



# “wholedamfam”



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STRAUS FAMILY NEWSLETTER

August 1997

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## **Robert Kenneth Straus**

October 22, 1905 - February 24, 1997

## **Barbara Flower Straus**

February 18, 1914 - June 26, 1997



**Robert K. and Barbara Straus**  
**50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary**

## Tributes to Robert Kenneth Straus

### Some Random Memories of a Beloved Cousin, Bobby Straus by Donald Blun Straus

Robert Kenneth Straus was, in many ways, a true Renaissance man. To list just a few of his personae; he was, above all, an intellectual. In addition, he was a businessman, a publisher, a philanthropist, a politician, a pilot, a sailor, an enthusiastic croquet player, a talented writer, a loyal friend, a true gentleman, a loving husband and parent, a generous and constructive Harvard alumnus and a passionate member of the Straus clan. Others can surely add so many more to my list of talents and accomplishments.

It was, of course, a combination of his intellectual curiosity and enthusiasms for the Straus family that impelled him to found the Straus Historical Project. Following in the footsteps of Aunt Sara Hess, who really planted the first seeds by privately printing *The Autobiography of Isidor Straus*, Bobby traveled to Otterberg in 1977 and found a number of friends and relatives

of our forbearers. That started a flurry of action on his part - first writing a number of essays about different family connections and eventually his recognition of Joan Adler's talents for genealogical recording and research. It was his example of both enthusiasm for the project and high standards of excellence, I feel certain, that persuaded a group of relatives to keep the project going in the form of the Straus Historical Society.

A quick glance at the Straus family tree will reveal that I grew up amid a crowd of cousins, most of them older than I. We would meet from time to time in rather formal family gatherings. A few became good friends. But we were mostly just "cousins" to each other, people with whom one must be polite but seldom intimate. Bobby was different. From the start, he treated me, ten years his junior - a big gap when you are young, as a person, someone worth getting to know. What Bobby first found in me was a shared love of sailing. This was the beginning of a friendship that went far beyond that cousin-hood.

I was still in my late teens. Bobby had not yet sailed very much himself. But with characteristic thoroughness, he bought a small schooner, hired a captain, and began cruising up and down the



Jesse Isidor Straus Jr. (Jack), Irma Nathan Straus, Robert Kenneth Straus, Jesse Isidor Straus and Beatrice Straus

East Coast as far as Canada. In those years, Bobby was also the youngest member of the newly formed New York City Council. He was always subject to an emergency summons back to his political duties and therefore in need of crew members who could be counted on to remain with the boat until it could be brought back to its home port. It was my good fortune to be invited to join him, and so was Gerry Levy who was even younger than I, on a cruise to Nova Scotia. It was on that cruise that we became good shipmates and close friends.

We had lots of adventures on that cruise. I recall one night, we were anchored on the harbor in Yarmouth, when we were rolled out of our bunks as the 20 foot tide ebbed and the boat gently settled on its side on the muddy bottom. We had to climb into the row boat we were towing and stand by for several hours to see if the boat would eventually right itself as the tide returned. It did, as any more experienced sailor would have known, but for us it was a "night to remember."

In later years, Bobby came cruising several times with Beth and me. On one memorable trip, from Cape Cod to Nantucket and back, Barbara was also a member of the crew. I know she never forgot that voyage, not because she especially enjoyed it, she didn't, but because Bobby gave her a special trinket from Van Cleef and Arpels in appreciation of her courage and good sportsmanship.

For a few years, Bobby was also a pilot and so was I. So we had another bond that also led to quite a few adventures. In the late 1930's, the great event of the year for the aviation minded was the Cleveland Air Races. It was to go to the 1937 race, I think, that we rented a Fairchild 24 airplane from the Boston Airport and flew it out to Cleveland. I was still in college. For two days, we watched the events: acrobatics, all kinds of races punctuated by frequent spectacular crashes, wing walking stunts and military fly-bys. In between the events, we would walk around the tarmac talking with the pilots and swap stories. As we prepared to take off on the way back, the plane immediately in front of us skidded off the runway, doing much damage to the plane but no one was injured. Once in the air, we had one more incident when our engine began to sputter just over what was later to become the Three Mile Island atomic plant. But again luck was with us and the sound of our engine soon returned to a comfortable hum. Those were the kind of shared adventures, of which there were quite a few, that strengthened our bonds of friendship.

When I married Beth in 1940 in Belvedere, California, Bobby was, of course, an usher. The ceremony was a lovely one in the garden of Beth's parents. The tradition then, and may still be, was for the bride to throw her bouquet into the air. It was believed that the bridesmaid who caught it would be the next to

be married. But Beth had a different agenda. By this time, Bobby had become a great favorite of hers and she felt it high time for him to join in on our marital bliss. So she took careful aim and whanged the bouquet right at Bobby. He had no choice but to catch it, much to the dismay of several eager and very pretty female members of our bridal party. But, all in vain. Bobby remained a bachelor for many more years and, when our second son Rob was born, we decided to name him after our favorite cousin, thus frustrating his option of having a junior. Perhaps, just as well. At a very young age, Rob bonded with Bobby almost as if he were a parent! Rob credits Bobby with teaching him to drive during one memorable summer vacation spent in Santa Barbara.



Bob in Bavaria - 1909

Bobby had many hobbies and interests and he pursued them with great thoroughness. One of these was General Semantics, the discipline invented by Alfred Korzybski. Bobby became a serious student of General Semantics and supported the work of Dr. Rachel Lauer at Pace College with both advice and funds. He also established a chair in the memory of his father, Jesse, at the Harvard Business School and with both determination and skill, persuaded the Dean to select a professor for that chair who would introduce many of the features of General Semantics into the curriculum.

The love and devotion of our grandparents, Ida and Isidor, exemplified by their conduct during the final hours of the Titanic, became a legend and a role model for our generation and probably will remain so for generations to come. Bobby's marriage to Barbara belongs in the same pantheon. Complete opposites in so many ways, they blended their love into an extraordinary matrimonial unity.

Although we lived on different coasts, we managed to see each other with surprising frequency and we also kept in touch through letters, phone calls, and even e-mail. Bobby was almost 90 before he bought his first computer, but he learned how to use it for writing, accounting, and e-mail almost as quickly as a nine year old!

Our last extended time together was only a year before his death when he flew to Maine for the graduation from Bowdoin of his grandson Braden. I picked Bobby up after the graduation ceremonies and drove him to our home in Somesville for a visit. For Beth and me, his seemingly unending store of anecdotes (no, he was far from, and never did reach, his "anecdottage"), and his teenage enjoyment and enthusiasms, were sheer pleasure. What a wonderful visit.

Bobby loved being a Straus. He was proud to be a Straus. He took great pleasure in the many accomplishments of other Strauses, especially those in the generations below his. His life, and now his memory, adds luster to the clan.

**For Bob and Barbara** by Rob Straus (named after Bob because it was thought he would never get around to marrying)

In the end I admired him most as a romantic, a man who loved deeply and well and with pleasure. With all his other qualities, that may seem a strange focus for admiration. But, in this time when marriages are all too fragile and transitional and when men and women seem more than usually at odds, "Uncle Bob's" relationship with Barbara is particularly remarkable. The stories abound, by now inevitably embellished with retrospective fantasy. The Courtship: how he pursued Barbara to the south of France, and when she locked him out of her hotel room in Cannes, sent bouquet after bouquet of roses until her bathtub was overflowing; intercepted his rival's telegram; and finally won her over. There is the Exodus from New York : when Bob, then a rising young political star and member of the City Council was faced by Barbara's ultimatum, choose between New York and me. And he - in an age of achievement - chose love over career, and left with Barbara, Chris, and Penny for L.A. and was proud of his choice. Even with his success in California as a businessman and pioneer in offset printing, he later gave the impression that these accomplishments were important, but somehow secondary to, or even part of, his success in choosing the relationship. And there was Bob the Family Historian, with Barbara rolling her eyes at the excesses of Strauses, as with his "Genealogical Miscellany" and "In My Anecdote" and endless letters, Bob created the context out of which our current interest in our family and our history has risen.

