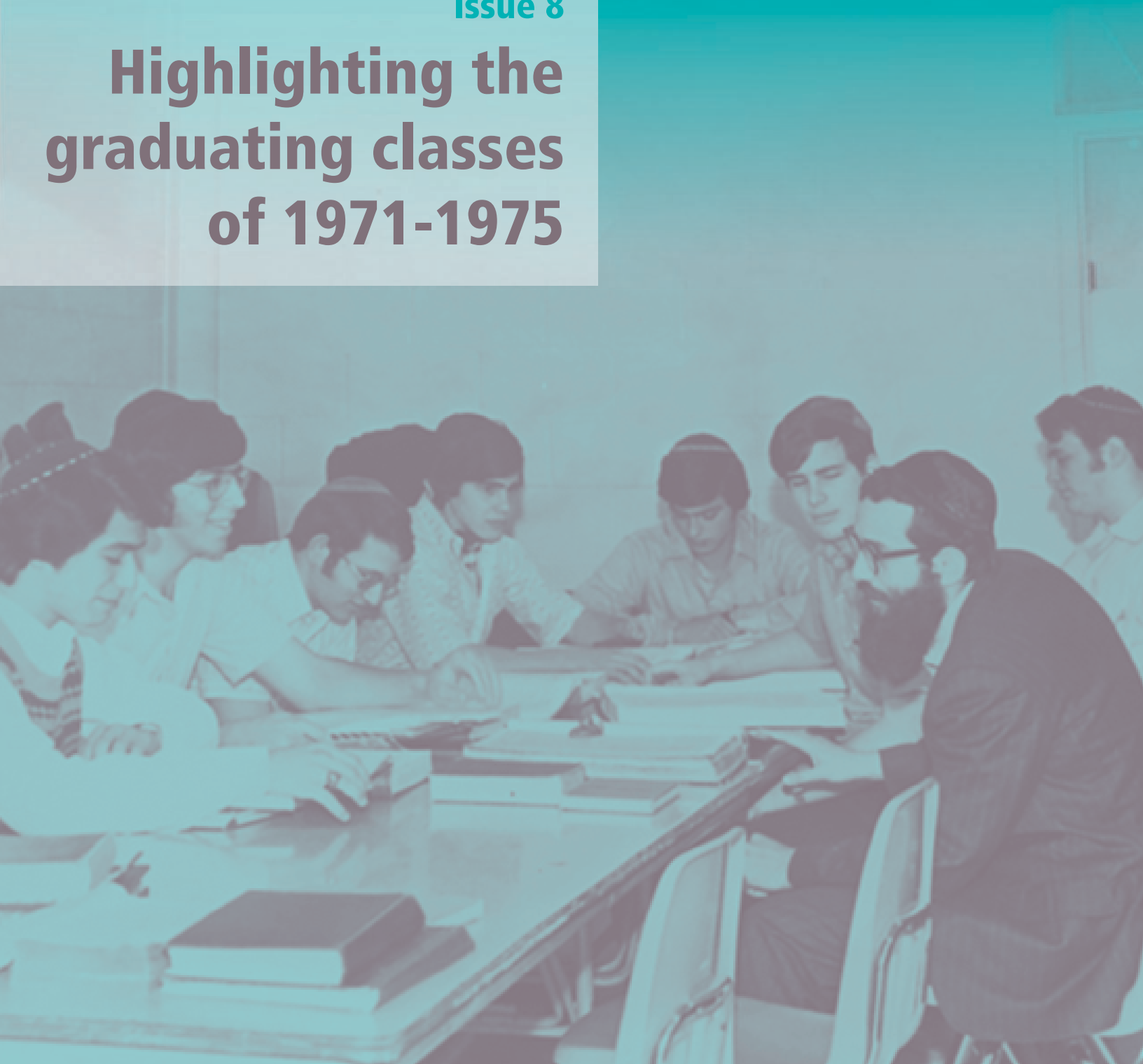


# MHA/FYOS

Alumni and Friends

Issue 8

**Highlighting the  
graduating classes  
of 1971-1975**



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This newsletter is dedicated  
in loving memory of

**Menachem Carl**

(MHA '74)

**Sidney Gontownik**

(MHA '70, YOS '74)

May their memories be a blessing.

## MISSED AN ISSUE? ARCHIVES

Click on each link to enjoy past issues!

**Issue 1, Chanukah 2014**

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**Issue 7, Chanukah 2016**

Joanne Kahane, alumni chair

Amara Levine-Reich (MHA '94, FYOS '97), editor

Shoshana (Yaffe) Cenker, contributing writer and copy editor

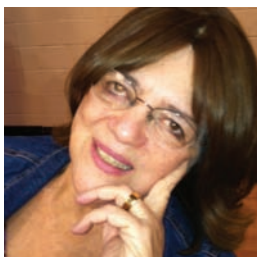
Eric Schubert, technology support

Layout by S. Schmell • s.schmell581@gmail.com

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Feinstone Yeshiva of the South

**COVER PHOTO:** Students (from left) **Lee Eskenazi** (MHA '70, YOS '74), **Ronnie Katz** (MHA '70, YOS '74), **David Katz** (MHA '70, YOS '74), **Ira Thomas** (MHA '70, YOS '74), **Mike Stein** (MHA '68, YOS '72), **Steve Graber** (MHA '70, YOS '74) and **Joel Katz** (MHA '69) enjoy learning with Judaic studies teacher Rabbi Ephraim Weingot.





Isn't it curious how things are always connected? As you may have read in our [Chanukah issue](#), we had planned to spotlight Rabbi Yaacov

Goldfein, z'l, in this Pesach issue. Just as our previous edition went to press, we received the devastating news of the sudden and tragic passing of his wife, our dear friend and tireless worker for the school, Mrs. Sharon Goldfein, z'l. Thus, we decided to devote our feature article to the Goldfeins as a couple.

Shortly after the Chanukah issue went out, we learned of the passing of Rabbi Meir Belsky, z'l, who was the founder and first *rosh yeshiva* (head of school) of the Yeshiva of the South. He left an indelible impression on our school and community, so we knew we would also feature Rabbi Belsky in the Pesach issue.

Interestingly, we did not know until we began our research for both stories that it was, in fact, Rabbi Belsky who recruited the Goldfeins to come to Memphis to teach. Everything is connected.

Nothing we could write on these few pages would do justice to the immeasurable contributions these three individuals made to our school. We can only hope that our words serve to honor their memories.

As we head into the final stretch of the school year, the MHA/FYOS community is preparing

for a third summer of campus renovations. We greatly appreciate all those who have donated to the school's capital improvements campaign. (For more information about the campaign, see the article by **Josh Kahane** [MHA '93, FYOS '97] on page 20 of our [sixth issue](#).) Please remember that all donations will be matched dollar-for-dollar by the Cooper family, so no contribution is too small. Thank you for your support.

We are thrilled to share that we have successfully obtained contact information for 84 percent of our graduates. That is a marked improvement over where we were just a few months ago, but our goal remains 100 percent. As always, if you know of alumni not receiving this publication, please forward them a copy and ask them to send me their email addresses. We are also glad to include non-alumni who are interested in receiving the newsletter. If someone who does not use email would like to be on our list, we are happy to send them black-and-white printed copies.

At this time of year when we celebrate our freedom, we on the alumni committee wish all of you a happy and kosher Pesach. *L'shana haba b'Yerushalayim* – next year in Jerusalem!

Please let us continue to hear from you.

**Joanne Kahane**

Alumni Committee Chair

[joannekahane111@gmail.com](mailto:joannekahane111@gmail.com)

Dear fellow alumni:

This spring edition of our alumni newsletter ushers in a new season at our school. The



blooming flowers and trees evoke thoughts of newness and rejuvenation, of color and freshness. Although it snowed on Purim night here in Memphis, there

is an exciting feeling in the air that warmer weather—and, soon enough, summer—is on the horizon.

Our school, just like the seasons, experiences ongoing change. We are continuously working to improve the general and Judaic studies education we offer our students and to give our current and future stakeholders a good reason to support our mission. Much like an individual trying to climb a descending escalator, institutions that stand still inevitably end up going downward. Our goal is to constantly move forward, even if baby steps are required along the way.

We at the Margolin Hebrew Academy/Feinstein Yeshiva of the South are working hard to identify opportunities to move forward. Whether it's in our classroom instruction, teacher-student relationships, college guidance program or expanding extracurricular and athletics programs, we are implementing numerous enhancements to our school.

Those efforts are already yielding great results. I am pleased to report that members of the FYOS class of 2017 have been accepted to the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, the Yeshiva University (YU) honors program and other highly regarded post-high school programs and yeshivas. Our high school students excelled at this year's YU National Model United Nations and have participated in meaningful learning and teaching opportunities through Facing History and Ourselves. Additionally, the Cooper Macs, our boys' varsity team, made it to the Tier II finals of YU's Red Sarachek Basketball Tournament.

We are also looking for better ways to spread our message and highlight our successes. To that end, we are developing more modern and relevant marketing materials and avenues to showcase our school. We recently introduced a new logo (shown on next page) that accentuates the mission of our school in an easily identifiable way. A [new website](#) is being developed, with content that considers the interests of not only our current parent and student body, but also our alumni and prospective parents and students. We have commissioned the creation of several videos to highlight the exciting programs we offer; the first can be viewed [here](#).

