York County Jewish Community News

AUGUST 2009/AV 5769

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PO BOX 905 KENNEBUNK, ME 04043



L'Shanah Tovah: Welcoming in 5770

Please join us for High Holiday services this year. Cantor Scott Rapaport will be traveling from Bangor to Biddeford to lead services. Rumor has it that his family will join him, so we will have a chance to welcome Patti, Sam & Ben.

Tashlich will be on the second day of Rosh Hashanah, because the first day is Shabbat. At the end of the Musaf service (around 12 or 12:30) we will walk down the hill to throw our sins (breadcrumbs) into the Saco River. This meaningful tradition really gives the feeling of the fresh start of the New Year.

Just a reminder: There is no shofar blowing on Shabbat, so this year, it will only be heard on the second day. Alan Fink will chant Torah and the haftarahs will be chanted by several of our Hebrew School alumni and teachers. Our newest readers will be Silas Phipps-Costin and Beniam Hollman, who will share the Yom Kippur afternoon haftarah, the familiar (and very, very, very long) story of Jonah and the Whale.

David Strassler will lead his famous Family Services on the first day of Rosh Hashanah and on Yom Kippur. The services are meaningful for family members of all ages.

Our Community Break Fast is after the last shofar sound of the holiday, at the end of the Yom Kippur evening service. Everyone is welcome. Please call Chuck if you could help out: 985-7333. As the Torah covers go from dark to white, So may our motives and our actions Change from greed to generosity, From selfishness to compassion, From fear to faith, And from indifference to righteousness.

Schedule for High Holiday Services at Congregation Etz Chaim

Rosh Hashanah

Friday, September 18: 6:30 pm
Saturday, September 19: 9 am & 6:30 pm
Family Service: 11 am
No Tashlich today (Shabbat)
Sunday, September 20: 9 am only
Tashlich following AM service



Yom Kippur

Sunday, September 27: Kol Nidre: 6:15 pm Monday, September 28: 9 am Family Service: 11 am Yitzkor: 11 am Evening Service: 4 pm Break Fast to follow evening service

Book Review

by Maureen King Congregation Etz Chaim Librarian

Golden Country (2006)

by Jennifer Gilmore. Scribner, New York, NY

Golden Country is a slice of American Jewish life in the first half of the twentieth century. The Bloom, Brodsky, Verdonik, and Weinstein families' stories are intertwined in Jennifer Gilmore's debut novel of immigrants, Jewish mobsters, and the American dream. A traveling salesman, the inventor of television, an advice columnist, the inventor of the first multi-purpose cleanser, a Broadway producer, and their spouses and various offspring make their way through the years from 1925 to 1962.

Sprinkled throughout the novel are just enough historical references to make us believe these people really inhabited their time. Prohibition, wars, and world fairs along with the day to day personal tragedies and highlights fill the novel with interesting details as each character struggles to define success.

The book opens with the announcement of David and Miriam's engagement. As their parents' generation relives their own personal moments, some highlights and some tragedies, the reader gets a sense of the struggle each is going through to find a personal version of the American Dream. Many of the characters came to America as young children and their own ideas of success were already different from the dreams of the parents they traveled over with. Comparing and contrasting life decisions is Gilmore's forte as she recounts each character's struggle.

The chapters are titled with family names, years, and sometimes with locations. The locations are spread across the Northeast from Brooklyn to Boston to Portland with a side trip to Sebago Lake, and back to New York's Upper West Side.

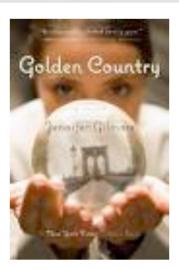
The attempt to neatly compartmentalize each family's story works only superficially as you soon learn that these four families overlap in many more ways than just being Jewish immigrants who live in New York. The genealogy chart at the beginning of the book is helpful to keep track of all the relationships as you wind through the lives of the dozen characters in <u>Golden Country.</u>

I enjoyed this book but it was not the epic I expected. It left me wanting to know more. How does the next generation do? Will they find their own American Dream? How will they define success?

Will each find the *goldene medina* of the title? Will they continue the timeless quest of each American generation?

Stop by the Samuel Osher Memorial Library and check out this book and our many other new offerings. •

> See you at the Library!



IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP & SUPPORT FOR CONGREGATION ETZ CHAIM

The suggested levels of membership are:

Non-Resident Basic: \$125 Basic: \$150 Patron: Supporter: \$255 Benefac Sustaining: \$360 Platinur

Patron: \$500 Benefactor: \$1,000 Platinum: \$10,000

Dues remain voluntary and modest.

Please mail to: Congregation Etz Chaim PO Box 905 Kennebunk, ME 04043

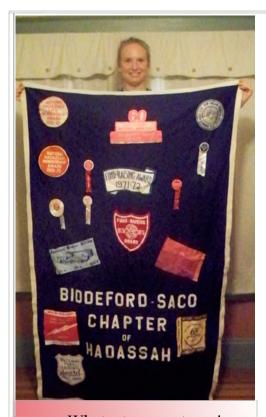
Please do it TODAY. We need your help.

Thank you.

We graduated!

Thank you for your support as we learned Jewish history in the two year, Me'ah adult program from Hebrew College.

-David & Beth



What a treasure trove! The box holds a fabric banner (3 1/2'x 5 1/2') with the letters of "Biddeford--Saco Chapter of Hadassah" stitched onto it. Pinned to the banner are awards that our local chapter won throughout the 1960's and 70's, including National Hadassah Membership Awards, Membership Honor Roll Awards, National Fundraising Awards, a Hadassah Master Builder Award, and a New England Regional Hadassah Esther Award.

The chapter's Esther Award submission for the following year is there. "Hadassah Profiles: A Satire in Poem and Pantomime" is an original play, written in verse, by Sylvia Chelder and none other than our still-current-member Tobie Nathanson. Apparently written for a Leadership Training meeting, the play portrays seven stereotypes of Hadassah members, including Mrs. Old-Timer, Mrs. Society, and Miss Hesitant. •

Treasures in the Basement

by Jennie Aranovitch, Congregation Etz Chaim Historian

As you may know, longtime congregant of Etz Chaim, Bella Cowan, recently relocated to South Carolina. Her departure from the Biddeford-Saco Jewish community is a loss that many of us feel very deeply. Shortly before leaving Maine, Bella contacted me to let me know that in the process of clearing out the basement of her Saco business, Sam's Place, she uncovered a box of Hadassah memorabilia from the days when there existed a Biddeford-Saco chapter of the organization. Since Bella knew that I have a keen interest in the Jewish history of Biddeford-Saco, she bestowed upon me this incredible find.

The box contains the chapter's constitution, adopted in March of 1958, and a Public Relations Folio prepared in May of 1960. The Folio is essentially a scrapbook of all of the articles and photographs that were run in local newspapers about the deeds, accomplishments, and general goings-on of the local Hadassah Chapter from 1959 through 1960.

Perhaps the most exciting items in the long-lost Hadassah box are the six books of handwritten minutes from the chapter's meetings, beginning in 1945 and ending in 1994. (The chapter was chartered in 1926, so the first 19 years' worth of minutes have not yet been discovered.) The minute books begin with entries written by my greataunt and former Hadassah recording secretary, Rose Aranovitch, whose beautifully written Hadassah minutes were legendary in my family. What a treat to see them for the first time!

After almost eleven years, the recording secretary position was taken over by Sylvia Chelder, whose minutes span to 1958. The next six years of minutes are unaccounted for, with Bella Cowan taking over in 1966. In 1968, Barbara Shapiro became recording secretary, being briefly replaced by Bella in 1975, but continuing on until 1977 when Golda Sneider took over for two years. Barbara resumed her duties until 1981, at which point Linda Levine was elected to the office. Barbara had her last run as the secretary from 1985 through 1991 (writing her last entry in rhyme), with Carol Copeland supplying the last two years of minutes.

Looking over the six books of minutes chronologically, it is interesting to see the overall trend that occurred: meetings became less frequent, shorter in duration (in 1945, for example, they typically lasted from 8:30pm until after 11pm), and minutes became more informal and less detailed with the passage of time. The Biddeford-Saco Chapter of Hadassah was dissolved in 1994, with interested members being incorporated into the Portland chapter.

There are also copies of two awards of appreciation bestowed by the chapter upon local media sources (the Portland Press Herald and W-I-D-E, a Biddeford radio station) "in recognition of outstanding public service in [their] endeavors in the medium of communication for the betterment of our communities and for promoting greater understanding among all its citizens." The folio was submitted to Hadassah's National Headquarters for an Esther Award in public relations in 1960.



