

The Golden Peacock



The Sam and Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies at UW-Milwaukee | Winter 2012 Newsletter

Center for Jewish Studies Dedicates New Building

The Sam and Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies celebrated a milestone in November with the dedication of its new home in the renovated Greene Museum.

On November 13th, Chancellor Michael Lovell, Stahl Center Director Joel Berkowitz, and members of the Stahl/Berkowitz family dedicated the former geological museum as the new home of the Center.

While describing the history of the building, Chancellor Lovell showed the audience a trilobite—Wisconsin's official State Fossil—belonging to the Greene geological collection. In a brief ceremony held in Greene Hall, Lovell welcomed Berkowitz to campus and described the Stahl Center as being among a number of exciting recent developments at UWM.

A \$2 million gift from the Berkowitz family and the Baye Foundation in 2008 allowed the Center to relocate in the summer of 2011 from a two-office suite on campus to the historic building on North Downer Avenue.

The name of the Sam and Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies honors the parents of the late Pearl Berkowitz, who was a trustee of the Baye Foundation and the wife of the late Nathan Berkowitz, the former president of the foundation. The two-story building has meeting and office space currently used by four professors and two support staff, with additional offices for future hires.

At the dedication, Jon Schnur recalled the personalities and values of his grandparents, Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz. Schnur said while his grandparents did not seek the spotlight, they would be pleased with what is taking place at the Stahl Center. The mission of the center aligns with the values held by Stahl and Berkowitz families, including education and community building.

Joel Berkowitz – no relation to Nathan and Pearl – announced the gift of an additional \$50,000 to the Center in the memory of another family member, Phyllis Stahl-Berkowitz, who was an

active member of the Milwaukee Jewish community before her death in 1978. She established the first multi-ethnic nursery school in Milwaukee in the 1960s, and co-founded the nation's first children's museum, which is now housed in the Milwaukee Public Museum.

After the ceremony, Joel Berkowitz gave his inaugural lecture, "The Many Languages of Yiddish Drama," at UWM's Zelazo Center. In a multimedia presentation, Berkowitz showed how Yiddish playwrights and composers took advantage of the many languages and dialects their audiences spoke and understood, and made this multilingual mixture an important tool for creating effective dramas, scathing satires, and compelling music for the stage.



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Message From the Director

Much has been new at the Stahl Center in recent months: a new newsletter and website, a new series of public programs, and a new—well, center. We have settled nicely into our beautifully renovated surroundings, which we formally inaugurated at a ceremony on November 13th led by UWM Chancellor Michael Lovell. We were joined there by descendants of Sam and Helen Stahl, as well as by many representatives of the UWM community and the local community. Later in the day, I enjoyed sharing my work on Yiddish theatre with a large and lively crowd.

A couple of weeks after the inaugural celebration, we had the opportunity to share our space with the UWM community at a festive “First Thursday” event sponsored by the College of Engineering and Applied Science, and the College of Letters & Science. The image of the Greene Museum as a construction site increasingly fades into memory now that the building has come so fully to life as a hub of intellectual and cultural activity.

We have also run the first three installments of our “Roots & Restlessness” series, funded by a generous grant from the Association for Jewish Studies. Less than halfway through this year’s series, the Legacy Heritage Jewish Studies Project has already begun bearing fruit. The grant has enabled us to carry out a vigorous marketing campaign that has greatly enhanced our visibility on and off campus. Those publicity materials, along with a rich network of co-sponsors for these events, have drawn large audiences to the programs. And the grant has enabled us to explore with those audiences significant chapters of Jewish history and culture: Henry Sapoznik’s learned commentary on American Yiddish popular culture, Lisa Silverman’s fresh scholarship on Austrian Jewry, and Tim Crain’s lively survey of FDR’s storied relationship with American Jews. We look forward to next semester’s events, running from February 1st to late May.