Furthermore, we are increasingly using Facebook and other social media outlets to reach the broadest possible audience. I encourage all of you to "like" the [Margolin Hebrew Acad-](#)



[emy/Feinstone Yeshiva of the South Facebook page](#) so you can follow all the great things going on at our school. (There is also an [MHA/FYOS Alumni Facebook page](#).)

MHA/FYOS alumni around the world feel a sense of gratitude and belonging to the school, even if they have been distanced from it for some time. I do not take that connection for granted, and I hope you don't either. We are only as strong as our Academy family

is strong; you are all part of the family and deserve to be proud of it.

Wishing you a *chag kasher v'sameach* – a kosher and joyous Pesach holiday,

**David Katz (MHA '88)**

*President, MHA/FYOS Board of Trustees*

[dkatz@terminix.com](mailto:dkatz@terminix.com)



# 6

## D'VAR TORAH

Rabbi Yitzchok (Jeffrey) Adler (YOS '71)

An American need not be a scholar of history to understand the importance of the phrase “no child left behind”; it is a four-word declaration that guided U.S. education policy for decades. For any student who attended the Yeshiva of the South in the era of the leadership of Rabbi Meir Belsky, z'l, it was a living philosophy and school mission. Rabbi Belsky believed—indeed, he lived and breathed for the purpose—that every Jewish child was entitled to a Jewish education. Since our very beginning as a people, this ideology has been core to the existential premise of *B'nei Yisrael* (the children of Israel). When *Moshe Rabbeinu* (Moses) argued with Pharaoh over the fate of the Israelite slaves, he proclaimed, “With our young and our old we will go, with our sons and with our daughters” (Exodus 10:9).

The Belsky years of the yeshiva were formative, if not transformational, for every student. Local students came from across the spectrum of Memphis' Jewish community, and the dormitory was the school-year home

to *talmidim* (students) from many different states. Under the common roof of the Belz *Beth Midrash*, there were high school students from the rural towns of Dixie learning how to read *alef bet* (the Hebrew alphabet) and high school graduates mastering the majesty of Talmudic *pilpul* (intense textual analysis). Outreach, in-reach and *kollel* shared in the vi-

sion of empowering young souls with ancient wisdom. Even if every student did not choose to passionately embrace the observance of every *mitzvah*, all were provided with the tools and opportunity to claim their portion of divinely ordained connections.

Indeed, as Jewish homes begin their annual recollection of *yetziat Mitzrayim* (the exodus from Egypt) at the Passover *seder*, one of the first lines of the *Hagaddah* proclaims, “Let all who are hungry

come and eat; let all who are needy come and celebrate.” Pesach is not Pesach if anyone is left behind. The *yom tov* cannot be a national celebration if anyone is left out. This season is the ultimate model of inclusive societies. It represents the best of everything Jewish.

**Pesach  
cannot be  
a national  
celebration  
if anyone is  
left out.**

It was centuries after the exodus when the virtue of Jewish solidarity again proved to be our salvation. In the book of Esther, it was during Pesach when Esther was the queen to King Achashverosh and Haman launched his diabolical plan to eradicate the Israelite population from all the provinces of the kingdom. After Mordechai informed Esther of Haman's plan and explained to her the severity of the moment, Esther spoke with elegant simplicity: "*Lech k'nos et kol ha'yehudim*"—"Go and assemble all of the Jews" (4:16). Survival in the face of challenge could not be secured through the wisdom of leaders or the courage of warriors alone. Survival required the inclusion and empowerment of everyone. Every Jew needed to believe that each contribution to the cause, whether big or small, made a difference. Every Jew needed to believe that every other Jew would be the difference.

The many graduates of the Margolin Hebrew Academy/Feinstone Yeshiva of the South owe so much to the school and the lessons modelled by Rabbi Belsky. For me, and I am sure for others, the enduring beacon will be the embrace of acceptance and the license of individual empowerment. Rabbi Belsky created a community that crossed lines and defied boundaries. That community, his community, continues on in the hearts of his students. It is still a fountain of pride and a source of spiritual strength for every student who ever attended his Yeshiva of the South.

*Rabbi Yitzchok Adler is the spiritual leader of Beth David Synagogue in West Hartford, Connecticut. He and his wife, Leslie (Rosenzweig) Adler of New Orleans, have three married children and six grandchildren.*



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# 8

## D'VAR TORAH

Aaron Thomas (MHA '68, YOS '71)

In the section on the four sons, the *Pesach Haggadah* says regarding the “wicked” son:

*What does the wicked son say? ‘What is this service to you?’ ‘To you,’ but not to him. Since he excludes himself from the Jewish community, he has denied the foundations of our faith. You should blunt his teeth and say to him, ‘Because of this, Hashem did for me when I went out of Egypt.’ ‘For me,’ but not for him. Had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.*

This passage is quite intriguing in a couple of ways. First, the wicked son’s question seems to elicit a slap of some sort; is it possible that our Sages condoned or even encouraged physical violence? Second, the *haggadah* appears to justify the harsh response to the wicked son by saying that if he would have been there, he would not have gone out of Egypt. While it may be true that a Jew’s substandard behavior kept him from being redeemed during *yetzias Mitzrayim* (the exodus from Egypt), why is that relevant when addressing a wayward son on the *seder* night? That rule regarding substandard behavior only applied at the moment of our nation’s birth; from then onward, bad behavior ceased to result in a forfeiture of Jewish citizenship. The Talmud tells us, “*Yisroel, af al pi shechatah, Yisroel hu*”—“a Jew, even though he may transgress, remains a Jew.”

In my view, the key to understanding this passage in the *haggadah* is its use of the word

“**blunt**,” rather than “hit” his teeth. The powerful words uttered by the wicked son are a very serious matter, as he is trying to sever himself from the nation. Therefore, you should blunt his teeth and diminish the effect of his biting words. Explain to him that while it was once possible for a Jew to cut himself off from his people, that is no longer the case. A Jew is a Jew no matter how he acts, and he is loved as a brother for all time.

It’s undeniable that the wicked son’s words are indicative of a serious problem that must be addressed, but his attitude is neither fatal nor disqualifying. Once a Jew, always a Jew. Though the son is referred to as “wicked,” we must love him today and for always, as we are one people, no matter what.

I must mention that my ability to see this puzzling passage from the *haggadah* in a new light after reciting it for more than 40 years was inspired by our esteemed *rosh yeshiva* (head of school), Rabbi Meir Belsky, of blessed memory. He taught us all to appreciate questions even more than answers and to resist the comfort of a superficial answer that does not really do justice to the question. He is sorely missed.

*Aaron Thomas is an attorney and lives in Memphis with his wife, Rachel.*



‘68

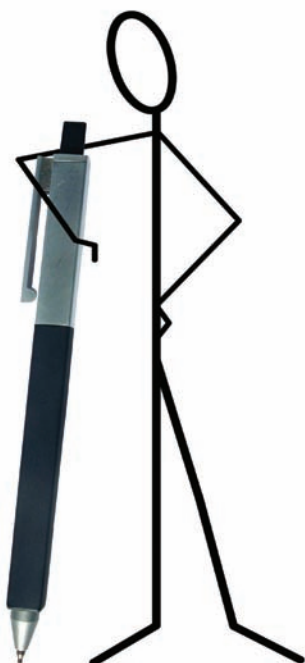
‘71



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR AND ALUMNI CHAIR

Community responses

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We welcome your feedback on the alumni newsletter at [alumni@mhafyos.org](mailto:alumni@mhafyos.org). Here are some of the responses we received to [Issue No. 7](#).

Wow! Thanks so much for this fantastic newsletter. I really enjoyed reading it with lots of laughs and smiles throughout. I'm looking forward to the next newsletter.

**-Miriam (Samberg) Levson**

MHA '04

I was shocked and delighted to receive your email. It's been so many years since I've been a part of the Memphis Jewish community. As a proud alum of the YOS, it's so nice to hear the good news of so many I knew back in the day. Keep up the good work, and thanks for the trip down memory lane!

**-Julia (Barron) Steiner**

YOS '83

Love the latest alumni newsletter! It was especially fun for me because I know those alumni pretty well, as they're not too much older than me. Thanks for a great read!

**-Rena Mashinsky**

MHA '14

I enjoyed the latest issue of the alumni newsletter so much. It covered many topics, and once I started reading, it was so hard to put it down! Thank you for all your hard work that I and everyone benefit so much from!

**-Dovid Kipper**

MHA '76

Great job once again! *Kol hakavod*. Thank you so much for all of your efforts.

**-David Cooper**

MHA '78, YOS '82

You outdid yourselves once again! I really love reminiscing and seeing familiar faces and where people are now. Thank you for your beautiful work!

**-Judy (Yormark) Mernick**

MHA '75, YOS '79

I attended the MHA beginning in kindergarten, and I would have graduated in '63 but my family moved away from Memphis when I was in eighth grade. I love the publication that my sisters forwarded to me. Please add me to your list for future issues. Thank you so much and *hatzlacha rabba* [much success]!

