



L'Chaim!

Summer 2003

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News & "Chailights" of The Greater Altoona Jewish Community

Rabbis sign new contracts

Both Altoona rabbis have signed three-year contract extensions.

Rabbi Burt Schuman of Temple Beth Israel, who had been contemplating a move, has agreed to stay on. Likewise, Rabbi Ammos Chorny of Agudath Achim Synagogue.

The decisions strengthen and stabilize both congregations at a time when it's challenging to find rabbis,



Rabbi Burt Schuman and Rabbi Ammos Chorny have signed new contracts.

particularly in smaller markets.

Schuman will enter his ninth year at TBI while Chorny will begin his fourth.

Both are eager to approach the future here while addressing the inevitable challenges.

"I'm thrilled and pleased to continue to serve Temple Beth Israel and let us look forward to a time of creativity and growth in culture and education in our Jewish community," Schuman said.

"Our community is built on a strong foundation as Agudath Achim celebrates its 120th year of service to our tradition," Chorny said. "I am privileged with the opportunity to build on this foundation."

The Federation enjoys an excellent working relationship with both rabbis, and L'Chaim wishes them well.



Rey Altberg's imitation of Elvis help to make the annual Altoona International Jewish Film Festival another success. For details and plans for next year please see page 3.

Hendersons to host barbeque

Eddie and Kathy Henderson have graciously agreed to host the Federation's annual late-summer pool party-barbeque.

It will be held on Sunday, Aug. 24 beginning at 3 p.m.

Families and children are welcome, and the picnic will be catered.

The picnic was introduced last year, and was hosted by Federation vice president Michael Tomor and Tom Trexler.

Games are planned for the adults while the children socialize.

Directions and further details will be forthcoming.



Executive director's report

by Bill Wallen

Federation back at JMC

President Clark Adelman invited us to return and we accepted. After a two year absence, the Federation moved back home to the JMC on January 1.

The area is newly renovated and offers more space, but most importantly allows more money to go into programming, as there is no charge for rent.

Busy winter and spring

Scholar in Residence – Rabbi Uri Regev – March 21-23, co-sponsored by Temple Beth Israel and the Federation, Rabbi Regev who is the Executive Director of the World Union of



Progressive Judaism in Jerusalem spent the weekend in Altoona advocating for religious pluralism in Israel. In his presentations to the Federation, at services, and to the Sunday school, he encouraged Conservative and Reform Jews to become more active in developing services in Israel and in obtaining recognition for their movements.

The Pianist

On April 13, over 140 of our community joined together to view this Academy Award winning story about the triumph of the human spirit during the Holocaust. Although we were saddened by memories of this terrible time, we were strengthened by our sense of community.



The Old World Folk Band

After listening to the Klezmer group, Bernice Levinson described their music as "full of love for our people, our history, and our tradition."

The band appeared on May 18 at the Westsylvania Arts Festival. Later that evening they sang, played, and led the dancing at Agudath Achim's annual meeting. The Old World Folk Band truly made the spirit of Klezmer music come alive with their Polish Russian and Yiddish songs. Our Jewish souls were lifted with the simple Russian love song "Kalinka," from the rowdiness of the tavern in "Krechma" to the piety and glow of G-d's presence in "Chernobyl" and the unique love song "Borscht."

What could be more delightful than a bowl of Borscht, after all?

A 'super' party at Ports

Over 100 enjoyed the warmth and welcome of Leeanne and Josh Port at the Federation's 4th annual family super bowl party.

The food was plentiful and featured some hot food for a cold night, a vegetable chili and tortilla soup. Great potluck dishes were brought by the many families in attendance.

The winner of this year's pool, picking the winning team with the closest combined score was that great football analyst, David Katz. He is a 2-1 favorite for next year's game.

Federation embarks on community census

Federation is updating our Jewish Community census. Long-range planning committee co-chairs Mickey Port and Elliott Bilofsky remind everyone to complete their census forms and return them to the Federation office. Our last census was seven years ago and it is time for an update. Once the data is compiled, we will be scheduling focus group meetings to share the results and obtain input on the future direction of Federation activities.