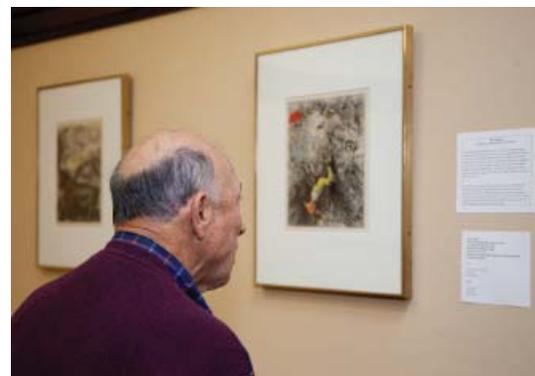
As always, our enthusiastic and generous community members have continued to support the program. Part of that is by showing up; in addition to playing to packed houses for public programs, we offer many courses that are heavily subscribed by community members. It has also involved many acts of philanthropy. The Baye Foundation, represented by members of the Sam and Helen Stahl / Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz family, led the way with a gift of \$50,000 beyond the \$2 million gift that made the renovations of our building possible. This new donation will support public programs that foster cross-cultural understanding—a goal that goes to the very heart of what we do.



Scenes from the Stahl Center Dedication



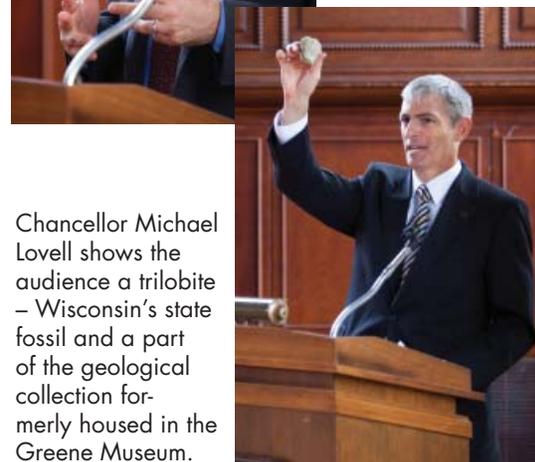
Trustees of the Baye Foundation and members of the Stahl-Berkowitz family with Chancellor Michael Lovell and Stahl Center Director Joel Berkowitz.



More than thirty hand etchings by Marc Chagall were donated by the Estate of Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz to the UWM Art Collection; pictured are some of those on display in the Stahl Center.

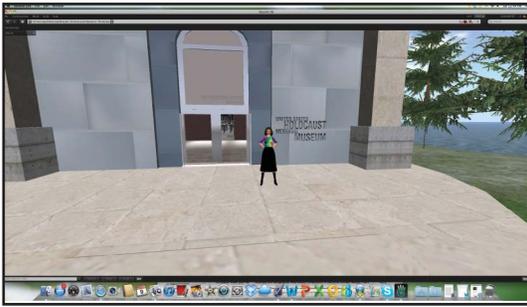


Jon Schnur speaks during the dedication ceremony about how the Stahl Center carries on the legacy of his great-grandparents, Sam and Helen Stahl, and his grandparents, Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz.



Chancellor Michael Lovell shows the audience a trilobite – Wisconsin’s state fossil and a part of the geological collection formerly housed in the Greene Museum.

Spring 2012 Events: Legacy Heritage Jewish Studies Project



February 1, 2012

“A Second Life for the Jews of Europe: Shoah & Virtual Memory”

Professor Rachel Baum, UWM

7 p.m. at the Sister Camille Kliebhan Conference Center

Cardinal Stritch University, 6801 N. Yates Road

March 5, 2012

“My Germany: A Jewish Writer Returns to the World His Parents Escaped”

Lev Raphael, author

7 p.m. at Congregation Sinai

8223 N. Port Washington Road

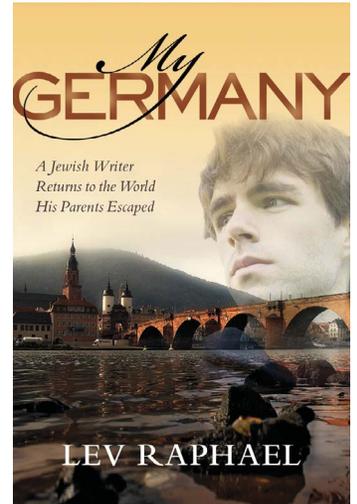


Photo Credit: University of Wisconsin Press

May 6 and 8, 2012

Staged reading of Kadya Molodowsky’s Yiddish drama *After the Desert God*

World premiere of the new English translation by Joel Berkowitz, UWM

3 p.m. on May 6th at UWM’s Music Building Lecture Hall, 2400 E. Kenwood Blvd.

7 p.m. on May 8th at the Harry and Rose Samson Jewish Community Center, 6255 N. Santa Monica Blvd.



