problems threatened the work.

The three editors of the dictionary are highly respected scholars and practitioners of the Yiddish language, possessing the appropriate academic skills for the project and are involved in numerous scholarly and communal activities to ensure the vitality and study of Yiddish.

Gitl Schaechter-Viswanath, a Yiddish scholar and poet, was born in the Bronx, New York. She attended the Yiddish school Sholem Aleichem Folkshul 21 and graduated with a degree in Jewish literature from the Jewish Teachers Seminary/Herzlia, which trained teachers for secular Yiddish schools. She further earned degrees in Russian from Barnard College, in nursing from Columbia University, and in health administration from New York University. Her day job is as a clinical consultant in health care and she is the chairperson of the New York-based League for Yiddish, as well as being an editor for several Yiddish magazines. She continues in her father's tradition of maintaining a Yiddish-speaking home (including her husband, whose own *mame-loshn* is Tamil). In addition to poetry, which she has published in Yiddish periodicals, she is the author of a 2003 bilingual Yiddish-English poetry book *Plutsemdikar Regn/Sudden Rain*.

The Brooklyn, New York-born Paul (Hershl) Glasser heard Yiddish in his childhood from his grandparents. His career as a Yiddish scholar began at a Workmen's Circle school. He continued his Yiddish studies at the University of Pennsylvania and in 1990 received his Ph.D. in Yiddish linguistics at Columbia University. Already as a graduate student he began his affiliation with the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and later served as the Dean of the Max Weinreich Center for Advanced Jewish Studies at YIVO. His research interests include Yiddish dialects, morphology, and historical and comparative linguistics. Dr. Glasser serves on the editorial board of numerous Yiddish publications and has published in major Yiddish publications. He co-edited with Dr. Schaechter several original Yiddish works and edited the English translation of Max Weinreich's *History of the Yiddish Language* (2008).

The native speaker Montreal born Chava Lapin received her Ph.D. in biochemistry at McGill University. She is a board member at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and an emeritus professor of Yiddish at Queens College who had also taught at the Stern College for Women and Columbia University. She teaches lectures and publishes on the cultural and literary traditions of Eastern European Jewry and on the Yiddish language.



Behrman House Acquires Gefen's Interest in Apples & Honey Press

Two-year-old partnership dissolved as Behrman House, Inc assumes full ownership of imprint

Upcoming Spring 2018 list includes *Roller-Coaster Grandma*, A graphic novel-style memoir by Dr. Ruth Westheimer

August 22, 2017 – Springfield, NJ – Behrman House, Inc. has become the sole owner of Apples & Honey Press with its acquisition of Jerusalem-based Gefen Books' 50% interest in the imprint, dissolving their two-year partnership. Apples & Honey Press will continue its schedule of releasing from four to six front list titles each in its Spring and Fall seasons, now as a fully-owned imprint of Behrman House. The Spring 2018 list will be led by "Roller-Coaster Grandma: The Amazing Story of Dr. Ruth" a 64-page graphic novel-style memoir for 8-12 year-olds written by Dr. Ruth Westheimer and Pierre Lehu and due for February 2018 release.

Apples & Honey Press debuted in 2015 with five titles including David Adler's Hanukkah Cookies with Sprinkles and now includes 27 works by authors including Barbara Diamond Goldin, Eric Kimmel, Ann Koffsky, Sylvia Rouss, and Karen Rostoker-Gruber. Over half of these works have also been offered as selections by the PJ Library program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. Nine new Apples & Honey Press titles are due for release in 2018, and the imprint has also recently signed with Sandy Sasso for her upcoming book, Regina Jonas, The Girl Who Persisted.

Apples & Honey Press invites authors and agents to continue to submit works for consideration. Submissions can be addressed to Apples & Honey Press through Behrman House Executive Editor Dena Neusner, dena@behrmanhouse.com.

Keep Up to Date with Hasafran

Hasafran is the electronic discussion list of the Association of Jewish Libraries. It was created in 1991 to provide a forum for the discussion of Judaica librarianship. The list is moderated by Joseph (Yossi) Galron, Jewish studies librarian at The Ohio State University. The views expressed in the list are the opinions of the participants and not necessarily the views of the moderator or of AJL.

To subscribe to Hasafran, please see instructions at

To post a message to Hasafran, send your message to: hasafran@lists.osu.edu

You will receive a confirmation message.

A keyword-searchable [archive](#) of Hasafran messages posted since June 12, 2003 is now available.

Scholarship Committee Report

SUBMITTED BY SARAH BARNARD, SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE MEMBER

The winners of the 2017 AJL Scholarships are Abigail Jan Lyon and David Frankel. Abigail is a student of Library and Information Science at Clarion University, Clarion PA. She works at the Baltimore Federation's Center for Jewish Education as a library assistant. David Frankel has a long list of credentials in Jewish studies at Ohio State University and the University of Illinois and is studying Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champagne. Both of our winners have great enthusiasm for careers in Judaica librarianship and are likely to contribute significantly to our profession. David was a presenter at the 2017 Conference in New York.

Tina Weiss is chair of the committee and members are Sarah Barnard and Amanda Seigel.

The Scholarship Fund needs help. We gratefully accept donations which can be in memory or in honor of someone. We will send a tribute card (or several). Please include the following information with your donation: your name and address, the name(s) and addresses of the recipient(s) of the tribute card, the reason for the tribute and your email address in case there are questions. Send check donations to:

Sarah M. Barnard
5646 Hunters Lake
Cincinnati, OH 45249
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AJL Scholarship Donation Form

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The AJL Newsletter (Irene Levin-Wixman z"l, founding editor) was published in print from 1979 to 2010 by the Association of Jewish Libraries to inform members about AJL activities and issues related to Judaica libraries. As of January 2011 it is split into two separate electronic publications - the AJL News and the AJL Reviews. Receipt of these publications is one of the benefits of membership. Please see the AJL website at <http://www.jewishlibraries.org> for membership rates.

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All links to online resources were checked for accuracy on September 12, 2017.

We cannot be responsible for broken links to those resources in the future.

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