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Happy Chanukah!



Celebrate Light and Miracles
by Jackie Olenick

Editorial

Recently I was flipping through the channels on TV and came to one called Biography. It was the middle of a show about unusual circumstances that had happened to actors. This particular segment was about Jane Seymour. I had missed the beginning of it, but when I tuned in, Seymour was talking about an experience where she had been acting and had had an allergic reaction to an antibiotic.

The show was a reenactment of what took place, with different actors playing her and two doctors. It looked as if the actor who played Seymour had been given a shot to cure the allergic reaction but it made her worse. She was fully clothed in a bed lying on top of the bedspread. She was moving from side to side, with her arms and legs moving in every direction, and she was out of it. There were two doctors frantically discussing what to do, and then one of them gave her another shot and that brought her back.

Interspersed with that (obviously filmed at a later date), they showed Seymour telling about the experience.

One of the things she said on the show was that the experience gave her a stark realization, that the body is simply a vehicle. Once you go, she said, you can take absolutely nothing with you. The clothes you love to wear, the car you love to drive, cherished acting awards – all of those do not matter. She said all that you can take with you is the love you gave and received, and what you have done to make a difference in the world.

When I went online to see if I could find anything about this, I found very little, but contactmusic.com had a short article with the title, "Near Death Experience Changed Seymour." It said that she was on a film shoot in Spain in 1988 when she had this allergic reaction.

In the online article it quoted Seymour as saying, "I saw the white light, and I saw, from the corner of the room, them trying to resuscitate me, and I saw a syringe with blood in it."

While I was online I saw different biographical clips of Seymour's life. She had a comfortable childhood but she also worked hard to achieve the fame and fortune that she enjoys today. Her personal life was rocky as she endured three divorces, one involving her children. After the third divorce, she was left with nothing and had to start all over. However, besides being beautiful and talented, she is also intelligent, dedicated and determined. She managed to get back in the game with her role in the TV show *Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman*, and then with her fourth husband, she had twin boys at the age of 44.

Besides a career involving all types of acting including theater, film, and television, she also is a talented writer and a painter. She has exhibited her work at fine art galleries across the nation and continues to reach new artistic levels by

About the Cover

This image reminds Jews that during the Chanukah season, the bright and ever-increasing light from the candles brings us to an awareness of light and miracles. This fine art 12" x 14" giclee, titled *Celebrate Light and Miracles*, is available on Jackie's new website: www.jackieolenickart.com.

"I create my artwork with the intention of bringing spiritual awareness to one's heart and home. I want my work to shine light, reveal wisdom, and bring blessing with words from Torah, psalms and prayers. Our everyday journeys are filled with so many challenges and these pictures serve as reminders that God is close, so close – we just need to remember," says Jackie Olenick.

(see Cover, page NAT 16)



Jackie Olenick

continually developing her technique, style and subject matter. Her art has been an inspiration for handbags, accessories, and jewelry. She has even created costumes and set designs for a ballet production. Now she and her husband are very involved in raising funds and giving to numerous local and national charities, not simply donating funds, but going to third-world countries and giving of their time and of themselves.

After viewing the clips of her online and seeing how she has lived in big spacious houses beautifully decorated, built on land with rolling hills and colorful gardens, and noticing all the fashionable clothes and accessories she wears, I imagine she has the best of everything that she has ever wanted. When she travels, I expect she either has a private jet or flies first class and stays in the best hotels and such.

I'm not judging her luxurious lifestyle because she had been very generous and been such a positive force in the world. However, I thought it must have been a sharp contrast for her to see all that being left behind, and indeed the scrape with death profoundly changed her whole outlook on life. The online article said she treats every day as if it's her last.

This reminds me of a story I once read about the other side of the coin. It was about a priest who left only five possessions when he died. He had his well-worn bible, a comb, a razor, a suitcase and the clothes he wore.

After caring for both of my parents and then having to dispose of their belongings after they died, I was fascinated by this story. It made me want to reduce my possessions to live more simply. "Live simply so that others might simply live" is a saying I have seen on bumper stickers. Perhaps for this priest the change was not so drastic.

Jennie Cohen, November 10, 2010. ★

Shabbat Shalom

By RABBI JON ADLAND

Nov. 5, 2010, Toldot
(Genesis 25:19–28:9), 28 Cheshvan 5771

Many of us are familiar with the story of the struggle between Esau and Jacob in Rebecca's womb. In order to try and understand better what was going on, Rebecca approached God who responded by saying, "Two nations are in your womb, Two separate peoples shall issue from your body; One people shall be mightier than the other, And the older shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23).

There are many lessons that can be understood from this passage. It can range from sibling rivalry to wars between competing nations. One message for us as Jews is our continuing internal Jewish struggle between those who advocate for more and stricter observance of Jewish life to those who believe in more personal choice, as well as more liberal observance coupled with less strict levels of observance of Jewish law.

This struggle between what we call the left and right has existed within Jewish life since its earliest times. It is a struggle that exists within all ideologies be it religious, political, or social. This struggle manifests itself in a number of ways in the American Jewish community from dietary restrictions for communal events to the hours a JCC is open in a community to who controls religious life in any given community.

These issues of control are even more pronounced in Israel where those who consider themselves *chiloni* (secular) struggle against those who call themselves *dati* (religious). I don't live in Israel so weighing in on the day to day issues of living life in Israel is beyond my scope. These battles must be fought and won by those who have chosen to live there. These issues might encompass education,

hours a store is open, kashrut, public transportation, and more.

There is a particular issue that does concern me and was brought to my attention in the most recent issue of the *Jerusalem Report*. This is about the status of the Western Wall, otherwise known as the Wailing Wall or, in Hebrew, *HaKotel*. There is a plan to recreate the entrance to the Wall plaza allowing Orthodox Jews who come to pray to bypass visitors like you and me and emerge directly at the Wall. The committee in charge of the Wall views this as a positive step forward.

There are a huge number of issues with this plan, but what most concerns me is the lack of concern for women at the Wall and even larger than this is the coopting of the Wall by the Orthodox movement turning this sacred space into an Orthodox sanctuary instead of the Holy Shrine it is to all Jews.

The Wall is not a *Bet Kneset* (synagogue), and it should never have become one. Men and women should be able to come to the Wall and stand next to each other immersed in their own thoughts and prayers and not be concerned with Orthodox Jews who don't value this type of public relationships. Why can't Sandy and I stand together at the Wall and insert a note that comes from the two of us at the same time? Why is she relegated to the other side of a ridiculously high wall and crowded area that says to the women that they aren't as important to Judaism as the men?

Like the struggle between Jacob and Esau, this is a struggle for Jews from around the world as this space is not just for Jews in Israel, but for Jews everywhere. Since my first visit in 1971 to my most recent visit in 2010, I feel disenfranchised from a place that I should be excited to visit. I am expected to accept the preconditions of the observant Jewish community with no latitude given for me as a Reform Jew. I am not alone in feeling this way as even

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Chassidic Rabbi

By RABBI BENZION COHEN

Recently we have witnessed some very special miracles.

A gold mine collapsed in Chile. Thirty-three miners were trapped 620 meters underground. Miraculously none of them were killed, or even injured. Rescue workers worked around the clock trying to find them. Hours turned into days and days turned into weeks, and still no contact was established. With each passing day their chances of survival became smaller and smaller. Finally, after 17 days, contact was established. Miraculously, all 33 miners were still alive and well. The rescue team could now supply the trapped miners with air, food and water while efforts were made to drill a hole big enough to get them out. The government of Chile announced that the rescue would take between 3 and 4 months. Miraculously, all 33 miners came out alive and well after two months.

What can we learn from this amazing story? For almost 2,000 years, we have been in exile, living in spiritual darkness. How did the miners survive for 17 days in complete darkness, with hardly any food, water or oxygen? Their hope and belief kept them alive. Their leader gave them strength and inspiration. So too we have survived 2,000 years in exile. Our leaders gave us strength, and we never gave up hope. We always knew that one day Hashem would redeem us, would take us out of exile, that one day we would see the light.

And that day is coming soon, any day now. Look at what is happening in the world. Many nations from all over the world cooperated with the government of Chile to help rescue the trapped miners. For thousands of years, the nations of the world made war with each other. Now we see more and more cooperation and goodwill between nations. This is the beginning of the fulfillment of the prophecies of redemption, when the nations will no longer raise swords against each other and not learn war ever again (Isaiah).