It was the simple quality of their relationship, though, that was most deeply appealing. Bob was intellectual, in his head, an encyclopedia of ideas and history and memories. He was deeply emotional, but never quite at home in the world of feelings. He loved and valued Barbara for her intuitive grasp of people, her directness, her beauty, her wonderful earthiness. And Barbara, passionate, intuitive, mercurial, loved him for his constancy, his intelligence, his honesty, his care. Their spats and arguments were those of two entirely opposite, strong personalities whose friction created sparks, but who fundamentally and with love appreciated each other's qualities. In short, they were still in love to the end. It was hard to think of them apart, and, though a double sadness, is not at all surprising that they should have departed this world so close together.

Sherry and I always felt nourished by their example, and I suspect they were a source of hope to other couples. It's strange. I had no intention to write about Bob and Barbara this way

when I sat down. But it seems right to romanticize them as romantics. I think they would appreciate it, and there are far worse lessons that we can take from their rich and full lives. In a letter just several weeks before her death, Barbara wrote that she liked the moments of solitude because it was then that she could feel closest to Bobby. His last evening Bob shared a glass of champagne and some caviar with Barbara. He died just after having tucked her in bed. It seems right.

**A Few Memories of Bob Straus, My Favorite Cousin** by Barnard Sachs Straus, Sr.

In 1944, we were both stationed in London serving in the military. Bob called and invited me to dinner at the Bearley Hotel to meet "the most beautiful girl in the world whom he hoped to marry." Barbara Flower was indeed breathtakingly beautiful and lovely. What a memorable and happy evening!

My mother and father, Helen and Nathan, were very fond of Bob and there were many happy lunches with Bob on the beach at Quarry Lake, the home of my parents in White Plains. My father, who was prominent in Democratic politics and in President Roosevelt's cabinet always thought Bob would have made a great Mayor of New York and he tried to persuade Bob to run for office.

In later years, after Dad passed away, mother spent her winter months at the Santa Barbara Biltmore Hotel and Bob was always attentive, kind and loving to mother. Just this past September, I was in Santa Barbara with "the love of my life" Marjorie Hyman, and we had a terrific visit with Bob and Barbara.

Bob was indeed a very special person and I really miss him.

**My Favorite Cousin** by Buzzie Scheftel

Bobby was always my favorite cousin. A far back as I can remember, we always got along well. When I owned a publishing company, Bobby was an investor in it and we made a lot of money on it. Eventually we sold out. Bobby was always a good businessman even though he appeared not to be too interested in it. He was very interested in publishing and bought a newspaper in the San Fernando Valley in California.

My wife and I used to visit Bobby in Santa Barbara. He belonged to the golf club but didn't play golf. He enjoyed the social aspects. When we visited, he would arrange for me to go out in a foursome and then we would have lunch together after. He was very considerate of his guests.



Bob's first campaign poster - 1920

We didn't see that much of each other in later years because he lived on the West Coast and I lived on the East Coast but we spoke on the telephone quite often. He was interested in so many things. We could talk about business or politics or the news and he would be up on it. He never stopped learning.

His death is a terrible loss.

### **A Tribute** by Paul A. Kurzman

As Chair of the Straus Historical Society, I would like to note the contribution Bob made to government and the public sector - which so few of the Strauses of his and the following generations have chosen to make. In the spirit of Congressman Isidor Straus; Ambassador, Judge and U.S. Secretary Oscar Straus; and his father, U.S. Ambassador Jesse Straus, Bob had a commitment to public service that led him to become a progressive member of the NYC Council under LaGuardia; a government affairs officer for the post-war Army; and an innovative administrator during the New Deal under FDR and Harry Hopkins. His wise and generous spirit has left a legacy for which Strauses have historically been known and of which we, as descendants of Lazarus and Sara Straus, can be eternally proud.

### **A Reflection** by Saul Viener

Thirteen years have passed since Bob Straus entered my life, and in the process enables me to reflect on the fifty years of a Straus connection. With the passing of Bob Straus it is most fitting that I pay tribute to the Straus Family "patriarch" and thank him for making possible the expanded Straus clan to know from whence they have come; who they are; and how each member must remember in order to build the future. Such was the *raison d'être* of Lazarus Straus who came to Georgia, his wife, and his children. Such sentiments, such as goals must also continue for us who remain behind.

Although Bob and I never met, I shall never forget the cordiality of that first telephone conversation after he had discovered *The Political Career of Isidor Straus* in the family papers at R.H. Macy's department store. We kept in touch more often in those earlier years. Less so, I regret, in recent years. With every communication for the estimable Joan Adler, I have been reminded of that visionary, that gentleman, that family-oriented man who carried the name of Straus with dignity and responsibility.

In the intervening years I have enjoyed keeping in touch with Joan. Somehow, I keep finding references to the Straus family and/or Isidor's friend and Congressional colleague, William L. Wilson, of Charles Town WVA, my hometown. Mr. Wilson

served as Postmaster General of the United States and during his tenure initiated Rural Free Delivery. The recent centennial of that service on Charles Town reminded me of Isidor Straus. Could he have been present October first 1886? As some of you may recall, Isidor came to Charles Town for Mr. Wilson's funeral. There is a newspaper article in Joan's repository.

A collective memory can sustain Bob Straus' Family Project if his kinspeople will labor to insure the future of the Straus Historical Society. However, the Society must carefully consider its *raison d'être* and how best to illuminate the lives of the immigrant Jews who contributed mightily to the well being of a society much of which we take for granted. The many threads which comprise the fabric of American life have provided us with freedom, freedom of opportunity and the opportunity to honor our forbearers by learning and by teaching and by being responsible citizens. The founding Strauses exemplified such matters, as did their descendant, Robert K. Straus. We mourn his loss. We must honor his memory.

### **A Memorial** by Dr. Hans Steinebrei, Germany

I am working on the history facts of the little town of Otterberg, which gave the USA an important family with four children, who brought it to success, respect and richness that would not have been possible in Germany at that time. First of all, I was involved in the reconstruction of our old monastery from which only the church still remained. Then I started in genealogy in 1977. I heard that an American descendant of the Straus family was here to look for some new facts by visiting their birth place in the 19th century. I saw the green book which he edited and I was so fascinated that I decided to help finding more about the history. I wrote to him and he sent me his book also. He gave me inspiration and encouraged me to start with some research work. He asked me if I couldn't find something about the period before 1800, but I couldn't promise it because I was still working in my office. By and by I found some news which I wrote him and he gave me publications of the American Straus family. Since 1987 I spend a whole day in the National Archives. In the same year I am retired and have a little more time to work in our local archives. Since 20 years we exchanged correspondence. One of my last letters was so exciting for him when I found out that the name Loesser was the Straus name before 1808 of the family members. I am deeply surprised at his passing away, but the family should be thankful that he reached a very old age. For about 2 years he had advised me to contact Joan Adler and this runs with very good results.



Photograph taken from: Seven Generations, a souvenir album of the reunion of the descendants of Jesse Isidor and Irma Nathan Straus and their wives and husbands. Santa Barbara California, June 20-23, 1988

## **An Extraordinary Man** by Joan Adler

I got to meet and work with Robert Kenneth Straus. It was a very special time for me. How did I get so lucky?

By now, most of you know that Bob hired me in the Fall of 1989 from an ad I used to run in *The New York Times Book Review*. I advertised my services as a literary researcher, an information broker of sorts. He called and asked if I would be able to get the familys' personal papers out of Macy's Archives. I agreed to try and, from that effort and my success at gaining access and photocopying the originals, the Straus Family Project was conceived.

Bob seemed thrilled with each new discovery. Although he gave me guidance and direction, he allowed me the freedom to work in my own way and at my natural pace. That suited us both just fine. As time went on, he became concerned that he would pass away and all the work he had initiated would stop. He encouraged me to find family members willing to make a commitment to the project and, when I did, we formed the Straus Historical Society. He seemed surprised. He said he had no idea others would be interested. It pleased him that they were.

