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*The Indiana Jewish*

# Post & Opinion

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## Passover Greetings



Art by Bruce David

# The Exodus Haggadah by Ben-Mordecai

## Interview by Shoshana Harper

**Harper:** In our pre-Pesach interview last year, you boldly stated your goal in writing *The*

*Exodus Haggadah* was to make the Passover seder more accessible to contemporary North

American Jews. Have you succeeded?

**Ben-Mordecai:** (Laughter.) Well, I'd say the process has begun, but we have a long way

to go – there are 6.5 million Jews in North America!

**Harper:** What did you mean by “accessible”?

**Ben-Mordecai:** All kidding aside, by “accessible” I mean, presented in a way that a person can immediately understand and find meaningful and interesting even without any special training.

**Harper:** In your mind, what is inaccessible about the regular Passover seder?

**Ben-Mordecai:** The seder invites us to celebrate our ancestors' liberation from Egyptian slavery – an event we don't know much about – using rituals that are foreign to us in a language we don't understand, reading commentary written for people whose daily entertainment was learning Jewish national and religious texts. For nearly a century, North American Jews have been caught between a rock and a hard place: whether to meet the demands of family, work, school, bills and contemporary culture or learn our ancient texts and enjoy the richness of our own unique culture. After a 10-hour workday, most of us find TV and a beer more relaxing than learning Biblical Hebrew.

**Harper:** Doesn't the standard haggadah provide instructions and explanations?

**Ben-Mordecai:** Not really. The standard haggadah presumes that we're all trained in Jewish history and culture and that we know the purpose of the seder rituals and readings. For many of us, the demands of everyday life limit our ongoing training to at most a few hours each year. For example, the standard haggadah emphasizes the need to wash our hands twice at the seder. For that ritual to have meaning, we must understand it – otherwise it's just a tiresome gesture not much different from having guests put white chalk on their ears.

**Harper:** How does *The Exodus Haggadah* make the seder accessible?

**Ben-Mordecai:** First, it gives us complete details about the events we are celebrating: It includes the complete story of the Exodus from Egypt, and it includes notes about life in ancient Egypt that are pertinent to the Exodus. Second, it gives explanations for the rituals in easy-to-understand language. Take handwashing, for example. Before engaging in a spiritual act, a person prepares himself or herself. A yogi might wash his face, hands, and feet to get a sense – spiritual sense, mind you – of cares, negative thoughts, guilt, leaving his presence in order to free his



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mind for spiritual tasks. Handwashing at the seder serves the identical function. Explained in this way, handwashing has a purpose and people can try it, participate in it, get behind it.

**Harper:** What about Kiddush?

**Ben-Mordecai:** All of us have attended a formal dinner where glasses were lifted to the guest of honor. The person making the toast took care to mention a noteworthy deed and expressed gratitude the entire assembly felt toward the honoree. A Kiddush is a toast. Yes, it's in a foreign language and the words are now formalized, but it serves the same purpose. It is, in essence, a toast to G-d.

**Harper:** Does *The Exodus Haggadah* "dumb down" the seder?

**Ben-Mordecai:** Not at all. The opposite in fact. *The Exodus Haggadah* operates from the assumption that the story

of the liberation from slavery, history, linguistics, Egyptian deities, and rabbinic commentary are all interesting and learnable. The key is to present all the information necessary – in margin notes – to fill in the gaps in people's knowledge. With context, everything comes into place. *The Exodus Haggadah* is about context.

**Harper:** How have people responded to *The Exodus Haggadah* so far?

**Ben-Mordecai:** People have responded even better than I had hoped. At my own shul, a Conservative synagogue, people whom I'd never met have approached me and thanked me for the haggadah. Recently, one woman who actually had tears in her eyes told



me that her seders were the most meaningful and interesting ever, as a result of using *The Exodus Haggadah*. Another woman bought three different haggadot so the family could decide which to use for their seder – and then ordered 14, telling the publisher that after comparing them, *The Exodus Haggadah* was the unanimous choice of her entire family.