We believe that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is Moshiach, that he is taking us out of exile, gradually bringing peace to the world and ruling the world. We are already in the beginning stages of redemption. The walls of exile are beginning to crumble, and rays of light are shining through the cracks. We can already see that in many ways the Rebbe is running the world. He said many times that the land of Israel belongs only to the Jewish people, and that it is forbidden and indeed very dangerous to give any of it away, especially in today's circumstances. Those who listen to the Rebbe succeed, and those who do not will fail.

We see this in Israel. The Labor party tries to give away land. Forty years ago they had 50 seats in the Knesset, and



Hadassah Women

By MELINDA RIBNER

Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem

"Who wants to go to a hospital?" I told myself, "I'd rather meditate at holy sites, swim Eilat or soak in the Dead Sea, anywhere but a hospital." For many years I resisted my Aunt Bernice's request that I visit Hadassah Hospital when I was vacationing in Israel.

A lifelong member of Hadassah, a former president of Hadassah, my aunt, well into her 90s, is still active for her Hadassah chapter, serving as program chairperson, knitting hats and blankets for patients at Hadassah Hospital. She even made me a life-long Hadassah member. For my aunt's upcoming important birthday, I finally heeded her requests. And I am very glad I did. The tour of Hadassah Hospital was not depressing, as I imagined that it would be, but rather my heart was opened by all the love and beauty that I saw there and I was inspired, in spite of myself.

As a result of my visit there, I now would even advocate that Hadassah Hospital actually be on the agenda of every tourist traveling in Israel. This recommendation is not because of the

they ruled the country. Today they have 13 seats, and the party is on the verge of disintegrating. All of the Israeli prime ministers who gave away land eventually either resigned or were ousted. We see this also in America. The president of the United States of America has been pressuring Israel to give away land. In the elections this November, he and his party had a great fall.

And what about those who are trapped 600 meters underground? Those who are really far away from Hashem? The Rebbe and his emissaries are making tremendous efforts to rescue them. Here too we see great miracles. Every day more and more people are coming closer to Hashem, all over the world. Here too we see global cooperation. Forty years ago, only Lubavitch was doing outreach. Today almost all branches of Judaism are working to bring all people closer to Hashem. I thank Hashem for whatever small part I can take in the wonders and miracles of our final and complete redemption. Each and every one of us has a part to play in bringing Moshiach. How? By doing mitzvahs and learning about Moshiach. We have to prepare ourselves and all of the world to greet Moshiach now!

Rabbi Cohen lives in K'far Chabad, Israel. He can be reached by email at bzcohen@orange.net.il. ★

beautiful Chagall windows decorating the synagogue there. They are lovely, and definitely worth seeing; rather, it is Hadassah Hospital itself that is a most gorgeous window that reflects the love and power of the Jewish women worldwide to create healing and blessing for the world. I might even be tempted to call Hadassah Hospital a national treasure. Visiting there is definitely one of those experiences that can be described, but words can never replace the experience of actually being there.

The bus trip there was very pleasant, offering beautiful vistas of Jerusalem as the bus climbed to the top. When traveling there, I asked the bus driver to alert me to the stop for Hadassah Hospital Ein Karen, so afraid that I would miss it and not see it from the road. I had expected Hadassah Hospital to resemble a New York City hospital that might be located off the main road. In retrospect, I have to chuckle to myself. There was no way that I would miss Hadassah Hospital.

I did not expect that I would enter into a gated campus composed of a complex of buildings, even with its own shopping mall. Hadassah Hospital is even called *Kiryat (village) Hadassah*, for over 25,000 people enter its gates each day. Next to the government, Hadassah Hospital is the largest employer in Jerusalem. Even though Hadassah is located at the outskirts of Jerusalem, this is no healing retreat center. This place is hopping! It would seem that people are willing to travel the distance to Ein Karem because the quality of care is superior at Hadassah, according to my guide. After my tour, I would even say that the care at Hadassah Hospital is superior to that of any American hospital as well.

My guide gave me interesting background information of the origins of Hadassah as an outreach program to help train nurses in Jerusalem to its development as an international center of medicine and research for the world. Actually it was Ben Gurion himself, the first prime minister who selected the location for the Hadassah Hospitals in Mount Scopus and Ein Karem. It would seem that Ben Gurion was truly a visionary here as well, for the location of Hadassah Hospital itself had offered considerable strategic benefit during the wars Israel had to fight with its neighboring Moslem countries. Its Mount Scopus hospital closed during the 1967 war and reopened in 1975 and now serves a primarily Moslem population. The Ein Karem campus surely serves a cross section of all of Israel.

Though I did not conduct a census, it seemed to me that there were a comparable number of Arabs, Hasidim, and regular Jewish Israelis being served there. Hadassah Hospital proudly serves all people of Israel equally, even those who are not citizens of Israel. People from Gaza, the PLO territories and even surrounding Arab countries also often find their way to Hadassah, according to my guide. Hospital rooms are also

equally shared by Arabs and Jews with no complaints. Perhaps it will be the efforts of Hadassah Hospital that will help bring peace between Arabs and Jews. Helping people when they are ill brings a lot of good will and blessing to a country.

After seeing the high technological trauma emergency rooms, my guide focused the remainder of the tour on the Maternal and Infant Care building, showing me the floors serving pediatric cancer patients. If that does not open one's heart, nothing will. I saw rooms with very young children, even infants, Arabs and Jews, surrounded by their parents, sitting at the same table, receiving chemotherapy. In a separate room, I saw a sick pale Arab child, surrounded by her parents, laugh as she was being entertained by a clown.

I so much wanted my aunt and her Hadassah friends to see this scene, so I asked if I could take a picture. According to Hadassah official policies, patients must give their consent if a picture is to be taken of them. Even though I may have said to myself, "These people owed me a picture," the truth of the matter is that they owe me nothing. I was emotionally touched when the family did agree to be photographed. I wondered whether these parents smiling for the camera realized that I was representing someone who dedicated her life to working for the kind of care that this hospital now offered to them.

The trip concluded with my visiting the synagogue to view the names of my family written in the *kaddish* book. *Kaddish* is said during the *minyan* prayer on every *yahrzeit*. And finally, I saw the name of my two aunts, Bernice Rogow and Lorraine Bernzweig, on a plaque as founders on the Maternal and Infant Care Center. My aunt Bernice who never has been to Israel still has a beautiful name in Israel for all time.

My aunt, so pleased with me that I finally visited Hadassah Hospital, asked me to write about the experience. I told her I would even attend one of her Hadassah chapter meetings where the youngest member is probably 92 years of age, show my pictures and speak about my experience at Hadassah Hospital.

To me, Hadassah Hospital is truly a model of *hesed*, unconditional love and kindness. I do hope that all of the patients realize that the wonderful services of this hospital they receive are the fruit of much hard dedicated work carried out by Jewish women of all ages throughout the world. Not that it should obligate them, but rather to inspire them to also be blessings of unconditional love in their lives. I too have been touched and inspired by Hadassah Hospital and pray that I can also love unconditionally as the staff at Hadassah Hospital and all the women who tirelessly raise funds for Hadassah demonstrate each day.

Melinda (Mindy) Ribner, L.C.S.W. is a (see Ribner, page NAT 5)



The Art of Observation

BY RABBI ALLEN H. PODET

Obama, Blacks, Jews, and notable shift in Democratic support for Israel

As the country recovers from the political mid-term “silly season,” some Jews ponder what the elections will now mean to them as Jews. Much of the controversy centered – and still centers – about Mr. Obama, despite the fact that he was not running. He restricted his political activity to supporting various Democratic candidates, some of whom would just as soon not be associated with him.

When he was elected two years ago, Jews by an overwhelming majority endorsed him and sustained his candidacy not only by voting out of proportion but by making available advance funds, that is, those funds that come early and that make possible solicitation of major giving later. Jewish young adults, especially our hitherto uninvolved collegians and high schoolers, packed the ranks of the “Barack-Stars,” canvassing, doing door-to-door soliciting, handing out flyers, getting coffee.

Jews in general supported him for a number of different and related reasons. For one, probably “number one,” he was Black. Jews have for generations in America felt a special relation to African Americans, perhaps born of a common history of persecution and insecurity. Even when some Black leaders evidenced a late anti-Semitism, many if not most Jews still treasured special feelings for the Black community.

