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VOL. XXVIII, № 670

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— “USEFUL INFORMATION FAITHFULLY RECORDED” —

BY MAIL: \$50 ★ E-MAIL \$36

APRIL 13 - MAY 3, 2018



OVER 30 YEARS WORKING AT HUNGARIAN — Staff members who have been with Hungarian Kosher Foods since it moved to Skokie in 1986 posed in 2013 with Ira Kirsche (second from left at back) and his sister Lynn Shapiro (front row, center).

They are (back row, from left): Lorena Cspai, Ira Kirsche, Caryn Bean, Jack Rosen, and Mark Levin; Front row: Veronica Sporia, Lynn Shapiro, and Regina Kutsin. ❑

Kirsche family era ends at landmark kosher market

► ALL-KOSHER HUNGARIAN FOODS WAS A PIONEER

By DOUGLAS WERTHEIMER
EDITOR

After 45 years, Hungarian Kosher Supermarket in Skokie, the Midwest's largest independent all-kosher food store, is changing hands.

The new owners, from Florida, take over on April 22.

“This is the right time, physically and emotionally, to make this move,” IRA KIRSCHKE, 67, Hungarian's owner, told the JEWISH STAR last week.

Kirsche will maintain an association with the store, known for its community involvement and *heimish* atmosphere, and its name will continue.

“I'm very proud of the business,” he said, “and proud of the way we ran it with integrity.”

“Even today, I will miss it, the camaraderie with the customers, the employees and the vendors,” he said, though he did not minimize the pressure of running such a business.

“I think the most important driving force behind this business was a passion to do for the Jewish people,” said LYNN KIRSCHKE SHAPIRO, Ira's sister.

Her award-winning *Food, Family and Tradition: Hungarian Kosher Family Recipes and Remembrances*, appeared in 2014.

“Our parents used to say, ‘You always have to do the right thing because it's the right thing to do,’” she said. “The work ethic, the service to the community, *kashrut* and Israel, giving *tzedakah* — we did it because it was the right thing to do.”

“We were partners”

This is the third time in its 55-year history that the

business will have changed hands.

Originally founded in 1963 as a kosher meat market and sausage company by ARON FRIEDMAN and his wife RIVKA (both Holocaust survivors), the store was located at 3544 W. Lawrence Avenue in Chicago's Albany Park area. In 1969 it moved to 2613 W. Devon, in West Rogers Park.

In 1973, SANDOR and MARGIT KIRSCHKE bought the 3,000 sq. ft. store. Working with them were their son Ira and daughter Lynn, as well as Mr Kirsche's sister, Goldie and her two sons, Irving and Alex, who had emigrated from the Soviet Union.

Mr Kirsche, who was born in a small town in what was then Czechoslovakia, survived Auschwitz and Buchenwald, a death march and harsh experiences as a slave laborer. In his memoirs he recalled that he emerged from the devastation of the Holocaust weighing 72 pounds.

After World War II, by a serendipitous turn of events he came to Chicago with his wife, Margit, who is today 95 years old. She remained at his side as his working companion for some 50 years.

Highly skilled in the food business and driven and hard-working, from the very earliest days he saw his businesses as a way to provide family members with employment and to bring them close together.

Indeed, “Everyone in our family has worked in the business at some time, from my parents and my father's sisters to the grandchildren,” stated Lynn Shapiro.

❑ PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 2

Wisconsin expands anti-BDS legislation

► OVER 45% OF STATES HAVE A BILL, ILLINOIS' IN 2015

SPECIAL TO THE CHICAGO JEWISH STAR

Wisconsin governor SCOTT WALKER (R) enhanced the state's anti-BDS legislation on April 3, signing Assembly Bill 553 focused on state and governmental agencies.

The bill prohibits them from “adopting a rule, ordinance, policy, or procedure” which would involve them in a boycott of Israel.

In October 2017, Walker signed Executive Order 261 which made it illegal for state agencies to participate in the Israel boycott.

As of Oct. 2017, nearly half (23) of American states have adopted anti-BDS legislation (Tennessee has

formally condemned the movement).