To learn more about *The Exodus Haggadah* and how to arrange for Ben-Mordecai to give a talk and book signing, go to [www.ExodusHaggadah.com](http://www.ExodusHaggadah.com). Copies of the book can be purchased for \$18.95 plus tax, where applicable, and plus shipping and handling at [www.ExodusHaggadah.com](http://www.ExodusHaggadah.com) and in some bookstores and synagogue gift shops or by

sending a check or money order to Vayomer Publishing, PO Box 60382, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

*Shoshana Harper is a freelance journalist and owner of Women-At-Work: Creative Solutions for Your Home & Office, where she can be found organizing other people's spaces. Ms. Harper can be reached at [www.women-at-work.net](http://www.women-at-work.net) or at 317-414-1480.*

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# Passover Events

**Congregation Beth-El Zedeck** – 600 W. 70th St. Indianapolis, 317-253-3441

Sun., April 20 – Congregational seder, 6:30 p.m. Open to all who wish to be part of a joyous musical, entertaining and inspirational celebration. Sisterhood will prepare a complete festive seder meal. Reservations are limited and only round tables will be available, with a limit of 8–10 seated at each table. \$30/adult/members, \$35/adult/nonmember, \$23/child ages 2–11/member, \$28/child ages 2–11 nonmember. For more information and reservations, please contact the synagogue office at 317-253-3441.

Sun., April 20 – Passover Festival Service, 10:00 a.m.

Sat., April 26 – Shabbat, Passover Festival & Yizkor Service, 10:00 a.m.

**Congregation Shaarey Tefilla** – 3085 W. 116th St. Carmel, 317-733-2169

Sun., April 20 – First Day Service – 9 a.m.

Sun., April 20 – Second Eve Service – 5–5:30 p.m. – early service before seder

Mon April 21 – Second Day Service – 9 a.m.

Fri Apr 25 – Seventh Eve Service – 6:30 p.m.

Sat Apr 26 – Seventh Day Service – 9 a.m.

Sat Apr 26 – Eighth Eve – Passover Nite Party and Service – 9 p.m.

Sun Apr 27 – Eighth Day Passover – Yizkor Service – 9 a.m.

**Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation** – 6501 N. Meridian, Indianapolis, 317-255-6447

Sun., April 20, Second Night Seder, 6:00 p.m. Annual family congregational Seder. Retelling of the Exodus story from our haggadot; children will ask the four questions and search for the afikomen, drink the four cups of wine, and enjoy a fully catered dinner. Song, prayer, spirituality, and history – an event to be shared by all! Supported in part by IHC Sisterhood, catered by Bruce's Catering, and led by our clergy. Adults, \$25 members / \$30 nonmembers; children 2–10, \$12 members / \$17 nonmembers. Please RSVP with payment by Mon., April 14.

### Women's Seder at Beth Shalom

Women's Seder at Beth Shalom, Bloomington, Ind., Mon., April 7, 7:30 p.m. As in past years, we come together to sing and to celebrate freedom, the theme of Passover. This year's interfaith gathering will support (with the suggested minimum donation of \$10) our commitment to the Habitat for Humanity Interfaith Build in which we are participating this summer/fall with sister Bloomington faith communities. Volunteers for planning and implementing the seder needed! Please contact Debby Allmayer, dallmayer@indiana.edu.

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PASSOVER GREETINGS

# Congregations and organizations celebrated Purim

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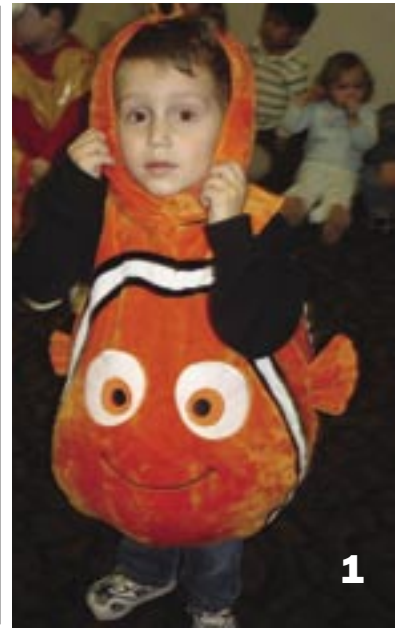
## Photos

1-Gabriella Deer was Nemo for the day at JCC preschool. (Photo JCC).

2-JCC preschoolers celebrate Purim (Photo JCC).

3-Lilly Thaxton was the green fairy at the JCC preschool Purim parade (Photo JCC).

4-Gracie Cohen is queen Ester with Rabbi Dennis Sasso as Mickey Mouse at Beth-El Zedeck Purim carnival (Photo by Jeff Cohen).



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# Passover recipes

Compiled by DEBORAH TEHRANI

Passover recipes from Mizrachi and Sephardi seder tables.