I want to express my appreciation to Bella Cowan for passing on to me such a fantastic collection of local Hadassah memorabilia. While I wish that these items had been uncovered

(continued on page 5)

Hanging Out in TLV

by Judy Harrison

My daughter's recent facebook status: Walking to dinner: 3 minutes. Eating dinner and talking: 90 minutes. Walking home: 2 hours. I love this neighborhood.

Suzanne has made aliyah. Consequently, I experience the fun of hanging out in Tel Aviv. She lives on a main street in the heart of the city. If this were New York, she'd be living on Broadway, near 42^{nd} . But, as in New York, each neighborhood is a community of its own. I love this neighborhood, too, and here's a page from my travel journal that will explain why.

I had errands to run this morning. I walked Suzy to the train station at Azrieli Center and consulted my list. The furthest was the pet store; Suzy's cats were low on treats. I couldn't find what I wanted, the other pet stores I know are about 1/2 to 3/4 of a mile away, and I didn't feel like the schlep, so I got what I could.

I stopped at a bakery that Suzy pointed out to me on my last visit and bought a loaf of a divine bread that I loved. The young man behind the counter said, "This is our magic diet bread." He went on to say, "It's 50% (phonetically) shi-fone." He saw that I wasn't understanding and put a hand out to each side pointing to the people working on either side of him, and they, like backup singers, said in unison, "Rye." I said, "If it's magic diet bread, if I eat the whole loaf, will I lose 40 pounds by tomorrow?" An elderly man next to me laughed and said, "Maybe 40 grams." I really have to work on metrics. That's my goal before the next visit, along with trying to learn some Hebrew.

Next was the SuperPharm, which was nothing special except I can never figure out how to get out of the place. It's a security thing. The doors look like windows, but this time I paid attention when I went in and then watched the folks in line ahead of me as they were leaving. I could always ask, but I'd feel like such a shmuck. "Can you please tell me how to get out of here?" *Nah.*

The exchange rate is increasingly favorable, so I stopped at Daniel, the change guy's shop. It astonished me that he remembered me, but before I could speak, he was smiling and saying in perfect English, "Hi. Welcome back." His rate is 4.20 and the best from the airport was

Destination

Catering

4.17. I'm going back as soon as I finish writing this to do some business.

Cafe Hillel is across the street and is Suzy's favorite cafe and mine. The young man who owns it is bright and gorgeous and has the name Barak. His military service was spent being a bodyguard to Someone Important, and he used his retirement money (if that's what it's called) to buy the cafe, which is booming. I walked in, Barak was on the phone behind the counter, and when he looked up and saw me, he didn't interrupt his conversation, but he put his hand across the counter to shake hands. Without asking me, he told the man working the counter what I wanted and said something with the words "Suzy" and "ima" (mother) in it. I got my latte gadol ve khazak (big and strong) without uttering a word. All I had to say was "To go, please."

I took my latte to Ilana's shop and was greeted with a hug. We firmed up plans for my birthday next Friday. Suzy, Ilana and I are going to spend the day at the Arab souk in Yafo (think flea market on steroids with hookah-smoking merchants, one of whom offered to buy Suzy from me during my last visit.) Ilana and I chatted about our lives, how her husband (Avi) has eves like Keanu Reeves, and compared it to a photo of his father that hangs in the shop. One of the men who works with Avi came back with our lunch (free because it came from a restaurant where they are presently doing a job - they are electricians) which she insisted on sharing. It was a lot of food, so I sampled some of everything and was happy to contribute the magic bread. Ran (sounds like Ron), the electrician, loved the bread. I'll pick up another loaf tomorrow morning.

Avi's father was a Holocaust survivor. He and Ilana worked in the shop together for many years during which he told her story after story about how he survived. He used his wits and charm. When he was digging coal and hurt his shoulder, he was essentially useless to the Nazis and would have been shot or gassed, but one liked him, took him to took him to the infirmary, had his shoulder bound and put him in another job. How he survived being whipped, because workers were routinely whipped to work faster, was by putting leather inside his pants.