Then again, he was a Democrat: the coalition of minorities put together in the Roosevelt years has never faded away for Jews, even when evidence surfaced that suggested Roosevelt easily could have bombed Auschwitz – our planes were passing over it very frequently – and chose not to.

There were reasons. There are always reasons: There were for example lots of bigots and racists who were already calling him “Rosenfelt” and claiming that WW II was a “Jewish War.”

The Jews of that period, desperate and very limited in real power despite the fears of bigots, clutched at their image of FDR, amicus Judaeorum, in the hope that maybe they were not as abandoned as many thought they in fact were, maybe they had a secret powerful friend in the White House.

A delusion, of course, but perhaps a necessary one to protect one’s mental health.

In any case, the Democrats spoke of concern for the common man, the welfare of the little people, and other quasi-socialist ideals that many Jews had been taught to admire. The propaganda echoed the words of the Hebrew prophets, it resounded well to Jews, and was well calculated to do so. Republicans were for the rich, notably rich WASPs, whereas Democrats were for the commoners, the poor, the powerless. *Unzereh* folk.

These motifs dominated much Jewish thought for decades, even generations.

Obama himself was more than merely a Black. First, he was handsome, young, and well-spoken. And well dressed. And he was following a president who had been the whipping boy of the liberal media for some years, who had been depicted – not without some reason – as a buffoon by the liberal press.

Obama meant change, a new birth of hope. Newsmagazines depicted him as standing in the shadow – indeed, actually casting the shadow – of Abraham Lincoln. If he was not hailed as Jesus Christ, the term messiah was in fact thrown around from time to time.

It was completely inevitable that terrible disappointment would follow when people saw, to their inexplicable amazement, that he was in fact not the messiah but a politician, with what that implies about barter and negotiation, failure to read other politicians, a wildly unrealistic idea of his own power, and a need and willingness to respond to the political realities that any politician in his place would find and have to deal with.

Having sought a messiah, many Jews began to find in their disappointment with their quondam idolatry that he was now a terrible man.

His great attempted achievements, which he was wisely to set in place from the outset of his administration during the honeymoon period, had to do with fiscal reform, the institution of a universal health coverage system for all, and the establishment under central government control the heaviest budget in the history of the Western world. He presided over the most significant transfer of power from the people to Washington in memory. A recession, blamed of course on the last administration as is the custom, was largely averted by issuing many billions of dollars in paper. The debt limit was raised to permit even more.

A war was wound down and another was stepped up in its place, thus fulfilling an Obama pledge to wind down the Iraq war, while still keeping the war economy healthy. And, by the way, removing a number of people from the labor market for years.

On the international scene, in an area always of interest to many Jews, he gained a good deal of Islamic support at the trivial cost of making nasty and threatening faces at Israel – but doing nothing to Israel of serious consequence, such as threatening the status of Israel Bonds or Israeli charities, attacking

current favorable tax arrangements which benefit Israel, trifling with the economic parts of the “special relationship,” reversing support for Israel in areas of the UN of real significance, or interfering conclusively in Israel defense activities. Compelling Israel to cancel a lucrative deal with China showed everyone that such things could be done, but practically speaking, they were not.

But Obama’s so-called anti-Israel moves were designed to impress the Arab world, and for a considerable time, they did. (Don’t fault the man. No scam lasts forever. “You can’t fool all of the Arabs all of the time,” as the original Mr. Lincoln said in a newly discovered manuscript.) Unfortunately these moves scared a lot of Jews too, who apparently did not notice that the tough words seldom led to serious actions. The U.S.-Israel union was still a pretty solid, if sometimes one-sided, marriage.

And as for the oft-repeated charge that Mr. Obama is leading us into [gasp!] Socialism, What do you want? The man ran as a socialist, lower-case S. He cannot be faulted for a program he described and laid out openly before the election.

On that subject one notes the words of the columnist Dr. Charles Krauthammer, MD, who describes himself as “a psychiatrist in remission,” has turned from psychiatry to political commentary. (He says he used to, as a psychiatrist, deal with borderline mental cases with dangerous delusions of greatness; now, however, as a political observer, he deals with borderline mental cases with dangerous delusions of greatness.) Krauthammer sounds a warning to those who underestimate Obama. In Obama’s first months in office, Krauthammer says, Obama has carried out and carved into stone socialist programs others only dreamed of.

Besides, Jewish socialism is a venerable and respected tradition, especially in this country. The pious Yiddish atheists and agnostics who headed the Arbeiter Ring, the Jewish Workman’s Circle, Camp Avodah, the Wobblies, and most of all the unions who were at one time practically the only ones caring about the workers – all of them would have endorsed the ideas of universal health care and fiscal reform.

The civil rights issues drew disproportionate Jewish support, and left many with the impression that local government, such as in Mississippi and Alabama, was not to be trusted, and supervisory – even coercive – power could be and should be wielded by Washington. Obama’s actions tending to concentrate new levels of power in the central government, partly through social welfare, social security, and compulsory health insurance policies, would have resounded well to the Yiddisher Bund.

The Democratic Party itself, however, has not fared as well. Most Jews still think of themselves as Democrats. FDR would be proud.

But a great many Jews, and perhaps even more important, a significant body of Christian Zionists, have noticed that, in the last four years and beyond, Republican support for Israel has risen while Democratic support is increasingly unreliable or just plain absent.

Dr. Daniel Pipes in *Middle East Forum* (No. 1044, 19 October 2010, cited in: National Review Online) recently wrote: “This much is clear after almost two years of Democratic control over the executive and legislative branches of government: Democrats consistently support Israel and its government far less than do Republicans.”

A Gallup Poll in 2010 dealing with American adults by party affiliation finds that Democrats are evenly split, pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian, but Republicans favor Israel by 5 to 1 (Gallup: “Sympathy for Israelis vs. Palestinians in Mideast Situation, by Party ID,” *ibid.*)

So saith the guru of Gallup. So saith also among others *The Weekly Standard* and the nonpartisan McLaughlin & Associates survey, 3-5, October 2010 (*International Jerusalem Post*, 22-8 November 10, 20ff.)

Political observers, both pro-Israel and anti-Israel, now note that “traditional U.S. policy [supporting the U.S.-Israel alliance] toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict does not have bipartisan backing.” So says anti-Israel left wing spokesman James Zogby of the American Arab Institute. Right wing and pro-Israel voices agree. (*Ibid.*)

Some will say that Obama is unhappy with the historic U.S.-Israel alliance, and that from a pragmatic, not to say Realpolitik, point of view, which is the only one Obama as politician can take, Israel’s status as the only Near East democracy is irrelevant in the face of 7 or 8 million Israelis versus a billion Muslims. And, more to the point, this Machiavellian Weltanschauung has seriously influenced the Democratic Party, root and branch, leadership and membership in Congress as a whole, and undermined the support for the alliance in both Houses of Congress. And further, that at this point, the strong support of Republicans in Congress is more relevant and more compelling for friends of Israel than ever before.

Not all Jews love Israel, and not all Jews who love Israel love every action of its administrations and its defense forces. But this notable shift is something to think about.

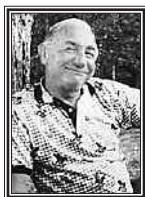
Comments? apodet@yahoo.com. ★

On this date in Jewish history

On November 10, 1856

Jew’s College, a rabbinical seminary, opened in London.

~ From *The Jewish Book of Days* published by Hugh Lauter Levin Associates, Inc., New York.



Spoonful of Humor

BY TED ROBERTS

Fathers, you're never too old to inspire

I used to be a father. I still am, and now I'm a grandfather, too. But it's a load I can handle because the job description is just about identical. It calls for inspiration – of young minds and young hearts; especially grandkids who are remote and therefore consider themselves safe from my constant inspirational messages.

Yes, despite TV and video games and blackberries and cell phone and an environment humming with electronic messages – we Jews honor and cherish words printed upon paper. We still are the People of the Book. Give us a pencil and a piece of paper, and we'll find something to say.