Mickey has been part of our previous planning efforts and reports that they resulted in the development of the Senior

Outreach Program and Adult Social Club, the L'Chaim Newsletter, additional programming at Penn State Altoona, and more emphasis on Family Education. She said that our greater emphasis on local programming has been directed by your input through the focus groups and Board discussions.

Elliott is new to this process and will help focus on the needs and interests of families with young children.

Please fill out your forms and join in one of the focus groups that we will be scheduling in September.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 17, 24, 31	Interfaith series on
August 7, 14	Social Justice. Locations vary 7-8:30 p.m.
Aug 1-3	BBYO Reunion weekend
Aug 24	Altoona Jewish Community pool party/picnic at Henderson's
Aug 30	Bar Mitzvah of Scott Rosenthal
Sept 7	Altoona Jewish Community School resumes, Agudath Achim Congregation 10 a.m.
Sept 26	Erev Rosh Hashanah
Sept 27	Rosh Hashanah
Sept 28	Rosh Hashanah
Oct 5	Kol Nidre
Oct 6	Yom Kippur
Oct 11	Sukkot 1st day
Oct 12	Sukkot 2nd day
Oct 18	Shemini Atzeret
Oct 19	Simchat Torah

L'Chaim!

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Suggestions and feedback are welcome.

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Michael Tomor Film Festival co-chair (right) chats with guest speakers Sister Carol Rittner (left) and Sondra Myers.

Thriving Film Festival looks ahead to another year

The 4th Annual Film Festival was a resounding success.

According to co-chairs Michael Tomor and Barbara Hollander. Thursday evenings in February are now firmly established as dinner and movie nights for the Jewish community.

Tomor reported that each evening was an "event" with the film, performer, speaker, and special dinner.

A quick recap:

Schmelvis – included a 50's diners style meal with Rey Altberg as our Elvis impersonator and Rick Lonsinger singing the King's tunes.

Courage to Care – featured the visit to Altoona of the authors of the book and producers of the documentary. Sondra Myers and Sister Carol Rittner spoke to over 550 Junior High School students at Spring Cove as well as speaking at Mount Aloysius College.

The Vow – was our first Yiddish film and was preceded by a typical Eastern European dinner prepared by Chef Doug Simon. Yiddish songs were presented by Rabbi Schuman, who then led an after-film discussion on Jewish life in Poland in the 1930's.

Focus – A Hollywood production based

on an Arthur Miller story dealt with anti-Semitism in the United States during WWII. A Penn State Altoona class viewed the film with us and their professor, Karen McKinney, led a discussion following the film.

The committee was so encouraged about this year's success that they are already planning for February 2004. Tomor reports that we will be applying for a humanities grant to enable us to bring additional speakers and exhibits to further enhance the program.

Films already being considered for 2004 are:

- Nowhere in Africa (Academy Award Winner), Germany 2002.
- A Trumpet in the Wadi, Israel 2001.
- Advice and Dissent, Canada 2002.
- God is Great – I'm Not, France 2001.
- The Burial Society, Canada 2002.
- Unfair Competition, Italy 2001.

Tomor added, "The Festival provides an exciting opportunity to bring Jewish art and culture to our community."

To suggest additional films or to join the committee, call the Federation office.



L' Chaim Profile: Carol & Morley Cohn

Family's roots run deep in Altoona

Name: Carol & Morley Cohn.

Address: 4305 2nd Avenue Altoona.

Family: children: Peter, Craig, Amy, son-in-law Steven, and granddaughter Isabella.

High School: Both graduated from Altoona High School, class of 1956.

College: Morley graduated from the University of Michigan and St. Louis College of Pharmacy 1962, U.S. Army Reserves medical corps 1962-1968. Carol attended Harcum Junior College and graduated from Montifiore School of Technology.

Hobbies: Golf, skiing, biking, and jogging.

Congregation: The Cohns are members of both Agudath Achim Congregation and Temple Beth Israel.

We've been contributors to the Federation campaign since: 1963.

We've been to Israel: 1977 Young Leadership UJA.

Morley's first memories of being Jewish include: at 5 years old, he attended Agudath Achim Congregation in Huntingdon, and learning to write Hebrew and English at the same time. Morley eventually had to quit Hebrew as he was writing English left to right.