We worked together with Dr. Hans Steinebrei to find out more about the ancestors of Lazarus and Sara. We organized the Macy's papers, had some of them translated, compiled a collection of family papers, photographs, newsclippings, albums and memorabilia, wrote a bibliography, began finding Straus relatives and entering information about them into a database, issued annual address book updates, semiannual newsletters and annual calendars and held a family reunion. We worked with the New York City Parks Department to complete the reconstruction of Straus Park. Bob was filled with ideas and I was delighted to try to carry them out.

Bob gave me advice, spoke with family members to encourage them to support the project, spent hours on the phone retelling his wonderful stories and never seemed to tire of the discovery process. He would call me at odd times just to chat. He'd ask what I thought about a political candidate or about a recent news event or to tell me about a book he had just read or an idea he had. He seemed to have an almost childlike delight with each success of the family project.

I have occasion to travel to California every summer to visit my family. I made a point of spending a day with Bob in Santa Barbara. When Barbara was feeling up to it, she joined us for lunch, either at home or in a local restaurant. On several occasions, my husband Frank joined us. True to form, Bob was fascinated with my husband's professional life and asked to see his laptop computer. Frank explained how the Internet worked and about e.mail. Bob's curiosity and interests were boundless. My husband started looking for excuses to go to California so that we could visit Bob more often.

Bob was a prodigious letter writer, questioning politicians, writing to newsmen and sharing ideas with commercial companies. Shortly before he died, Bob wrote to the Hershey Company,

asking them to develop sugar-free chocolates such as those he had gotten from Europe. He knew about CD-ROM writers, wireless telecommunications, genetic engineering, orchid growing; it seemed as though he was interested in, and knew about, almost everything.

Bob was devoted to his wife Barbara. He died ten days before their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Barbara had suffered a debilitating stroke about 25 years ago. Although it curtailed her independence somewhat, it did nothing to diminish her beauty or spirit. Bob doted on her. His eyes would sparkle when speaking of her. He would giggle like a schoolboy. He left his office daily between two and three so that he was available to help Barbara. He stopped traveling at her request. After Bob passed away, Barbara wrote me two letters. This took great effort. In each, she expressed how much she missed her "beloved husband." It is sad that Barbara could not survive without him. I find comfort in believing they are reunited.

I found April to be a terribly exciting, and yet melancholy, month. The family participated in the rededication of Straus Park, held a cocktail party, dinner and evening at "Titanic," and the documentary "Titanic on Broadway" aired. We brought family together from all over the country and rekindled interest in the Straus Historical Society. Bob would have loved to have been in the middle of all of this. He would have been thrilled with each event. He would have been delighted that others cared. I felt that the interest of the family in these events was an affirmation of all Bob was trying to accomplish. He brought all branches of the family together through this project and stimulated and interest in their shared history. He touched so many lives.

Those of you who knew him, know what an extraordinary man Bob Straus was. If you hadn't met or spoken with Bob, you missed a rare treat. I certainly haven't met anyone like him nor do I believe there will ever be another like him. He was a true Renaissance man; interested in and knowledgeable about everything, with a good heart, a kind soul, a moral and ethical man, an intelligent man, a generous man. I feel both honored and blessed that our paths have crossed. My work for the family is dedicated to the memory of this wonderful individual, Robert Kenneth Straus.

### **Other Tributes**

I asked family and friends to send me some remembrances of Bob for publication in the newsletter. I knew how many people revered him and thought it odd that more responses were not forthcoming. I called. Many people miss Bob so much after six months that they are still unable to articulate what their relationship meant to them. They were overwhelmed at the prospect of having to express the breadth or depth of their feeling. I repeatedly heard comments like: "I still pick up the phone to call him." "He was an absolutely wonderful man." "He was adored by everyone in the family." "He was the most wonderful person in the world." "He was beloved." For most, it is impossible to truly express how much he is missed. The memory of this wonderful man, Bob Straus, enriches us all.

## Straus Historical Society Update

A Straus Historical Society board meeting was held March 13, 1997 at the home of Tom and Carol Straus. Present were Joan Adler, Alan Hockstader, Kalen Holliday, Daniel Kohns, Paul A. Kurzman, Gail Nutku, Barney Straus Sr., Carol Straus, Oscar S. Straus III and Tom Straus. Carol and Tom's busy lives necessitated the preparation of dinner in 45 minutes. It was delicious and they made it look so easy.

501(c)(3) Status: Oscar S. Straus III volunteered to find out about more how we might obtain 501(c)(3) status. He found an organization, Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, which helps some groups with this procedure. Because we are not in the "arts," we could not avail ourselves of their services. Oscar and I attended a very informative seminar given by one of their volunteer lawyers. We learned the basics of what is involved.

Friends of Straus Park: Leon Auerbach has stepped down as president of the West 106th Street Block Association to become co-president of the newly formed Friends of Straus Park. He will be working with Jo Abrams, Mary Walsh and a host of volunteer members to make the Park a showcase of vest-pocket parks in New York City. They will be scheduling frequent events to keep people involved in the Park and in the community. An article about their activities and our upcoming Second Annual Straus Day in Straus Park appears on page 12 of this newsletter.

The ribbon cutting rededication of Straus Park was scheduled for April 15, 1997, 85 years after the sinking of the "Titanic" and 82 years after the Park's dedication. Plans were made to include the family in this event. I discussed my cooperation with the Parks Department at the board meeting and explained my effort to have the actors who portray Isidor and Ida in the Broadway play "Titanic" perform their featured song, Still, at the rededication. The possibility of getting media coverage was also discussed. An article about the rededication appears on page 8.

It was decided that I should try to obtain a block of tickets to "Titanic" which would be sold as a fund-raiser for the historical society. It was further decided that a dinner or cocktail hour would be scheduled before the performance. See page 10 for further details about this event.

Elections for board members were held. Paul A. Kurzman was elected chair. Alan Hockstader was elected finance committee chair. Robert B. Straus will continue as treasurer and Gail Nutku will continue as secretary. If any member of the family is interested in joining the board, please contact Paul or me. Your support and involvement in the Society is welcome.

An additional meeting of the Society was held June 25<sup>th</sup> at the home of Alan and Birgitta Hockstader in White Plains. Alan and Birgitta served a lovely meal accompanied by lots of welcome ice water. This meeting was scheduled because of our continuing financial crisis. It was decided that, if no more contributions were forthcoming, it might be necessary to suspend operation of the Society. The June meeting was scheduled to discuss this problem and to focus on possible solutions.

At this meeting, Oscar S. Straus III presented information about our attendance at a seminar given by the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts regarding obtaining 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status. This seminar was extremely informative. We learned what legal procedures would be necessary if we were to move in this direction. I bought two books from the group with step-by-step instructions and forms. We came away from the seminar with the impression that it might be possible to do most of the work ourselves or, at the very least, with minimal assistance from an attorney. One of the stumbling blocks has been the expense of hiring an attorney. The least expensive proposal we had received put the fee at between \$2,500 and \$3,000. The Society does not have the resources.

After attending the seminar and my reading through this material, Oscar arranged for us to meet with his attorney, Michael Katz. Mr. Katz had been thoroughly briefed by Oscar and was familiar with the specifics of our organization as well as being conversant with this type of law. His comments were specific to our situation and very helpful.

It was decided at the board meeting that, given our precarious financial situation, it would be premature to move in this direction. It was further decided that a more pressing problem was where and how we would find additional funding. It is necessary to locate several individuals within the family who are willing to make more substantial contributions to the Society if we are to continue.

Based on the success of our first fund-raising event, "Titanic," the board voted to hold future fund-raisers. It was suggested that we try to get tickets for the premier of "Titanic," the movie. We discussed the possibility of selling T-shirts, caps or lapel pins with an ostrich logo. The board also decided to make the video which includes "Titanic On Broadway," the two hour documentary in which I appeared and Paul Kurzman's CNN interview available for sale for \$20.00.