I told her the story of my first awareness of the Holocaust, though I didn't have access to the word at the time. I was 5 or 6 years old and a family friend named Magda was at our house for dinner. I noticed the tattoo of numbers on her wrist and asked what it meant. I remember her looking immediately to my father and *(continued on pg 5)*

Kennebunk, ME

985-7333

(Treasures from the Basement, continued from pg 3)

three years ago, in time to be included in the Saco Museum's exhibit on 100 years of local Jewish history, it is, of course, better late than never.

The items offer us a glimpse into the life of a local chapter that was once brimming with vitality and that truly was a focal point in the lives of many of Biddeford-Saco's Jewish women. What comes through loud and clear from the minute books is the dedication of the members to their cause, the seriousness with which they viewed their work, and, certainly in the early days, the sense of importance and purpose that being part of the organization afforded to these women who were largely without power and status in what was essentially a man's world.



Art Exhibit

Works by Richard Joy Exquisite Executions in the Pointalism Technique

July 1 thru August 1

Main Street Gallery 148 Main Street Biddeford Hours: 10 AM - 6 FM (M-Sat) 282-2840 (Hanging Out in TLV, continued from pg 4)

he said, "Tell her." So she did. I cried then. I cried telling it to Ilana in her shop. I'm crying as I write it now. The irony of Suzy's newest tattoo is not lost on me. It is Stars of David and sabra flowers as a bracelet on her wrist.

Tomorrow is Purim, so people all over the streets are in costumes, particularly the school kids from close by. Purim is a way bigger deal here than it is in the US. The pre-teen and teenage girls want to be sexy, so there are a lot of Playboy bunnies, along with a devil in full regalia including pitchfork, angels, cats, Sheena-like costumes in leopard print, etc. The most fun was an adult man in white face with Charlie Chaplin eyes and mustache. The most surprising was the man walking into the bank carrying his briefcase and looking very banker-like, except he was wearing pajamas and a bathrobe. As it happens, I have a Purim costume provided by Suzy. When I was a kid, all the girls were Queen Esther and the boys were (Boo! Hiss!) evil Haman. The times they have a-changed. I will be wearing the big round black fur hat of the Hasidim, complete with attached payot. We'll probably meander up the street a couple of blocks to Kikar Rabin (Rabin Square) where there are always fun doings on holidays.

Right now, a nap. Next: about town with my street map to see places I have never before seen until it is time to meet Suzy on her way home from work. •



Sunday School Dates for this year:

October 4th Sukkot November 8th Shabbat December 6th Hanukkah January 24th Tu b'Shevat February 28th Purim March 21st Passover April 25th Israel Independence Day

Sunday School

You are invited to join the Levy family--Adrianne, Jeff, Tara & Ethan-for Sunday School this year. Once a month, they lead a morning of learning while creating, singing, listening to stories and (of course) eating. Discussions are lively and the best way to describe it is: It is just FUN!!

Each session follows the theme of a Jewish holiday and is intended for younger children and their parents, grandparents, neighbors and whoever else might want to come!

The first session is October 4th. Please bring fruits, vines, branches, flowers: Whatever you have at home for decorating the sukkah. Families will also make decorations together.

Meetings are from 10 AM to noon in the Congregation Etz Chaim social hall. Parking is on the street or in the police station parking lot.



"Unifoms don't matter to the cats in Gaza." -JH

Mazel Tov to the Levy Family on Tara's upcoming bat mitzvah!

History of a Hungarian



Rabbinical Family

by Jack Schraeter

Rabbi Abraham Samuel Benjamin Schreiber, (1815 - 1871) was one of the leading rabbis of Hungarian Jewry in the second half of the nineteenth century and head of the famed yeshiva. He was born in Pressburg (now Bratislava) on March 13, 1815. His father, the famed Chasam Schreiber, Rabbi of Pressburg, was the leader of Hungarian Jewry. His mother Sarel (1790-1832) was the daughter of Rabbi Akiva Eger, the Rabbi of Posen, of his time

one the greatest Talmudic scholars of his time.

