



Spring 2008

The BRUSTMAN HOUSE

The Newsletter of a decrepit place and the people who love it

HOW DOES THE QUEEN EAT SPARE RIBS?

By Henry Heinbach

This topic appears not solely under the category of little asked questions but also as one of those subjects that no one really cares about and, as is true of most queries, this one has both a long and short answer:

To be brief, the Queen picks a spare rib up in one hand (pinkie extension optional) and with the other hand she grasps a fork and delicately places the tines on the free end of the balanced rib while drawing it to her mouth (using both hands), in preparation for royal consumption

How do I know this for a fact? Well again the short answer is: direct observation.

The longer version of the answer requires that I mention that one March day Andy, Susan and I went to their favorite Chinese restaurant in New Jersey called Sesame. We had just finished ordering when I noticed Andy give a little start and saw his eyes widen while he mumbled something that I failed to clearly hear but thought it sounded awfully like "the queen". He was staring over my shoulder toward the doorway and as I glanced to my left I observed a large woman passing our table, closely followed by two female companions. It wasn't until she took her place at the table located just behind ours that I realized that he and Susan had recognized Queen Latifah.

Although the restaurant was almost empty, we were buzzing what was The Queen doing here in Jersey and did Weight Watchers know? While She sat facing me, her back to the wall, Andy swiveled around to let her know that he really enjoyed her work. After she thanked him he then turned back to me and said that this was as close as we'll ever get to Hollywood.

Once our meal arrived it occurred to me that perhaps we should ask for an autograph but the idea was dropped when it was decided to allow her to eat in peace. Since I had a direct view of her table, I couldn't help but notice that a double slab of spare ribs were immediately brought out for her. May I say that they were beautifully prepared in that they were left intact on the rack and not cut into separate individual pieces as would have ordinarily been the case.

It was then, with admiration and amazement, I learned why such a gulf exists between regal personage and commoners as the former apparently know the true meaning of spare rib etiquette. Having previously described the procedure in detail, I am now aware of just how much it reminded me of consuming an ear of corn.

Upon our return to Susan and Andy's house, we commented on our good fortune while Susan Googled "queen latifah" and learned she was born and raised in New Jersey, not far from Newark. We surmised she probably returns home to associate with old neighborhood friends in some of her favorite places and we considered ourselves lucky to have been in the right place at the right time in order for us to perfect our new product the Queen Latifah Spare Rib Holder.

HOW WE WERE ALMOST RELATED TO BUGSY SIEGEL

by Richie Brustman

The notorious Jewish gangster, Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel was bumped off in the late 1940's after a long career in crime. He's was one of the founders of Murder, Inc. and is often credited with creating the Las Vegas strip. Siegel was the subject of the movie, "Bugsy," and the model for the Moe Green character in "The Godfather."

There is a family connection. Benjamin "Whitey" Krakower, a nephew of Grandma Dora, was involved in Bugsy's gang. Whitey was eventually gunned down in a NYC street, shot from a speeding car. Though never proven, it's generally thought Bugsy ordered the shooting because Whitey had information that could put Siegel in jail.

Whitey's association with Bugsy was a scandal to the Brustman family. Dora and her kids, who were Whitey's cousins, never openly spoke about the association and the way he died. Because of this, most of the next generation wasn't aware. Henry Schoenfeld and I were aware but knew little because our parent's wouldn't discuss it. So, most of what we knew came from books and other public sources.

Complicating the picture is Bugsy's wife's maiden name was Esther Krakower. Years ago Henry read this fact in a book and surmised she must have been Whitey's sister. He asked his mother, Aunt Frances, about this and she didn't want to talk about it. Henry took this evasiveness as confirming his surmise. This means we are related to Bugsy Siegel, a cousin by marriage!

Whether we were so related to Bugsy was an occasional discussion between Henry and me over several years. He was pretty sure this was the case, while I wasn't. My hesitation was based on a long ago conversation with Whitey's sister who claimed Bugsy was no relation. Henry was pretty sure that claim was just part of the family cover-up.

This winter I told Henry I would try to research the matter to see if the issue could be resolved. I scoured the net and came up with a lot of biographical information on Bugsy. A few sources said Whitey and Esther were brother and sister. None said otherwise. This supported Henry's surmise and so I came to agree with Henry.