Our strongest Jewish influences at an early age were: Our parents, grandparents, and attending Sunday and Hebrew school. Morley was also made aware of his Jewishness by the secular community — some mean-spirited remarks, and as crazy as it sounds, in elementary school, we had to memorize Christmas carols. Also, our parents and grandparents set good examples for us by their activities in both the Jewish and secular communities. We have continued many of the same activities. Morley's uncle, Ben Cohn, helped to build the Temple. His uncle, Ruben Cohn and Carol's grandfather, Levi Skolnek helped to build the Synagogue.

The leaders in the Altoona Jewish community when we first came here were: Edgar Henderson, Abe Colbus, Sam Port, Phil Klevan, Mike Devorris, and Frank Titleman.



Morley and Carol Cohn have been members of Temple Beth Israel and Agudath Achim Synagogue for many years.

Past positions held: Morley has been president of the Greater Altoona Jewish Federation, president of the Jewish Memorial Center for two terms, chairman of Israel Bond campaign many times, and has also on the board of Temple Beth Israel congregation. Carol has been Hadassah president, a member of the Federation board: including chairing one of the first women's campaigns, Israel Bonds, Agudath Achim Sisterhood, and Sunday School Committee.

In our Jewish community, we are most proud: Of our very visible Jewish community — two congregations, JMC. We are equally proud of the very active role we play in the secular community.

Our vision for our Jewish community includes: That our two congregations work toward achieving greater union and harmony, and our community will have peace and financial security.

We remember them

So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are now part of us, as we remember them

Rita Pollack leaves legacy

Since L'Chaim's last issue, the Altoona Jewish community suffered its share of losses.

Perhaps none was more sudden than the untimely passing of Rita Pollack, a popular and beloved member of our community. Rita passed away on Jan. 21, 2003 at the age of 52.

Rabbi Burt Schuman and close friend Kathy Henderson offered moving eulogies.

Rabbi Schuman called Rita "a woman of grace and style, who faced extraordinary challenges and mammoth responsibilities with incredible inner strength, clarity and charm."

Kathy became friends with Rita shortly after moving to Altoona and quickly decided, "if Rita can love it here, so can I."

Rita was active at Temple Beth Israel in addition to the Blair Concert Chorale and the Blair County Arts Foundation. She regularly entertained large groups at her home on Frankstown Road and was known for her generosity.

Rita is survived by daughters, Andrea



Rita Pollack: 1951 – 2003

and Gabrielle and long-time companion, Richard Morrison.

Other members of the Jewish community who passed away include:

Gerry Antikol	Dec. 14, 2002
Miriam Kaminsky	Dec. 29, 2002
Hugh Goldberg	Jan. 18, 2003
Robert Allenbaugh	Feb. 9, 2003
Albert "Kayo" Karp	Feb. 15, 2003
Andy Jubelirer	March 6, 2003

Social Club renamed for Gerry Antikol

Club members have unanimously decided to name the group in memory of their dear friend, Gerry Antikol. Gerry was a co-founder of the club, helped plan programs and always called members encouraging them to attend all of the luncheons.

Gerry was known as the telephone voice of the Synagogue Sisterhood. She referred to herself as "Altoona's oldest call girl." In addition to reminding people of events, she provided a cheery hello to all who were ill or homebound. In her honor, the Synagogue has named their new automated telephone message program the "Gerry phone."

Bill Wallen reports that "Gerry was an integral component of our community's Senior Outreach Program. Gerry and Mo looked after many of our seniors through phone calls, home visits, and invitations to their home for a joyous holiday meal."

We all miss Gerry and know that her memory will always be a blessing.



Gerry Antikol

Andy Jubelirer camp scholarship fund established



Andy Jubelirer: 1951 – 2003

Senator Bob Jubelirer, Mrs. Myra Friedman and the Jubelirer family have initiated an annual camp scholarship in memory of Andy.

They are establishing an Endowment Fund at the Federation that will help one of our communities children to attend a Jewish camp each year.

It will be part of the Y.E.S. program (Youth Educational Scholarship) which funds camp and other experiential programs to help develop a strong Jewish identity in our youth.

The idea was suggested by family friend Roz Sky, who remembered that

Andy and his friends Mike Scheinberg and Izzy Sky spent some of their happiest times at summer camp.