When he was six years old, little Shmuel Volf, as he was called, fell ill. The doctors had given up on him. As a segulah they added "Avraham" to his name, but to no avail. They already called the Chevra Kadisha (burial society) and lit candles as were the custom of the time and they said the last rites. Then the doctors approached his father and said "We know that you are a Godly and holy man; if with your prayers you cannot help your son; on our part, all hope is lost". After hearing this, Chasam Schreiber went to a corner and said a short prayer. At that time the sick child in his great weakness started screaming the Shema, and his condition took a turn for the better. The bewildered doctors said to the father, "Now we truly know that you are a Godly man" to which he answered, "I hadn't given up hope, not even for a second." His pupils later testified that the Rabbi said at the time that "for one Jubilee, I begged him out". In fact, his son, Samuel Binyamin, lived for another fifty years and died at age fifty-six.

Samuel's first teacher was Rabbi Mordechai Schreiber (not a relation). Later, he entered his father's famous Yeshiva becoming one of its outstanding students. At age eighteen, he married Chavah Leah, the daughter of the Tzadik Rabbi Yitzchok Weiss from Gorlitz who promised to support them for six years. They settled in Pressburg (now Bratislava), where he continued his studies and helped with the Yeshiva.

On October 3, 1839 Rabbi Chasam Schreiber died and the mantle as Rabbi of Pressburg passed to Samuel. On his deathbed, the father blessed his son with an extremely long blessing in which he mentioned every single blessing found in Tanach. Everyone in attendance stood in awe, as he was able to remember and say all this. He closed by saying, "Your grandfather Akiva will stand to your right hand; Your grandfather the Maharsheshach will stand on your left side; a certain angel will stand over your head; and I will be close behind to fulfill your wishes".

During the 32 years he occupied this post, he continued his father's policies. He was an active organizer of Hungarian Orthodoxy for the Jewish Congress, which took place in 1869. He joined their ranks and finally gave the religious approval of the Schreiber dynasty to the schism in Hungarian Jewry. He published response and expositions of the Torah under the title Ketav Sofer (1873–1938).

His brother R. Simeon Sofer (1820–1883) became rabbi of Mattersdorf (1848) and Cracow (1861). He founded Mahzike Hadas (Orthodox) in Galicia, and strengthened relations with the Hasidic rabbis of Belz & Zanz to battle the maskilim. (continued on next page)

Samuel Osher Memorial Library

at Congregation Etz Chaim

Jewish Books, Music & Movies for the York County Community

> To donate books call 967-5833



Shabbat Potlucks

Whip up your favorite veggie/ dairy dish, grab your candlesticks and come to the shul for a wonderful evening beginning at 6 pm. Please bring an entree so we will be sure to have enough food for everyone! There will already be plenty of desserts and drinks.

The food is delicious, the challah is heavenly and the company is terrific. We may even break out the song sheets & tune our voices.

Dates for this year are: October 9 January 29 November 6 February 26 April 30

> Questions? Ask Linda <u>Petsrluv@aol.com</u>



Beth Israel Congregation, Bath

Interested? Call David Strassler at 967-5833 SOON

(History of a Hungarian Rabbinical Family, continued from previous page)

From 1878 R. Simeon Sofer was a member of parliament in Vienna. His books on halakhah and homiletics were published under the title Mikhtav Sofer (2 vols. 1952-55).

On December 31, 1871 Rabbi Abraham Samuel Benjamin Schreiber died in Bratislava and the mantle as Rabbi of Pressburg passed to his son, Rabbi Simcha Bunim Schreiber, (1842–1906).

R. Simcha continued to run the large yeshiva, to organize Orthodoxy, and to accentuate its differences with other sectors of Hungarian Jewry. For this purpose, he strengthened relations with Hasidic rabbis in Hungary. He expressed his opposition to the Mizrachi conference, (Pressburg, 1904). His publications are: Shevet Sofer, responsa (1909) and novellae on Talmudic tractates (1938-56); and Sha'arei Simcha, on the Pentateuch (1923). His son, Rabbi Simeon Schreiber (1850-1944). founded the well-known yeshiva in Erlau in 1881. He taught there until the day he was taken to the Auschwitz extermination camp where he perished. He had been in favor of agricultural settlements in Israel. He published the responsa, Hitorerut Teshuvah (4 vols. 1912-34).

His brother, Rabbi Solomon Schreiber (1853-1930), was a distinguished teacher and writer. He is the author of Hut ha-Meshullash (1887), biographies of famous members of the family and edited the Iggerot Soferim (1928), containing letters of his family, the Schreiber's and the Eger's. He served as rabbi of Beregszasz until his death.