So, I write a lot of letters to my grandkids. For only 44 cents (it goes up every year – no competition will do that every time) you're allowed a large number of words written on paper. And a wise grandfather, besides council, advice, and family gossip, can include a candy bar, a stick of gum, a newspaper clipping, or a baseball card to lure the young mind into the civilized joy of correspondence. What teacher ever taught successfully without incentives? It's a trick I learned years ago from the Crackerjack people. They marketed candy with cheap, fragile toys. I market family pride.

History hints that Socrates – you've heard of the Socratic School – kept a big jar of black olives beside his desk to reward precocious students and I do the same with my letters.

I use wiles of all kinds to encourage my younger kin to rip open their envelopes with frantic enthusiasm. "Wonder what he sent this time? Maybe if I write back today, he'll send me another Hershey bar."

Yes, Hershey bars are great. Nice and flat – but they have their disadvantages in July unless you live in Nome and your granddaughter hangs out with her kids in Anchorage. Kids love letters with or without sweet bonuses. They love their name in big, bold letters on the envelope. They love the ritual of sorting through the mail and throwing the discards on the floor before finding *their* letter.

And like I say, I rarely write without including something that is either amusing, edible, or ethically fortifying. My favorites are clippings from my local newspaper (human interest stories, we used to call them). So educational! Encourages kids to read and observe the world outside of home and school. And if you pick your stories with care, you can package amusement and even morality

in your envelopes. For example, I just mailed off to eight grandkids a story of a 65 year old lady who wrote a confession to her high school principal; she cheated in a high school writing course 47 years ago! My small audience loved it and marveled at her delayed but full confession.

They were full of questions: "Did she have to take the class over? Did she get a punishment? Did they send her a new report card? I assured them she was not punished and maybe – because of her honesty – they renamed the auditorium in her honor.

But my kids usually award the family Pulitzer Prize to the vignettes I call "Pet Saves Family": the collie who pulled Jamie out of the river. The cocker spaniel who barked and alerted the family to their smoldering home. And of course the whole category of dog-finds-missing-child story. We humans, even after we've lost the glow of childhood, still have a soft spot for animal rescue stories. It goes back in history to the gabbling geese who saved Rome. A story probably told in a grandfather's letter of 300 BC.

We don't always need burning homes and swollen rivers. Kids of the right age (say over 3 and under 10) love any animal story. Naturally. They love animals. There's a kinship there of smallness, innocence, helplessness that we just don't understand.

Just this month I mailed out a tearjerker that couldn't fail to warm the juvenile heart. A two-column report of a three-legged dog – yes, a handicapped mutt who had lost a race with a truck and forfeited one of his four limbs – found a lost child. The sheriff and an army of searchers failed, noted the article, but the dog, only 75% effective, found the missing child.

The returns from my young readers have been overwhelmingly enthusiastic about this theme. More! they cry. They want more. But that's not so easy. I'm at the mercy of the newspaper industry, which is attracted to war, corruption, crime, and disease rather than the uplifting genre of "Pet Finds Child".

Besides the inspirational value, there's a selfish payoff to my letter writing campaigns: I like the return mail. And maybe decades from now when I'm old and my pen trembles on the paper; and my poor old grinders are loose and wobbly, my mail will be full of attentive notes sweetened with easy to chew Hershey Bars. Bread on the waters, you know.

Ted Roberts, a Rockower Award winner, is a syndicated Jewish columnist who looks at Jewish life with rare wit and insight. When he's not writing, Ted worships at Etz Chayim Synagogue in Huntsville, Ala., where for 25 years he has served as bar mitzvah teacher. His inspiration is his patient wife, Shirley. Check out his Web site: www.wonderwordworks.com or blogsite: www.scribblerontheroof.typepad.com. His collected works The Scribbler on The Roof can be bought at Amazon.com or lulu.com/content/127641. ★



Fun Coach

BY BERNIE DEKOVEN

Staccabees

Dear Whachamacallit,

Last year you wrote about some new Chanukah-worthy Dreidel games, and much did we chortle with conceptual glee. Given the rapidly-approaching potential Chanukatude of it all, I was wondering if you had any other Chanukappropriate alternatives to recommend.

Jude A. McAbee

Hey, Jude!

Good to hear from you. As a matter of fact and ineluctable coincidence, I have just what you're looking for, dreidel game-wise. And it's commercially available, even.

It's called "Staccabees." And it comes to us from a company called Big Voorah. I played it. I loved it. And, in the guise of Major Fun, I awarded it.

Staccabees, I wrote, is a surprisingly fun stacking game (as you might guess from the name).

There are three different sizes of hardwood cubes: the natural-wood-colored are the largest, the orange are next, and the white, the smallest. There's a 4-sided top-like thing. You spin it. If, when it finally falls over, an S is on top, you take half of any of the three kinds (rounding up if the number is uneven) in your collection, and add them to the STAC. If a T is on top, you take the top cube off the STAC and add it to your STAC. If an A is showing, you add all of any one kind of your blocks to the STAC. And if a C is revealed, you don't do anything. Which, depending on how high the stack, can be a great relief.

There's a total of 54 blocks. Each player gets 3 of each kind of block, which leaves enough for as many as 6 players. Players take turns spinning the top-like thing (which some scholars refer to as a teetotum, while others of a more ethnic bent, think of it as a driedel), following the directions, and hoping that they: (a) don't make the stack fall, and (b) be the first to use up all their blocks.

Though the rules are simple (it may take a while to remember what each letter on the dreidel stands for, but after a few games, it's not an issue), they are very cleverly designed. If you are unfortunate enough to have toppled the tower, when it's your turn again, and you get something like A for all or S for half, you could very likely get rid of a lot of blocks, and, at the same time, radically increase the height of the tower (and its instability) for the next player.

This makes Staccabees remain fun until the very last spin. Even someone with only one block left can easily find herself still playing round after round

after round. And if you seem to have gathered a great many blocks, there's still the possibility that you can turn your fate completely around with a single spin.

There's a delightfully growing tension to the game, which is even more delightfully balanced by at least an equal amount of laughter.

Everything is well made (all hardwood), and comes with a cloth, drawstring bag for easy transportation – which is something you'll want to do a lot, take the game with you, just about everywhere.

Staccabees, designed by Daniel Singer and Bruce Kothmann, is as fun for kids as it is for the entire family. Major fun. The website is <http://staccabees.com/>.

You don't have to be Jewish to enjoy the game. You don't even have to connect it to Chanukah or even to dreidels. On the other hand, if you are Jewish, the connections are too obvious and too rich to ignore...especially when you discover the rules for playing Staccabees with an actual dreidel! (You can find the dreidel rules on the FAQ page of the Staccabees site).

Not so coincidentally, Mr. Singer is also the author of another website, called <http://www.dreidelfun.com/>. As you might guess, the lad is not only an excellent game designer, but also something of a dreidel scholar. It's a most Chanukah-dikke site, filled with an astounding variety of dreidel lore.

Also, the fact that it's a building – and, in fact, a rebuilding game – which is at least somewhat reminiscent of what Chanukah is also about.

But more importantly, at least from my perspective as a play advocate – it's more fun than the traditional dreidel game. A lot more fun. Co-designer Bruce Kothmann explains: "In traditional dreidel, the winner is the player who didn't lose. One by one, all of the other players are eliminated as they run out of gelt or nuts or whatever. This is not the way to have a happy family gathering. In Staccabees, everyone remains in the game until someone wins."

Dreidel-game-wise, tradition is good, but, Staccabees is better.

Bernie DeKoven is a Fun Coach. He works with individuals and groups, institutions, organizations, by phone, email, chat, Skype and in person to help them recover the fun of life. Online at <http://deepfun.com>. ★

RIBNER

(continued from page NAT 3)

spiritual psychotherapist and healer in private practice (www.kabbalahoftheheart.com). She is a teacher of Jewish meditation and Kabbalah for over 25 years. Author of Kabbalah Month by Month, New Age Judaism, and Everyday Kabbalah, she is also the founder and director of Beit Miriam (www.Beitmiriam.org). She can be reached by email at Miriam@kabbalahoftheheart.com. ★



Jewish Educator

BY AMY HIRSHBERG LEDERMAN

What drives the Jews?

I opened the email from my daughter Lauren, who has been living in Guatemala for almost a year. I cherish the “conversations” we have in cyberspace, because it gives us a chance to share differently than we do in our phone calls, where we tend to discuss more immediate concerns like college papers and bank overdrafts. Her email hooked me with the first sentence, and the question she raised has been on my mind ever since.