May 22, 2012

“Love at the Zero Hour: Jewish War Brides in WWII”

(Faye Sigman “Woman of Valor” Lecture)

Robin Judd, associate professor of history at the Ohio State University

7 p.m. in the Golda Meir Library Conference Center, at UWM, 2311 E. Hartford Ave.

Photo Credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Flory Kabilio Jagoda



Jewish Lives at Home and Abroad

Roots
&
RESTLESSNESS



Gift Honors Phyllis Stahl-Berkowitz



The Sam and Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies recently received a major gift from the Stahl/Berkowitz family in memory of Phyllis Stahl-Berkowitz, daughter of the late Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz. The gift of \$50,000 will support the Stahl Center's mission to serve the UWM campus and the Milwaukee community with courses and public events in the field of Jewish Studies.

The Baye Foundation, through the Nathan and Pearl Berkowitz Fund for Jewish Studies, established the fund to support curriculum development, public lectures, visiting scholars, and interdisciplinary conferences, among other uses. In appreciation of this gift, the office suite on the first floor of the Stahl Center, located in the Greene Memorial Museum is being named in honor of Phyllis Stahl-Berkowitz. The Stahl Center will continue the legacy of Phyllis Stahl-Berkowitz and her family by enhancing cross-cultural understanding and participating in community building.

In the late 1960s, Phyllis Stahl-Berkowitz was instrumental in starting the first multi-ethnic nursery school in the city of

Milwaukee. She also co-founded one of the nation's first children's museums in Milwaukee, a forerunner of the Milwaukee Children's Museum, currently at the Milwaukee Public Museum. Along with two other women, Phyllis conceived the idea of a kids' play grocery store and installed it at the Milwaukee Art Museum in the 1970s.

Stahl-Berkowitz was active in the Jewish community. She contributed many engaging articles through her work on the staff of *The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*. She also served on several boards, such as the Women's Welfare Board and the Children's Outing Association. In addition, she raised funds for other Jewish organizations. When she passed away in 1978, Phyllis was writing a book about outstanding Jewish families in America.

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General contact: (414) 229-6121 or cjsuwm@uwm.edu

Dr. Joel Berkowitz, Director
berkowitz@uwm.edu

Megan Loiselle, Communications Assistant
loiselle@uwm.edu



The Sam and Helen Stahl
CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

Fall 2011 Event Recap

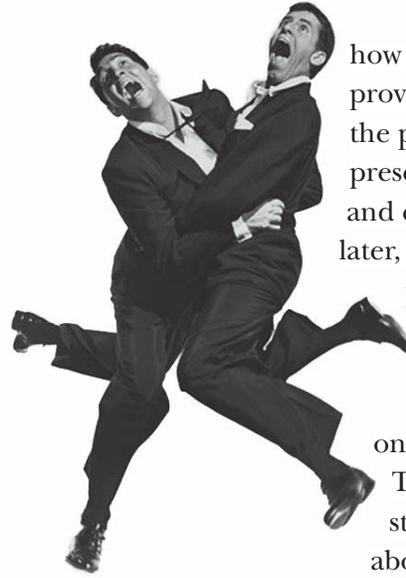
The first semester of programming under the Legacy Heritage Jewish Studies Project has been well received by audiences on campus and in the wider community during the fall of 2011. As reported in the first issue of *The Golden Peacock*, the Stahl Center is one of four programs nationwide to receive the grant, administered by the Association for Jewish Studies. The grant provides \$22,000 in funding to support public programming on a specific theme, and showcasing the talents of the Jewish Studies program's faculty, as well as presentations by distinguished visiting speakers.



Sheet music for Avrom Goldfaden's wildly popular operetta *The Two Kuni-Lemls*

Not every speaker gets to open for the Yiddish master Sholem Aleichem, but Henry Sapoznik, director of the Mayrent Institute for Yiddish Culture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, did just that in September. His witty lecture, drawing on his deep knowledge of Yiddish culture as well as his decades of activity as a musician and producer, was coupled with a screening of the documentary film *Sholem Aleichem: Laughing in the Darkness*, featured in the JCC's Milwaukee Jewish Film Festival. After the film, Sapoznik and Stahl Center director Joel Berkowitz responded to audience members' questions and comments.