I mentioned my findings to my mother. She thought they were odd, because she knew Dora's nieces and nephews and didn't remember an Esther. She enumerated the Krakower cousins for me and still no Esther. What gives? I thought maybe I could get a definitive answer on whether Dora had a niece named Esther through the census records, but that's a hassle. Then it dawned on me that we have an authority living in Florida: Aunt Ida. Ida confirmed there was no Esther Krakower among our relations.

Whitey's sister, nearly 100 and living in Queens, is a delightful, lovely and sharp woman. Her name is Elsie Lassman (nee Krakower,) the same first name as her friend and cousin, our Aunt Elsie. We speak on the phone occasionally and she recently was telling me how she misses Aunt Elsie. Then I decided to ask her about Esther Krakower. Elsie knew Esther slightly, as they grew up a few blocks apart and had the same last name, but she was no relation.

With Elsie, Ida and my mother all agreeing that Whitey had no sister named Esther the mystery was almost solved. The only dissonant information was on-line sources saying otherwise. Apparently the writers, seeing Bugsy had a friend and a wife with the uncommon name Krakower, assumed a relationship that wasn't there. It's a good assumption, but it turns out not to be true. The lesson, kiddies, is an old one: don't believe everything you see in print, except for The Brustman House Newsletter.

And there you have it, how Bugsy Siegel was almost our cousin.

NEWS, NOTES AND MILESTONES

First up is Lucy Schoenfeld. Miz Lucy says, "Will's home and out of the army. He's working for a contractor at Fort Belvoir and his wife Debby is working for a contractor at Walter Reed Hospital. I've decided to retire [from nursing] in October, big yeahh-hhhhhhhhh."

In preparation for retirement Lucy bought herself a house near Tampa in the town of Safety Harbor, Florida. She'll "next try to turn it into a tropical paradise of plants. The yard needs all the work." Thinking about covering her summer as well as winter bases, she thinks aloud, "Has anybody considered turning the Brustman House into a livable summer retreat? Or do we let it rot?"

Henry provides a graphic report on his health. (Warning: children and the squeamish, please avert your eyes.) "I had a rejection episode with my transplanted liver in September that landed me in the hospital for a few days. The reason was I had been taken off of the anti-rejection medicine - Prograf - because I was having diarrhea. The substitute did not prevent the rejection. The rejection was stopped (by massive doses of steroids) and I am back on Prograf, so I sometimes have diarrhea. Meanwhile, the diarrhea was making my butt sore, and a bunch of warts grew on it. I had an operation about a month ago to take the warts off. I am still somewhat sore, but it is getting better. Otherwise, I feel fine." Uh, thanks for the details, Henry.

Henry continues, "I'm trying to work 1/2 time. Some times it is more, sometimes it is less. When I'm not working [at my law practice] I fill my time by eating, sleeping, reading, and watching TV and Netflix movies. Now that the weather is warming up, I'll probably spend a little time gardening too. This is fine with me. I'm not bored at all."

Mike Schoenfeld writes, "I just completed my first year at law school and Ashley is graduating with her B.S from Towson. I'm looking forward to a school-free summer with an internship with the public defender's office to keep me out of trouble. We're looking forward to spending time in sunny Florida at Lucy's new house and getting some sand in our shoes. Love to all." Mike also hopes he can make it to the Reunion this August. Just as I was wrapping up publication of this newsletter, Mike wrote saying, "Ashley and I recently got engaged. We're thinking about getting married either next summer or the summer after next." Congratulations, Mike! And best wishes to Ashley.

Susan writes, "Hello all you cousins. Andy and I have just finished a year in Newark with another incredible spring that produced the most beautiful flowering trees you can imagine. Who knew! Anyway, Richie says everyone wants to know how Andy is. It's been almost a year since we got the cancer diagnosis. The tumor on the lung has shrunk, due to radiation and multiple chemotherapies. He still has nerve damage, which gives some discomfort. Some days are better than others. However the metastases in his adrenal glands have grown. It looks like there will be more chemo in the future and possibly some more radiation. We live each day as it comes. We have had good days between all this medical activity."

Susan continues, "The amazing Heinbach family has kept us looking forward to their visits, with corned beef, pickles, cheesecake, matzo ball soup, snacks, and lots of flowers. On one of those visits Henry H, Andy and I went out to eat, and low and behold the Queen (Latifah) showed up for lunch with a couple of her friends. Yes, her skin is as beautiful as her Revlon commercials, and she wasn't even wearing makeup. I hope I didn't make an ass of myself. Andy was very suave and complimented her on her new jazz styled music. Henry was the lucky one; he got to watch her eat her spare ribs. He said she had an interesting technique, which maybe he will demonstrate on cousins weekend."