A family trip to Georgia was decided upon for the weekend of October 24<sup>th</sup>. See page 11 for details.

If you have any ideas about other possible fundraisers, please call or write to me or to a board member. Your ideas are important and will be given serious consideration.

The next board meeting of the historical society will be held at 6:30 PM September 29<sup>th</sup> at the home of Paul and Margaret Kurzman. All contributors to the Society are invited to attend.

### Inside this issue:

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## Rededication of Straus Park April 15, 1997

After many years of waiting, much of it with frustration, anticipation and apprehension, and a full year of reconstruction, Straus Park was rededicated on Tuesday, April 15, 1997. The ribbon cutting ceremony was held at 11:00 AM by the City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation. Many family members, community members and politicians attended. A full program was planned. It included speeches by Leon Auerbach, president of the West 106<sup>th</sup> Street Block Association; Paul A. Kurzman, great-grandson of Isidor and Ida Straus; Henry J. Stern, Commissioner of Parks & Recreation; Adrian Benepe, Manhattan Borough Commissioner and Ruth Messinger, Manhattan Borough President. The program also included songs by local area school children and the song, "Still," from the Broadway production "Titanic," performed by Alma Cuervo and Larry Keith who portray Ida and Isidor Straus in play.

The weather was perfect. It was easy to imagine how glorious the park will be in the Summer months when the flowers are in full bloom. Eric Mattes, landscape architect for the project, was on hand as were many other members of Commissioner Stern's staff. Paul Kurzman's speech was both inspiring and inspired. He was a wonderful representative of the family.



Paul Kurzman speaking at the April 15, 1997  
Straus Park rededication ceremony

Leon Auerbach hosted a wine and cheese hour at his apartment following the ceremony. This gave people a chance to chat in an informal setting and to catch up with others they had not had a opportunity to meet at the park. It was wonderful experience to see how excited community members were to meet members of the Straus family, some of whom came from Georgia, Texas, Virginia and Pennsylvania. I, of course, was delighted with the interest and response of the family. Many had never participated in a family event before. I hope this won't be the last time!

## Oscar S. Straus Memorial Washington D.C. - An Update

At the Straus Park ribbon cutting ceremony, Didi Hockstader asked me if I knew what had happened to the Oscar S. Straus Memorial in Washington D.C. In 1947, President Harry. S. Truman dedicated the Oscar S. Straus Memorial to honor Oscar who served the country in many capacities including Secretary of Commerce and Labor under President Theodore Roosevelt from 1906 through 1909. The actual memorial was authorized by Congress in 1927 but there was indecision about the site and then World War II intervened. It was felt it would be inappropriate to dedicate this memorial during the war.

There are two groups of statuary, depicting Justice and Reason in one and Religious Freedom in the other. A fountain and reflecting pool lie between the two groups. An inscription along the base of the pool reads: "Statesman, Author, Diplomat" and bronze letters spell out: "Oscar S. Straus 1850-1926" on the plaza around the pool.

The memorial stood outside the Department of Commerce Building on 14<sup>th</sup> Street between Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues until the building was torn down. A parking lot was erected in its place. There is an ordinance in Washington that all statues must be on display. They may not be placed in storage. And so, the memorial had been on display in the parking lot. Then, it disappeared.

In June, I was in Washington D.C. and decided to try to learn what had happened to the memorial. After about two hours of unproductive phone calls, I realized my only option, if I wanted to learn where the statues were, would be to go to 14<sup>th</sup> Street myself. I was surprised to find a construction site where the parking lot had been. A new building, the Ronald Reagan Building, is being erected with a stone plaza at its entrance. The reflecting pool and pedestals for the Oscar S. Straus Memorial statuary are in place. The area is surrounded by a chain link fence. I was able to talk myself inside the fence with an explanation of who I was and with the promise that I would wear a pink hard hat at all times when I was on site.



Oscar S. Straus Memorial Construction Site  
Pedestal on left, Tar paper lined reflecting pool on right

I toured the site taking photographs of the construction. I also spoke with some of the workers, asking if any of them knew when the construction would be completed and if there would be a rededication ceremony. Fortunately, the construction foreman was available. Although he didn't know when the construction was scheduled to be completed, he promised to keep me informed as he learned more. He explained that the reflecting pool would be tested for leaks in a month or six weeks and that the bid for re-patina-ing the statues would be let in October. He told me I didn't have to worry about missing the rededication ceremony because the flagpole had not yet been ordered.

The statues will be placed on their pedestals on the plaza in front of the new Ronald Reagan Building, across the street from an existing Department of Commerce Building. The Reagan family didn't want this new building named for our ex-president because they didn't want it to seem that he stood for big spending. Apparently, they were voted down.

The plaza, Oscar S. Straus Memorial, the plantings and new Ronald Reagan Building are an attractive addition to the Washington D.C. landscape. It will be wonderful to have these beautiful statues on display once more in such a lovely setting.

The photographs I took are available. Please let me know if you want to see them. I will send out announcements with the date for the rededication ceremony as soon as I receive it.

## **Nathan Straus Park The Story Continues**

Recently, Barney Straus Sr. called me to ask if anything could be done about the deplorable condition of Nathan Straus Park. This is a small triangular piece of land bordered by East Broadway, Rutgers Street and Canal Street on the Lower East Side. Buoyed by Leon Auerbach's success with the Park Department's reconstruction of Straus Park on West 106<sup>th</sup> Street, I called Bob Redmond and asked if we could meet at the Nathan Straus Park to discuss the possibilities. He immediately agreed. In fact, he made some phone calls himself and assembled a team of Park Department staff members, including Eric Mattes, to meet with Barney and me at the park. We made a date. I was beginning to think, "This is all too easy." I was right. Here comes that Strausian water again!

The morning we were scheduled to meet, I was listening to the radio, checking traffic reports as I prepared for my trip to the city. A water main had just ruptured at the corner of East Broadway, Rutgers Street and Canal Street. We would never be able to tour the park. It was now underwater.

Fortunately, we had plenty of time to abandon ship, or at least, cancel our plans. We have rescheduled our meeting for September 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 AM. I'll keep you updated on the progress, or lack thereof, of the Nathan Straus Park reconstruction project. An interesting footnote to all of this park reconstruction: Nathan Straus was Commissioner of Parks of New York from 1889 - 1893.

## **Monuments and Memorials to the Strauses**

I have begun compiling a list of the monuments and memorials to the Strauses. This is just a beginning. Please let me know if there are others.

- Straus Park - West 106<sup>th</sup> Street between Broadway and West End Avenue, New York. Dedicated to Isidor and Ida Straus April 15, 1915
- Nathan Straus Park - East Broadway, Canal and Rutgers Street, New York
- Oscar S. Straus Memorial - 14<sup>th</sup> Street between Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues, Washington D.C. - Dedicated October 26, 1947
- Jesse Isidor Straus School, P.S. 199, 270 West 70th Street, New York. Dedicated March 24, 1964
- Isidor and Ida Straus School, P.S. 198, 96th Street and Fifth Avenue, New York.
- Nathan Straus Young Adult Library at the Donnell Branch of the New York Public Library, 20 West 53<sup>rd</sup> Street, New York.
- Ida Straus Subdivision of Montgomery and Liberty Counties, developed by the Jewish National Farmers Alliance.
- Macy's 34<sup>th</sup> Street Plaque dedicated to Isidor and Ida Straus April 15, 1915.
- Nathan Straus Jr. Recreational Park, Town of New Castle, Westchester, Armonk, New York.
- Nathan Straus Synagogue, 3512 DeKalb Avenue, Bronx, New York.
- The Lee Kohns Auditorium, Educational Alliance, 197 East Broadway, New York.
- The Papers of Nathan Straus, Hyde Park Library, Hyde Park, New York.
- The Straus Family Papers, The New York Public Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue, New York.
- The Oscar S. Straus Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
- Oscar S. Straus' oral history, Oral History Collection at Columbia University, New York.
- Jesse Isidor Straus' oral history, Oral History Collection at F.I.T.
- The papers of David A. Morse, Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University Archives, Public Policy Papers, 65 Olden Street, Princeton, NJ.
- Straus-Kohns Mausoleum, Salem Field Cemetery, Macpelah Section, 775 Jamaica Avenue, Brooklyn, NY
- Straus Mausoleum, Woodlawn Cemetery, Webster Avenue and East 233<sup>rd</sup> Street, Bronx, New York.
- Oscar S. Straus family home in Purchase NY is now owned by Roger Williams Straus.
- Percy S. Straus' home, King Street, Port Chester, NY is unoccupied.
- "Northview," Sarles Street, Mt. Kisco, NY, a summer home of Jesse and Irma Straus is now owned by Seema Boesky.
- "Noview," 402 Sarles Street, Mt. Kisco, New York, a summer home once owned by Jack and Peg Straus is now owned by Denise Santomero.