On May 18, 2015, Illinois became the first state to pass anti-BDS legislation, but on June 4 South Carolina became the first state to adopt legislation when Gov. BRUCE RAUNER (R) delayed signing the Illinois bill until July 23 (JEWISH STAR, Aug. 7, 2015).

Last October, Walker led a 15-member state delegation on a mission to Israel, emphasizing water technology (JEWISH STAR, Nov. 10, 2017).

Wisconsin has annual exports of \$80 million to Israel, and imports more than \$200 million. ❑

FREEDOM COINS

► BRONZE COINS WERE HIDDEN DURING ROMAN REVOLT

By EDGAR ASHER
ISRAEL CORRESPONDENT

Bronze coins, the last remnants of a four-year Jewish revolt against the Roman Empire between 66 and the destruction of the

Second Temple in 70 CE, have been found near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, it was announced March 26.

The 1.5cm (.6 inch) coins were left behind by Jews hiding in a large cave 23 x 46 feet during the four year Roman siege.

While several of the coins date to the early years of the revolt, the great majority are from its final year, otherwise known as “Year Four” (69-70 CE). Significantly, during the final year, the Hebrew inscription on the coins was changed from

“For the Freedom of Zion” to “For the Redemption of Zion,” a shift which reflected the changing mood of the rebels during this

period of horror and famine.

“A discovery like this — ancient coins bearing

the words ‘Freedom’ and ‘Redemption’ ... is incredibly moving,” said Hebrew University archaeologist EILAT MAZAR, who led the dig.

In addition to Hebrew inscriptions, the coins are decorated with Jewish symbols such as the four biblical plant species and a picture of the goblet that was used in the Temple service. ❑



HEBREW UNIVERSITY VIA ASHERNET

IDF STILL TOPS

SPECIAL TO THE CHICAGO JEWISH STAR

With an approval rating of 88%, the IDF is the most trusted state institution among Israeli Jews, according to the *Israel Democracy Index 2017*, released Dec. 12, 2017.

In the 2016 report, the IDF was also ranked first, with a 90% rating (JEWISH STAR, Feb. 24, 2017).

Following the IDF in the current report, the 15th in the series, were: Israel's President (71%); Supreme Court (57%); Attorney General (44%); Police (42%); and Media (30%). The Chief Rabbinate (20%) and political parties (15%) were at the bottom. ❑

Pritzker pans scholarship plan

► DEMOCRAT CALLS INVEST IN KIDS ACT A “TAX BREAK” FOR THE WEALTHY, VOWS TO CANCEL IT IF ELECTED

By GILA WERTHEIMER
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

On two days running, Democratic candidate for governor J.B. PRITZKER condemned Illinois' new tax-credit scholarship plan, known as the Invest in Kids Act, and promised to rescind it if in the November elections he defeats Republican opponent BRUCE RAUNER, the incumbent governor.

The plan, passed in the Illinois legislature and signed into law by Gov. Rauner last fall, allows \$75 million in state tax credits per year to provide scholarships at private schools, including religious schools, for children from low-income families.

Its purpose is to offer educational options for needy children. No direct funding from the State of Illinois is involved.

Pritzker campaign spokesperson JASON RUBIN told the JEWISH STAR in an April 8 statement that in signing the legislation that created the scholarship program, “Bruce Rauner used school children as leverage to establish a back door voucher program that siphons money away from public schools.

“It's appalling that the state loses out on precious education funds in order to give wealthy donors a tax break.”

Legislators divided

Illinois was the 18th state to enact a tax-credit

scholarship program.

There are an estimated 5,500 students at Jewish day schools in the Chicago area, and some of their families stand to benefit. The number eligible for the need-based scholarships, however, is limited by the financial status of the family.

After an initial system crash on the application website on Jan. 31, applications were successfully submitted on Feb. 27 (JEWISH STAR, March 16).

State-wide applications at that time had been received for 33,000 students, and donations of \$45 million had been pledged (out of a maximum allowable of \$100 million). Donors are eligible for a 75% tax credit (JEWISH STAR, Mar. 16).

Speaking in Chicago at

❑ PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 3

BEST-EVER PREDICTION?