Roz states that "we all feel that helping others to have a memorable camp experience will be a great tribute to Andy's memory."

The Jubelirer's and Friedman's have made a very generous contribution to the Endowment Fund and the Federation has agreed to match it with contributions from our community.

Please help us by sending your check to the office and indicating that it is for the Andy Jubelirer Camp Fund.

Smile for the camera: The



Irene Wilkinson poses with grandkids.



The entire Sunday School, after successfully searching f



Jan Houseman and son Ian.



Ellie Bilofsky blooms at Purim.



Sunday School students (from left) Dina Bilofsky, Allison Cohen and Dana Holiday participate in the model Seder.



Kevin Thaler contemplates a summer without Sunday School.

Jewish community in focus



All dressed for Purim were, from left: Samantha Bilofsky, Sophira Morris and Falon Morris.



Sunday School aides (from left) Erica Binus, Rachel Hollander and Sam Gordon get ready to draw straws to collect the Karen Ami.

for the Afikomin, was all smiles during the model Seder.



Nicole Lipitz spins a mean cotton candy.



Jacob Gordon (left) and Daniel Chorny are poised for the model Seder.



Jason Kivitz hopes his Jets are in next year's Super Bowl.



L'Chaim perspective: Margalit Younger

'If one person has the potential to change the world, imagine the power we will have together'

By Margalit Younger

It is a relatively warm day today, around -5C, and the snow is melting away. After a long, frozen, and dreary winter, it is wonderful to feel the sun again – Spring has finally arrived in Russia.

I am currently on a program called AMITIM ("colleagues" in Hebrew), in which a select group of North American college graduates and post-military Israelis, ages 21-27, live and work together in an underdeveloped Jewish community abroad for 6-8 months. The AMITIM program divides participants into smaller teams of 3-4 people in various communities. This year, with 21 participants, we are broken up into 6 groups. Due to the fact that AMITIM originated on the principle of working in the former Soviet Union, the majority of the groups are located in Russia and Ukraine. (The other two groups are in Turkey and South Africa.) The goals of AMITIM are to rebuild and strengthen Jewish infrastructures abroad, redefine relations between North Americans and Israelis, and establish and reinforce the ties between Israel and Diaspora communities.

My AMITIM group comprises a 22 year old from New York City, a 27 year old from Tel Aviv, and myself. We live and work in Kazan, the capital of a Muslim province called Tatarstan. We arrived shortly before Hannukah began and plunged into work right away, focusing our energies on holiday activities for the various Jewish organizations and clubs. During our non-holiday schedule, we do a variety of different tasks such as plan activities for, and participate in, the university youth club, the high school club, the Sunday School, and the women's club. We teach English and Hebrew at the Jewish day school, have Havdallah every week at our apartment for the youth club, attend and do peulot for Kabbalat Shabbat at the JDC's elderly club and Kabbalat Shabbat for the youth club, attend "Warm Houses" for the elderly, teach Ulpan and Limudiah classes, and lead the English Club. In addition, we have shiurim with the Rabbi and individual Russian lessons. Occasionally, we travel to outlying smaller Jewish communities to celebrate Shabbat and teach about traditions.

Living and working in Russia for the past four and a half months has been a whirlwind of constant activity and new expe-

riences. I have been introduced to a completely new way of life, which has had its ups and downs. I have a new appreciation for certain comforts I am afforded in the U.S., such as turning on the faucet and knowing water will come out. On the other hand, I have been awakened to a society in which, though the majority of people are struggling financially, they are



Margalit has spent the last year in Russia

deeply committed to bettering themselves, particularly within the Kazan Jewish community. I came to a community that I originally thought was going to be "underdeveloped." I soon noticed that this community is thriving; the Jewish organizations work together harmoniously, most likely due to the fact that they are all located (along with the only synagogue, which is Chabad), in one building.

At times, I have felt that we are needed here and other times, not. I have come to realize, however, that although I contribute in making an impact, both personal and as part of AMTIM, the affect of living and working here has had a tremendous impact on me. Some of the most important lessons I have learned are from living and working with the same people day in and day out, as well as working with an Israeli organization (AMTIM is sponsored by the Jewish Agency for Israel). I have learned a lot about my roommates, furthered my understanding of New York and Israeli cultures, and gained perspective in overcoming language and cultural barriers. Although I do not know what I will do after the conclusion of this program, I do know that the experiences and lessons learned will stay with me for a long time.