## "Titanic," The Musical

On April 17, 1997, a group of 47 family members and friends attended a preview performance of "Titanic" at the Lunt Fontanne Theatre on West 46<sup>th</sup> Street in New York City. The board of directors of the Straus Historical Society had decided that we would use the sale of tickets to "Titanic" as our first fund-raising event. Tickets were sold for \$125, a \$50 per ticket profit for the historical society. After a feverish few weeks of phone calls, 50 tickets were sold. Many people seemed disappointed that they had already made travel plans for that date and would not be able to attend.

The week of April 15<sup>th</sup> was exciting. We were able to schedule "Titanic" for the same week as the Straus Park ribbon cutting ceremony and many people came from out-of-town to attend both events. Gus B. Kaufman and his wife Marian came from Macon GA. They were accompanied by their nephew Bill Levitt who lives in Red Hook NY. Linda Marcus and her husband came from Pittsburgh PA. They were accompanied by their daughter and her husband. Regina Marscheider, a good friend of Ken Straus, brought a friend and her sister. Regina came from Virginia Beach Virginia.

Susan King came from Houston TX. Michael King came from New Orleans, LA. Ric King and his wife live in New York City. I was anxious to have Susan and her brothers meet the family, and for the family to meet them because Susan, Michael and Ric are descendants of Lazarus' mother, Jeanette Grunebaum. Susan is the Webmaster of Jewish Genealogy. She has amassed a database of over 7,000 people who are her relatives. She brought a copy of her descendant chart and a second descendant chart specific to the Lazarus Straus family. I hope Susan will become part of our project and that we can collaborate in the future.

Leighton Coleman III also attended. His ancestors, Frederic, Daisy and Douglas Speddon were aboard the "Titanic." They were also aboard the "Caronia" going to Europe with Isidor and Ida Straus in January 1912. Leighton wrote a children's book called "Polar The Titanic Bear." It is a story told from the bear's perspective of his adventures with his Master, Douglas, and of his trip aboard the "Titanic."

A pre-theater cocktail and dinner party was held in the Marriott Marquis Hotel across the street from the theater. Most of those attending the play came to dinner. The hotel staff were very professional and accommodating. We were able to book a beautiful suite where cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and a buffet dinner were served. A scrumptious dessert bar was set up in one corner of the room with coffee and tea service nearby. It was an elegant and congenial way to start the evening. After the play, several members of our party returned to the suite for coffee.

The musical "Titanic" had been in previews for several weeks and the early press had not been good. Many people could not imagine how a musical would be made from this tragedy. Several family members refused to participate in our fund-raising event, citing their feeling that it was macabre to stage such a play. Many others expressed their curiosity about how it could be accomplished. I believe all attendees were happy they had chosen to participate.

Knowing that Isidor and Ida would be featured characters in this production made the prospect of seeing the play all the more tantalizing. I will not give you a review of the play. For that you have only to remember that it received five Tony awards. I will, however, tell you that there were many tears in the audience as the curtain came down. I had arranged for the actors to come forward at the end of the play to meet the family. It was an emotional moment when Paul Kurzman showed the actors a locket that had been found with Isidor's body.

The previous day, Wednesday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, I had taken Gus and Marian Kaufman and Bill Levitt to Salem Field Cemetery to see the Straus-Kohns Mausoleum. Several relatives of Marian's are buried in a cemetery in the area. We looked for other Strauses, Kurzmans and relatives of Gus' who might be buried there.

On Sunday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, a two hour documentary was aired on WOR TV, Channel 9 in New York, about the making of the Broadway play "Titanic." The producer, Diane Oates, interviewed me. I brought many letters, photographs, albums and memorabilia of the Straus family which were video taped for inclusion in the documentary. Four segments of my interview and many Straus photographs and letters were used.

Paul Kurzman was interviewed by CNN about the Broadway play and that interview is also included on the tape. Copies of the video, which includes Paul's interview, are available from the Society for \$20.00.

### Additional Media Coverage

April was a busy month. All the interest in the "Titanic" disaster encouraged many writers to produce articles. Alice Burdick Schweiger's article, "Fates Afloat: Jewish passengers on the Titanic" ranged from Russian Jewish immigrants to middle-class American and Europeans to the well-to-do and prominent," appeared in five editions of *The Jewish News*. This newspaper is published in five cities including Detroit and Cleveland. Alice interviewed me over the phone and asked that photographs of Isidor and Ida be sent to her editor for inclusion. A copy of the article is in my files and available if you wish to read it.

Valerie Gladstone wrote an article about the Broadway play "Titanic" for the *Star Ledger*. Valerie also conducted a phone interview. Her article included information about the Straus Park rededication and mentions the Straus Historical Society. Her article is also available.

Jessica Power published photographs of Isidor, Nathan and Oscar in the June issue of *Avenue* magazine. Darryl Lyman's

book, Great Jewish Families is at the publishers. We are contributing many photographs of family members to this publication. The book will be released in October.

I am currently working with Cheryl Johnson of Greystone Communications. She is producing an A&E documentary about Macy's. I've sent Cheryl many Straus and Macy's photographs. John W. Straus was interviewed for this documentary. It is scheduled to be aired in November but the exact date has not yet been set. Please check your local A&E listings.

Fran and Jonathan Straus have designed a website, infoeng@shorennet.com. This website contains a web page dedicated to the Straus Historical Society. <http://www.information-engineer.com/straus/straushp.htm>. I have received several queries from people who have seen Fran and Jonathan's website. One author, Roy Edroso, is writing about free things to do in New York City. He is including information about Straus Park. Andre Aciman, an author whose book has been published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux, is preparing a speech about the Park which will be delivered at The New York Public Library on Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM.

## **Straus Family To Visit Talbotton GA October 24<sup>th</sup> - October 26<sup>th</sup>**

Gus B. Kaufman of Macon and Mike H. Buckner of the Historic Talbotton Foundation have invited the family to visit the site of the Straus family's American roots in Georgia. The board of directors of the Straus Historical Society has decided to endorse this trip.

We will leave Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup> and return Sunday evening, October 26<sup>th</sup>. Delta Airlines and US Airways have flights to Columbus GA through Atlanta or Charlotte from New York's LaGuardia Airport. There is limited seating and reservations should be made as soon as possible. Those traveling from other locations should plan to meet us Friday evening in Columbus. Please call me for details.

Friday and Saturday night will be spent at the Columbus Hilton Hotel. Saturday morning, we will travel 36 miles to Talbotton. The Talbotton Historical Foundation will sponsor a reception and lunch at Straus-LaVert Hall. A fish fry dinner will be given by Mike and Debbie Buckner on the Patsiliga Plantation late Saturday afternoon. Many of the area's residents have stories about their connection to the Straus family which they are eager to share. The reception will offer them the opportunity.

Lazarus and Sara's first home in Talbotton is no longer standing. The new Talbotton library was erected on the site. Many of you are familiar with the plaque commemorating the Straus' homestead. A photograph of Lazarus' first house in Talbotton was published in the February issue of "wholedamfam" Volume 5, Number 1, page 2 along with a photograph of the plaque.