**-Rivki (Nayowitz) Aderet**

The last issue was great, as usual!

**-Ranelle Evensky Kibel**

*MHA '66, YOS '70*

My classmate **Lynnie (Katz) Mirvis** (MHA '62) recently forwarded me a copy of the most recent alumni newsletter. I would love to receive future issues.

I was also able to view an archived copy of the [fifth issue](#) and read your tribute to our principal and teacher, Rabbi Joseph Nayowitz, z'l. In addition to teaching my class of bar mitzvah boys to *lain* [chant the Torah reading], he taught us what might be called "synagogue skills." He told us that we might end up in a smaller city where there was no one else who knew how to be a *gabbai*, and he wanted us

to be prepared. I still *lain* regularly and use the skills he taught me.

I recently retired from a career as a college faculty member and administrator and then as an accreditation official. My wife Charlene and I live in Skokie, Illinois, north of Chicago. We are blessed with three children, all with families of their own. I have just had a book published called [Patterns on Parchment](#), which defends the integrity of the Torah against biblical criticism. I was pleased to be able to dedicate the book to Rabbi Efraim Greenblatt, z'l, my *rebbe* and mentor until his death.

**-Bob Appleson**

*MHA '62*





## Births: Mazel Tov to...

Ephraim and **Anna (Thomas) Kotkes** (MHA '65, YOS '69) of Far Rockaway, New York, who welcomed a granddaughter and two great-grandchildren in recent months. (1) Granddaughter Sarah Ayla was born March 1 to Tzvi and Shira (Kotkes) Silberstein. (2) Great-grandson Boruch Simcha arrived Oct. 7, 2016. His parents are Elimelech and Atara Sperling, and Charles and Rivka (Kotkes) Levine are the proud grandparents. (3) Menuchah Ariella, the daughter of Hindy and Yoni Guggenheim and granddaughter of Ephraim and Aliza (Kotkes) Guggenheim, was born Feb. 26.

Sylvia and **Erwin "Bubba" Albert** (MHA '71) of Memphis on the March 21 birth of grandson Max Benjamin, whose proud parents are Memphians Laura Albert-Wilons and Larry Wilons.

Rabbi Elazar and **Mashie (Greenblatt) Langsam** (MHA '73) of Jerusalem, Israel, on the Feb. 24 birth of a granddaughter. The baby girl, the first child for Malka and Akiva Langsam of Jerusalem, has been named Miriam in memory of her great-grandmother, beloved MHA faculty member Mrs. Miriam Greenblatt, z'l.

Rena and **Ephraim Kutner** (MHA '85) of Lawrence, New York, on the March 16 birth of a baby girl, Sarah Leah. Mazel tov also to siblings Shira Bracha, Raizelle Miriam, Aharon Dovid, Moshe Leib, Rivka Elana, Binyamin Zev, Moshe Yaakov and Nesanel, as well as grandparents **Alan** (MHA '62) and **Barbara (Katz) Kutner** (MHA '64, YOS '68) and great-grandparents Rabbi Seymour and Malka Kutner of Memphis. (Rabbi Kutner is one of the founders of our school.)

Aviva and **Rabbi Josh Friedman** (MHA '87) of Ramat Bet Shemesh, Israel, on the Feb. 6 arrival of a baby boy, Yosef Chaim. Mazel tov also to all his happy siblings.

Sean and **Miriam (Eljas) Goldman** (FYOS '96) of Jerusalem, who became parents with the Feb. 24 birth of son Yehoshua Aryeh Leib.

Gideon and **Bracha (Beth Goldberg) Garland** (FYOS '97) of Jerusalem on the March 4 arrival of their daughter, Rut Chana Avrash. Mazel tov also to siblings Izzy and Deborah.

David and **Maren (Harrison) Magid** (MHA '96) of West Orange, New Jersey, on the Dec. 9, 2016, birth of son Judah Asher. Mazel tov also to older sisters Arielle and Clara.

Josh and **Ilana (Schechtman) Yehaskel** (MHA '98, FYOS '02) of Atlanta, Georgia, on the March 6 arrival of daughter Adina Chaya. Mazel tov also to big sister Allie.



Josh and **Rebecca (Wender) Chubak** (MHA '99), who live on the Upper East Side of Manhattan and on Jan. 9 welcomed son Jacob Arnold. Mazel tov also to big sister Olivia and grandparents Sally and **Mark Wender** (MHA '70, YOS '74) of Memphis.

Chaim and **Brittney (Eshelman) Worch** (FYOS '03) of Chicago, Illinois, on the Feb. 9 birth of daughter Sara Sasha. Mazel tov also to older siblings Sheindy, Malky and Duvie.

Mindy and **Yaakov Samberg** (MHA '00, FYOS '04) of Chicago on the Feb. 3 birth of daughter Devorah Leah. Mazel tov also to siblings Akiva and Chaim and grandparents Malka and **Morris Loterstein** (MHA '68, YOS '72) of Chicago and Cantor Aryeh and Adina Samberg, former MHA faculty members, of Memphis.

David and **Tamara (Freiden) Goodman** (MHA '03, FYOS '07) of Baltimore, Maryland, on the Feb. 3 birth of their first child, son Eitan Elan. Mazel tov also to grandparents Debbie and **Hugh Freiden** (MHA '72, YOS '76) of Memphis.

Kirstin Gros-Kirshstein and **Uri Kirshstein** (FYOS '10) of Charleston, South Carolina, on the Feb. 26 birth of daughter Laella Miriam. Mazel tov also to big brother Henri Gros.

### Engagements/ Weddings: Mazel Tov to...

Channah and **Rabbi Moshe Sauer** (MHA '59) of Baltimore, Maryland, on the Jan. 4 marriage of their grandson Chesky Sauer, son of Avraham Dovid and Toby Sauer of Baltimore, to Aidy Rosenberg in Aberdeen, New Jersey.

Ephraim and **Anna (Thomas) Kotkes** (MHA '65, YOS '69) of Far Rockaway, New York, on the Jan. 9 marriage of their grandson Daniel Guggenheim, son of Yoni and Aliza (Kotkes) Guggenheim, to Shira Wurtzberger in Monsey, New York. The couple lives in Lakewood, New Jersey.

Anne and **Howard Clemons** (MHA '70) of Potomac, Maryland, on their daughter Ariel's March 4 wedding to Brian Meyrsohn in Baltimore. The newlyweds will soon move to New York City.

**Jeff Roberts** (MHA '75) of Memphis on the engagement of his daughter Emily to Adam Saslawsky. The couple will wed Nov. 25 in Memphis, where they will also live.

Ariela and **Steven Geller** (YOS '79) of Cedarhurst, New York, on their daughter Shayna's engagement. She will marry David Shetrit May 16 in Brooklyn, and they will live in the Five Towns on Long Island.





Naava and **Beryl Thomas** (MHA '77, YOS '81) of Beit Shemesh, Israel, on the engagement of their son Daniel to Leah Bor. The couple is planning a *Lag b'Omer* (May 14) wedding in Beit Shemesh and will live in Petach Tikvah.

Nancy and **Mordechai (Marty) Wolff** (MHA '80) of Brooklyn, New York, on the engagement of their son Shmuel to Henny Pomerantz. The couple will marry April 24 in Brooklyn and make their home in Lakewood, New Jersey.

**Shirley Waknin** (FYOS '96) on her engagement to Matthew Levine. They are planning a June 15 wedding in Miami, Florida, where they will also live.

**David Holzer** (FYOS '03) on his engagement to Samara Harris. They are planning a July 2 wedding in Schenectady, New York, and will live in Cleveland, Ohio, where Holzer currently resides.

**Daniel Lewis** (MHA '01, FYOS '05) on his engagement to Ruchama Rubin. Their wedding will be held in Israel in October, and they plan to live in the Miami area. Mazel tov also to the groom's parents, Teri and **Larry Graber** (MHA '71, YOS '75) of Memphis.

**Shaka Berry** (FYOS '06) on his engagement to Kiersten Feldman. They will marry Nov. 5 in Atlanta, where they plan to live.

**Eli Osdoba** (MHA '09, FYOS '13) on his engagement to Phoebe Cutler. Their wedding will take place Aug. 24 in Miami Beach, and they will live in

New York City. Mazel tov also to **Sandra (Loterstein) Osdoba** (MHA '76, YOS '80), mother of the groom and manager of the MHA/FYOS kitchen.

**Sarah Greenblatt** (MHA '10) on her engagement to Yair Jason Klein. The couple is planning to marry Aug. 17 in Baltimore, which is where they will live. Mazel tov also to the bride's parents, **Chavi (Adler) Greenblatt** (MHA '83) and Rabbi Akevvy Greenblatt, former Judaic studies principal of the MHA, now living in Baltimore.





## Bnei/Bnot Mitzvah: Mazel Tov to...

Ephraim and **Anna (Thomas) Kotkes** (MHA '65, YOS '69) of Far Rockaway, New York, whose grandson Aryeh Shalom Levine, the son of Charles and Rivka (Kotkes) Levine, celebrated his bar mitzvah on Nov. 6, 2016.

Lauren and **David Levinson** (MHA '85) of Dallas, Texas, on their daughters Alex and Samara becoming bnot mitzvah March 18.

