

Alechem Club have expressed their disapproval of AARP and several have resigned. You might consider doing likewise. Supplemental health insurance can be obtained from several other organizations listed in the 2004 Medicare Handbook.

Club member profile

Fay and Joe Hocky

by Bea Solomon

The Sholom Aleichem Club is approaching a major landmark. We are having a birthday. Our 50th. In May we will celebrate together with remembrances, food, entertainment, and with the people who make up the Club membership. So this seems to be a particularly good time to continue a practice we started a few NEWS & COMMENT issues back (with a profile on Sara Zallman) and take a look at other members.

Among the many who may be quite familiar to us, those who address us at meetings, and so forth, there are also those whose contributions to Club life may not be so well known but who nonetheless are very important to the integrity of the Club and to its functioning. Two such members come readily to mind: Fay and Joe Hocky. For the 25 years in which they have been members they have epitomized the heart and soul of secular Jewishness and of good citizenship.

Founding of Suburban Jewish School

When their kids were young, recognizing the need for a community of compatible Jewish secularists in their Broomall area, they banded together with several other young families (including that of Hesh and Blanche Jacobs who lived in the same area) to form the Suburban Jewish School. Although that school no longer exists, at the time it served their family and several other young families coming up after them. Both Fay and Joe devoted quite a lot of time, energy, and thought to the school; it gave the kids, and the grownups, the stability of a caring Jewish community and a background in secular Jewishness. And later it was a natural segue into the Club.

As a Club member Fay has served for many years on the Executive Board, she has been an officer, is presently on the NEWS & COMMENT staff, and in the Yiddish Reading Group; and she has served on the Program Committee for as long as 25 years. Joe, an attorney whose legal work has been primarily in Wills, trusts, and estates, has served as a legal and financial and tax consultant to the Club, and has served on the



Fay and Joe Hocky at work preparing the refreshments for a Club meeting.

Executive Board as well. In recent years one of their tasks — especially Joe's — has been to fill orders for the books that the Club has published.

Originally our books were stored, supervised, and mailed by Bess Katz and Jack and Sylvia Rosenfeld. When both families moved out of their houses and into apartments Joe and Fay took over some of the responsibility for filling orders. Here is how it works: Dan Berger stores the bulk of the books in his home. Periodically the Hockys transfer a supply to their home. Bess Katz receives orders and forwards them to the Hockys. Joe wraps and addresses the books, and takes them to the post office (Fay assures me that he does that oh so promptly, as he does most things). Joe says he might mail from zero books to as many as 50 a month, depending on the time of year and a holiday period.

Well-rounded Folks

Fay and Joe are what might be described as well-rounded folks. They integrate multiple Club, Secular Jewishness, family, community, and cultural and intellectual pursuits in a seemingly effortless way. Fay's professional life as a social worker was with autistic children and in the Elwyn School for children with special needs. Being with and for people appears to be central to who Fay is.

Joe says she is the "active" one, the "people" one, the "doing" one in the family. Evidenced by a list of her activities over the years his description seems to be accurate. For instance, to name only a few items: For a good number of years she was very involved in the local Democratic Party and worked to elect Bob Edgar to Congress. She was a trustee of the Marple Library. Whatever civic and professional activities engaged her

she has always been a very hands-on, involved family/extended-family member. Son and daughters, grandchildren, in-laws, and her sisters and her cousins and her aunts are all important to Fay.

Indeed family occupies a major focus of interest to both Fay and Joe; they enthusiastically engage in all sorts of family events — birthdays, holidays, Bar Mitzvahs, etc. One of a triplet (Joe and two sisters) plus another sister, Joe remains very close to his siblings. He and Fay share vacations and family events with Joe's sisters and their families. Fay and Joe often stay with grandchildren for a day or a weekend in order to allow the parents some "time off."

Compared to Fay, Joe says he is the "reticent" one in the family. He does not engage in chit-chat, he says, and he speaks only when he has something he really feels needs to be said. Some of us who know him find this quality refreshing, though we also feel he tends to "hide his light under a bushel."

Yiddish in Their Lives

As a child Fay attended a Workmen's Circle school for many years where she learned to read Yiddish, and she attended the summer camps as well. Yiddishkeit, yes, but no formal Torah training. As a youngster Joe had basic cheder schooling, but it was not the kind of training to inspire a search for deeper understanding of his Jewish roots.

Still, both reflect a strong Jewish connection; indeed, being Jewish can be said to be the cornerstone of their identity. Possibly in part to make up for a lack of or an inadequacy in early training, they have for a number of years been participating in a class on Torah given at the Haverford Jewish Community Center. It is a very basic class, starting with Genesis but with a strong psychological, topical, and social interpretation from the youngish rabbi who leads the class. The class seems to fill a gap and is another way of identifying with their Jewish roots.

In a world in which there is so much personal, community, and international conflict, uncertainty, and strife it is a joy to be in the company of two who are so "together," so truly caring, thoughtful, and responsible with each other and with all with whom they come in contact.