“I just talked with a friend, mom, who asked me: ‘What drives the Jews?’” she wrote.

Lauren, confused by his question, asked him what he meant.

“Well,” he explained, “fear and guilt is pretty much what drove me growing up as a Roman Catholic. What drives the Jews – you know, to act, behave and live in certain ways?”

Lauren ended her email with these words: “I have my own answer, mom, but I’d love to hear yours.”

Wow, I thought. That is *one great question*. I barely had time to think of an answer before my cell phone rang. The word MOM lit up the screen.

“Oh hi, Mom. Hey, listen, I have a question for you. What do you think drives the Jews?”

Her answer made me laugh out loud. “A chauffeur?”

No, this isn’t a joke. I told her about Lauren’s email and that I really want to know what she thought.

Her answer this time wasn’t funny and in some ways, it bothered me. But for a woman born in 1925 who was orphaned at two and raised by her Turkish grandmother, it made sense.

“Success and money because it gives them a certain security,” she replied. The word “them” struck me as odd. Her answer assumed a certain distinction between herself and other Jews.

Then, without missing a beat, she called my father and asked him to pick up the phone. She posed the question to him as if it had been on her mind for years.

As a Depression boy, Dad has always been aware that you can lose everything overnight, as his family did.

“Personal insecurity drives the Jews and motivates them to achieve and become educated,” he answered in a quasi Freud-like tone.

Since this was becoming a real family affair, I hung up and called my brother, the true intellect in our family.

“Hey Jeff. Got a minute?”

“Sure, what’s up?”

“I have a question for you. What do you think drives the Jews?”

I heard him laugh on the other end. “One thing about you, sis, there’s not a lot of time spent in idle chatter.”

But he answered my question in a traditionally Jewish manner, by asking more questions.

“What do you mean: What drives the Jews? Do you mean what do I think drives Jews in the past or are you talking about Jews today? Or are you asking me what drives *me* as a Jew? And when you say Jews, are you talking about all Jews, or Israeli Jews as opposed to those in the Diaspora? And the questions continued...”

What drives the Jews? The answers to this question are as broad and diverse as the Jews themselves and can hardly be limited to a single column. So I would like to offer an invitation to you, my readers, to help me uncover and explore what *you* think drives the Jews.

From now until the end of the year, I welcome your answers to: “What drives the Jews?” which I will read and perhaps, one day, develop into a book (with your permission, of course!). Submissions should be 250 words or less and you can email them to me at my website at www.amyhirshberglederman.com.

Please identify yourself by name and community and put “What drives the Jews?” in the subject line. I look forward to reading your thoughts on what drives the Jews.

Taking the LEAD: Who do you want as your leader?

The other night my husband and I sat down to review the sample ballot in preparation for the upcoming election. It took less than two minutes before a mild depression set in and I started looking for that glass of wine I hadn’t finished at dinner. I was upset, not just with the number of propositions, but with how they were written. Without an advanced degree in law and English, it’s almost impossible to understand what they say. When I started whining, my husband reminded me, as he often does, of what was most essential: We are privileged to live in a country where we have the right to vote freely, without fear of violence or retribution when we enter the polls to vote.

Once I figured out where I stood on the propositions, I turned my attention to the candidates, the men and women competing for the privilege of serving this country. And here’s what I realized. I may not be an expert in the language or logic of the world of politics, but I do feel quite conversant in the world of people. And politics, when stripped of all party affiliations, divisive issues and public displays of power, boils down to one common denominator: people in relationship with other people.

So when I think of who I want to represent me in the arduous task of tackling the many complicated issues we face in this country today, I know who I want. I want a *mentsch* in office. (And no, I don’t mean State Senator Bob

Mensch, who is running to retain his 24th District Seat in Pennsylvania!)

Don’t laugh. It’s not as silly or simplistic as it may sound. A *mentsch*, translated from Yiddish as “man” or “human being” is a person of integrity, compassion, courage and honor. In today’s political arena, a *mentsch* is the person who understands that there are democratic principles and moral imperatives that cannot be abandoned or side-stepped to gain personal or political clout. A *mentsch* is willing to fight for the right of every individual to live a life of dignity, regardless of what it will do to him or her at the polls.

We learn much about the qualities of *mentschi-ness* (okay, you may not find this one in the dictionary) from several great Jewish leaders in history.

Moses, one of our greatest and yet most reluctant leaders (he objected 5 times to God’s request to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt), was known for his humility and compassion as well as his righteous anger. He pleaded for mercy for the Hebrews when they sinned with the Golden Calf but acted swiftly and decisively in establishing a community that would follow God. He was a careful listener and capable arbiter, yet understood the necessity to delegate responsibilities.

Approximately 1,400 years later, Rabbi Hillel, Jewish sage and architect of rabbinic Judaism, became a revered leader of the Jewish people, interpreting Jewish law so as to make obedience feasible for all Jews. He was known for his kindness, gentleness and concern for all humanity. His rulings were often based on concern for the welfare of the individual and he sought dignity for all, regardless of background.

Moving into the 20th century, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, a renowned Torah scholar and Kabbalist, showed remarkable leadership as the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi under the British Mandate in Palestine. While a master of Jewish law (*Halacha*) in the strictest sense, he also maintained an unusual openness to new ideas, which drew many religious and nonreligious people to him. He had the courage to adhere to tradition but embraced people and ideas that deviated from his own, thereby becoming a great conduit for communication and political alliances between various Jewish sectors, including the secular Zionists, the religious Zionists and the non-Zionist Orthodox Jews.

I am not saying that being a *mentsch* is *all* that it takes to become a leader. Obviously, there are other qualities, skills and talents that must be present before I would want a person to take on the responsibility of office. Nor do I think that being a *mentsch* is any guarantee that the results will be perfect since, by definition, a *mentsch* is a human being – real and flawed – albeit one who strives to be good, honest and caring.

(see Lederman, page NAT 15)

Picture this

BY RABBI SANDY SASSO



A recent article in *The New York Times* reported that interest in children’s picture books has been fading. It is not just because families are tightening their budgets that sales are in decline. Parents are encouraging their children to read chapter books at earlier ages because they believe it will advance their reading skills. They think the more words their children can read and the quicker they stop looking at the pictures and focus on vocabulary, the better prepared they will be for the rigors of school and the sooner they will be able to advance in their studies.

As a children’s book author and educator, I read this information with a great deal of sadness. As a parent and grandparent, I was appalled. Reading to my son and daughter was not designed as a reading comprehension tutorial. Our time together was not a lesson; it was a bond and the glue was a wonderful story. The pictures were not distractions, but places for the imagination to take root and grow. We would stop and wonder what the illustrations might be telling us. I would marvel at their creativity, their burgeoning talent for telling stories, building on what they heard and saw. I learned about how they saw themselves and where they found themselves on the book’s pages.

In the 1930s, anthropologist Morris Olper recorded that among the Apaches of southern New Mexico, a person who had acted inappropriately often would be asked, “How could you do that? Didn’t you have a grandfather to tell you stories?”

I am blessed to be able to tell stories to my grandchildren. I know that I keep them up way past their bedtimes for the sheer delight of reading more than one of their favorite picture books. Their absolute joy in hearing the same book again and again, their ability to memorize the words and to find ever new meaning in the pictures continue to amaze me. Clearly, their vocabulary is enriched. Picture books, because adults read them to children, often introduce children to words that early-reader chapter books cannot. And there is so much more.

Picture books help develop the imagination and critical thinking; children learn to appreciate art and to tell their own stories. Never underestimate the sophisticated words and ideas that picture books can offer. In a world where more time is spent alone in front of a computer or with a cell phone, let’s not take lightly the importance of sitting down with a child to read. Author Julius Lester reminds us that “the primary purpose of story is not the transmission of information, (but) one heart touching another.”

(see Sasso, page NAT 15)



Wiener's Wisdom

BY RABBI IRWIN WIENER, D.D.

A debt that cannot be repaid

On July 4, the anniversary of America's freedom from tyranny, I glanced at the cover of the *New York Times*. There I saw a picture of a soldier who had lost all his limbs in combat. The caption read: "No less of a person." I was so moved by the picture and the thought because it brought to the forefront the realization that war is hell! No question about it.