Aviva and **Rabbi Josh Friedman** (MHA '87) of Ramat Bet Shemesh, Israel, on their son Moshe's bar mitzvah celebration Feb. 11.

**Miriam (Amy Goldstein) Kahane** (MHA '89, YOS '93) and **Rabbi Michael Kahane** (MHA '91, FYOS '95) of Jerusalem, Israel, on their son Eliyahu becoming a bar mitzvah April 11. Mazel tov also to grandparents **Sidney Goldstein** (MHA '64) and Joel and Joanne Kahane (alumni committee chair), all of Memphis.

Faigy and **Eliezer Kutner** (MHA '92) of Far Rockaway, New York, on the March 9 bat mitzvah of their daughter, Rena Rivka. Mazel tov to grandparents **Alan** (MHA '62) and **Barbara (Katz) Kutner** (MHA '64, YOS '68) and great-grandparents Rabbi Seymour and Malka Kutner, all of Memphis.

# *Mazel tov!*

Send us your alumni news for the next issue at [alumni@mhafyos.org](mailto:alumni@mhafyos.org).

# TRIVIA ANSWERS

FROM  
ISSUE 7

# 2006-2010

Thanks to everyone who sent in responses to the trivia questions featured in Issue No. 7.

**Dylan Cooper** (MHA '09, FYOS '13) won our last trivia quiz. He will receive his tin of Ricki's Cookies shortly after Pesach.

Dylan got  
**9 out of 11**  
correct answers.

*Here are the answers so you can see how you did.*

1. During this era, the price of a can of soda from the boys' high school lounge soda machine went from \$\_\_\_\_ to \$\_\_\_\_?

ANSWER: 50 cents to 75 cents.

2. What was the signature catchphrase of Mrs. Karin Schmitt, of blessed memory?

ANSWER: "Bells are ringing, lights are flashing."

3. Which student brought a shocking stapler to Hebrew class?

ANSWER: Aaron Milevsky (MHA '09).

4. What was Rabbi Sheftel Skaist's favorite game?

ANSWER: Box Mania

5. Who acted as Barack Obama, Joe Biden, John McCain and Sarah Palin in the mock presidential debate held in the gym in 2008?

ANSWER: **Dylan Cooper** (MHA '09, FYOS '13), **Lee Silberberg** (MHA '09), **Aaron Milevsky** (MHA '09) and **Zahava Gersten** (MHA '09, FYOS '13).

6. How did Coach Jake (Robert Jacobson) begin every gym class?

ANSWER: He sang, "It's a beautiful day in East Memphis."

7. Where did Mr. Dana Vaughn say that he lived?

ANSWER: In a box.

8. What's the only basketball shot that **Meir Gersten** (MHA '03, FYOS '07) could make?

ANSWER: A full court shot.

9. What famous Dr. Seuss story did Rabbi Josh Spodek use in his introductory speech to the students?

ANSWER: *Oh, the Places You'll Go.*

10. Why did a number of students pile into the small computer room during a fire drill?

ANSWER: The new alarm system confused them, and they thought it was an intruder alarm.

11. From which Caribbean island does **Jamie Langer** (FYOS '09) hail?

ANSWER: Antigua.



# *In loving memory of* *Rabbi Meir* *Belsky*



*On Jan. 3, 2017, the MHAIFYOS family mourned the passing of Rabbi Meir Belsky, z'l, who founded the Yeshiva of the South. He also led the boys' and girls' high schools and a kollel program for more than two decades. We offer our heartfelt condolences to Mrs. Regina Belsky (now living in Jerusalem) and their children, Rabbi Hillel Belsky, Rabbi Zvi Belsky, **Rabbi Daniel Belsky** (MHA '64), **Rabbi Ezra Belsky** (MHA '67, YOS '71), **Gitti (Belsky) Thomas** (MHA '70, YOS '74), **Naomi (Belsky) Homnick** (MHA '74, YOS '78) and **Molly (Belsky) Cohen** (YOS '83).*

*To help us pay tribute to Rabbi Belsky and his legacy at our school, **Mike Stein** (MHA '68, YOS '72) shared the following reflections on his beloved teacher.*

The relationship of a *rebbe* (rabbi) and his *talmid* (student) is one that is steeped in our traditions, and I was very fortunate to experience that unique relationship with Rabbi Meir Belsky, z'l. He became a major presence in my life when I was in seventh grade, a critical juncture in my life; how fortunate for me that he did. He related to me as a father does to his son, and that close relationship continued throughout my high school years at the Yeshiva of the South, which he founded with many wonderful Memphians of his day.

It was unheard of in those days to establish a Torah high school and thriving community in a

city the size of Memphis. I've always marveled at the foresight, commitment and strength Rabbi Belsky exhibited as he worked to build the YOS here in our community. He had the support of lay leaders in town who were by his side for 22 years as he built Memphis into a *makom Torah* (place of Torah). They were drawn to his sense of *emes* (truth) and *amalus* (perseverance). His tireless work influenced generations of students and their families to lead true, authentic Jewish lives; their merits continue to be a credit to Rabbi Belsky.

Under his leadership, the Belz *Beth Midrash* (study hall) became the epicenter of the yeshiva. He pushed us to strive for ever-higher goals in Torah learning and *avodas Hashem* (service of G-d). Emblazoned on the wall of the *beth midrash* to this day is the dedica-

tion of that holy space to “man’s nobility and splendor through the vigor of Torah,” and those qualities were apparent day and night due to Rabbi Belsky’s efforts. Shabbos, *yomim tovim* (holidays), special days like Purim and other *mesibas* (celebrations) were elevated by his *drashas* (Torah lectures). His diligence in *tefillah* (prayer) and intense *kavanna* (devotion) were always inspiring. On the *yomim noraim* (High Holidays), he would *daven* (pray) *shemonah esrai* (the silent *amidah* prayer) for hours. I always felt I had a home at the yeshiva. Although I was not one of the best learners, Rabbi Belsky treated me with deep understanding and imparted his love of Torah to me; for that I will always be grateful.

Since the Belskys’ move to Israel in 1984, I had the privilege of speaking with *Rebbe* every Friday morning. He continued to teach me during our phone calls throughout the past 33 years. He would say, “How do you hear...” or “What is your *haorah* [Torah thought]...” He never failed to say, “*hodu lo, borchu shemo* [Thanks to Him, bless His Name].” I would frequently ask him questions about concepts in his multi-volume work, [\*Citadel and Tower\*](#). He related to me that it gave him much *nachas* (pride) that I was learning his *sefer* (book).

Rabbi Belsky’s many students from his years in Memphis now span the globe, and the lasting impression he made on them was quite evident in the difficult days following his passing. I spent time with the Belsky family in New York during the *shiva*. It was extremely comforting to see the incredible love, respect and gratitude expressed by Rabbi Belsky’s *talmidim* (students) and their extended families for the opportunity they had to learn from him.

It’s been 50 years since *Rebbe* became a part of my life. As alumni, we must show our gratitude for all that Rabbi Belsky built—with Hashem’s help—here in Memphis. May the Torah learning at the Yeshiva of the South continue to grow and be both a credit to his name and a source of comfort for the Belsky family. *Yehi zichro boruch* – may his memory be blessed.



*Here are some highlights from other responses we received following Rabbi Belsky's passing:*

Rabbi Belsky was an enormous and influential figure in my life. He was simply a towering giant—not just overpowering all in his presence, but overpowering all intellectually and spiritually. He was all business, and that business was learning Torah and living Judaism every moment of every day. Rabbi Belsky's vision to establish a yeshiva high school is what has enabled the Orthodox community in Memphis to flourish.

**-Pace Cooper** (MHA '77, YOS '81)

Although it happened nearly 50 years ago, I clearly remember the day Rabbi Belsky came into my elementary school classroom and posed a question for my class to think about. When I answered the question, he beamed at me and told me that the answer I gave was such an excellent one that Rashi gives the very same answer. I remember feeling so special that Rabbi Belsky was happy and proud of my answer. His enthusiastic response encouraged and energized me to keep learning and striving to come up with the right answers.

**-Sara (Finkelstein) Schachter**  
(MHA '73, YOS '77)

When we became observant, we enrolled our younger children [**Marty (Mordechal) Wolff**, MHA '80; and **Ellen (Wolff) Silverman**, MHA '85, YOS '89] in the Hebrew Academy. Our older daughter [**Devorah (Sharon Wolff) Herbst**, YOS '80] was beginning high school at the time. Rabbi Belsky called us and with his big, booming voice said he would like us to send our daughter to the Yeshiva. When we met with him, he convinced us to enroll her in the high school. She was very happy, made friends, and liked the teachers. She went on to seminary after graduation and is now living in Lakewood, New Jersey, married to a *rebbe*. We have much *hakaros ha'tov* (gratitude) that Rabbi Belsky took the time to call us that morning.

**-Robert and Marcia Wolff**

Anyone whose life was touched by Rabbi Meir Belsky came out the other side a changed person. He always led by example with his passion for Torah, davening and all of *Yiddishkeit*. During the 10 years we lived in Memphis, the Belskys were an integral part of our family's lives. They were extraordinary paragons of what Torah families in modern times should be. Rabbi Belsky made a real difference and helped move our inspirational lives forward.