By DANIEL PIPES
MIDDLE EAST FORUM

THEODOR HERZL wrote in his diary on Sept. 3, 1897, three days after the close in Basel of the First Zionist Congress: “... at Basel, I founded the Jewish State. Were I to say this in public today, I would be greeted with universal laughter. Perhaps in five years, certainly in 50, everyone will see [the truth of] this.”

Fifty years later to the day, on Sept. 3, 1947, the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine presented its Report to the General Assembly calling for the end of the British Mandate and proposing a Plan of Partition of Palestine into a Jewish state and Arab state.

On Nov. 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly passed UNSCOP's plan almost without changes as Resolution 181, thereby formally recognizing “the Jewish State” that Herzl had foreseen. ❑



CHICAGO JEWISH STAR PHOTO

Winter in April

The Chicago area received a snowfall which, while modest, was a record for April 9, an incongruous lingering of winter following the Passover holiday, a harbinger of spring.

Congregation Sukkat Shalom in Wilmette presented a typical scene, with its snow-clad trees, bushes, and spire. The building, formerly the First Church of Christ Scientist, was remodelled in 2011. ❑

Kirsche family

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

In 1986, they located a then-empty building at 4020 W. Oakton, in the Jewishly-growing Village of Skokie.

The site had previously been a food store under Kroger, then Dominick's and finally Butera, ownership.

Once renovated under Ira Kirsche's supervision, "Hungarian Kosher Foods" was born. It was an "All-Kosher, Only-Kosher Shomer Shabbos Supermarket," a pioneer in its field. Expanding to 25,000 sq. ft., at the time it was one of the largest such stores in the U.S.

At the helm were the Kirsches and their nephew, IRVING WEINBERGER.

Innovation was "at the core" of Mr Kirsche's business outlook, his son said, one which he emulated.

"We were partners, we had a good working relationship," said Ira Kirsche, in reference to his father.

In 1992, the store installed handicap-approved checkout counters (a first in Illinois); in 1993 a kosher wine department was added, followed in 1995 by kosherwine.com; and in 1997, an in-store fish department opened.

These efforts produced results.

In 2003, Hungarian Kosher was serving some 250,000 customers annually, selling 25,000 kosher products, 5,000 Kosher for Passover products and in 2005 using some one million custom-made plastic bags for shoppers.

The store was also gaining recognition: it was voted Skokie Merchant of the Year in 1993, selected *North Shore Magazine's* "Best Ethnic Grocery" in 2004 and About.com's "Favorite Jewish Food Store" in 2012.

Meanwhile there was consistent philanthropic activity for the local Jewish community and for Israel — for Arie Crown, Hillel Torah, The Ark, Friends of Refugees of Eastern Europe, Magen David Adom, Hazon Yeshayahu Humanitarian Network, and United Hatzalah, to cite some examples.

Business challenges

As entrepreneurs, the Kirsches were feisty and competitive, standing their ground when others might have folded.

That attitude continued even after the passing of Mr. Kirsche in 2007, when his son found the work "very difficult" without what he termed his "mentor and partner".

Some of the challenges Hungarian Kosher faced

were not substantially unlike trials which any independent business might face, although their details were particular to this business.

Many of them were the subject of JEWISH STAR reports at the time.

His relationship with the Village of Skokie, for example, was frequently uneasy. It was exemplified by the Village's decision in 2007 to allow the Assyrian community to hold its New Year's parade there.

The parade coincided with Passover, Hungarian's busiest shopping period. Some 3,000-5,000 participants passed directly along the main entrance to the store, blocking shoppers' access.

Skokie officials remained immune to Kirsche's complaints about the harmful business impact of the event and ignored his requests to alter the parade route. The situation was resolved in 2010, when organizers moved the parade to Chicago.

Nor did Kirsche have an easy time with the Chicago Rabbinical Council (CRC), the largest regional Orthodox rabbinical agency in the country, which provides kosher supervision of the store.

In 1993, for example, the CRC alleged "serious irregularities" in the kashrut practices of the Bessin Corp., which produced processed kosher meat under the Sinai 48 label. Though never accused of *treif* practices, the CRC ordered stores under its supervision to pull the Bessin items.