She adds, "So many of you have called and given us comfort and support, from Susan B. and her books to Aunt Martha's medication commiseration and Sadie and Shayna's Valentines greetings. We can't begin to thank all of you individually but please continue your well wishes."

Finally, Susan notes, "Both Soren and Tristan are very busy doing their thing. They are happy in their lives. I can't wait to see them in June when my grandmother Ruth will be turning 100. Soren and Todd are flying in from Chicago and Tristan has just told us he has his tickets too. We all plan to be together in Syracuse for Ruth's grand birthday event."

Holly reports having "a lovely Passover with the Klatsky's at their home. We're so lucky to live near them." David and Gabby Klatsky are from the Australian Brustman branch and moved to LA a few years back. Holly continues, "Milo had to have a tooth pulled after falling and breaking it at the playground. A heart-felt thanks goes out to

Larry H. for giving professional and moral support."

Holly adds "On another note, Richie, as far as family matters are concerned, I am really just thinking about Andy and praying for him and keeping him, Susan, Tristan & Soren close in my heart."

Alice notes, "I quietly turned 65 last February. I'm in pretty good health, just fat and tired a lot - but I'm not on any medication! ta da. I'm going to have to move very soon, the apartment house I live in is slated for "eminent domain" demolition so I will available on my cell for now 323-493-2735. Please feel free to call me!"

Susan B checks in from Florida and says, "All is well with the Miami contingency. Diane and I saw a lot of Heinbachs this winter and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. Lots of fressing, laughing, etc. Henry bought a beach umbrella and is an official snowbird! We broke it in on the beach in my beautiful backyard. I'm looking forward to my July vacation - a friend's 60th Birthday Cruise to Alaska. About 20 of us are going to Vancouver, staying a couple of nights to soak up some local color, then heading off to Alaska while there's still ice caps. Should be most interesting and lots of fun. Diane and I are both thriving and in good health."

The rest of the Miami contingency, Diane, writes, "So today is Mother's day and I'm seeing Susan (of course) bitter sweet. I'm still not working - although next week I'm working with my sister and I have a 2nd call back for an interview on Thursday morning - so we'll see. I swim a lot, have a load of really good friends and I keep very busy. Don't know about Sharon Springs yet because I have a wedding in NY in Sept. and want to see Andy - who I spoke to yes-

The Brustman House Newsletter is published twice each year by the Brustman Cousins' Eating and Schmoozing Society. The society convenes at Sharon Springs, New York, each summer. Newsletter circulation is to direct descendants of Louis and Dora Brustman, their spouses, other relatives, their friends, and anybody who requests it. The idea is to keep everyone minimally in touch as the family grows and disperses over the land. Send articles, address changes, news or whatever to the editor, Richard Brustman, (518) 356-2563, at 313 West Highland Drive, Schenectady, New York 12303, e-mail: brustman@cornell.edu

terday. Other than that I'm busy with my planting and swimming and of course, eating way too much - but what the heck, right. It's in the DNA or something. Well, that's all she wrote."

Joan B responded to the call for news with, "Let's see, what have we been doing.... Edith, Joan, Jay, Allison and Marci took a wonderful trip to Israel in February. We had an amazing experience. We visited the Wall, Masada and swam in the Dead Sea. It was an experience that will be remembered our whole lives."



The Jay Brustmans and Edith in Israel

Joan adds, "Allison was named Captain of the 8th grade Solomon Schechter Girls Soccer team. She is the starting forward on the team. She also plays the outfield for the girls' softball team. Jay continues to coach both soccer and basketball. His love of sports shines through at each game he coaches. Marci is the family thespian. She had a major role in the presentation of Alice in Wonderland at the JCC in Scarsdale. She also has the role of Dorothy, in the Wizard of Oz at the Solomon Schechter School. Joan was elected to the Board of Trustees at the Harrison Jewish Community Center, joining Marc Lust as a board member." Congratulations, Joan!