**-Marcia Werbin, mother of  
Seth Werbin** (MHA '79, YOS '83)

יהי זכרו ברוך

# Rabbi Yaacov & Sharon Goldfein



## A LEGACY OF TORAH AND CHESED



In 1963, a young couple moved to Memphis with a plan to stay for a few years to teach Torah and support the growing Memphis Hebrew Academy. Fortunately for our community, a few years turned into many more, and that couple—Rabbi Yaacov and Sharon Goldfein, z'l—became not just supporters of the school, but builders of a lasting legacy of commitment to Torah and *chesed* (kindness).

Rabbi Goldfein, a native of Minneapolis, Minnesota, moved to New York City at age 15 to study at Yeshivas Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin. Several years later, he met his future bride, who hailed from San Francisco, while she was in college at Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women. After receiving *semicha* (rabbinic ordination) from Rabbi Yitzchok Hutner, Rabbi

Goldfein followed his brother to the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland. He and the future Mrs. Goldfein corresponded long-distance and married in Ohio the following summer. After three years there, they were ready for a change.



"My parents were part of the movement envisioned by Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz of Torah U'Mesorah,"

said **Ruthie (Goldfein) Veshnefsky** (MHA '80).

"They recognized the importance of Jewish education to the continuity of the Jewish

people and wanted to move somewhere they could help make that available."

Rabbi Goldfein was offered a teaching position in Portland, Oregon. Before accepting the job, he contacted Rabbi Meir Belsky, his



respected *rebbe* from Chaim Berlin who was already in Memphis, to ask his opinion. In lieu of career advice, Rabbi Belsky made him a job offer. What the Goldfeins originally thought would be a brief stint in Memphis lasted more than four decades.

During the course of his MHA career, Rabbi Goldfein taught nearly every grade. He is best remembered for teaching Gemara (Talmud) to the junior high school boys and later teaching introductory Gemara to the fifth and sixth grade boys in the mornings and second grade Judaic studies in the afternoons.

“Even though my father had a tremendously high level of scholarship, he was able to take advanced legal concepts and break them down for his students, who were just beginning to study Gemara,” Veshnefsky said. “He created his own study materials to help develop their understanding of the concepts and grammatical nuances. My father had the boys’ hearts in one hand and their minds in the other. No matter what kind of background a student came from, he always found a way to connect.”

The walls of his second grade classroom were adorned with posters depicting the names of the Hebrew months, books of *Tanakh* (He-

brew Bible) and *parshas* (weekly portions) of the Torah. “He created a program for helping children memorize them,” said his daughter, **Rivka (Goldfein) Kramer** (MHA ’88, YOS ’92). “Many remember his large gold-star stickers, the prize for memorizing the names of all the *parshiyos* in order.”



Like her husband, Mrs. Goldfein also served in numerous roles at the school over the years, including a kindergarten classroom aide, fourth grade Judaic studies teacher and director of the lunch program. She also taught Hebrew school on Sundays at Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth Congregation and volunteered as treasurer of the MHA parent-teacher association (PTA) for more than a decade.

On top of their communal and familial responsibilities, Rabbi and Mrs. Goldfein invited a few out-of-town students to live with them at varying times, including **Lou Chapman** (MHA ’70, YOS ’74) and **Jesse Schwartzman** (MHA ’72) from Houston, Texas. “In December 1969, Jesse and I moved into the Goldfeins’ home for the balance of the school year,” Chapman said. “They were very gracious hosts. They did all they could to make us comfortable, and we are forever grateful for their Southern hospitality.”

Rabbi Goldfein is perhaps most fondly remembered by alumni for his work outside the classroom. “My father wanted very much to make Judaism alive and living, and not just book learning, which is why he got so involved in extracurricular activities,” Veshnefsky said. This was particularly true around the Jewish holidays. “He was known for his *simchas yom tov* [joyous holiday celebrations], and he made each *yom tov* very special for our family and the school,” Kramer said.

“My memories of Rabbi Goldfein include walking from the school to his house on White Station to visit his *sukkah*,” said **Ronit (Sauer) Brakha** (MHA ’83), a lifelong friend of **Rochel (Goldfein) Rosenberg** (MHA

’83). “We used to have school during *chol ha’moed* [the intermediate days of the holiday], and he would take us there on Sukkot to have a snack so we could make a *bracha* [blessing] in his *sukkah*. The Goldfeins were so welcoming and accepted everyone, no matter where they were in religious observance.”

Rabbi Goldfein was also well known for the roller skating events he arranged during *chol ha’moed*. “The skating rink was rented out just for us, and I can still hear the Jewish

music blaring through the loudspeakers,” said **Rebecca (Rubenstein) Gutman** (MHA ’93, FYOS ’97). “The best part was that Rabbi Goldfein skated along with us; he was amazing!”

Skating wasn’t the only physical activity at which Rabbi Goldfein excelled; he was also a brown belt in judo. “The after-school judo



class with Rabbi Goldfein remains a lasting and wonderful memory in my mind,” said **Josh Kahane** (MHA ’93, FYOS ’97). “Seeing our *rebbe* change from his suit and tie into full judo regalia and instruct us in self-defense offered a rare but genuine glimpse into the other side of his marvelous personality. The lessons we learned extended far beyond martial arts instructions.”

Following Rabbi Goldfein’s retirement in 2000 due to health issues, he continued to learn Torah as much as possible. “When my father was sick at the end of his life, my brother [Yitzi] and others would call and talk to him about learning, and his whole face would light up,” Kramer said. In 2004, Rabbi Goldfein passed away at the age of 70.

Mrs. Goldfein relocated to Florida soon thereafter to care for her elderly mother, to whom she devoted herself for more than five years.

Following her mother's passing, she relocated to Lakewood, New Jersey, to be closer to many of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. There Mrs. Goldfein joined Veshnepsky and her family in helping to establish a new girls' school, Bais Yaakov of Western Monmouth County in the growing community of Freehold, New Jersey.



*Mrs. Goldfein in 2016 with her four grandsons named for her beloved husband: (from left) Yaacov Shimon Veshnepsky, Yaakov Goldfein (Yitzi's son), Yaakov Goldstein and Yaakov Kramer.*

said. "She worked in the office and contributed to every aspect of the school. With her warmth and her smile, the girls all thought of her as the 'Bubby of Bais Yaakov.' She devoted time to focusing on each girl and what she needed. I watched my parents do that throughout their lives in Memphis, and that emphasis on the individual is really very special."

"My mother recognized another opportunity to encourage Jewish education," Veshnepsky

Mrs. Goldfein died in a tragic accident in Lakewood on Dec. 9, 2016. She and her late

husband are survived by their eight children—Batsheva (Goldfein) Levin, Veshnepsky and Kramer of Lakewood; **Sarah (Goldfein) Goldstein** (MHA '85), Rosenberg and Rabbi Yitzi Goldfein of Brooklyn, New York; **Basya (Goldfein) Israel** (MHA '87, YOS '91) of Chicago, Illinois; and Rabbi Yisroel Goldfein of Detroit, Michigan—and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The Goldfeins' legacy of dedication to Torah and selfless devotion to others lives on in their many descendants and countless students; may their memories be a blessing.



*The Goldfein family at the September 2016 wedding of Rivka Kramer's daughter Gitty to Eli Friedman: (back row, from left) Rabbi Yisroel Goldfein, Rabbi Yitzi Goldfein, the groom and bride, Basya Israel, Rochel Rosenberg; (front row, from left) Sarah Goldstein, Ruthie Veshnepsky, Mrs. Sharon Goldfein, mother-of-the-bride Kramer and Batsheva Levin.*

# *Alumni converge on Memphis for 2017 homecoming weekend*

The weekend of Jan. 13-15 brought excited alumni back to Memphis for the second annual MHA/FYOS homecoming celebration. Squeals of delight could be heard across the community as old friends saw each other for the first time in years.

The marquee events of the weekend were Saturday night's Irby and Bernice Cooper Alumni Basketball Game and Sunday night's Steak Dinner, presented by the Cooper Yeshiva High School for Boys (CYHSB). Both events gave alumni the opportunity to experience the school's newly renovated gym/auditorium and kitchen.

Spectators at the Jan. 14 basketball game held their breath in excitement over an extremely close and competitive game between the 2016-17 Cooper Macs and the formidable alumni team. Thanks to a dominant final quarter, the varsity Macs pulled out a 75-67 victory over the alumni.

The alumnus who traveled the farthest to participate in the game was **Beryl Thomas** (MHA '77, YOS '81), who currently resides in Israel. He was joined on the alumni team by his son **Avi Thomas** (FYOS '11), who lives in Florida.