Kirsche told the JEWISH STAR in 1994 that before the ban, Hungarian had been selling some \$5,000 per week of packaged Sinai products; afterwards, he sold \$500 per week of the store's own deli.

But Kirsche's severest business challenge came in the kosher marketplace, from both the production and marketing ends.

First was the rapid takeover of the ownership of kosher food producers by corporate America.

In 1990, one group of investors bought the Manischewitz company and in 1992 another claimed Empire Kosher Poultry. In February 1993, the two largest kosher meat processors in the country — Hebrew National and Bessin Corp. — were sold, respectively, to Armour Swift of Downers Grove, Illinois, and the Sara Lee Corp., of Chicago.

In the wake of that trend was the establishment of corporate-owned supermarkets

to take advantage of a remarkable consumer buying pattern. While figures vary, the trend is unquestioned: in the U.S., the appetite for kosher products grew from a \$2.1 billion field in 1994 to a \$12.5 billion one in 2011.

Witnessing the success and popularity of Hungarian Kosher, no corporate enterprise in Chicago was more determined to grab kosher market share than Jewel-Osco (owned by Albertsons).

In 2001 it opened an in-store kosher section at a Highland Park branch. In 2003, the company bulldozed over concerns from the CRC with a similar kosher section in its Skokie Blvd. store, vowing (in the words of a company official at the time) to "Get the Jew Into Jewel".

In 2004, its largest selection of kosher products was offered at its Howard St. location in Evanston. Eleven Chicago rabbis expressed "concern ... [about] a supermarket chain competing for the kosher food clientele in an aggressive manner, against the existing local all-kosher food stores."

YAKOV YARMOVE, corporate kosher category manager for Albertsons, specifically was accused by kosher distributors of alleged pressure tactics, and "underhanded" and "not ethically correct" efforts to undermine local kosher businesses. Yarmove denied the charges.

The Jewel-Osco expansion was followed by new kosher sections in other major supermarkets with Skokie stores: Walmart (2014) and Mariano's (2015).

Shoppers comment

Shoppers at Hungarian Kosher who were approached by the JEWISH STAR remarked on the store's kashrut standards, convenience, and staff.

"Hungarian is a shopping tradition," CAROL CHASNOFF, a long-time customer told the JEWISH STAR last week. "It's a defining part of the whole Jewish community experience," the Evanston resident said.

JAN GOLDMAN told the JEWISH STAR she believes that "it's important to support a local Jewish business," and she appreciates that the entire store is kosher. "I don't have to be concerned about checking products," she said.

That is also an attraction for Skokie resident SHELDON SCHAFFEL.

"I go there, number one, because it's totally kosher," Schaffel told the JEWISH STAR. "Especially with SANDY ABRAMOWITZ there, I know I can trust all the products."

Living in Skokie, Jan Goldman said she enjoys the store's convenience, and the fact that it's a smaller supermarket makes it "doable".

SOPIA BOGACHKOV, an accountant in Skokie, said that convenience and variety were particularly significant to her at Passover, which coincides with the busy tax season.

Bogachkov, who depends on the store for spe-

cial orders of meat, fish and wine, said she finds every department cooperative and responsive.

"I get personal attention from [the butcher], Milton. He's the best!" she said. "Mark in the deli" is "always careful and cooperative."

She added that "whenever I dealt with [the late] Mr. Kirsche, I knew he cared about his customers, and Ira does too."

Chasnoff, who is no longer able to visit the store and relies on the delivery service, said she finds that it's "excellent".

She had high praise for the staff in the store, and like Bogachkov, singled out "Mark in the deli" who takes her phone orders for delivery, as "careful and patient. ... I hope the new owners keep the staff."

Without a moment's hesitation, Ira Kirsche was able to name for the JEWISH STAR six employees — CARYN BEAN, LORENA CSIPAI, REGINA KUTSIN, MARK LEVIN, JACK ROSEN, and VERONICA SPORIA — who had been with Hungarian since it opened on Oakton over three decades ago (photo, page 1).

All employees participate in a profit-sharing arrangement.