## Albondigas (Sephardic Matzo Ball Soup) By Rose Alt

- 3 cups matzah meal
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup finely chopped walnuts (optional)
- 1/4 cup warm chicken broth (enough to moisten dough)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Mix matzah meal with eggs. Add 1/4 cup nuts (if using). Add warm chicken broth (if dough is not moist enough, add a little more chicken broth). Add salt and pepper. Wet hands and roll balls the size of marbles. Drop into simmering chicken broth. Add 3/4 cup of walnut to broth. Simmer 1 hour. Soup will turn dark.

## Babanatza Sephardic Matzah Pudding By Saddelle Ray

- 10 matzahs
- 12 eggs (if extra large, use 10)
- 1 cup orange juice (if desired)
- 1:1 cups sugar (if using 1 cup orange juice, use 1 cup sugar)
- 3/4 cup oil
- 1 cup white raisins (soak about 1 hour before)
- 1 cup chopped walnuts sugar and cinnamon mixed

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Spray pan (disposable aluminum with high sides) with cooking spray. In large bowl, add orange juice and eggs. Beat by hand to mix, then beat with mixer on whip until mixture is light and frothy. Mix matzah, sugar, oil, raisins, cinnamon and sugar together. Gently mix eggs into matzah and blend well. (If eggs are not frothy when adding to mixture, whip up again). Pour into pan and even out batter. Sprinkle mixture with remaining nuts, cinnamon and sugar on top. Place cake on center rack of oven. Check at half-hour intervals by putting toothpick in center of pan. Sides should slightly pull away from pan when done. It should be a

little moist when taken out of oven, as well. Set up when cool.

**To make syrup:** Mix 3/4 cup water and 1 cup sugar. Add lemon juice to taste. Cook until just sticky but not thick. Pour over babanatza when it has cooled. Cake can be served cold or at room temperature.

## Syrian Spiced Meat with Eggplant and Prunes By Tina Wasserman

- 2 lbs. ground chuck meat
- 2 tsp. ground allspice
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- Pepper to taste
- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 6 medium onions, halved lengthwise, then cut into fourths
- 4 large red potatoes, cut into eighths
- 12 ounces pitted prunes
- 1 large eggplant, quartered lengthwise and cut into 1-inch slices
- 2 six-ounce cans of regular (not flavored) tomato paste
- 1/4 cup light brown sugar
- 3/4 cup fresh lemon juice

In a large 2-quart bowl, combine the ground meat with the allspice, cinnamon, salt and pepper. Distribute spices evenly by mixing first with fork and then with your hands. Place oil in bottom of a 6-quart Dutch oven or metal casserole. Place half of the onion slices into bottom of pot. Cover with half of meat, making sure that you press meat evenly and firmly into onions. Scatter half of the potatoes, prunes and eggplant over meat. Repeat with remaining onions, seasoned meat, potatoes, prunes and eggplant. In a 3-quart bowl, combine tomato paste with remaining ingredients, along with salt and pepper to taste, into smooth sauce. Pour sauce over meat and vegetables. Gently swirl pan to allow sauce to permeate dish evenly. Cover pot and bring to boil over medium high heat. Keeping meat at medium simmer, cook mixture for 2 hours, or until potatoes are tender and dish is thickened. Ashkenazi law prohibits eating rice during Passover, but if you're Sephardic, serve this dish with rice flavored with some pine nuts and sautéed onions.

# Camps

## Summer camp thrives despite threat of recession

Many are concerned with the current economic trends. Some say recession is just around the corner. Some businesses are already seeing the effects. Yet despite the threat of recession, the number of children signing up for summer camp appears to be on the rise.

Flat Rock River YMCA Camp in southern Indiana camp set a record for most campers registered by the

(Continued on page IN 8)



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## Camps

*(Continued from page IN 7)*

end of February. Last year more than 1,000 kids spent at least a week at Flat Rock. This year, the camp expects to increase the number of children served by 10 percent.

Camps like Flat Rock, which offer one or two-week resident camps for 7- to 16-year-olds, are often the last to feel the effects of economic trouble. "People don't skimp on their kids," reported Executive Director Steve Heiny. "Even when they have to cut back on other things, parents still feel that it's important to send their kids to camp."

Heiny feels that parents value the friendships their kids form at camp. At camps like Flat Rock, children spend their days riding horses, swimming, canoeing, and climbing the 50' Alpine Tower. They make friends. And at Flat Rock, they learn about the YMCA's four core values: Caring, Respect, Responsibility and Honesty.