"Walking through the hallowed halls toward the gym brought back fabulous memories of

decades past," Beryl Thomas said. "To have Avi on the team with me was just icing on the cake. The Coopers, Wrubles and everyone involved did an amazing job on the transformation of the school gym. To be zocheh [have the merit] to play in the first alumni game held



The 2017 alumni team (from left): **Beryl Thomas** (MHA '77, YOS '81), **Avi Thomas** (FYOS '11), **Eli Osdoba** (MHA '09, FYOS '13), **Jon Wogan** (MHA '94), Coach **Pace Cooper** (MHA '77, YOS '81), **Asher Silbermann** (MHA '09, FYOS '13), **Mendel Osdoba** (MHA '07, FYOS '11), **Zev Levine** (MHA '01, FYOS '05), **Josh Kahane** (MHA '93, FYOS '97) and **Ethan Cooper** (MHA '09, FYOS '13).

on the new court in my first-ever time participating was truly like a small taste of *Gan Eden* [the Garden of Eden] here on Earth. In addition, the *simcha* [joy] of having my father, Al Thomas, in attendance to watch his son and grandsons play far exceeded my wildest dreams."



## HOMECOMING WEEKEND

Alumni converge on Memphis

# 25

"Last January, I had the pleasure of playing in my first alumni game as an alumnus," Avi Thomas said. "What made this year even more special was the fact that I was able to share the court with my dad, a former varsity player and team captain. Having my dad there was extra special, since I did not have the pleasure of playing in front of him while I was in high school since he lived (and still lives) in Israel. Being able to play with him was a special feeling and a great time that I hope I can repeat sometime in the future."

On Sunday evening, Jan. 15, guests exchanged their athletic attire for evening wear to attend the annual Steak Dinner. Alumni and community members enjoyed an upscale dining experience as the CYHSB students, dressed in their signature white shirts and bow ties, waited on tables, shared words of Torah, and put their many talents on display.

Each year, the high school boys select the evening's honoree, whose identity remains a secret until it is unveiled at the dinner. This year, the boys chose to honor Coach James Nokes, the school's athletic director, for his many contributions to the CYHSB. Nokes' philosophy is that the body must be as strong and flexible as the mind for optimal learning to occur. He goes to great lengths to help our students

stay healthy and gives the high school boys the skills and desire to achieve physical fitness. Coach Nokes' efforts are greatly appreciated by the MHA/FYOS students, parents and faculty.

"*Min ha'shamayim* [from heaven] are the only appropriate words to truly express my homecoming weekend experience," Beryl Thomas said. "I would like to thank everyone at the MHA/FYOS for pulling off such an otherworldly experience, and may I be *zocheh* to participate in years to come with all of my friends and family."

Please join us next year over Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend—Jan. 12-14, 2018—for the third annual homecoming weekend. We hope to see y'all there!



# 1971-1975

## TRIVIA

Regardless of when you graduated, have some fun with these trivia questions. Send your answers to [joannekahane111@gmail.com](mailto:joannekahane111@gmail.com). The person who gets the most answers correct (or in the case of a tie, the earliest respondent) will win a tin of Ricki's Cookies, made by **Ricki (Thomas) Krupp** (MHA '66, YOS '70). Good luck!



1. What year marked the first time the YOS boys' basketball team won a championship in any Memphis Jewish Community Center (MJCC) league?
2. How many times in its history did the dorm burn down?
3. Who cleaned the dorm bathrooms and girls' high school building between 1970 and 1974?
4. Who was the most absent-minded yeshiva professor? And what musical instrument did he play?
5. Which teacher used to check that students cleaned under their nails and behind their ears?
6. Which teacher drilled students on the multiplication table with fun and games until they got it down pat?
7. Which school fundraiser had all of the students out on the streets?
8. Which beloved children's book did Mrs. Janet Yancy read to her third graders on days when they completed their work?

9. Which no-nonsense high school teacher did students somehow convince to replace their final exam with creative, small-group presentations?
10. Who were the school's two outstanding speech teachers, who taught eighth and ninth grades, respectively?
11. What was Mr. David Cotton's other profession, aside from being a junior high school math and science teacher?
12. What kind of car did Mr. David Cotton drive?
13. What's the name of French teacher Mr. Andre Suffren's hometown?
14. Which MHA parent brought fresh bananas to the yeshiva every week so the boys could enjoy a healthy snack?
15. Who played the lead role of Mortimer in the eighth grade production of *Arsenic and Old Lace* in 1973?



# Banquet

supports Jewish education,  
celebrates graduates  
and dedicated volunteers

Planning is underway for the MHA/FYOS 67th Annual Scholarship Banquet. The springtime event is among the most significant fundraisers for the school's scholarship fund, making it possible for every Jewish child in Memphis to benefit from a traditional Torah education. It also pays tribute to the school's most dedicated supporters and the students graduating from eighth and 12th grades.

The guests of honor at this year's banquet will be **Dr. Joel and Joanne Kahane**, long-time supporters of the school and parents of alumni **Josh** (MHA '93, FYOS '97) and **Rabbi Michael Kahane** (MHA '91, FYOS '95). As the proud grandparents of four current MHA/FYOS students, the Kahanes remain an integral and active part of the MHA/FYOS community. Additionally, as chair of the alumni committee, Joanne Kahane has spent countless hours reaching out to graduates near and far and conducting research for this publication.

Receiving the Community Service Award will be **Hugh Freiden** (MHA '72, YOS '76), father of five alumni—**Yoni** (MHA '96, FYOS '00), **Shirli** (MHA '99, FYOS '03), **Ariella** (MHA '01, FYOS '05), **Tamara** (MHA '03, FYOS '07) and **Meirah** (MHA '04, FYOS '08)—and

grandfather of two MHA attendees. This year marks the 25th anniversary of Hugh Freiden's leadership of the Parent-Child Learning program, held every Saturday evening during the winter months in the FYOS Belz *Beth Midrash*.

Recognized with the Ish Chesed Award will be **Dr. Joel Siegel**, immediate past president of the MHA/FYOS board of trustees. Siegel, who has been incredibly supportive of the alumni committee's efforts, is the father of four MHA students and a tireless advocate for the school. He is also a leader of the [100 New Families](#) initiative, designed to recruit Jews to Memphis and ensure the sustainability of our community.

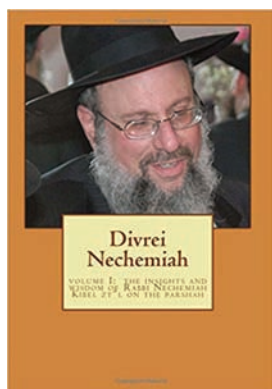
A great way for alumni to support the school is by placing an ad in the scholarship journal distributed at the banquet. Students and faculty alike cherish these yearbooks as keepsakes of their experiences at the school. Ads can be sponsored for the banquet honorees, members of the class of 2017, the memory of a loved one, or simply to thank the MHA/FYOS for its role in your life.

Please watch your email for forthcoming information about the banquet and ad sponsorship opportunities; thank you in advance for your generous support.



# Two former faculty members' books published posthumously

Many special teachers have passed through the doors of the MHA/FYOS; some of those one-of-a-kind people went on to branch out beyond our close-knit community to share their talents and wisdom with others. We are pleased to share the news that the works of two beloved former faculty members—**Rabbi Harry (Nechemiah) Kibel** (MHA '65, YOS '69), z'l, and Rabbi Yosaif Silverman, z'l—are now available to the public.



Rabbi Kibel, who was profiled in our [third issue](#), is widely known for his Torah scholarship and considered a great influence in the spiritual development of the Jewish communities in both Memphis and Cincinnati. Although he passed

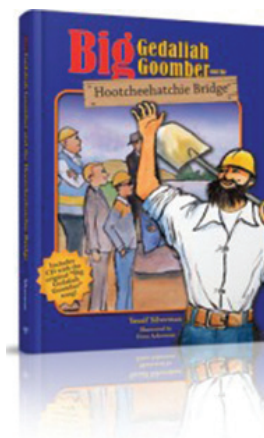
away in 2005, his teachings can now be shared for generations to come.

"The recently released *Divrei Nechemiah on the Torah* is based on the *shiurim* [classes] my father gave on Thursday nights in Cincinnati," said Rabbi Kibel's son, Yaakov, who served as editor of the publication. The book is dedicated in honor of the rabbi's wife, **Ranelle (Evensky) Kibel** (MHA '66, YOS '70) and in memory of his teacher, Rabbi Meir Belsky, z'l.

The compilation of Rabbi Kibel's inspiring and dynamic lectures on the *parsha* (weekly Torah portion) and *Navi* (books of the prophets) is available on [CreateSpace](#) and [Amazon](#).

Those who knew Rabbi Silverman, and especially his students, often mention his love of Shabbos and the wonderful creativity he brought to our school.

Many fondly remember Big Gedaliah Goomber, the 17-foot-tall character made famous in song, who proclaimed, "Double, double, triple pay won't make me work on Saturday."



As the Silverman family told us, "The character alumni grew up with, Big Gedaliah Goomber, is now in print, and the song should continue having the impact of making people excited to keep Shabbos. This is a great tool to enhance the Shabbos experience for children and even adults who haven't forgotten BGG."

*Big Gedaliah Goomber and the Hootcheehatchie Bridge*, featuring the exciting adventures of the lovable giant created by Rabbi Silverman as well as a recording of the song, is now available from [Menucha Publishers](#) and at Judaica retailers around the world.

# The MHA/YOS Classes of 1971-1975 *Where Are They Now?*

**Jerry Gontownik** (MHA '68, YOS '71) lives in Miami, Florida, and works in real estate. He and his wife Anne have six sons, four daughters-in-law and seven grandchildren.