On Saturday, we will visit the second home of Lazarus and Sara Straus in Talbotton. It is privately owned. Known as the Smith-

Callaway House, it was built about 1835. The owners have graciously agreed to allow the family to walk through their home. We will tour the area with Mike Buckner. Of particular interest are the many plantation homes in Carsonville and Prattsburg; many still owned by the descendants of people who knew Lazarus. We will also stop at the train depot where Lazarus and family arrived in Talbotton.

On Sunday, Laurette Rosenstrauch, a local historian, will take us to the Columbus homesite of Lazarus and Sara and the home of Frank Rothschild, brother-in-law of Ida Straus. Columbus has an historic district where many older houses have been restored, one of which belongs to Ralph and Kathy Evers. It is the former home of Gus Kaufman's grandparents, Julius and Matilda Straus Kaufman. Ralph and Kathy have done extensive research into the lives of the former owners and are gracious hosts and tour guides.

In July of 1993, I visited Gus and Marian Kaufman in Georgia. They took me through the quiet town of Talbotton and showed me its historic buildings. We stopped to read the many plaques commemorating its most famous citizens, the Strauses. We visited Straus-LaVert Hall, the church where the Straus children were said to worship and the town's main street where Lazarus Straus and Julius Kaufman had their dry goods store. We followed the highway to Carsonville where 15 year old Isidor visited Jacob Kaufman, brother to Julius, and wrote home in December of 1859 describing the business and social news.

We then drove to Columbus and met with Laurette Rosenstrauch. She took us to the Jewish cemetery and to the city's historical district where every house has been carefully restored with great attention to detail. We passed by the fully restored Springer Opera House and met Cindy and Richard Straus. Cindy is the widow of Jack Straus Sr. and Richard is their son.

Gus is a marvelous host who is obviously proud of his heritage and very knowledgeable about the historic towns of Georgia. He is an absolute wealth of information. I came away from that trip with a far better understanding of the family and the conditions they found upon their arrival in America. The South, steeped in history, has not let go of its past. That past includes the Straus family. Georgia is proud to have counted them among its citizens.

Arrangements have been made with the Talbotton Historical Foundation to coordinate events. Columbus is a two hour drive from Atlanta. There are flights from LaGuardia Airport in New York to Atlanta on Delta or US Airways with a connection to Columbus. If you do not live New York and wish to join us, please plan to meet us in Columbus, hopefully by dinner time on Friday. We will hire a bus or van depending on the number of people traveling. A block of rooms is reserved for two nights at the Columbus Hilton Hotel.

**It is imperative that I know how many people will be joining us so that the appropriate arrangements can be made. Please call me before September 10<sup>th</sup>.**



## Friends of Straus Park

A new organization, Friends of Straus Park, has been formed to help make Straus Park a showcase for all vest-pocket parks in the city. It is hoped that the park's utilization will increase as area residents find this a safe, secure and beautiful place to rest, sit, talk or enjoy a quiet moment. To increase the Park's utilization, Friends has planned a number of events.

On April 26<sup>th</sup>, a Straus Park Green-Up was held in conjunction with the Parks Department and the West 106<sup>th</sup> Street Block Association. Flowers were planted to enhance the Park's environment. Eric Mattes, landscape architect for the Parks Department of the City of New York directed the planting. Over 60 people participated. Eric is the designer of this very beautiful Park. He will return on October 18<sup>th</sup> to lead a walking tour. At that time, he will explain what has been planted in the Park and the historical significance of these selections. John Olund, a trained horticulturist, has been retained to care for the plants in the Park on an ongoing basis.

Jo Abrams, a local teacher and storyteller, read stories to an audience of 20 to 25 children and their parents on June 7<sup>th</sup>. The balloons and flowers which decorated the Park were donated by Academy Floral and five gift certificates were donated by the Bank Street Book Store.

The Summer season was ushered in on June 19<sup>th</sup> with an excellent soft jazz and blues concert performed by Adele Zane and the Frank Ponzio Quartet. Between 200 and 250 people came to this rain date concert. Friends of Straus Park had tables set up with light refreshments. They sold T-shirts and added several new members to their organization at this event.

A special education class of 10 students from Middle School 54 came to the Park with their teacher Marie Simone. They looked at pictures of the area before it became Straus Park. Jo Abrams told the story of the Titanic and the monument. The students walked through the Park and spent an hour doing drawings of both the Park and the monument. Some great sketches came out of the visit. Additional school outings are planned in the Fall.

On August 6<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM, the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band performed at Straus Park. These five musicians; David "Bubba" Brooks on Tenor Sax, Al Casey on Guitar, Ed Swanston on Piano, Alex Layne on Bass and Johnny Blowers on Drums, comprise the world's most authentic swing band. Their roots

reach back to the music of the 1920's and 30's. These "originals" have actually jumped with Count Basie and stomped at the Savoy with Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong and Lionel Hampton. What a great way to spend an evening!

Between 275 and 300 people attended "Friends" August presentation of the Performing Arts Series, the Harlem Blues and Jazz Band. Each Park event has attracted more participants than the previous one. A trend we hope will continue. Area residents were pleased to share Straus Park with folks who came from all over the metropolitan New York area. Light refreshments were available and memberships in Friends of Straus Park were offered.

Leon Auerbach has been talking with Lawrence Davis about having students from Dr. Bloomingdale's House of Music practice in the Park during lunch hours. This will give free, informal concerts to all passing through the Park while giving the students an audience for their efforts.

Memberships to Friends of Straus Park were made available at these events as were T-shirts designed by the board. If you are interested in becoming a member of this worthwhile organization, please send a check or money order for \$10 or more, made out to City Parks Foundation/Friends of Straus Park, to Leon Auerbach. c/o Friends of Straus Park, 340 Riverside Drive, Apt 9B, New York, NY 10025. T-shirts may be purchased for \$13.00, 2 for \$25.00.

There are several other Park events planned for the Fall. On **Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup>**, Friends of Straus Park will sponsor **Art in the Park Day** from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM. This is when Eric Mattes will conduct his walking tours at 10:00 AM, 11:00 AM and noon. He will describe the plantings in the Park and the rationale behind their selection and placement.

There will be a series of other events throughout the day including performances by professional music groups; a folk/square dancing presentation featuring Karl Finger, renowned folk dance leader; a demonstration, exhibition and mass dance lesson of ballroom dancing; instruction in the Maccarena; a performance by the Soh Daiko Drummers and Dancers from the New York Buddhist Church; an arts and craft exhibition and sales. Our **Second Annual "Straus Day in Straus Park" will be held Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup>** in conjunction with "Friends" Art in the Park. A family representative will be prepared to give a presentation and to answer questions about the family. In addition, we will have a display of family memorabilia and membership information about our historical society. The rain date is Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. More information about this day appears on page 16.

A number of family members have volunteered to serve on the board of Friends of Straus Park. They are: Paul Kurzman, Daniel Kohns, Alan Hockstader, Oscar S. Straus II, Hugh Straus and Tom Straus. I am also on the board. If you would like to become a member of this organization, serve on its board or have an idea for an event in the park, please contact Leon Auerbach at 212-865-4948.

## Health Family Tree

For several years, we have been talking about taking a health inventory of the family. We have a family tree. We **need** a health family tree. Knowing what diseases may be found in its branches could save your life.

Scientists are unraveling our genetic code and learning how to manipulate genes with the hope of ameliorating or eradicating inherited disorders. Additionally, many conditions seem to run in families even though the genetic link has not been identified. It is important that we know where and how these disorders are represented in the Straus family. We already know that bipolar disease, diabetes, cataracts, hearing loss and heart disease are overrepresented in some branches. The possibility of preventing disease becomes more real each year. Knowing where the patterns of inheritance lie is imperative. Doctors may improve the quality of life, prolong or save life, make quicker diagnoses and administer the correct tests immediately if they are aware of the patterns of illness within a patient's family. Today, women considering becoming pregnant are advised to have a pre-pregnancy doctor's visit and to bring along their family medical history.