The Sunday School faculty put on their best face for the annual Purim carnival skit.

Sunday School wraps eventful year

By Phyllis Thaler

As our Sunday school year comes to a close, I am amazed at how the year has flown. The Altoona Jewish Community School is an upbeat and interesting place full of noise, laughter and friends. Students study, ask questions, search for answers and learn. The morning includes discussions, song, bible stories, and current events. We learn prayers, speak of our traditions, and take part in holiday celebrations. We enjoy a sense of community where our children can develop pride in their Jewish heritage. This year has gone well. We are already working on some new ideas to improve the Jewish education we will offer next year.

Sue Katz and I will continue as co principals. Fortunately, most of our teachers are returning as well. A big thanks to Bonnie Gordon and Barry Allen for their tremendous dedication. These teachers and other adults who have seized the opportunity to be involved will tell you that there is no greater gift than having the chance to watch our children grow and learn in our small but mighty religious school. Through teaching, we learn. We are also rewarded by the joy and gratification that comes from knowing that we've impacted young lives and helped shape our Jewish future.

This past year included several wonderful holiday celebra-



Bonnie Gordon and Barry Allen, who are retiring as teachers, received gifts recognizing their years of service.

tions. At the Hanukkah party, the children visited learning stations where they recited blessings, played dreidle, heard stories, and decorated cookies. We all enjoyed the many menorahs brought from home. The Purim carnival was well attended. Many of the younger children came in costume and took part in our annual parade. There were carnival booths created and run by each class as well as a lunch of kosher hot dogs and Hamentashen. For entertainment we were treated to a wonderfully funny Purim play by our cast of teachers. Especially memorable this year was the Passover model Seder. We read from a haggadah written and illustrated by the children. And we watched and listened as the classes presented their interpretations of the story of the exodus. The children did an outstanding job! The parents, grandparents and friends in attendance will tell you that even the oldest among us learned something new.

Earlier in the year, the 4th-6th grade students and their parents participated in a parallel learning session. The topic was "Being a Mensch". This interactive program included skits, role-playing, and discussion. By combining learning and fun the children had an opportunity to explore issues such as honesty and not embarrassing others.

Have a great summer! See you at Sunday school in the fall.

L'Chaim couples quiz: Who belongs to whom

(answers below)



Correct answers would be A (Joel and Barbara Hollander), G (Barbara and Gary Price), and I (Altoona Mayor Tom Martin with wife Christina). Just enjoying each other's company are B (Michael Cohen and Sue Simon), C (Marilyn Muhlfelder and Jeff Greenberg), D (Ed O'Brien and Mickey Port), E (Dianne Rudel and Bobby Neidorff), F (newly-elected Judge Elizabeth Doyle and Mildred Miller) and H (Neil Port and Barb O'Brien).

Schuman performs at Mishler

The Blair County Arts Foundation proudly presented Rabbi Burt Schuman in concert at the Mishler Theater on June 24.

The program featured the Best of Sondheim, Bernstein, Harold Arlen, Rodgers and Hart, plus a dash of American-Jewish music from Blair County's king of chutzpah.

Barbara Weller Crain accompanied at the piano and Michelle

McGowan and Les Weiss sang with the Rabbi.

Proceeds benefited The Blair County Arts Foundation, The Home Nursing Agency's AIDS Intervention Project, and Family Services of Altoona.

Additional contributions benefited The World Union of Progressive Judaism, which supports Conservative and Reform programs in Israel.



The Allen family (from left) Karen, Lawrence and Erin were featured in a three-generation confirmation program at Temple Beth Israel on May 30.

Confirmants honored

Temple Beth Israel celebrated their first tri-generational confirmation on Friday, May 30. Erin Allen, mother Karen, and grandfather Lawrence, provided us with a very inspirational service. In their address to the congregation they focused on the importance of life cycle events in their family.

Agudath Achim held its Confirmation services on June 6. The theme was "searching for our Jewish identity."

This year's class consisted of Daniel Chorny, Annie Schneider and Brian Thaler.

