

## Three Generations of Mohels



*Rabbi Solomon Cohen passed on the tradition to his son Rabbi Avraham Cohen, right, and grandson Rabbi Erza Cohen.*

The Cohens of Southfield are a cut above the rest and they're clearly used to cutting jokes as they are now three generations of mohels.

It began with Rabbi Solomon (Shlomo) Cohen, who immigrated from Israel to Rochester, N.Y., at age 24 in 1947. When he discovered there wasn't a qualified mohel around, he promptly filled the vacancy himself. During the next 40 years, Solomon circumcised thousands of Jewish baby boys in Rochester and its surrounding cities.

Family lore has it he was once pulled over for speeding and, after a quick game of Jewish geography, discovered he'd been the mohel at the cop's bris. (No ticket after that revelation.)

Solomon cherished being a mohel until he passed away in 2002.

Like father, like son. In 1980, Solomon's son, Rabbi Avraham Cohen, relocated to Israel, where he became a certified rabbi, sofer and mohel. He trained under Shaarey Tzedek hospital's well-known mohel, Rabbi Yossel Weissberg. For six weeks, Avraham attended between 8 and 12 circumcisions per day (except Shabbat), getting more hands-on experience than most certified mohels get in their first few years of practicing



*Rabbi Solomon Cohen*  
 detroitmohel.com.)

Avraham returned to Detroit as a mohel and his family grew. His children had a front-row seat at every bris and his son, Ezra, was particularly fascinated, always peppering Avraham with questions afterwards. When people tried to move the young boys, Avraham joked they were MITs (Mohelim In Training).

The joke became reality. Rabbi Ezra Cohen debuted as a mohel in 2008 at the bris of his second son, named Shlomo after the first mohel in the family. Avraham helped Ezra break into the market by encouraging clients to use him while he oversaw the bris.

To date, Avraham has done thousands of circumcisions (including grown men) and Ezra has done hundreds. They often attend each other's brissim, observing each other and improving, particularly in terms of minimizing the pain for the baby and parents.

Both Avraham and Ezra say they love being part of people's simchahs and helping them perform this important and special mitzvah. (Find out more at

These days, Ezra uses his "bag of honor," the same bris bag his grandfather used. He has noticed that his 12-year-old son has been observing him perform brissim with the same fascination he had years ago, so both Rabbi Cohens are hoping to have a fourth-generation mohel in the family one day!

— Rochel Burstyn, Contributing Writer