The second event was held at the Jewish Museum Milwaukee, where Jewish Studies and History faculty member Lisa Silverman presented findings from her research on Austrian Jewry between the two World Wars. She focused specifically on Philipp Halsmann, who was tried and convicted of brutally murdering his father while hiking in the Alps in Austria in 1928. Although there was no evidence of motive, the jury found him guilty of patricide. (He was pardoned and released two years later.) Professor Silverman discussed how the legends and beliefs of the neighboring Austrians contributed to the antisemitism that led to both the murder of Halsmann's father and the bias against the son at trial. The lecture also raised broader questions about



Dean Martin (left) and Jerry Lewis in Philipp Halsmann's "Jump!" portrait

how we see the world, by making provocative connections between the photographic evidence presented at Halsmann's trial and examples from Halsmann's later, highly successful career as a professional photographer.

On Dec. 7th – the 70th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor – Professor Tim Crain spoke to a standing-room-only crowd about President Franklin D.

Roosevelt's storied, and ultimately controversial, relationship with American Jewry. Early in his presidency,

Roosevelt became legendary for his championing of Jews and other minorities, but historians continue to debate FDR's response to the Nazi Holocaust. Professor Crain assessed the evidence for and against Roosevelt, and then fielded numerous questions about this pivotal historical moment.



Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr. (left) and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise leaving the White House after a meeting with FDR

Faculty News

The Sam and Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies is pleased to announce two outstanding additions to our roster of affiliate faculty members.



Winson Chu is an assistant professor of Modern Central European History at UWM. He completed his Ph.D. in 2006 at the University of California, Berkeley. His doctoral dissertation won the UC Berkeley History

Department's James H. Kettner Graduate Prize as well as the Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize, which the Friends of the German Historical Institute (Washington, DC) awards to the best North American dissertations in German history. He has received fellowships from the German Academic Exchange Service, the United States Department of Education, the German Historical Institute in Warsaw, the American Council on Germany, and the American Council of Learned Societies. He is currently working on multiethnic politics in the city of Łódź, Poland, and is a 2012 fellow at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. His book, *The German Minority in Interwar Poland*, will be published by Cambridge University Press in 2012.



Daniel M. Vyleta is an assistant professor of German in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature. He received his Ph.D. in History from King's College, University of Cambridge in 2003, and previously taught at the Universities of Vienna, Cambridge, the European College of Liberal Arts (Berlin), the

University of Alberta, and Mount Allison University. His research specialization is Austrian and German cultural history with a special emphasis on crime and criminality, antisemitism, modernity, *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past), and narrative theory. His monograph, *Crime, Jews and News, Vienna 1895-1914*, was published by Berghahn (Oxford and New York) in 2007 as part of its Hapsburg Studies series. Dan is also a published novelist. His first novel, *Pavel & I*, draws on genre conventions to explore life in postwar Berlin; it was translated into eight languages. His second novel, *The Quiet Twin* (Bloomsbury, Harper Collins Canada), was shortlisted for the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize and is the first part of a projected trilogy exploring the impact of Nazism on Viennese society.

In other news...



Dana Margolis, senior lecturer in Hebrew Studies in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, has developed a new online tutorial designed to improve the auditory and conversational component of the Hebrew language curriculum. One of the greatest challenges in teaching a foreign

language is finding ways for the students to put what they've learned into practice. While reading, writing, grammar, and spelling are important, these skills are useful only when students have the opportunity to converse in the language they are learning. This year, thanks to funding from a SURF (Salary for Undergraduate Research Fellows) grant and a partnership with UWM's Language Resource Center, students will benefit from listening to numerous questions pre-recorded in Hebrew that supplement the lessons in the textbook. They will then have the opportunity to practice responding to those questions, recording them online, and submitting them to the instructor for feedback. So far, the tutorials have been welcomed with excitement. Dana anticipates the continued development of innovative learning experiences for students.