Lois writes Alyssa graduated Colgate in May and is going to Cornell Law School in August. "She graduated magna cum laude and we all went up for the weekend, inclusive of Jay, Edie and Allison. (Marc's parent also came from Florida). Also, in June, Ben is graduating Middle School and going on to high school at Rye Country Day School. We are going up to Union College May 28th and the 30th for Marc's 35th Reunion. Danny is in a modern version of 'As

You Like It.' Maybe you and Loretta would like to join us one night? My Mom and Alyssa are coming up to see opening night and we may come but otherwise we will see the play on the weekend... probably both performances ...with love to all, Lois."

This winter Rita wrote, "Drew left Iraq Dec 25th 2007 for a layover in Qatar before he returned to Georgia. It just so happened his dad, Hoyt, was also in Qatar at the same time. After 14 months of not seeing each other, father and son finally got to spend some time together, in the desert. Of all the places in the world for both men to be at the same time.... Qatar! The world is shrinking for sure. Ain't that some kinda sh--."

In researching the Bugsy Siegel connection this winter (see story elsewhere in this issue) I talked to Elsie Lassman. She told me she was going to call Aunt Ida, which she did. However, Aunt Ida can't hear that well, so Ida told her to call Rita. Afterwards Rita wrote, "So yesterday I got a phone call from Elsie Lassman. I think you all know who she is. Well, I didn't and was taken by surprise. (She's a 1st cousin to Mark, Irv, Fersh, Elsie, Ida, and Al). She's 98 and can hear a pin drop. That's something I'm not used to with my mother. Anyhow, she told me how the two Elsie's kept in touch and how much she missed their talks. She told me that among the cousins she was closest to Aunt Elsie. She also told me about her grandson, Nicholas Lassman, who died 09/11. I'd heard about a distant relative who died and now the connection was made. I looked him up and read the touching memorials. Nicholas' father, Ira, lives in Palm Beach Gardens. Just wanted to let you know that Aunt Elsie was particularly remembered yesterday."

Rita also writes, "Not too long ago we had a visit from Drew and Brettanie and Jeff, all here at the same time. It was a great visit, always too short a visit. They never stay long enough to really feel like I've had enough of my kids, if you know what I mean. I miss them so much already. Rich and I are well and anxious to take some sort of vacation, but we have an older cat that needs attention, so we are duty bound. If anyone wants to vacation in the Orlando area and not worry about lodging fees, all you have to do is feed our cats and give Cuddles a subcutaneous shot of fluids every other day. Oh, one more thing... change the litter! Actually, I'm quite serious. Interested parties please apply."

She notes, "Aunt Ida is fine. She looks well and basically has no complaints. She'll be 88 this year and the glue is still holding. Gimme some o'dat!"

Jeff L tells us, "I'm always writing fiction. Maybe someday I'll work up the nerve to start a real book, maybe even publish it. A lot of things have been on my plate as far as work is concerned. From January to late February, I attended the Air Force's Airman Leadership School. Afterward I sewed on Staff Sergeant stripes. Drew won his stripes too. It seems as though your status in the military flips a switch and you are instantly looked up to."

He continues, "For a while I contemplated commissioning into the officer ranks and I've decided to go all the way with it. I also attained two professional certificates. One was for building/ troubleshooting/ maintaining fiber optic circuits from the size of household network, all the way up to a metropolis and beyond. The other was in overseeing telecommunications equipment."



Jeff Layson flaunts his stripes

"On the Sharon front, Brad and I are talking about driving up to Sharon this year. I look forward to that because I love to drive my Mustang and it needs to have its gears churning and the wheels spinning. I definitely want to see the gorge again as well as the other sites. I remember taking a tour of a microbrewery last time. Beer samples were quite nice."

Finally, Jeff adds, "I really hope Andy is feeling better through his treatment. I keep in contact with him now and then to wish him well. So Andy, if you read this, GET BETTER."

Toby reports, "The Smith family is fine, though we had an unfortunate incident Christmastime. As Randy and I were off playing tennis, our house was broken into

and all my jewelry stolen. The thieves came through an unlocked window, spent just minutes in the house despite the alarm horn and then out the front door. It was quite a shock as we rushed home expecting the usual false alarm, only to find several sheriffs' cars along with Brad and his police car and realize we had been robbed. Shortly after one bad guy was caught: we're now waiting to prosecute. We'd put them away for life, but most likely it will be just a slap on the wrist. The system sucks! By the way, none of my jewelry was recovered...some criminal's 'squeeze' is now enjoying my 'free' diamonds and pearls. But my comfort is I know even if they get away with it now, they'll pay in the end."