Each generation has had battles to fight whether on the field or in the trenches. Our generation is no different. And yet we are different because the conventional waging of war is not the norm today. Today we face enemies from within and without who wear no uniform, understand no discipline and follow no prescribed tables of battle plans or methods taught in the colleges of war.

Most wars are fought because of economics. Today's wars are waged by zealots whose only purpose is to create havoc while randomly murdering innocent people. The ultimate goal is to subjugate and dominate, we are told, because of ideological differences and religious intolerance.

I looked at the picture over and over again. The pain on the soldier's face was evident. I wondered, "Was it the pain of his agony or the pain of his sacrifice?" Perhaps it was the pain of trying to understand and make sense of his offering. I thought of all the men and women serving our country that have made similar commitments of body and mind and tried to imagine how I would feel or what I would be thinking as I suffered through the ordeal.

None of us who are whole can truly understand the torment of living a different life that now requires constant care and help. The agony of not being able to wash or dress or walk or catch a ball; the anguish of realizing that there will no longer be a normal relationship with a loved one or a partner; the constant reminder that life consists of looking at a ceiling, or just reading a book or watching television, all come into play in the afflicted existence of a person who was once whole and vibrant.

Dr. Louis L. Mann, rabbi of Sinai Congregation in Chicago, wrote two interesting observations that I believe speak to the problems facing the men and women who serve in the military today and have experienced untold horrors on the field of battle.

The first: "Only eyes washed by tears can see clearly." There is no doubt that there have been nights and days when all seemed lost and the future looked

even dimmer. Waking each day to the realization that what once was is no more. Gazing at the emptiness that once filled sleeves and pant legs can be daunting.

Second: "What happens to a man is less significant than what happens within him."

And here is the crux of the internal struggle that accompanies the loss of limbs. We all know that there are ghost pains – limbs that are no longer there seem to be calling out, looking at the void and wondering about the touching and feeling that gave it life and fulfillment. Where are the legs that once took us to places we can no longer remember?

At a recent meeting of a veterans organization I listened to an Iraqi War veteran tell about his experiences and the marvel of science and how it put him back together. He lost a limb and one eye and modern medicine created a limb and a bionic eye. If he had not told us, we would never have believed. And as he displayed these wonders we sat in amazement and awe.

Then he made a startling pronouncement that the government, our government, which sent him into battle, refuses to help others with these miracles because it was too costly. Everyone in the room was shocked to learn that there are funds for everything but not to make people whole again.

We read about saving financial institutions and helping industrial giants regain their significance in our economic downturn. We watch, on TV, the millions of dollars spent in faraway places to bolster corrupt regimes. We discourage democracies by touting demagogues who want nothing more than to see us destroyed. We do all this but cannot find the will or the resources to do what we can to give meaning to lives that have been shattered by war.

These men and women serve our country because they want to, not because we demand it of them. We no longer have a draft system where we indiscriminately take men and women from their daily exercise and throw them into some makeshift environment and take their time from them. All the more reason we need to acknowledge the debt owed.

Every day the newspapers relate stories of depression and homelessness. Veterans who gave their all are now living on the street and cannot receive the help they need and deserve. Where is our humanity for them? When there is a flood somewhere in the world, or an earthquake in a distant land, we load planes and send aid and help those looking for assistance. And we do this as a caring nation of people who understand what it means to have and not share. We do all this, and it is right and as it should be.

What happened to the compassion for us right here at home? Where is the connection to the people of Louisiana or Mississippi or Georgia as they struggle to clean their shores of contamination?

Why don't we feel the pain of struggling families who lost their homes or jobs? And where, oh where, is our desire to

(see Wiener, page NAT 15)

Jews' News

Jewish Federations of North America launches Israel Action Network

NEW YORK – The North American Jewish Federations movement is launching an unprecedented campaign to fight back against growing efforts to delegitimize and demonize the State of Israel.

The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) in cooperation with the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA) are launching the Israel Action Network, a major continental initiative to protect Israel against a vicious campaign that seeks to isolate the Jewish state in the international arena, and which utilizes boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) as its principal tool. Through the Israel Action Network, JFNA, the nation's leading Jewish philanthropic movement, and JCPA, the consensus voice of the organized American Jewish community, will help prepare communities both to meet urgent situations and to develop long-term strategies to promote a fair and balanced understanding of Israel and Middle East issues.

The Jewish Federations launched the Israel Action Network in response to a rising tide of strident anti-Israel initiatives in the United States and Canada including, among others incidents, calls for boycotts of the Toronto Film Festival because of its programs honoring Tel Aviv's 100th Anniversary; calls for boycotts of Trader Joe's Supermarkets because it carries Israeli goods; protests interrupting a California university speech by Israel's U.S. Ambassador Michael Oren; and attempts by members of the Presbyterian Church USA to divest assets in Israel.

"Delegitimization of the State of Israel is one of the most serious and critical challenges facing the Jewish state and its supporters today," said Kathy Manning and Jerry Silverman, chair and president/CEO, respectively, of The Jewish Federations of North America. "The anti-Israel activists and groups may be transitioning their focus away from the battlefield to the boardroom, but their ultimate goal remains the same – the destruction of Israel. This is not simply about criticizing particular Israeli policies. It is existential. We cannot allow them to continue to bear false witness against Israel."

The Israel Action Network, which is being launched with an initial three-year investment of \$6 million, will be led by JCPA Senior Vice President Martin Raffel with staff in New York, Washington, D.C., and Israel.

"Our advantage in this effort is our ability to leverage the Federations' and JCRCs' unique community-based infrastructure and relationships throughout

the broader society," said Dr. Conrad Giles and Rabbi Steve Gutow, chair and president, respectively, of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. "We will be able to mobilize and affirmatively lead the conversation, exposing the real goal of the anti-Israel activists."

The goal is for the Israel Action Network to be fully staffed and up and running by Jan. 1, 2011. ★

Jewish Council for Public Affairs Statement on Civility

The election is finally over. Are you numb from all the demagogic and demonizing campaigns from candidates in every party? Individuals were attacked and groups were scapegoated. Issues were too often sidetracked. A base form of discourse has permeated our society. Political campaigns are not the only public space that cry for more civility. In Jewish life, we are witnessing a similar breakdown. Name calling, raised voices, outrageous charges...Have we really reached the point where this kind of rhetoric is not only accepted, but also considered necessary? Have you had enough? I know I have. You can do something about it. Sign the Jewish Council for Public Affairs Statement on Civility and ask others in your community to do the same. Join hundreds of Jewish leaders in a call for civility. The statement can be found at www.civilitystatement.org. The words are elegant and important. Read it, sign it, and forward it to others. And learn more about the JCPA's Campaign for Civility. We can do better and together we will. Thank you.

Rabbi Steve Gutow, jcpainfo@thejcpa.org, President, Jewish Council for Public Affairs. ★

Mazel Tov to Morton Gold

The Maine Press Association has awarded (long-time *P&O* contributing columnist) Dr. Morton Gold 3rd place for his reviews as an art critic for the Biddeford (Maine) Journal Tribune. During the course of the year he reviews shows as well as concerts in the area. ★

Mazel Tov to Barry A. Kaplan

Identity Travel of Modi'in, Israel is pleased to announce the addition of Mr. Barry A. Kaplan, of Jerusalem, formally of Overland Park, Kansas, as Company Sales Manager. Mr. Kaplan brings many years of sales and management experience to our company, in North American and international areas. Mr. Kaplan will be working primarily with groups in the English-speaking areas of England, North America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

(see News, page NAT 15)



Seen on the Israel Scene

By SYBIL KAPLAN

Sufganiyot for Chanukah

Jewish law does not prescribe any special feasting or elaborate meal for Chanukah as it does for other holidays. Maybe this is because the origin of Chanukah is not in the Bible but in the Apocrypha, the books of literature written between the second century BCE and the second century CE that were not incorporated into the Hebrew Bible.

The Books of Maccabees, of which there are actually four separate books, only say that the hero, Judah, "ordained that the days of dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year by the space of eight days from the first and twentieth day of the month Chislev, with mirth and gladness."

So where do we get all the food we eat? It is in the Talmud where the so-called miracle of the oil burning for eight days is written, which was inserted to deemphasize the miracle of military triumph and replace it with a more palatable idea, that of the intervention of G-d, which somehow would seem more a miracle of man against man, according to the sages of the time.