Lisa Silverman's article "Beyond Antisemitism: A Critical Approach to German Jewish Cultural History" was recently published in the inaugural issue of *Nexus: Essays in German Jewish Studies*, the official publication of the Duke University German Jewish Studies Workshop, in which she was invited to participate in 2009 and 2011. The journal will publish innovative research in German Jewish Studies and will serve as a venue for defining the field, introducing new directions in it, and considering its place within the broader field of German Studies. In October, she was invited to participate in the colloquium "Jews in Popular Culture," held at the University of Southern California, and also presented "Picturing Vienna's New Woman: Madame d'Ora meets Ella Zwieback-Zirner" at the Symposium "Jews and Fashion," held at Creighton University in Omaha. As part of her Global Studies Fellowship, which she was awarded by the Center for International Education at UWM for the year 2011-2012, she presented work from her current research project, "Beyond Material Claims: Rhetorics of Restitution after the Holocaust," at the Global Studies Colloquium: Global Networks in November. Also in November, she presented the lecture "From Falling to Jumping: Philipp Halsman and the

Faculty News continued

‘Austrian Dreyfus Affair,’” as part of the Legacy Heritage series of the Center for Jewish Studies, held at the Jewish Museum Milwaukee. In December, she presented a paper on the trial of Philipp Halsmann as a modern-day ritual murder case at a panel on modern uses of blood libel in Central and Eastern Europe at the annual Association for Jewish Studies conference, which was held in Washington, D.C. Both of these talks stem from her book *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars*, forthcoming from Oxford University Press in May, 2012.

Yair Mazor, professor of Hebrew literature, spoke on “The Secret Text Behind the Biblical Text” as a part of the Judaic Studies Distinguished Lecturers Series at the University of Central Florida. The lecture was held in November in cooperation with Central Florida Hillel in Orlando.



In April 2011, **Marc Tasman** (Senior Lecturer in the Department of Journalism, Advertising, and Media Studies and coordinator of the Digital Arts and Culture Program)

presented a paper, “The Survivors: Soylent Green Reframed as a Holocaust Film,” at the Conney Conference on Jewish Arts at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In September 2011, Tasman was honored among some of the region’s most celebrated artists – previous awardees of Mary L. Nohl Fellowships – in a group exhibition at the Milwaukee Art Museum. Tasman showed recent work from his photographic series, “Dark Tourist seeks Lost Galitzianers’ Treasure,” which documents his visit to Poland as an adult grandchild of Jewish Holocaust survivors.

Alumni Voices: Tony Rodriguez ‘09



The interdisciplinary approach that prevails in Jewish Studies courses sparked and sustained my interest in the program. With a passion for understanding the sensitive issues of antisemitism and genocide, I availed myself of the opportunities provided by the Sam and Helen Stahl Center for Jewish Studies, UWM, and Milwaukee’s Jewish community.

Dr. Rachel Baum’s “Jewish and Christian Responses to the Holocaust” and “Jewish American Literature from the Holocaust to the 21st Century” introduced me to authors and texts that challenged conventional wisdom and encouraged me to think analytically about the Holocaust, Jewish identity, and Jewish popular culture. Dr. Baum’s use of technology in the classroom and her innovative approach to teaching provided a forum for Jewish narratives as they relate to current social contexts.

One summer during college, I enrolled in an intensive summer program at the Catholic University of Lublin. While in Poland, I had conversations about the representation of Poles in Holocaust-related American cinema, and about responses to Jan T. Gross’s 2001 highly controversial book *Neighbors*, an exposé of the destruction of the Jewish community of the Polish village of Jedwabne. I left Poland hungry to learn more about this subject. Dr. Lisa Silverman’s “Introduction to Jewish History” and “The Jews of Modern Europe: History and Culture” helped me better understand the issues of contemporary genocides from a historical perspective. Her cutting-edge research inspired me to delve deeper, ask provocative questions, and seek not just one answer, but several.

The guidance provided by Dr. Baum and Dr. Silverman has been instrumental in helping me reach both my academic and career goals. Had it not been for their support, I would not have had the opportunities I have been given, including my current profession. I graduated in 2009 with a B.A. in Jewish Studies and History. In 2009, I received the Chava Frankfort-Nachmias Award for Excellence in Scholarship in Jewish Studies. I now work for the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc. (Claims Conference), an international organization that provides assistance to Nazi victims and funding for research and educational initiatives, and seeks the return of property lost during the Holocaust. As a program officer, I administer education and research grants in 14 U.S. states and 16 countries, allowing me to play a role in Holocaust education as well as in the rescue of several hundred archives in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and South America. In June 2010, I was sent as a representative of the Claims Conference to the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research in Jerusalem. Over the past two years, I have traveled on behalf of the Claims Conference throughout the United States and Europe.



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