Here are their comments:

"Following a strict code of ethics and values, through which, as the years progress, I will be considered to be an upstanding member of the Jewish community. I hope I will always be ready for the challenge."



Daniel Chorny



Annie Schneider

"It's an honor for me to be confirmed and carry on my Jewish tradition. Confirmation marks a milestone in my Jewish education."

"While I sometimes put up a fight about going every week, I now realize how much I have learned over all of these years.

I'm glad to have had the opportunity to learn about our Jewish ancestors, customs, traditions, and heritage."



Brian Thaler

Federation Board

Executive committee:

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V. President	Sue Simon
V. President	Roz Sky
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 Jeff Greenberg
 Rob Herman
 Joel Hollander
 Bernice Levinson
 Dr. Josh Port
 Phyllis Port
 Madelyn Greenberg
 Tobi Rispoli
 Yale Schulman
 Joel Younger
 Clark Adelman
 Dr. Andrew Gurman

Rabbis:

Amnos Chorny
 Burt Schuman

Talent show in works

Coming to a theater near you: The Federation Follies.

Mark your calendars and sharpen your talents! On Sunday, October 26, the Mishler Theater will resonate with the singing, dancing, and dramatic skills of the members of our Jewish community.

Our planning committee, under the leadership of Mickey and Neil Port, is developing a script and will be recruiting both planners and performers to make this into a memorable event.

Look for more information to be sent during the summer and plan to be a part of the action.

BBYO reunion set August 1-3

Past members of the B'nai Brith Youth Organization (Allegheny Mountain Council) are staging a reunion in Altoona on Aug. 1-3.

Plans have been in the works for the last couple of months and E-mail addresses are being gathered from past members from Altoona, Johnstown, State College, Lewistown, Lock Haven, Indiana, Clearfield and DuBois. At this point, more than 50 people have committed to attending.

The main events planned include a Friday night gathering picnic/pool party on Saturday afternoon at the home of Steve and Amy Seltzer, a Saturday night dinner-dance at Temple Beth Israel, and a Sunday morning brunch at Agudath Achim Synagogue. The registration fee of \$75/adult and \$25/child (15 yrs. old) will cover the food, facilities, and other amenities at these events. The Saturday night and Sunday morning events will be catered.

The Jewish Federation in Altoona has generously volunteered to help subsidize the cost of the Sunday brunch.

The Hampton Inn Hotel has reserved a block of rooms for all of us. Greg Morris, another former Altoona AZA member, is one of the owners of the hotel and has generously offered a discounted rate of \$64/room/night. Call (814) 941-3500 to reserve one of the rooms in the block. You need to mention BBYO reunion when making your reservation and rooms are being held until July 1.

Please send back the registration form below, along with a check to: Neil Rudel,



The way we were; Cinda Rosenberg (left), Sam Coppersmith, and Alice Forshner relax at a 1970 BBYO convention. Rosenberg has helped organize a reunion this summer.

612 Robertdale Drive, Duncansville, PA 16635.

Make your check payable to AMC Reunion.

AMC Reunion Organizing Committee:

Terri Goldberg

(terrigoldberg@yahoo.com, 617-489-2891)

Cinda Rosenberg

(gulliver4@aol.com, 310-454-8556)

Neil Rudel

(scupe@aol.com, 814-695-8488)

Judi Sevel

(jasevel@ilstu.edu, 309-438-3733)

Jay Silberblatt

(jnsilberg@aol.com, 412-232-0580)

REGISTRATION FORM

Cost: \$75/adult; \$25/child

Current Name of Former BBYO Member:

Address:

Phone:E-mail address:

Current Occupation:

Name of Spouse/Significant Other that also

Plans to Attend:

Number of Children that Plan to Attend:

Names & Ages of the Children:



L' Chaim News & Notes:

Special best wishes on recent milestone birthdays to:

**Ruth Ann Rosend
Marty Weinstein
Minerva Auerbach
Yale Schulman
Ida Schulman
Paul Blender**

Be sure to wish a happy birthday to **Bess Lang on July 30.**
Congratulations to our **Bat/Bar Mitzvahs of 2003**

**Chelsea & Ryan Keenan
Kathryn & Erica Schmidt
Sara Arlick
Michael Kivitz**



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