Straus Historical Society board member Kalen Hockstader Holliday has devised a comprehensive health survey which will be distributed to all family members. It is included with your newsletter and will be sent under separate cover to all noncontributing family members. Please take a few minutes to fill out this form and send it back to me. Joan Adler, P. O. Box 416, Smithtown, NY 11787-0416. Phone 516-265-3340. Fax 516-724-4487. E.mail FAMJAD@aol.com.

Make as many photocopies as you need and fill out this form for all minor children and for your deceased relatives. Please go back as many generations as you can. Do not assume someone else will do it. It is important for family members to know where their health problems are coming from and to anticipate what they and their loved ones might be facing in the future.

**Don't delay. Do it for your children and for their future!**

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### Medical Update

#### Diabetes

Francesco Facchini reported, in the June issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, that large doses of vitamin A, about five times the recommended daily allowance, may help some diabetics. Vitamin A appears to improve insulin's ability to control concentrations of sugar in the blood. In another study, vitamin E was found to boost insulin sensitivity in people with type II, adult-onset, diabetes. Both vitamin A and E in large doses increase the concentration of high density lipoprotein, HDL, the good cholesterol, in the blood.

In another study, researchers have identified a piece of a chromosome responsible for the most common form of diabetes. It affects about 15 million people, mostly those over 40 years of age. Scientists think several genes play a role in the susceptibility to type II diabetes and they are closing in on them.

National Institute of Health sponsored doctors are beginning a trial to see if swallowing a capsule of insulin crystals daily can prevent or delay the onset of juvenile diabetes, type I, in people most at risk of getting the disease. This type of diabetes is thought to strike when the immune system destroys the body's own insulin producing cells. The study will attempt to learn if daily doses of insulin can, in effect, provide immunization and, thereby, prevent this disease.

Researcher Jonathan D. Katz at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis has determined that insulin-secreting islet cells in the pancreas commit suicide in insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus or type 1 diabetes. He is working with a genetically engineered strain of mice to learn how the immune cells induce this apoptosis.

A new, glucose-sensing polymer is being developed by Frances H. Arnold at the California Institute of Technology. It will measure a diabetic's blood-sugar concentrations inside or outside the body. This polymer is more stable in many environments than previously tested sensors and is being developed as an implantable system which will be used in conjunction with an insulin pump. Arnold expects that products based on this new technology will be available within a couple of years.

Two new cookbooks with recipes for diabetics are [Diabetic Meals in 30 Minutes or Less](#) and [The Flavorful Seasons Cookbook](#). Both are written by chef Robyn Webb and are published by the America Diabetes Association. They are available in bookstores.

### Bipolar Disorder

A four year study by Joseph Biederman of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, published in the August 1996 issue of the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, shows that children diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactive disorder, ADHD, seem to have a one in four chance of later developing bipolar disorder. ADHD children exhibit a volatile mix of symptoms including distractibility, anxiety, depression, irritability and violent outbursts. They are often treated with Ritalin which, although a stimulant, has a calming effect on hyperactive children.

Several websites contain information about bipolar disorder. Some are written by people who have bipolar disorder themselves and offer information and support, while others are written by scientists and are more technical in nature. There are new treatment options. Set your search engine to bipolar disorder to begin your query. It is well worth the time to learn about these latest developments. If you do not use a computer, I would be happy to send you some of this material.

## Announcements

**Born:** Matthew Fennelly Levy to Robert and Claire Levy in Bethesda MD on August 1, 1995. Robert works for the U.S. Information Agency on foreign public opinion in East Asia. Robert described Claire as a recovering sovietologist who is presently working on military affairs at Rand Corporation.

**Born:** Emma Keyes Ward to Richard and Elizabeth Ward in San Francisco CA on August 22, 1996.

**Born:** Graham Paley Straus to Barnard Sachs Straus Jr. and Nancy Bercow Straus in Chicago IL on March 5, 1997.

**Born:** Zephyr Elizabeth Straus to James and Lisa Straus in Palo Alto CA on April 5, 1997. Look up information about Zephyr's birth at <http://www.straus.org>

**Born:** Charlotte Louise Straus to Stephen and Melissa Straus in Austin TX on June 24, 1997. Check out Charlotte's Web for details and photographs at <http://www.straus.org/charlotte.html> Carol and Tom Straus are the proud grandparents of both Zephyr and Charlotte.

**Born:** Pierson Winslow Holliday, a daughter, to Kalen and Robert Holliday in Sleepy Hollow NY on June 30, 1997.

**Born:** A son, to Franklin and Catherine Gertler in Montreal Canada on August 7, 1997. Franklin and Catherine's as yet unnamed son was born on their fourth wedding anniversary. They will have two happy events to celebrate every year. Catherine is a clinical nurse specialist practicing palliative care.

**Recovering:** Alfred Gertler, who broke his ankle in Costa Rica.

**Get Well Wishes** to Oscar S. Straus II, who is recovering from reconstructive knee surgery.

**Graduated:** Philip Kurzman from Stanford University in Palo Alto CA in June 1996. Philip worked at Disney Studio in LA last year but he has decided that a career change is in order. He will be following in the footsteps of his great grandfather Alfred Hess by pursuing a career in medicine. Philip will be returning to school to complete pre-med requirements.

**Graduated:** David Kurzman from Grinnell College in Grinnell Iowa in June 1996. He is currently employed by Wallace, Weitz & Co. in Omaha NE where he is a junior financial analyst.

**Congratulations:** Daniel P. Kohns has accepted a position as Coordinator of Public Affairs with the Council on Foreign Relations.

**Congratulations:** to Caroline Selden who was reunited with her daughter Kristen Sanders after a 21 year search. Congratulations are in order for Kristen, too, who celebrated her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in Malibu CA at Beau Rivage on May 16<sup>th</sup> with Caroline and her friends. I was delighted to be invited to Kristen's birthday party. It was a wonderful party and a very moving evening.

**Welcome Home:** to Rob Straus and family after a year in their home in France. Rob's e.mail address is: [RobStraus@aol.com](mailto:RobStraus@aol.com)

**Dedication:** A beautiful stained glass window was dedicated in memory of Ralph I. Straus at Saint Andrew's Dune Church in Southampton, NY on June 22, 1997. Katney Straus was kind enough to invite me to the service, which was lovely. The scene depicted in the window is of Ralph's favorite Psalm, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd..."

**Retired:** Oscar S. Straus III from BLS Legal Services Corp. a senior citizen law office based at Brooklyn College, on June 1, 1997. Oscar will take the summer off before deciding what professional direction he will pursue.

**Died:** Robert Kenneth Straus in Santa Barbara CA following a stroke, on February 24, 1997.

**Died:** Barbara Joan Straus in Santa Barbara CA following a stroke, on June 26, 1997.

### Changes for your address book:

**Add:** Darren Aschaffenburg, grandson of Janet Aschaffenburg, 700 South Peters, New Orleans, LA 70130.

**Add:** Eric Lysle Aschaffenburg, son of Janet Aschaffenburg, 1931 State Street, New Orleans, LA 70118, FAX 504-899-8474.

Sara, Marcus, Mischa and Chloe Byruck will be spending the year in France. While I do not have a new address for them at this time, they can be reached via e.mail at [bigfeet116@aol.com](mailto:bigfeet116@aol.com).

Kate Fariss Fraser Cote: Phone 757-221-0610. E.mail [kcwindward@aol.com](mailto:kcwindward@aol.com)

Kate Fariss McNally Cote is in the process of changing her e.mail address. Please do not use her current e.mail address.

Barbara Douglas' e.mail address is [bjsdoug@aol.com](mailto:bjsdoug@aol.com)

Geoffrey and Colleen Douglas have moved to 21831 Hyerwood, San Antonio. TX 78259. Phone 210-497-2031. E.mail [douglasg@texas.net](mailto:douglasg@texas.net)

George Douglas' e.mail address is [GWDCO99@aol.com](mailto:GWDCO99@aol.com)

Susan Finkelstein is known as Susan Scheftel. Her office phone is 212-769-9311.