Toby continues, "But a good thing came out of this nightmare. We decided to update our alarm system, which led to replacing our old windows, which led to remodeling our kitchen, which led to remodeling old bathrooms and that's where we are now, in the midst of updating our home, something we've wanted to do for many years."

"Brad and Steve are great. Steve is completing his AA degree and will be moving to attend Berkeley College in the fall. We recently had a rare Smith Family get-together for a few short hours before Steve had to fly back to California. We also had a wonderful visit with Larry & Claire and Diane in Melbourne, FL. Before that, we got together with Richie & Loretta in Orlando. It was great seeing you all!"

Toby also notes, "Ida is doing pretty well despite some health issues that we're attending to. She enjoys bingo and an occasional trip on the gambling boat. All in all, we're happy and well. Our love to everyone, especially Andy, whom we remember and pray for his speedy recovery."

2008 Reunion Weekend

is the weekend of

August 2

So we have a head count, those intending to come should let Henry Heinbach know, especially if a room in the house is requested. His phone is (212) 533-3336. If you are staying in the Brustman House, Henry asks you to bring your own linens, towels, sleeping bags, etc. If you can.

**See you at the Brustman House!
in Sharon Springs!**

Brad says, "Things are going great down here. Steven was here for a wedding in South Florida. When he came back to Orlando, the family went to dinner; it was pretty nice. Work is great. I'll be applying for our Emergency Response Team, which is like our riot control unit. It's a big group of crazy cops that get to dress up in cool uniforms. We also get lots of neat tools to stick in our patrol cars. I'm looking forward to making the team. My girlfriend, Lesley, and I spend all of our free time together. We're planning a weeklong cruise to the Caribbean in October. It's my first cruise, so I'm pretty excited. We'd like to make it up to Sharon this year for the reunion, but that depends if I can actually get the time off."

My favorite nonagenarians, Martha and Saul are still going strong. Saul, at 94, still drives and they go everywhere. They drove to the Catskills this spring for Passover. Martha writes, "Saul and I spent our customary Passover stint at Kutcher's Country Club. Our room seemed city long blocks away from the dining room and lounges, and these long passageways were decoratively lined with full-length mirrors. I caught the reflection of a little old lady wearing a brilliantly colored print silk jacket (Chinese import) and crisply creased black pants stoically pushing a walker. I took another look. Holy Gee! That was me!!!"

Fred tells us, "In January I ran away to Queretaro, Mexico, the city I lived and worked in twenty years ago, to escape the northeast winter. As a pretext I enrolled in a language program there and studied Spanish. The weather wasn't as warm and comfy as I hoped, but it sure beat Boston. Later on, in March, Joan and I spent a delightful nine days in Tucson, AZ. At the Hacienda del Sol. The weather was beautiful and we had a fine time hiking in the desert parks, taking in plays, galleries and lectures, enjoying Mexican food, and relaxing."

Fred continues, "For Passover Richie and Loretta visited me in Newton. We began with a second Seder at Joan's (thank you Joan) and the next day we watched the Boston Marathon runners, from a vantage point just after the famous (around here) Heartbreak Hill, as they puffed through Newton on their way to Boston. In the afternoon we watched the Patriots Day Parade in Lexington, [the place where the American Revolution began.] It was a traditional parade with vets, flags, patriots, Brits, bands, banners, fire engines, WWII vehicles, and a few politicians."

"This June," Fred added, "I'll attend the Massachusetts Democratic Convention as an ex officio delegate. Later on I fly to Bermuda to ferry a sailboat back here after it

competes in the Newport to Bermuda race."

Loretta and I had a normal winter, except no foreign travel (unless you count the Bahamas.) We did get to Florida where I spent time bicycling. On the way back we stopped in Washington where we saw the Schoenfelds and Loren Heinbach. I speak regularly with Andy and even managed to inadvertently take a tour of North Jersey when I missed a turn while driving to visit him and Susan. Andy loaned me his DVD collection of "Curb Your Enthusiasm," telling me it was really funny. It was laugh out loud funny.

From Beijing, Dan says, "Things are a mess in China (earthquakes, uprisings, contagious viral infections, unbelievably tight Olympic security) but I'm fine. I spent the Chinese New Year holiday with my girlfriend in Taiwan. It's kind of like China without all the annoying Communism. I am hoping to make it back for cousin's weekend this summer."