By the way, it is only within the past few years that children's books about Chanukah dare say the oil story is a legend or a myth.

Practically every ethnic group has the custom of making and eating a form of food prepared in oil as a reminder of the so-called miracle of the jar of oil.

Judy Siegel once wrote in the *Jerusalem Post* that people gain an average of two kilos from eating *sufganiyot*, *latkes* and other fat foods during Chanukah!

From Israel have come two popular foods for Chanukah – *sufganiyot* (jelly doughnuts) and *ponchikot* (ball-shaped resembling a doughnut hole).

Gil Marks, in *The World of Jewish Desserts*, writes that *ponchikot*, doughnuts fried in oil, were adopted by Polish Jews for Chanukah. The name is taken from the Polish word, *paczki* [*poochkey*], which led to the nickname, *ponchiks*, the Polish name for jelly doughnuts.

I noticed in our Overland Park, Kansas, newspaper one day an ad for *paczi* [*poonchkey* or *poochkey*] and a photograph of a plate of what looked to me to be exactly *sufganiyot*. The ad explained *poonchkey* are similar to jelly doughnuts only larger and more rich tasting and are traditionally served on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Lent. They were made to use up shortening and eggs, which were prohibited during Lent.

Sufganiyot have a more interesting history. In *The Jewish Holiday Kitchen*,

Joan Nathan, an acquaintance of mine from our Jerusalem days and noted cookbook author and *maven* of American Jewish cooking, said she learned the origins of *sufganiyot* from Dov Noy, dean of Israel folklorists.

Noy relates a Bukharian fable, which says the first *sufganiya* was a sweet given to Adam and Eve as compensation after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. He says the word *sufganiya* comes from the Hebrew word, *sof* (meaning end), *gan* (meaning garden) and *Ya* (meaning G-d). Thus the word means – the end of G-d's garden.

According to Noy, this fable was created at the beginning of the 20th century, since *sufganiya* is a new Hebrew word coined by pioneers.

Some say *sufganiyot*, which means sponge-like, are reminiscent of the sweet, spongy cookie popular along the Mediterranean since the time of the Maccabees. Hebrew dictionaries say the word actually comes from the Greek word, *sufgan*, meaning puffed and fried.



Ummm! Warm sufganiyot for Chanukah! Photo credit: Barry A. Kaplan.

John Cooper, author of *Eat and Be Satisfied – A Social History of Jewish Food* has another theory. He says Christians in Europe ate deep-fried pastries on New Year's Eve, and Christians in Berlin ate jelly doughnuts. From them, German Jews started eating apricot-filled doughnuts. When they immigrated to Palestine in the 1930s, they encouraged the population to eat the jelly doughnuts for Chanukah.

One of my favorite pieces of research is the characteristics that *sufganiyot* are said to have: (1) they are round like the wheel of fortune, (2) they have to be looked at for what is inside not for their external qualities, and (3) they cannot be enjoyed the same way twice.

In Israel, *sufganiyot* have gone through a major revolution. For years, they were injected with strawberry jelly and dusted with confectioners' sugar.

According to an article that appeared in the *Forward* in 2005, one could find fillings with these flavors: pina colada, coffee liqueur, caramel, bittersweet chocolate, flaked chocolate, white chocolate, crème café, nougat, chocolate orange, pear, crème brûlée, grapefruit, vodka, crème espresso with cardamom, bittersweet chocolate and rum, passion fruit, walnut crunch, coconut milk, chocolate liqueur, coconut liqueur, vanilla cream.

A *Jerusalem Post* article in 2008 related a contest that was held on seven bakeries, judging *sufganiyot* for flavor, freshness, consistency and aesthetics. The winning bakery was La Paneria in Katamon, which offered fillings of ganache chocolate, white chocolate cream, halva and pistachio, butterscotch toffee and strawberry.

According to Judy Siegel of the *Jerusalem Post*, the average *sufganiya* contains 500–600 calories. She also suggested cutting a *sufganiya* in half to eat at two sittings rather than consume the minis. Those baked in the oven contain 125–150 calories. My research on the internet shows the calories from 93 to 276, and gluten free with rice flour is 166 calories.

Whatever their origin, sample the real thing and you won't forget it!

The Susan B. Komen March in Israel

From the moment my Hadassah chapter heard about the Susan B. Komen Race for the Cure was coming to Jerusalem, we were excited to have a team and walk. With our unseasonable weather, we all hoped it would be nice but not unbearably hot. It was hot.

We gathered in Gan Sacher, the large park below the Wolfson complex that one passes when going from the Bus Station over to the neighborhood of Rehavia on the lower side. Pink balloons were everywhere and people were gathered under tents from 10 a.m. until noon, gathering their teams.

All 300 plus members of Young Judea's year course were there, many with Hadassah banners. Hadassah U.S. had National Board participants, colleagues of mine with whom I enjoyed a reunion. A parade of women in black dresses and white headscarves, each carrying a white umbrella with writing in Arabic, descended the hill –Druzim from the North. Many modern religious people (knitted *keepot* on men, scarves on women) were present and the lack of *haredi* or ultra-Orthodox Jews was conspicuous by their absence.

Walkers wore white t-shirts unless they were breast cancer survivors, in which case they wore pink t-shirts and VIP badges. From the stage, various celebrities made short speeches and then at noon, teams were told to line up, pass the exit and receive bottles of water.

Pink-shirted survivors were asked to walk in the front and lead the march.

For those who have a map of Jerusalem, we exited the park, walked up the very long and steep hill of Bezalel Street, down the tiny street, Be'eiri, to Keren Hayesod. There we walked past the Jewish Agency Complex to the corner of Agron with the Conservative Synagogue on one corner and the Prima Kings diagonally across. Down Agron we walked past the U.S. Consulate, past the Mamilla Mall then down below the walls to Gai Ben Hinom.

I cannot tell you the immense pride I felt that Hadassah had been responsible for bringing this to Jerusalem nor my excitement at being a participant. Being

a walker anyway, I wasn't the last bit tired, only thirsty and not excited to drink the by-now hot bottled water the volunteers handed us.

The English-language radio station on which I have my spot, Rusymikeradio.com, interviewed me and then called the DJ at the station (coincidentally my across-the-hall neighbor, Sharon) and had her interview me again. If they do this again next year, I hope all of you will think of joining me in this special experience!

Fly on a Red Carpet

Do you come to Israel often? Do you own an apartment in Israel or have a favorite place or neighborhood in which to rent? Does *aliyah* loom in your mind each time you are here and when you are away? Does the thought of potential bureaucracy and endless offices put you off?

Remember watching the red carpet on which VIPs or celebrities tread? Remember how you felt when you saw how they were treated?

Now you can experience Red Carpet treatment, too.

For the past year, the motto of the Jewish Agency has been "*Aliyah on a Red Carpet.*"

Ofer Dahan, current marketing director of the Jewish Agency's *Aliyah & Klita* department has made the red carpet treatment a reality. From 2006 to 2009, Mr. Dahan was a *shaliach* (emissary) and director of the Israel Centre in South Africa. While there, he conceived the idea of having an *Aliyah Expo* in the country of origin, progressing to a special flight, and heralding the arrival in Israel with a ceremony to receive one's *teudat zehut* (Israel identity card) and Israeli citizenship and a mini expo.

Now making *aliyah* on a red carpet is a reality. Arriving immigrants are taken to a hotel where all of the services, which normally require days and sometimes weeks of office hopping, are available. In one brief evening, immigrants can visit as many as 30 companies for immediate needs such as: opening a bank account, obtaining a driver's license, securing a cell phone, signing up for health insurance, learning about *b'tuach leumi* (social security), acquiring a transportation card, and receiving a free newspaper subscription as a special gift.

In the same expo, immigrants can also afford themselves opportunities to learn: customs information, employment opportunities, how to buy or rent an apartment, insurance and tax information.

After a restful night in the hotel, the red carpet treatment continues, and immigrants are then taken to wherever they are planning to live initially.

Why a red carpet treatment? If all of the initial hurdles for new immigrants can be handled in one place in a few hours, perhaps more people would seriously consider *aliyah*.

