

# Texas Jewish Historical Society

Preserving Jewish Heritage in Texas  
Established 1980



Fall 2003

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PREZ



The Texas Jewish Historical Society Fall Board of Directors Meeting was held in Temple, Texas on October 25 and 26, 2003. We enjoyed dinner Saturday in the Dynasty Oriental Restaurant. Our guest speaker was TJHS member, Dr. Sheila Dobin, PhD, Texas A&M School of Medicine, Scott and White Hospital. Dr.

Dobin presented a very interesting talk on the Jewish perspective of ethics and morality in genetics.

Our Sunday morning meeting was in the new country home of Jan and Charles B. Hart. Reports were given and discussions were held on a number of topics. Those present agreed there is a need to develop a new tri-fold membership application that can also be used as a membership campaign brochure.

We are gearing up to print a new, updated membership directory in a few weeks. If your zip code or mailing address have changed, or if you have a new phone number, email address or fax number, please email your information to Fay and Leon Brachman at [leonhb@flash.net](mailto:leonhb@flash.net) or call them at 817-924-9207. Please do this today!

Make plans now to attend two wonderful TJHS weekends! Rusty Milstein presented a review of the planning for the Winter Board Meeting, to be held on South Padre Island February 6-8, 2004. Max Stool reported on plans for the TJHS Silver Anniversary Celebration & Annual Gathering, slated for April 30-May 2, 2004 in San Antonio. We are looking forward to a large turnout at these events, which promise to be interesting, fun and informative.

In closing, Jan and I would like to wish you and yours a warm and wonderful Chanukah, and a safe, happy and healthy 2004.

Charles B. Hart  
President, TJHS

## In This Issue

<i>Sylvia Wolens Writing Competition</i>	3
<i>Texas Czech Society</i> <i>L. David Vogel</i>	3
<i>Secrets from the Minutes</i> <i>H. Weiner</i>	4
<i>Memorializing Rabbi Sydney Wolfe</i> <i>H. Wilk</i>	6
<i>Bessie Kantrovich Chodorow</i> <i>J. Hart</i>	9
<i>A Lone Star Zionist</i> <i>David Hirsch Hoffman</i>	11
<i>Napolean Bonaparte Wiess</i>	13
<i>Fall Photo Spread</i>	14-15
<i>Jewish Cemetary</i>	21
<i>Honorable Menschen</i>	23
<i>Jewish Surnames</i>	24
<i>Have Exhibit, Will Travel</i>	25
<i>Winter Meeting</i>	27
<i>Silver Anniversary</i>	25



Happy Birthday to 90-years-young Blanche Sheiness. Blanche is a model for all of us and an exemplary definition of staying young by staying active.

Blanche has been a TJHS member,

and currently serves as Historian. We wish Blanche many years of continued happiness and good health, and hope she will share with us her secrets of the fountain of youth!

## HONOR LOVED ONES WITH TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY DONOR CARDS

The card below is available for anyone wishing to honor or memorialize an individual through our endowment fund. Upon receipt of your gift, the Society will respond with the acknowledgment. To the members who have sent in funds in the past, thank you on behalf of the TJHS. To all those who will send funds in the future, please send your gift to: Texas Jewish Historical Society, P. O. Box 10193, Austin, TX, 78766-0193.

**THE TEXAS JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
gratefully acknowledges your gift to our

Endowment Fund  
Of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
In \_\_\_\_\_ of

An acknowledgment has been sent to the party you requested. Your gift will further the efforts to record, preserve and disseminate historic information about Jewish culture in Texas.

### Gainesville's Morton Museum of Cooke County Needs Your Help

#### An Open Letter

I am the curator/director of the Morton Museum of Cooke County in Gainesville, Texas. From at least the time period of the 1880s through the 1920s, a Jewish community existed in this town. A synagogue was built, and several members became prominent business owners, etc. I am beginning a study of this community and am trying to acquire as much information as possible about the synagogue, its members, and their activities. Do any TJHS members have information concerning the synagogue in Gainesville? I am also trying to find a good photograph of it. We have only a photocopy of one photo. I would appreciate any suggestions. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Shana Powell, Curator/Director, Morton Museum

If you have information or photographs, please contact Shana Powell directly at P.O. Box 150, Gainesville, TX 76241, phone 940-668-8900.

## CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS: ISRAEL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Submitted by Don Teter

The Israel Genealogical Society is pleased to invite proposals from potential speakers for the 24th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. The Conference will be held July 4—9, 2004 in Jerusalem. English will be the official language of the conference. A number of lectures will be presented in Hebrew, with simultaneous translation into English.

**Submission Guidelines:** Authors wishing to present a paper at the Conference are encouraged to visit the website at [www.ortra.com/jgen2004](http://www.ortra.com/jgen2004) for proposal format and submitting information.