Caroline told me a story about my two-year-old grandson, Tyler: After a swim in their backyard pool, she took off his trunks and diaper and let him play naked to dry off in the hot Los Vegas sun. Apparently, Caroline's walking the family dog, Buddy, had taught Tyler something. He soon yells to her: "I pooped. Get the plastic bag!" The Gilbert family will be visiting us in Albany for much of June.

Billy tells us, "Denks G-tt, we're all OK. Rosa, Julie, Karen and Lynn are still working and/or schooling. Lynn graduates Ramapo College May 16 with honors. In February Rosa and I took a 4-night cruise on the Queen Mary 2, from Brooklyn to the Bahamas and back. We had a terrific time! The weather was great and we spent a day at the beach. The ship itself is interesting in so many ways. It's 14 stories tall and as long as the Empire State Building is tall. It's made of steel, yet it floats. The service makes you feel nothing would give them more pleasure than to make your bed or bring another dessert. The food was very good, with the simplest items like steaks the best. The shows featured talented singers, dancers, and performers (not Broadway level yet, but very good.) The ship's décor is just beautiful. Musicians frequently play in public areas...very relaxing. One could get spoiled. We shared our table with very friendly people, including a couple who told us this was their 13th cruise (The husband was somewhat in awe of my appetite at dinner, but that's another story). I was a little apprehensive of traveling in February, but it worked out fine. So two thumbs up."

In May Billy wrote, "Henry and I met Amy Holcomb, her husband, Jeff, her mom Sylvia Edwards, and especially her beautiful 5-month old daughter, Amber, for lunch in New York. Amy is the granddaughter of Reuben Katz, (Grandma Dora's nephew who, I understand is 98 years old and lives in the Bronx,) and the daughter of Howard Katz, whom we knew from Sharon Springs. Two years ago, Reuben's caretaker put Amy in touch with my mother (who kept in touch with Reuben), and then with me. We met then also, because Amy always maintained contact with her grandparents, even after the untimely death of Howard, when Amy was only four years old. The Holcombs live in a suburb of Phoenix, AZ, and wanted Reuben to meet his great-granddaughter. We had a good time. I think Amy enjoyed meeting and learning about relatives who were completely unknown to her two years ago. Henry and I enjoyed ourselves very much also."

Karen writes, "This summer, I'll be working as a therapeutic support staff - in other words, a fancy mentor for kids with behavioral or emotional problems. I'll be in the Philadelphia area and I'm not sure what age group I'll be placed with. I'm looking forward, especially being able to deduct 48 cents from my gas mileage! One more year to go with my Masters program ...can't wait! I start my internship next year at a high school near Trenton with a reputation for gang involvement and less than stellar academics. It'll be a good way to get some street credit as a school counselor. My boyfriend Colter, who usually braves the elements to come to the Reunion, became an uncle and assumed the role of the crazy uncle with the cackling laugh. No big vacation plans this summer ...maybe just a weekend whitewater rafting trip with some friends and a couple of days at the beach. Looking forward to the Reunion!"

I asked Karen about her photography and she said, "The photography's good ...I've been practicing at the canal paths and Delaware River, blocks from where I'm living. My next thing is to practice taking portraits. ...I'd love to have a few good family shots. Last year, I started putting together some random pictures of the various.... shall we say textures... of the Brustman House. For example, there are a few close-ups of the wallpaper patterns, lawn chairs, and the creepy Farmer-in-the-Dell toy."

Lynn checks in, "I graduated in January. I don't miss the homework or projects, but sometimes miss the campus and the atmosphere. I'm glad to be home, though. I got a job part-time at a local library; it's a little boring at times, there are a lot of yellow spiders, and we get a lot of crazies there, but it suits me. I enjoy the quiet, the mugs

of tea, the old people, the sweaters, the reading, and the seemingly endless games of spider solitaire during slow periods. I also get to grab the new books and movies before any patron can see them. In May I secured an internship at the Met!! The Met!!! I'm soooo excited. It's unpaid, but totally worth it. I'll be working underneath the Senior Exhibit Designer. I'll be working twice a week through the fall. I hope to apply for grad school (for an M.A. in Museum Studies) this summer, and start in 2009. All in all, a very exciting time."