Flat Rock campers and staff come from all over the world, including Spain, China, and England, offering the opportunity to interact with and make friends from different cultures. Heiny says: "Parents believe that the experience of camp – the friendships, the values, the fun – is worth it."

For information about the YMCA Flat Rock River Camp, call 888-828-9622 or visit [www.flatrockymca.org](http://www.flatrockymca.org).

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## 8 Seasons of Children's Summer Camps

The Mud Creek Players opens its 8th season of Barn R.A.T.S. (that's Really Awesome Theater School) this summer with five sessions of elementary school camp and two sessions designated for middle school students. The camp was founded in 2000 to encourage elementary and middle school students to investigate and participate in live theater.

Barn R.A.T.S. is open to elementary school students ages 7 – 11 and middle school students in grades 6 – 8. Elementary school camp dates: June 16–20; June 23–27; July 14–18; July 21–25; and July 28 – August 1. Middle school camps: June 9–13 and July 7–11.

Camp directors Lynne

Perkins and Matt Socey, a husband and wife team, together have over 25 years of theater experience. Lynne grew up with the Mud Creek Players, and her father, Bill Perkins, is directing *Avanti*, the next show in the Mud Creek Season.

Each week, Barn R.A.T.S. explores sound, movement, music, script writing, and improvisation. Students create a production of their own, which is performed each Friday afternoon for parents and friends. No two final performances are alike as the group dynamics change weekly depending on the personalities of the students involved.

High school students with an interest in theater volunteer for one week at a time

during the summer to build up college entrance portfolios or to earn community service hours. Interested teens can obtain an application by calling 290-5343, option 2.

*Avanti* opens on Fri., April 25. Performances are Fridays and Saturdays, April 25, 26, May 2, 3, 9, and 10 with a matinee scheduled for May 4 at 2:30 p.m.

Mud Creek Players' home is at 9740 E. 86th St. For further information, call 290-5343 or access the Mud Creek Players website at [www.mudcreekplayers.org](http://www.mudcreekplayers.org).

## Olney School—the summer camp/boarding school link

Adolescence, at its best, is a time for seeking challenge and affirmation, creating a strong peer network and taking on leadership roles. An effective summer program fosters these opportunities, allows youth to stretch their limits physically, creatively, and socially. Add a focused college preparatory curriculum to that and you have a fall-through-spring boarding program nurturing academic and personal growth.

Olney Friends School, a small private Friends Boarding School, offers a summer

camp program and boarding school that are all of those things.

Admissions director for Olney, Ella Robertson, has often heard students comment that the friends they made and the experiences they had at summer camp were a big part of their decision to go away to school:


"Going to Gathering (Friends General Conference summer program) is one of the many things that made me want to come to Olney," says Junior, Shannon Mckelvey

(Continued from page IN 12)

MudCreek Players presents

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**WONDERCAMP**  
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**Children's Theater of Indianapolis  
 Performances & summer camp**

Summer's on its way here! Now, what to do, what to do? Here's a thought, visit an established friend in their new home. The Children's Theatre Institute has a brand new theatre at 7435 N. Keystone Ave. in the Gene B. Glick Junior Achievement Education & Conference Center.

CTI offers programming for children that not only entertains but teaches. "The arts have a powerful impact on our community and on the way children learn," says Executive Director James Leagre. "We are thrilled with our partnerships with the Indianapolis Symphony and Junior Achievement, along with grants from the Allen Whitehill Clowes Foundation and the Lilly Endowment," he beamed.

CTI's mission is "to educate and inspire through the arts." All CTI shows are tooled using audience participation and traditional literature as source material. Add to that the bonus of helping kids learn a little something extra about life skills and maybe a state educational standard or two along the way, and you have the solution for

spring break or summer "video game vertigo."

Currently the theater is running an adaptation of *The Ant and the Grasshopper* (through April 4). After *The Ant and the Grasshopper*, The Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, CTI's musical partner organization, offers up *Feel the Family Rhythm* (April 12 and 13) and *Waves* (April 18 and 19). Both programs from the ISO Learning Community explore music in fun, interactive ways.

The education does not stop after performance season is done. Summer camps are huge for CTI. With half-day camps for younger and full-day for older campers, CTI offers something for kids from 5 to 14. Campers explore all facets of creating and producing an original theater production while building creativity and self-confidence. One-week camps run from the first week of June to the last week of July.

For tickets or more information on camp, go to [www.indycti.org](http://www.indycti.org) or call 252-5900 extension 503.