Kirsche said that Mark in the Deli Department once told him, "I've tried to do the best I can, in memory of your father."

Carol Chasnoff lauded the Kirsche family for their support of Jewish community institutions, programs and activities.

"The Kirsches are part of the community, not just a business in the community," she said. ☑



YOU BE THE JUDGE

"[O]pposition to Israel is at the epicenter of the new antisemitism.... It is often said that Israel was created at the expense of the local population to make amends for the Holocaust.... That is simply untrue....

The Jewish attachment to Israel goes back long before the Balfour Declaration in 1917, ratified in 1922 by the League of Nations; before 1890, when the word 'Zionism' was coined; before 1862, when Moses Hess wrote the first great document of secular Zionism, *Rome and Jerusalem*.

It goes back to the first recorded syllables of Jewish time, some 4,000 years ago, when God told Abraham to leave his land ... and travel to 'the land which I will show you.' ...

Jews have lived in almost every country under the sun. In 4,000 years, only in Israel have they been able to live as a free, self-governing people.

Only in Israel have they been able to construct an agriculture, a medical system, an economic infrastructure, in the spirit of the Torah and its concern for freedom, justice, and the sanctity of life.

Only in Israel can Jews today speak the Hebrew of the Bible as the language of everyday speech. Only there can they live Jewish time within a calendar structured according to the rhythms of the Jewish year....

Israel is the only place where Jews have been able to live Judaism in anything other than an edited edition, continuing the story their ancestors began." ☑

Source: Jonathan Sacks, "Israel, Gateway of Hope," *Koren Mahzor for Yom Haatzma'ut and Yom Yerushalayim* (2015).

CHICAGO JEWISH STAR QUOTE OF THE WEEK

CHICAGO MURDER CITY RECORD

CHICAGO • JAN. 1 - APRIL 8, 2018

569
SHOT

120
SHOT & KILLED

—Source: Chicago Tribune Breaking News, 9 April 2018



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

April 13 - May 3

Arts & Entertainment

Sun., Apr. 29 – New documentary film "Driving West Rogers Park: Chicago's Once and Future Jewish Neighborhood," directed by Beverly Siegel, will be screened, 9:30 a.m., at Congregation KINS, 2800 W. North Shore, Chicago.

Following the 25-minute film, there will be a panel discussion featuring Dr. Steven Nasatir, president, JUF/Jewish Federation, and Dr. Howard Rieger, past president/CEO of Jewish Federations of North America and volunteer president of Jewish Community Council of West Rogers Park.

Free, but reservations are requested. Email jccwrp@gowrp.org

Synagogues

Sun., Apr. 15 – "Jewish Intellectual History: The Known and the New", a weekly series begins and runs through July at Skokie

Valley Agudath Jacob, 8825 East Prairie Rd, Skokie. Classes begin at 8 p.m.

For information go to svaj.org. Call 847-674-3473.

Yom Ha'atzmaut

Wed., Apr. 18 – JUF Yom Ha'atzmaut/Israel Independence Day celebration, "David Broza & Friends", 7:30 p.m., Harris Theater, 205 E. Randolph St., Chicago.

Register for tickets at juf.org/Israel70

Sun., May 6 – Na'amat USA Greater Chicago Council presents "A Celebration of Israel at 70", 7 p.m., Evanston Golf Club, 4401 Dempster, Skokie.

Tickets: 847-675-7275; office@naamatchicago.org

Na'amat USA is a partner with Na'amat Israel, the country's largest women's organization, which provides educational and social services for women, children and families in need. Its services include centers for treatment of domestic violence, legal counselling for women, educational scholarships, daycare for 20,000

preschoolers and more.

Yom HaShoah

Sun., Apr. 15 – Sheerit Hapleitah Yom HaShoah Holocaust memorial observance, 1:30 p.m., Skokie Valley Agudath Jacob Synagogue, 8825 E. Prairie, Skokie.

The annual observance pays tribute to the six million who perished, and marks the liberation of the concentration camps.

Keynote speaker is Dr. Rabbi Julian Ungar-Sargon, a second-generation survivor and major in the Indiana Guard Reserve.