'68

'71

"Much of who I have become was molded in Memphis, and I cannot imagine having been raised in any other community," Gontownik said. "Rabbi Efraim Greenblatt, z'l, was not only my teacher in the third and fifth grades, but he also taught me my first Gemara [section of Talmud], how to *daven* [pray] and *lain* [chant Torah reading], and was my role model

for how to treat people." He is also grateful to Rabbi Meir Belsky, z'l, for "not throwing me out of school when I 'borrowed' the school van and did not bring it back in the same shape.

"My mother, may she rest in peace, used to say, 'Days drag, years fly.' Where did the time go? I wish my classmates all the best." Gontownik can be reached at [jerry@stonepost.net](mailto:jerry@stonepost.net).



**Francie Schneider** (MHA '68, YOS '72) lives in Memphis with her sister Ellen and has worked as an office assistant at the MHA/FYOS for 45 years! Among her favorite memories from her days as a student is "going to the drug store to buy candy" during her senior year, she said. Schneider's favorite teacher was Mrs. Eva Loskove. Her email address is [pandab53@yahoo.com](mailto:pandab53@yahoo.com).

'68

'72

**Louis B. Chapman** (MHA '70, YOS '74) came to Memphis from Houston, Texas, to attend the MHA/YOS. Now an attorney, he lives in Passaic, New Jersey, with his wife Elke, and they have four children and three grandchildren.



"I was a resident of the boys' dormitory for five years and shared rooms with students from across the southern United States," Chapman said. "I made many lasting friendships, both from the dorm experience and with my fellow classmates who were 'in-townners.' We had a lot of good times together, leaving lasting memories that we reflect on when we get together." His favorite teacher at the school was Mr. Ephraim Bluestein, who taught American history and speech.

"Memphis is a warm, friendly Jewish community," Chapman said. "Thank you for receiving me when I was there." His email address is [louchapman@optonline.net](mailto:louchapman@optonline.net).

'70

'74

**Ronnie Katz** (MHA '70, YOS '74) lives in Dallas, Texas, and is president of a life settlements and financial consulting firm. He is the father of five alumni: **Deena (Katz) Yarmush** (MHA '94, FYOS '97) of North Woodmere, New York; **Shira (Katz)**

**Nathan** (MHA '95, FYOS '99) of Rechovot, Israel; **Daniel Katz** (MHA '98, FYOS '02) of Dallas; **Noam Katz** (MHA '01, FYOS '05) of Long Beach, California; and **Aviva (Katz) Fink** (MHA '08, FYOS '12) of Jerusalem. He has six grandchildren.

He has fond memories of the "family feel" of the school, he said, and his favorite teachers were Mrs. Lillian Feldman and Mr. David Cotton. Katz can be reached at [rkatzmem@gmail.com](mailto:rkatzmem@gmail.com).



Four generations (from left): Bar mitzvah boy Yonah Yarmush, Deena (Katz) Yarmush, Ronnie Katz and Izzy Katz, one of the founders of our school.



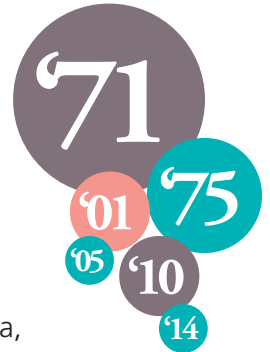
"In addition to my other business, I have Ron Hot, Sauces for the Brave, with a new product coming out soon," Katz said.

**Larry Graber** (MHA '71, YOS '75) and his wife, Memphian Teri (Petrovsky) Graber, live in Memphis. Their blended family includes **Richard Lewis** (MHA '99, FYOS '03), who also lives in Memphis with his wife, **Aviva (Krupp) Lewis** (MHA '02, FYOS '06), and their two children (who

attend the MHA); **Daniel Lewis** (MHA '01, FYOS '05), who lives in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and is getting married this fall (see page 13 for more); Ahuva Graber, who lives in New York City and is expecting her first child with husband Peter Winik; Joel Graber, who works in finance in New York City; and **Isaac Graber** (MHA '10, FYOS '14), a pre-med/business student at Brandeis University.

Memories from Graber's school days include "hitchhiking to Eastgate during recess, leaving a classroom during class via an open window, enduring a Mrs. [Phyllis] Wahl pinched chin, eating bananas through the courtesy of Mrs. Goldie Gold, and visiting the inmates at the penal farm," he said. His favorites teachers were Mrs. Joyce Casada, whom he called "by far the best teacher in the school at the time," and Mr. David Cotton.

Graber urges his classmates to "live life to its fullest, make every day count, and thank G-d every day." His email address is [larry.graber@gmail.com](mailto:larry.graber@gmail.com).



**Judy (Lebovits) Lillien** (MHA '72) lives in Great Neck, New York, with husband Richard and daughter Meryl; the Lilliens also have a married daughter living in Bergenfield, New Jersey; a married son in Baltimore; and three beautiful granddaughters.

Her favorite memories from the MHA include "going to pick cotton in kindergarten, apple slices and honey with a shiny penny, color war, softball at recess time with Mrs. [Joyce] Casada's class and the antics of my eighth grade class, just to name a few," she recalled. Lillien invites classmates who want to reconnect to contact her at [syny98@gmail.com](mailto:syny98@gmail.com).



**Jesse Schwartzman** (MHA '72) came to Memphis from Houston, Texas, with his siblings to study at the MHA. After his eighth grade graduation, his family moved from Houston to Chicago, where he attended high school and earned a bachelor's degree.

Schwartzman began his career at the NASA space shuttle program and later worked

on military aircraft for McDonnell Douglas and the Israeli Air Force. He currently serves as an aerospace engineer at Boeing Defense, Space and Security. He and his wife, Dina, live in Teaneck, New Jersey; they have five children and two grandsons.





"I was overwhelmed during my first year at the MHA," Schwartzman said. "I was a boy from Houston with a funny accent! But, my classmates eagerly welcomed me and made me feel comfortable. They welcomed me into their homes and into their lives. My years in Memphis were truly the wonder years, and I am grateful for the friendships, as well as the warmth, loving-kindness and hospitality the community extended to my siblings and me. The Memphis Jewish community uniquely combines the social etiquette of southern hospitality with *Yiddishkeit* [Judaism] and *midos* [strong character]."

Schwartzman's choice of favorite MHA teacher is not that surprising, given his eventual career choice: Mr. David Cotton, who taught math and science. "He was really cool and inspired me to pursue engineering," he said. He also fondly remembers musicians from the Memphis Symphony Orchestra visiting the MHA, going to Carvel's with his classmates, the YOS Purim *seudah* (festive meal) and visiting friends in the Memphis community on Shabbos.

Schwartzman reported that his sister **Esther (Schwartzman) Braunstein** (YOS '70) now lives in New York City, and his brother **Mike Schwartzman** (MHA '69) lives in the northern suburbs of Chicago. He can be reached at [jesse.schwartzman@boeing.com](mailto:jesse.schwartzman@boeing.com).



**Rabbi Michael Whitman** (MHA '72) and his wife Marci live in Montreal, Quebec, where he serves as spiritual leader of the Adath Synagogue. They have four children and four grandchildren. Whitman's favorite teacher at the MHA was Rabbi Efraim Greenblatt, z"l. His email address is [rabbi@adath.ca](mailto:rabbi@adath.ca).

**Sara (Finkelstein) Schachter** (MHA '73, YOS '77) and her husband Nachy live in Baltimore, Maryland. They are the parents of five children and proud grandparents; their oldest son, Menachem, married Shira Tropper, whose mother, **Davida (Dona Eskenazi) Tropper** (MHA '73, YOS '77), was Schachter's classmate and childhood friend.



Her favorite MHAYOS memories include "color war, being in the play *Arsenic and Old Lace* in eighth grade, our end-of-year celebrations at Margolin Farms, kickball with the class and Mrs. Ricki Haggard at recess in fifth grade, and, most importantly, great friends," she said. "We had such a happy childhood, thanks to so many wonderful family members and friends who made the

Memphis community such a loving, fun and safe place in which to grow up. Special thanks to all those who made the school what it was so that we could receive a quality Jewish education, and to the shuls, which provided us with a wonderful place to *daven* [pray] and offered fun, healthy activities, especially during our teenage years."

With regard to her teachers, "Rabbi Efraim Greenblatt, z'l, really stands out in my mind," Schachter said. "He had such a sense of humor and warmth toward all his students. In third grade, we loved his Benny stories and 'yaish li' game. Mrs. Frances Gibbs, who taught us in fourth grade, was always smiling and made learning fun. And Rabbi Hillel Belsky taught me *Chumash* [Hebrew bible] for four years in high school and had a profound impact on my *Yiddishkeit* [Judaism]."

She sends her classmates very warm regards. "We really should plan a reunion; wouldn't it be great to get together, catch up, and share memories?! I would love to see 'y'all' (and that's plural, of course!)," Schachter said. Her email address is [theschachters@juno.com](mailto:theschachters@juno.com).