John Paul Herzog and Sarah Herzog have moved. I do not have their new address.

Didi Hockstader's e.mail address is [DIDIHOCK@aol.com](mailto:DIDIHOCK@aol.com)

Gus Kaufman's fax number is 912-474-4007.

Daniel Kohns' e.mail address is [armandjean@aol.com](mailto:armandjean@aol.com)

Jennifer Kohns is working towards her masters degree in English at Hunter College.

David Kurzman has moved to 1302 South 101 Street, Omaha, NE 68124, Phone 402-343-9282.

Paul A. Kurzman is president of the faculty at Hunter College. His office number is 212-772-4124.

**Add:** William (Bill) Levitt, grandson of Matilda Straus, P.O. Box 31, Red Hook, NY 12571.

Jessica Levy's office is LEMA Productions, 226 W 47<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10036. Phone 212-354-3729.

Aaron and Sara Landis MacDonald have moved to 114 Clinton Street, Apt 2F, Brooklyn, NY 11201-4239.

**Add:** Linda Marcus, granddaughter of Melville Straus, 1128 Bennington Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15217. Phone 412-682-1682.

Kevin McKean has moved to HC 30, Box 1009, Prescott, AZ 86301, Phone 520-541-0281. E.mail kmckean@primenet.com. Kevin has a web page: [www.primenet.com/~kmckean](http://www.primenet.com/~kmckean) It contains wonderful photographs of the construction of his new home in Prescott and photographs of his longtime friend Jennifer in their vegetable garden and with their dogs.

**Add:** Kristen Sanders, Caroline Selden's daughter, is studying sociology at Centenary College. Her address is P. O. Box 41188, Centenary College, Box 845, Shreveport, LA 71134-1188. Phone 318-869-5332.

Melinda, Calandra, Jesse and Mara Schwartz' area code has been changed to 954. Their phone number remains the same.

Caroline Selden's e.mail address is UserSpnshM@aol.com

Brad and Diane Straus' address in Spain is Calle El Jardin 37, La Cuesta de la Villa, 38390, Tenerife, Spain. Brad assures me they have not moved. The municipality has just changed their address.

Benjamin Jonathan Straus has moved to 193 Eldridge Street, New York, NY 10002. His phone number is unlisted.

Christopher D. B. Straus' e.mail address is [straushouse@worldnet.att.net](mailto:straushouse@worldnet.att.net)

Donald Straus' e.mail address is [straus@tmn.com](mailto:straus@tmn.com). I had previously published this incorrectly.

James, Lisa, Jessup and Zephyr Straus have moved to 633 California Way, Redwood City, CA 94062. Phone 415-599-9059.

Jeanne Straus' home phone number has been changed. I do not have the new number.

Jonathan Herbert Straus' office phone number is 508-799-2100, ex 69812.

Jonathan and Fran Straus' e.mail address is [infoeng@shore.net](mailto:infoeng@shore.net). Check out their web site. They have been publishing information about the Straus Historical Society and about family events. <http://www.information-engineer.com/straus/straushp.htm>

Katney Straus' new summer address is 245 First Neck Road, Southampton, NY 11968.

Laura Straus has moved from 23<sup>rd</sup> Street to 490 West End Avenue, Apt PhC, New York, NY 10024-4329.

Richard Kelly Straus Sr., Julie, Richard Kelly Jr., Grace and Virginia are no longer at 1380 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Columbus, GA 31901. I have no new address.

Timothy, Darden and Kenneth Straus have moved to 10 West Wesley Ridge, N.W., Atlanta, GA 30327. Phone Tim and Kenny at 404-367-9532 and Darden at 404-367-9533.

Tom Straus' new e.mail address is [tomstraus@macconnect.com](mailto:tomstraus@macconnect.com)

William Miller Straus, son of Oscar S. Straus III, 25 Forest Street, Apt 4L, Stamford, CT 06901-1850. Phone 203-358-0229

Philip Toohey Jr. and Denise Toohey have moved to 200 Nemo Court, St. Helena CA 94574.

Susan, Richard (Chip), Edward and M. Brice Voorneveld have moved to 47 Gibbes Street, Charleston SC 29401. Phone 803-965-5596. The Voornevelds came to New York in early July. They enjoyed a performance of "Titanic" and visited with their family.

**Note:** The annual calendar has been mailed with this packet. Please dispose of last year's copy of the calendar and use this one for reference. Many changes, corrections and additions have been made. My apologies to the females in the family who are known by their own last name. The software I use will not print married females by any other than their husband's last name. I hope to change software programs, if I can find the time. By the next issue, the calendar should contain your name printed correctly.

The Straus Family Health Questionnaire has been included with the Summer newsletter and calendar. Please take a few minutes to fill it out and return it to me. Joan Adler, Post Office Box 416, Smithtown, NY 11787-0416. Phone 516-265-3340. e.mail [FAMJAD@aol.com](mailto:FAMJAD@aol.com).

Comments and explanations may be written on the back of each sheet or on a separate sheet. Please fill out a separate questionnaire for each member in your family including your deceased relatives. I will compile the data and write an article about the findings in the next issue of the newsletter if there has been a sufficient return. This is a great way to open up the lines of communication with your parents and siblings.

Please take the few minutes to help everyone in the family. It may be one of the most important things you do this year.



## Dates To Remember

### Andre Aciman's Talk - Straus Park

Author Andre Aciman will give a talk about Straus Park at The New York Public Library on September 9<sup>th</sup>. It is necessary to purchase tickets if you wish to attend. Please contact the library for details.

### Second Annual Straus Day in Straus Park October 18<sup>th</sup>, raindate October 19<sup>th</sup>

Meet your relatives, go on a walking tour of the Park led by Eric Mattes, landscape architect for the Park at 10, 11 or noon. View the artwork on display. Take a dance lesson. Enjoy the Soh Daiko Drummers and Dancers. Learn more about your heritage from an exhibit of family memorabilia and a presentation of historical information. Picnic in the Park or at one of the local area's wonderful restaurants and sidewalk cafes. Meet neighborhood residents. Show your support of the Straus Historical Society by participating in this free event.

### Trip To Talbotton and Columbus Georgia October 24<sup>th</sup> - October 26<sup>th</sup>

Call me by **September 10<sup>th</sup>** if you want to be included. See my article on page 11 for details

### Great Jewish Families

Darryl Lyman's book, Great Jewish Families, will be released in October by the publisher, Jonathan David. The historical society has supplied the publisher with many photographs and documents which will be included in this book.

### Oscar S. Straus Memorial Rededication Ceremony

The contractor has promised to let me know when this event will take place. Expect details sometime in November or early December.

### A&E Documentary: Macy's

Check your local A&E listing. It is currently scheduled to appear sometime in November.

### "Titanic," the movie

Look for information about this upcoming family event. I am working on getting a block of tickets to the premiere showing of "Titanic," the movie. I have been in communication with a representative of the producer and she is excited about the prospect of having family members at the New York opening which, unfortunately, is not yet scheduled.

## Available from Straus Historical Society:

Back issues of the newsletter - \$5.00

Newsletter binder - \$30.00

Artistic family tree - \$55.00

Family tree update, current to January 1997 - \$15.00 (Available at this price only to people who have previously purchased a family tree.)

Video tape of "Titanic on Broadway" with Joan Adler interview and CNN interview with Paul Kurzman regarding "Titanic" - \$20.00

"The Autobiography of Isidor Straus," privately published by Sara Straus Hess, in softcover - \$20.00

**Coming soon:** T-shirts, caps and lapel pins, all with an ostrich logo - in adult and childrens sizes

Please send your check, payable to the **Straus Historical Fund**, to Joan Adler, Post Office Box 416, Smithtown, NY 11787-0416 if you would like to purchase any of these items. All checks are deposited into the fund's account. I do not profit personally from these sales.