Julie writes, "In April I was called for jury duty and ended up being one of 8 jurors selected for a two week civil trial. It was quite an experience! It gave me a chance to see first-hand how the system works and I met some very nice people. It's not always as exciting as they make it out to be in TV dramas, but I'm glad I had the opportunity. My mom and I participated in the Revlon Walk for Woman 5k in May. It start-



Thumbs up at the finish line

ed in Times Square, went through Central Park and ended in the East Meadow. The weather was cold and damp, but that didn't stop everyone from having an awesome time. They had a band, a ticker tape celebration and Tiki Barber to cheer us on at the start! It's great to have fun and know you're doing it for a great cause. We're planning on doing a different walk in June! Looking forwards to seeing everyone this summer. Hope we get a good turnout for the reunion this year! Hope everyone is well!"

Andrea says, "The girls are enjoying our new home and have made a lot of new friends in the neighborhood. It will be a year in June -- maybe I should hang some pictures at this point? Our backyard borders the Town Forest, so our dogs are happy too. Mark and I recently became an Uncle and Aunt for the first time -- Mark's brother and his wife had a baby: Sam Riley Fidler, named for Mark's Grandpa Sam. They live in Portland, OR and we're hoping to visit them soon. We

made it to the Heinbachs for Passover in Edison, NJ. Sadie said the 4 Questions with some help from Mark. The applause was deafening, and much deserved. We send our love to all of our cousins and think of everyone often."

Larry tells us, "It's hard to believe over a year has passed since Uncle Mac's passing and almost a year since my mother's. We will be having her unveiling June 22nd. This date coincidentally happens to be both the date of my father's death as well as his birthday. My mother, as you may know, died the 24th of June, their anniversary. All is well with us. It seems life gets busier and more hectic as I get older. It gets harder to get everything done as time flies faster and faster. You would think as I get older I would be taking more time off, but it seems the opposite is happening. We did, however, take over a week off in March and went to Florida. Had a great time meeting up with the Habers and Randy and the Brustmans, Diane and Susan. We had a great time. Always do with these people. Claire and I secured a last minute short cruise out of Miami that really topped off our trip. I hear some family members are interested in doing a cruise next year. It would be nice if something could work out."

Larry continues, "Imagine my surprise when out of the blue I received a call from Jay inviting me to a Philadelphia 76ers basketball game. He said he had tickets and was coming down. He said nothing about the seats being practically courtside. You could see sweat and spit flying. What a guy. I have a picture of us on my phone. The kids are well, working hard and staying busy. I don't see them enough. Loren is in DC, teaching her little

The Rita Report

Last year the Cousins contributed \$2,833 in dues and rents towards the Brustman House's 2007 upkeep. Thank you, contributors! As you know, this is greatly appreciated.

More than ever, these contributions may make the difference in whether the House remains a family treasure or becomes some stranger's fix-up project.

Send in your 2008 annual dues, still a bargain at \$100. Affirm your "familyship." As usual, please make your check out to THE BRUSTMAN HOUSE and send to:

Rita Layson
803 Shallow Brook Ave
Winter Springs FL 32708

heart out. Jeff is in Philly transitioning jobs and working hard to break into the production end of films. Eric is in West Chester, PA cooking up a storm for now. I thank Susan Schoenfeld for the beautiful, hand-made baskets she made each member of my family from pieces of clothing from my mother's wardrobe. These are not only professional quality; they are pieces of art. The hours she put into this project and the care she took in her perfection are greatly appreciated. I also wanted to thank Andy for his technical iPod help and his vast music library he shares so unselfishly. Special thoughts to them both."

Loren writes, "For Passover, the Heimbachs had the first seder at my Uncle Billy's house in NJ. In attendance were: Uncle Billy, Aunt Rosa, Julie, Karen, Lynn, my Dad (Larry), my Mom (Claire), Eric, Jeff, Andrea, Mark, Sadie, Shayna, Uncle Henry and me (Loren.) We had a lovely time and missed Grandma Elsie greatly, although I certainly felt her presence. Also, we received thoughtful gifts Susan created from Grandma's clothes. They were unique baskets reminding us of the wonderful woman we all loved so dearly. It was great to be able to spend time with the family."

She also notes, "All the triplets are now graduated from college." [That long sigh of relief you hear is Larry.] "A few weeks ago, Obama came to speak in Philadelphia. Jeff is working there at the Franklin Fountain and for the event the Fountain's owners created a milkshake flavor, "Barak and White." Many coworkers found this offensive, including a black who mentioned feeling uncomfortable. Because none of the owners were around, Jeff made an executive decision to take the offensive sign down. A couple weeks later, the owners called Jeff into work early. Because of his actions, they told him, he was demoted and his benefits taken away. Well, this caused a huge uproar at work and many co-workers stood up for him without his asking. As a result, the owners offered Jeff back his former status and benefits. Originally Jeff was planning to leave the job, but chose not so he wouldn't inconvenience the other employees. Only Jeffrey!"