Sun., Apr. 29 – Yom HaShoah commemoration, 7 p.m., Lincolnwood Jewish Cong. A.G. Beth Israel, 7117 Crawford, Lincolnwood.

The event is the Ninth Annual Man's Search for Meaning: When Objects Make Meaning Immortal, with keynote speaker Scott Miller of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Also featuring Rabbi Yona Reiss, Av Bet Din, Chicago Rabbinical Council.

Free, but RSVP requested. Call 847-676-0491; office@ljcagbi.org ☑

BEST WISHES on ISRAEL'S 70th INDEPENDENCE DAY



LOUIS I. LANG

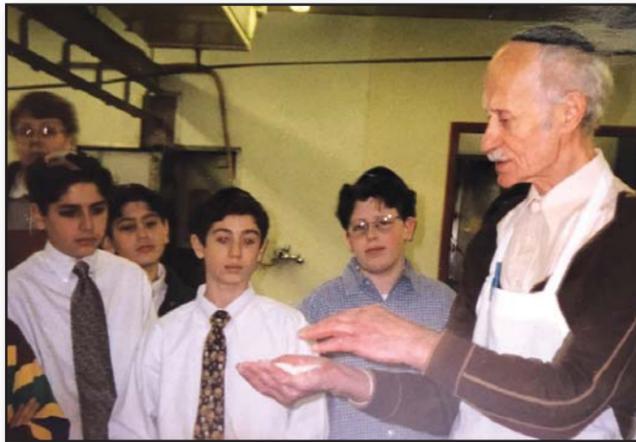
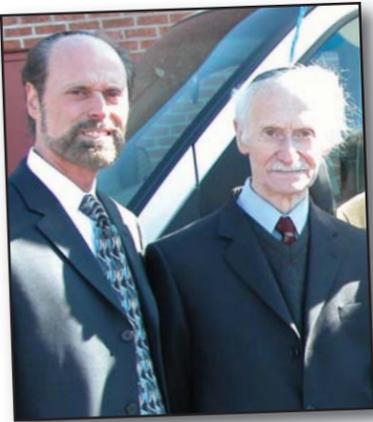
STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 16th DISTRICT
4121 Main Street, Skokie, Illinois 60076
E-mail: RepLouLang@aol.com • (847) 673-1131



Thank You

... to our Customers for your support — we hope you enjoyed shopping at our store;
 ...to our Staff for being part of our family — and joining us in serving the Jewish community.
 It has been a privilege.

— The Kirsche Family



Illustrations (clockwise from left): Ira and Sandor Kirsche; Margit and Sandor Kirsche; Sandor Kirsche giving a demonstration to kids; Ira Kirsche and sister Lynn Shapiro with the About.com Readers Choice Award; Customer Appreciation Festival scene; some staff during Purim 2018.

PHOTOS: KIRSCHER FAMILY, JEWISH STAR

Hungarian Kasher Supermarket Highlights

1973 The Kirsches and family purchase Hungarian Kasher Sausage Co. on Devon; also working in the family business is Sandor's sister, Goldie Weinberger

1970

1980

1990

1997 In-store kosher Fish Department added

1963 Hungarian Kasher Sausage Co. is founded



2001 Grandson Daniel Kirsche manages and expands the wine operation

2000

1986 The Kirsches move Hungarian Kasher to 4020 W. Oakton, Skokie, opening an All-Kosher, Only-Kosher Shomer Shabbos supermarket expanding to 25,000 sq. ft., the largest in the Midwest and one of the largest in the United States.

1992 Handicap-approved check-out counters are installed — a first in Illinois

2004 Named "Best Ethnic Grocery" by North Shore Magazine

2005 Loyalty Customer Card initiated

“People like shopping here. Customers talk, share recipes, and gather and meet with old friends and family members.”
 — Ira Kirsche

1993 Voted Skokie Merchant of the Year
1993 Kosher Wine Department added

2007 Sandor Kirsche dies, age 81, and is buried in Jerusalem

2012 Voted "Favorite Jewish Food Store" in an online national poll conducted by the website About.com, then a New York Times company

2010