**Summer Trip?  
 Check Out Bloomington's  
 WonderLab Museum**

By Louise Schlesinger

Thinking about breaking up your summer routines? Check this out.

Nestled in the rolling hills of south central Indiana,

Bloomington is a diverse and welcoming community that offers a perfect destination for people interested in a variety of

(Continued to page IN 12)



Children's Theater of Indianapolis is now presenting *The Ant and the Grasshopper*.

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# Olney

(Continued from page IN 9)

Isaacs. "I enjoyed the Gathering high school program and I wanted to live like that all the time. My blended Jewish-Irish identity found a purposeful place here."

Senior Ingrid Pancoast adds, "I found the community aspect at Friends Music Camp to be tight and encompassing. It was a great way to experience the type of Friends environment that would be awaiting me come ninth grade."

"At summer conferences, I enjoyed being with a number of other Quaker kids my own age," says Daniel Gold-Hopton, senior, "so when I heard about Olney I was excited about it and now have been here for three years."

Olney camp teenagers are often overheard at the end of a summer saying things like, "I don't want to go home." This affirmation of their sum-



mer experience may also be an expression of their desire for something similar in their school life.

Dropping off a child at boarding school for the first time is no doubt more emotional than the good-bys at

summer camp. However, when a student and their parents decide together on the boarding experience the result can be, in the words of Rich Sidwell, Olney Friends Head of School, "graduates who are responsive, self-possessed and

taking on college with zest." Olney's summer program is a great place to start.

For more information on small boarding schools contact The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS) [www.schools.com](http://www.schools.com) or Small Boarding Schools Associations (SBSA) [www.smallboardingschools.org/](http://www.smallboardingschools.org/). For more information on Olney Friends School go to [www.olneyfriends.org](http://www.olneyfriends.org) or contact [admissions@olneyfriends.org](mailto:admissions@olneyfriends.org).

## JCC camps

The Arthur M. Glick JCC offers summer camp programs from June 10 to August 1, all-day programs, sports camps, arts camps, Broadway camp and more. For more information about JCC summer programs, go to [www.jccindy.org](http://www.jccindy.org) or call 251-9467.

## WonderLab

(Continued from page IN 10) enriching experiences.

Most Hoosiers are aware of the world-class musical opportunities provided by the Indiana University Jacobs

School of Music and the hiking, biking, spelunking, and water sports opportunities available in the Hoosier National Forest and on Lake Monroe.

Perhaps less well known is how much downtown Bloomington has changed in the past few years, with the establishment of many new themed shops as well as incredible restaurants serving cuisine from around the world.

Downtown Bloomington also is home to Bloomington's premier family destination: the WonderLab Museum of Science, Health and Technology.

WonderLab is an award-winning science museum that offers two floors of hands-on exhibits. The museum's mission is to introduce people of all ages to the scientific method of discovery that involves testing, measuring, building, and observing. And WonderLab knows how to make it fun!

The museum's signature exhibits are a two-story climbing maze in the whimsical shape of a grapevine, a gallery devoted to unexpected experiences with bubbles, and its "science of sound and music" exhibits. A special discovery area provides science adventures for very young children. Even though WonderLab is packed with activities, it is a particular favorite of parents because the museum's small-town size and design make it easy to keep track of children.

Families may wish to plan a summer day trip around one of WonderLab's special science programs. For example, the museum offers family science programs such as *Cycle Science* (May 24-25) or *Archeology on the Edge* (June 7-8). Others might be interested in age-focused programs, such as *Science from Scratch: Build a Radio* (June 21) or the weekly *Discovery Time* for preschoolers.

For those who will be in the Bloomington area for at least a week, WonderLab offers the acclaimed *WonderCamp*, a half-day or full-day summer science enrichment program for children entering kindergarten through 6th grade. Two weekly sessions will be held in June and two in July.

WonderLab is located at 308 W. 4th St. and is open to the public Tuesday-Sunday. General admission: \$6/children and \$7/adults. More information is available online at [wonderlab.org](http://wonderlab.org) or by calling 812-337-1337 ext. 25. To help plan a visit to Bloomington, go to [visitbloomington.com](http://visitbloomington.com).

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- 116th & Keystone Ave., Carmel
- 96th & Lantern Rd., Fishers
- 116th & Allisonville Rd., Fishers
- 116th & Brooks School Rd., Fishers

- 11625 Fox Rd., Geist
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