"As for me," Loren continues, "I am still teaching 6th grade Earth Science at KIPP AIM Academy in southeast, DC. It has been rough, but it's a lot better now. School runs from 7:45-5:00 plus Saturdays twice a month. I also take grad school classes twice a week from 5:30-8:30 to get my certification and masters in teaching. Life has been crazy, but I can definitely see the results with the kids. It's amazing to see their increased performance with high expectations and the ex-

tra support they need to catch up with their peers. They still drive me crazy (they are pen tapping fanatics!), but I guess they're growing on me a little. Although DC public schools currently rank last in performance in the US, the KIPP DC schools are doing some pretty neat things while trying to give underprivileged children in DC access to the education they deserve (who knows if that's what I'm doing, but I'm trying!)"

Jeff H writes, "I graduated from Temple this past February magna cum laude. I also did an internship in the Art Department of "The Dream of the Romans", an independent film that was shot in Philly starring Jeff Daniels and Lauren Graham. We're all very proud of the work Loren is doing in D.C. She is a little irked recently that the backside of her car was dented up a bit while it was parked on a street. Eric is doing well at West Chester. He's involved in some band now, and I'm told it has an upcoming show in Philadelphia. Passover went splendidly with the entire Heimbach clan, from the Brothers down to the smaller Fidlers, meeting up at Billy's house in Jersey. One surprise was the wonderful gifts Susan had made for us. It was incredibly thoughtful and, presumably, labor-intensive. We send her our collective thanks. Larry and Claire are doing well, making frequent trips down to Ocean City. On their most recent trip, I'm told that they brought along Henry Heimbach and my maternal grandfather, Eugene Neuberger. I'm sure that fun was had."

From Australia, John writes, "Love from the Aussie cousins. Life has been great during our Summer (your winter) and as usual we went on our vacation to Australia's Sunshine Coast over Christmas vacation, except it was not sunny...record rainfall and cyclones had us indoors for most of the two weeks overlooking the beautiful beach (which was closed for safety reasons.)

Nevertheless, a good break. March was exciting as we traveled to Surfers Paradise for (my mother) Sadie's 88th birthday. She is really well. I'm still traveling to China often, but trying to slow down the pace. Helsie is still the "Event Queen" of the Jewish community of Melbourne. We'll be in USA end of May and early June to visit friends and relatives in LA, NY and Boston. We hope all the family is well and hope you can come "Down under" to visit us soon."

Helsie adds "I went to Canberra, our national capital, for a parliamentary motion celebrating Israel's 60th anniversary. I went in a private jet and sat in the Parliament pinching myself on this historic occasion. Afterwards the Israeli Ambassador to Australia hosted a cocktail party to celebrate this great event. There I told our Prime Minister how proud I was to be present and it is a day I will always treasure. I was honoured to be one of the 400 invited Jewish leaders to be present. As Australian Jews, we are proud to have a government and opposition party that support Israel and has a strong alliance with the USA."

Nina Blumenfeld tells us "The Curator of the Museum of Jewish Heritage -- down in Battery Park -- sent me a letter saying a money order receipt from Jack Blumenfeld (Dora's nephew) will be on display in a case on the history of the Jewish community in the US. It's on the third floor of the Museum's Core Exhibition and will stay on display for at least a year. I had sent his receipts to the Museum many years ago. The museum kept some, and returned some. They were for passage for his brother to come to the states."

That's all Folks!

BRUSTMAN HOUSE BLOG

Last Summer I set up a Brustman House Blog. This Spring I added to it the family history, "**Shtetl to Sharon**, How the Brustmans came from Russia to New York City and Sharon Springs," a booklet I published several years ago. If you have Internet access you can view it by going to

<http://brustman.wordpress.com>

and clicking on "Who's Who" and then clicking on "Ancestors."

At the blog you can find contact information for family members and add or change your own listing. There is also a place for you to leave a note on any news you want to share. You can also leave a brief biography of yourself, which will help me if I ever get around to recompiling the family tree. (But don't worry about the information escaping to the Internet at large: I set it up so search engines can't scan the blog.)

The blog is a work in progress, so some of the pages are still bare. Help fill them out.