**Mashie (Marsha Greenblatt) Langsam** (MHA '73, YOS '77) and her husband

Rabbi Elazar Langsam live in Jerusalem, Israel. She works in a seminary attended by girls from all over the world, a job she finds very enjoyable and fulfilling. The Langsams have 12 children (nine of whom are married) and recently welcomed their 40th grandchild (see page 11 for more). "We are blessed to have all of them living

in Israel with us and have much *nachas* [gratification] from them," she said. "We were blessed with a special son with Down syndrome by the name of Chanina, z'l. He touched many hearts in his seven short years of

life. He has been gone for eight years now, and we miss him very much. The fact that he is in *shamayim* [heaven] with my dear parents [longtime MHA faculty members Rabbi Efraim and Miriam Greenblatt], of blessed memory, is certainly a *nechama* [comfort] to me."



## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Graduates of 1971-1975

# 35

Although the Langsams have lived in Israel for more than 35 years, "I still feel very much a part of Memphis and think about so many of my wonderful classmates, even if we haven't been in touch or seen each other in so many years," she said. "When my brother [**Yitzy Greenblatt**, MHA '75] sent me the link to view the 40th reunion of his eighth grade class, I actually sat there and cried! My time at the MHA and Yeshiva of the South was very special and represented meaningful years in my life, and I cherish the memories. My classroom memories are starting to fade, but the fun times during color war, recess and lunchtime are still in the forefront."

Langsam does remember a number of her favorite teachers. "First grade teachers are always very special; Rabbi Mordechai Yormark and Mrs. Betty Reed were very caring and warm, and I was crazy about them," she said. "Mrs. [Janet] Yancy, my third grade teacher, and Mrs. [Ricki] Haggard from fifth grade stick out in my mind as well." She would love to hear from classmates at [mashielangsam@gmail.com](mailto:mashielangsam@gmail.com).

**Jill (Wender) Friedman** (MHA '73, YOS '77) lives in the Riverdale area of The Bronx, New York, and can be reached at [JillWender@gmail.com](mailto:JillWender@gmail.com).



**Shirley (Loterstein) Moskowitz** (MHA '73, YOS '77) and her husband

Yaki live in Memphis, where she works as administrative manager for a company that sells touchscreen register systems to retailers. They are the parents of three alumni: **Yudi Moskowitz** (MHA '97), who lives in Phoenix, Arizona, with his wife Lolly and their four children; **Mindy (Moskowitz) Klugmann** (MHA '01), now living in Hollywood, Florida, with her husband Shloimie and one son; and **Hershel Moskowitz** (MHA '03, FYOS '07), who is married to Ariella Novick and lives in Forest Hills, New York.



Shirley Moskowitz's favorite teacher in high school was Rabbi Yehudah Silver. Her email address is [shirley.moskowitz@dsmartinc.com](mailto:shirley.moskowitz@dsmartinc.com).

*Want to connect with other MHA/FYOS alumni?*

JOIN US ON **FACEBOOK!** 



The MHA kindergarten graduates of 1965. Front row (from left): Carol Burson, [unknown], **Sara (Finkelstein) Schachter** (MHA '73), **Judy (Katz) Rudovsky** (MHA '73), **Shirley (Loterstein) Moskowitz** (MHA '73), **Rachel (Wolmark) Deutsch** (MHA '73, YOS '77), **Fayge Silverman** (MHA '73, YOS '77), **Mashie (Greenblatt) Langsam** (MHA '73), [unknown], Robin Fleisher, **Patti Kabakoff** (YOS '77), [unknown], **Rachelle (Loskove) Bernstein** (MHA '73). Middle row: [unknown], **Jill (Wender) Friedman** (MHA '73), **Dina (Seiger) Bernstein** (MHA '73), Eddie Denenberg, **Jonathan Whitman** (MHA '73), [unknown], Ronnie (Tzvi) Levin, [unknown], [unknown], **Naomi (Belsky) Homnick** (MHA '74, YOS '78), Lisa Banes, Lisa Wiener. Back row: [unknown], [unknown], **Marshall Lebovits** (MHA '73), [first name unknown] Lansky, [unknown], [unknown], Danny Becker, [unknown], [unknown], Randy Barris, **Daryl Lansky** (MHA '74), **Morris Goldstein** (MHA '73), **Jeffrey Rosenberg** (MHA '74).

If you recognize any of the faces we couldn't identify, please let us know at [alumni@mhafyos.org](mailto:alumni@mhafyos.org).

# *flashbacks*





MHA students gathered in the gym during color war, circa 1968-69.

Do you recognize yourself or anyone else in this photo? If so, please email [alumni@mhafyos.org](mailto:alumni@mhafyos.org) or write to us at the school; if we get a sufficient number of responses, we will reprint the picture with names in our next issue.

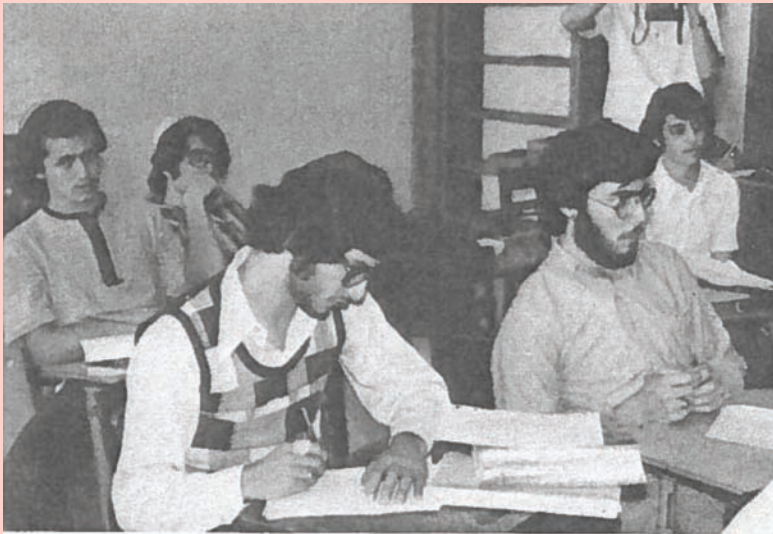


Performing in the eighth grade production of *Arsenic and Old Lace* in 1973 are **Jonathan Whitman** (MHA '73, seated), **Russel Scheinberg** (MHA '73, kneeling) and **Avremel Kivelevitz** (MHA '73, standing).



Performing in the eighth grade production of *Arsenic and Old Lace* in 1973 are (from left) **Sara (Finkelstein) Schachter** (MHA '73), **Fayge Silverman** (MHA '73, YOS '77), **Avremel Kivelevitz** (MHA '73) and **Russel Scheinberg** (MHA '73).

# flashbacks



Yeshiva of the South students at work in April 1974. (From left) **Sidney Gontownik**, z'l (MHA '70, YOS '74), **Mark Wender** (MHA '70, YOS '74), **Denis Freiden** (MHA '70, YOS '74), **Steve Graber** (MHA '70, YOS '74), **Larry Graber** (MHA '71, YOS '75) and (partially hidden) **Ira Thomas** (MHA '70, YOS '74). The photo was taken during the Omer, which accounts for their unshaven faces.

**Sara (Finkelstein) Schachter** (MHA '73, second from left) poses outside the MHA building with her teachers, (from left) Mrs. Joyce Casada (sixth grade), Mrs. Rikki Haggard (fifth grade) and Mrs. Frances Gibbs (fourth grade).



Members of the class of '73 enjoy a Judaic studies class taught by Mrs. Nechama Hartman. Front row (from left): **Sharon (Weiss) Nichol** (MHA '73), **Madelyn (Diamond) Gordon** (MHA '73), **Mashie (Greenblatt) Langsam** (MHA '73). Second row: **Shelly Franklin** (MHA '73), **Sharon Prager** (MHA '73), **Sara (Finkelstein) Schachter** (MHA '73). Third row: **Lisa (Wruble) Kaufman** (MHA '73), **Dina (Seiger) Bernstein** (MHA '73), **Judy (Katz) Rudovsky** (MHA '73), **Dana (Kamin) Saltzman** (MHA '73, YOS '77), **Shirley (Loterstein) Moskowitz** (MHA '73). Fourth row: **Rachel (Wolmark) Deutsch** (MHA '73, YOS '77), **Rachelle (Loskove) Bernstein** (MHA '73), **Davida (Dona Eskenazi) Tropper** (MHA '73, YOS '77), **Fayge Silverman** (MHA '73, YOS '77). Against far left wall: **Jill (Wender) Friedman** (MHA '73).



## IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The ninth issue of our newsletter is scheduled for publication sometime around Rosh Hashanah. In it, we will highlight the 8th and 12th grade graduates from the years 1996-2000. Members of those classes will receive questionnaires by email (or regular mail) in July. Please return your completed survey promptly so that you can be included.

By popular demand, that issue will feature a story about Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Abby Johnson, who taught history and English in our junior high and high school for almost an entire generation. If you have any stories, photos or memories of the Johnsons that you'd like to share, please send them to Joanne Kahane, alumni chair, at [joannekahane111@gmail.com](mailto:joannekahane111@gmail.com) or to her attention at the school's mailing address below.

Also, be sure to submit your "Mazel Tov" events so we can include them in the Alumni News section of our next issue. Thank you!