Authors are invited to submit an abstract either by e-mail as an MSWord attachment, to [jgen2004@ortra.com](mailto:jgen2004@ortra.com) or mail on a diskette in MSWord format, together with three original copies. Material should be sent Airmail in a padded envelope marked "Do Not Fold." Proposals, whether accepted or declined, will not be returned. Make sure to retain a copy of your proposal. FAX submissions *will not be accepted*.

**Important:** To be included in the final program, at least one presenter from each accepted proposal must register for the Conference.

#### Deadlines:

Dec. 31, 2003 - Submission of abstracts

Feb. 15, 2004 - Notification of acceptance

#### Conference Secretariat:

Ortra Ltd.

1 Nirim Street, P. O. Box 9352

Tel Aviv 61092, Israel

Tel: +972-3-638-4444

Fax: +972-3-638-4455

Email: [jgen2004@ortra.com](mailto:jgen2004@ortra.com)

## DAVIE LOU SOLKA NAMED TJHS ASSOCIATE EDITOR

TJHS President Charles B. Hart is happy to announce that Davie Lou Solka has graciously agreed to serve as Associate Editor/Liaison to TJHS Newsletter Editor, Susan Elsner Furman. To continue having a quality newsletter

### Sylvia Wolens Jewish Heritage Writing Competition Deadline is February 1<sup>st</sup>

Submitted by Jack Gerrick

It is time for the Sylvia Wolens Jewish Heritage Writing Competition. Developed as a way to pass along reflections of the past to the generations of tomorrow, the competition is in its 12<sup>th</sup> year in Florida, and has received a great amount of publicity and recognition. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Texas competition is open to amateurs and professionals of all ages. Last year's winner was Mr. Ralph Marks of Houston. The competition is sponsored by TJHS member Jerry Wolens of Boca Raton, Florida in honor of his wife, Sylvia. Contest rules include:

- Entries can be from a single paragraph up to a maximum of 2,000 words
- Each page must include title, writer's name, age, address and phone number
- Each entry must include a word count list
- Each person may submit up to 4 entries
- Handwritten work will be accepted only if legible
- Include a four-to-six line biography of the writer
- Judging will be based on originality and content
- May be edited for publication in the TJHS newsletter and/or local media
- Winners will be announced at the TJHS Annual Gathering in San Antonio the weekend of April 30-May 2, 2004
- Send entries to Sylvia Wolens Jewish Heritage Writing Competition, c/o TJHS, P.O. Box 10193, Austin, Texas, 78766-0193

Contestants are strongly encouraged to keep a copy of their work, as *entries will not be returned*. Prizes are 1<sup>st</sup> place - \$500; 2<sup>nd</sup> place - \$250; 3<sup>rd</sup> place - \$100. All entries will be included in the TJHS archives at the University of Texas at Austin. For information, contact Jack Gerrick at 817-9278-8765.

for our members, please assist us by sending your items to Davie Lou at [davielou@solka.net](mailto:davielou@solka.net) or mail them to Davie Lou Solka, 501 Bermuda Place, Corpus Christi, TX, 78411, phone 361-852-5815. She will then prepare and submit newsworthy articles for publication in the newsletter.

**Important:** Please do NOT send irreplaceable original documents or photographs. Due to postal issues beyond our control, we cannot guarantee receipt or return of items. We strongly recommend providing color photocopies (even of black and white photos) rather than originals. Also, to help with their return, please include a self-addressed envelope and make sure to include your contact information on each item you send. Thank you for your help!

## TEXAS CZECH HERITAGE AND CULTURAL CENTER SEEKS JEWISH PARTICIPATION

By L. David Vogel

Several years ago the Czech-Texan Community selected La Grange as the site for the new Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center. A statewide project of Texas Czechs, the Center is currently in the planning and fundraising stages, with the outdoor amphitheatre recently completed.

Situated on a high bank of the Colorado River overlooking the Colorado River Valley, La Grange, and the Bluff area, the Center will be a beautiful, first-rate facility built in traditional Czech architectural style. The Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center is "dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the history, language, culture and heritage of Texans of Czech ethnicity." It is expected to attract many visitors from Texas, the United States, and beyond.

While the majority of Czech-Texans are of the Catholic faith, Center board members and the Executive Director welcome input and participation by Jewish Czech-Texans. They have expressed a feeling that Jews represent an important component of the immigrant Czech-Texan experience, which should be included in the Center's design and content.

To learn more about the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center, visit [www.czechtexas.org](http://www.czechtexas.org). If you would like to become involved in the project, contact Executive Director Woody Smith at 1-979-968-9399 or toll-free at 1-888-785-4500, email [Czech@ctv.net](mailto:Czech@ctv.net), or mail to P.O. Box 6, 250 W. Fairgrounds Rd., La Grange, TX, 78945.