Rabbi Akiva Schreiber (1878-1959), son of Solomon succeeded his father as rabbi and rosh veshiva of Pressburg. In 1940, he reestablished the veshiva of Pressburg in Jerusalem, acting as its head until his death. His publications are Da'at Sofer (1963), and responsa (2 vols. 1965).

Rabbi Abraham Schreiber (1897-), son of Rabbi Simeon Schreiber, served as rabbi in many communities in Greece and Italy. He immigrated to Israel in 1939, settling in Jerusalem. From 1948 to 1966 he was a teacher at the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York. As a fruitful rabbinic author, his main activity was preparing the works of others, esp. R. Menachem Meiri, for publication.

-Ketav Zot Zikharon, Jerusalem, Asher Samuel Panet publishers, 1976 -Torah Sparks, Rabbi Joyce Newmark, Teaneck, New Jersey, May 2009 -Index of Rabbinic works, Mark Hoffman, August 1986 -Blackwell Dictionary of Judaica, Edited by: Dan Cohn-Sherbok 1992

President Arnold Shapiro and the entire Board of Directors of Congregation Etz Chaim wish you and your family

a healthy, happy and peaceful New Year.



Jewish Holidays 5770/2009-10

Sat. 19 September Rosh HaShanah* Mon. 28 September Yom Kippur Sat. 3 October Sukkot* Sat. 10 October Shemini Atzeret* Sun. 11 October Simhat Torah* Sat. 12 December Chanukah Sat. 30 January Tu b'Shevat Sun. 28 February Purim Tue. 30 March Pesach* Sun. 11 April Yom HaSho'ah Mon. 19 April YomHaAtzma'ut Wed. 19 May Shavuot * Begins at sundown the day before

Rosh Kashanah - What's the Rush? (a Grace before the meal) As we gather for this Yontif Round the table, Tush to Tush, With a fragrant meal before us-Dause a Moment - What's the Rush? http://www.asukt.com/buffumer.oftile/htm?a=174/nasedsapersona



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Financial Report

We raised \$550 for the Annual Teen Trip to NYC. This is a huge success. *Thank you* to everyone who donated their redeemable cans/bottles or cash to the program.

Don't Stop!! Let's continue CLYNK to start raising money for next year's Teen Trip. There will always be a supply of green bags with our special bar code on the table as you enter the synagogue.



How to CLYNK

for the York County Teens

1. Pick up green bag(s) with our bar code sticker from the synagogue when you come to any event.

OR call David at 967-5833

- 2. Fill green bag(s) with redeemable cans/bottles.
- **3. Drop green bag(s) at any Hannaford Market** at CLYNK redemption area.
- 4. Repeat Steps 1 3.
- 5. Please Remember: Each green bag costs us \$ so take it only if you will use it.

No waiting No counting No hassle

Thank you for your help

York County Jewish Community Calendar

<u>August</u>

1: No Shabbat Service 15: Tara Levy Bat Mitzvah: 10 am

September

- 12: Shabbat Service: 9:30
- 18: Rosh Hashanah: 6:30 pm
- 19: RH (Sat): 9 am & 6:30 pm Family Service: 11 am No Tashlich today
- 20: RH (Sunday): 9 am only Tashlich follows AM service
- 27: Yom Kippur Eve (Sunday) Kol Nidre: 6:15 pm
- 28: Yom Kippur (Monday): 9 am Family Service: 11 am Yitzkor: 11 am Evening Service: 4 pm Break Fast to follow evening service

<u>October</u>

- 1: Hebrew School begins (Thurs) 3 & 17: Shabbat Service: 9:30 am
- 4: Sunday School: 10 am
- 9: Potluck Supper: 6 pm

November

6: Shabbat Potluck: 6 pm
7 & 21: Shabbat Svce: 9:30 am
8: Sunday School: 10 am
14: Sarah Campisi Bat Mitzvah

<u>December</u>

5 &19: Shabbat Service: 9:30 am 6: Sunday School: 10 am

York County Jewish Community News

is published four or five times each year. It is intended to announce & report on

Jewish community events in York County, and especially at Congregation Etz Chaim in Biddeford. It offers local

perspectives on historical & contemporary aspects of Jewish life.

Beth Strassler, Editor & Layout

Design Consultant: Joe Strassler

mail@etzchaimme.org

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