Since the inaugural flight, there have been additional *aliyah* on a red carpet flights from South Africa, France, Great Britain and the former Soviet Union. (see Kaplan/Israel, page NAT 15)



Jewish Theater

REVIEWED BY IRENE BACKALENICK

Fyvush Finkel Live and Driving Miss Daisy

It's only right that Fyvush Finkel be paid tribute. The 88-year-old actor has had a long, venerable history on stage and screen, both Yiddish and mainstream theater. And appropriate, too, that his current show is staged at The National Yiddish Theatre – Folksbiene – a venerable institution in its own right.

The show is named *Fyvush Finkel Live!* a feisty statement to prove that Finkel is still ready to stand up and do his thing. But it's no longer easy for this performer. He no longer strides ahead (the cane is more than a prop), or belts out a tune (despite a few strong notes), or executes a lively dance step.

Which leads us to wonder, once more, why actors never know when to quit. We have seen this phenomenon frequently – aging actors, who can no longer remember lines or move easily, are on stage all the same. Apparently it's hard to relinquish one's place in the sun, one's very identity.

(Our most memorable recollection is that of the renowned Yiddish actor Pesach Burstein, father of actor Mike Burstyn. Some years ago, when given a "Goldie" award, the Jewish equivalent of the Tony award, he rose to the stage and the occasion – offering up an interminable, rambling acceptance speech. Though awkward, it was fortunate that he was allowed to deliver this soliloquy, since he died a few months later.)

Hence we now have Fyvush Finkel – alive and on stage. And though Finkel has formidable back-up (his own sons included), this is not a good show – in

fact, not a show at all. Had someone been on hand to write the book, this mish-mash, with its scattered thoughts and pieces, might have been integrated into a worthy show.

Not that there is not considerable talent on hand: Both sons (Elliot, the concert pianist, and Ian, the xylophone virtuoso) are renowned musicians. Their duets, in the course of the evening, are nothing short of marvelous. They, too, are backed by a solid musical combo. And two competent actors – June Gable and Merwin Goldsmith – offer songs, skits, and dances that do much to take the burden off Fyvush Finkel's shoulders. In fact, Goldsmith's moving song, "Reuben the Knish Man," proves to be one highlight of the evening.

Finkel does have his fine professional moment – when he delivers the Shylock speech from *The Merchant of Venice* in Yiddish. The fact is that Finkel has always been a first-rate actor, and, in that moment, he meets the challenge.

But if the show itself is meant to be a Finkel retrospective, one looks for tales of his long, continuing cross-over career, from Yiddish to mainstream stage and screen. One expects vivid anecdotes, really good jokes, and, above all, an orderly sequence of events – all sadly missing.

There is, however, affability and good will, both on stage and off. The Finkel sons reveal filial devotion, love and support – and the audience itself is warmly receptive. But doesn't that responsive audience deserve a clearer, more entertaining, and deeper rendition of the Fyvush Finkel story? Where is the substance, the juice, to this show?

The Southern Jews come back to Broadway

That upper-class Jewish matriarch of Atlanta, Georgia, has once more returned to Broadway. We're talking about Miss Daisy of Albert Uhry's *Driving Miss Daisy* the perennial favorite, which has now become a classic.

And this time around the play features two super-stars – Vanessa Redgrave and



(L to R) Vanessa Redgrave and James Earl Jones in *Driving Miss Daisy*. Photo credit: Annabel Clark.

James Earl Jones. And the fine actor Boyd Gaines fills a supporting role as Miss Daisy's son.

It is ironic to think of Miss Redgrave playing a Jewish character. She fell into disfavor some years ago with the Jewish community when she gave strong support to the Palestinians, while patently ignoring the Israelis. While it was all talk, and no action, as far as we know, it was enough to bring the icon down from her pedestal – at least with Jewish audiences generally.

And now Vanessa Redgrave turns Jewish – on stage, that is. The result, as it turns out, is a resounding failure. Could it be that her heart is not in the role? When one thinks of Jessica Tandy and other capable players who have portrayed Miss Daisy, one sees how far off the mark this performance is.

Though other critics (among them, the *New York Times* reviewer Ben Brantley) have praised her performance, we totally disagree. In our view, she sleepwalks through the part. She just does not give. Long before Miss Daisy lands in a nursing home, she appears to be in a coma. This is not *Driving Miss Daisy* but *March of the Zombies*.

James Earl Jones, certainly a towering figure in the theater world, is hardly better than Redgrave. Though he gets the body language just right, his lines are lost. Not a single word can be understood. Whether this is an unfortunate attempt to emulate Atlanta accents or an inability to project, it is hard to say.

In any event, the entire effort to bring the story to life rests on Boyd Gaines' slim shoulders. Fortunately, he is top-notch and well worth watching.

The story, for those who have never encountered *Driving Miss Daisy*, deals with a proud, independent elderly woman. She is no longer capable of driving, and her son Boolie insists that she have a chauffeur. Despite her protests, he hires Hoke, a black man in need of a job. While the two get off to a rocky start, they move into a deep friendship as the years pass. And

ultimately the story packs a strong, emotional wallop – and a very human response to racism.

The play itself still resonates. Playwright Uhry had offered, for the first time, a glimpse into the life, values, and culture of Atlanta's Jewish community. Later, he would carry this study into greater depth in *Last Night at Ballyhoo*. For this reviewer, Uhry's plays offered new insights into an unknown southern Jewish world. And for this, we are deeply grateful.

Theater critic, Irene Backalenick, covers theater for national and regional publications. She has a Ph.D. in theater criticism from City University Graduate Center. Her book *East Side Story – Ten Years with the Jewish Repertory Theatre won a first-place national book award in history. Comments welcomed at IreneBack@sbcglobal.net. Visit her website: nytheater scene.com or jewish-theatre.com.* ★



(L to R) Merwin Goldsmith, Fyvush Finkel and June Gable perform a treasure trove of classic routines and numbers in *Fyvush Finkel Live!*

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Jewish America

BY HOWARD W. KARSH

Sacrificing lives for honor: A war of cultures

We read the reports every day of terrorist bombings in the cities of Iraq, killing citizens, bridal processions, people on religious treks. They are Muslims killing Muslims, Sunnis killing Shia, Iraqi slaughtering Iraqi, and, as well, in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In the 1980s, in the Iran-Iraq War that claimed over 1.5 million casualties, 250,000 were attacked with chemical weapons. These are clearly the work of terrorists, enemies of decency, honor, and respect for life. These are the world's enemies. But the majority of the world has come to accept these behaviors, but never as deviant. The horrific has somehow become normalized.

To defend yourself against your enemy, you have to try to understand the enemy mind. In the instances referred to above, only rarely did it have anything to do with land or water. It was always about honor, and in the name of honor, life became cheap and unimportant. In the last Gulf War, no chemicals of mass destruction were found, but there was no question that they had been used in the Iran-Iraq War, by Iraq against the Iranians, and by Iraq against the Iraqi-Kurds. There is no question that they were willing to use them then, and, reasonable people should assume, now as well.

While the world is a terror target in general, Israel remains the primary target of an Iranian government now accumulating nuclear capability. And as for the world, in general, they remain uninterested in "primary targets," and more interested in pursuing economic and national objectives.

And among the billions of Muslims worldwide, there is a chilling silence that seems, to those of us who care, as if it is indifferent to the next casualties of world terror. It is a very difficult time for the nation of Israel, and for those who understand the nature of the danger to its survival.

The United Nations, born with hope, has failed in every part of the world, and in greater or lesser amounts in every challenge they have faced. They continue to exist, because the world feels that something is better than nothing, but there is no proof that the world is correct in this estimation.

Since Jews are a people that have championed justice for all, it is difficult to come to terms with the irrationality of honor as a fitting rival, according to nations, sects, and self-elected religious

leaders. There was one point in the Iran-Iraq War when the front-line troops were children, all of whom had been surrendered to the war effort by their families. They were not kidnapped and forced to serve as in the Congo or in South America, they were brought forward by their families in the name of honor.

For those of us who would like to believe that these are fringe groups, the case remains unproved, because in the world where "honor" is counted as the final destination, everyone falls silent. We do not read or hear or see the rejection of any of these behaviors, not in the United Nations, not in the Muslim countries that are not involved, and not in the United States of America, where criticism of any behavior is an accepted right.

When a parent teaches safety to their children, they warn them about the danger that lurks, seen and unseen. Why would any thinking person believe that we should think better of a massive group that refuses to decry any behavior?

What we know is what we see, and we see nothing that would belie our worst fears.

America is currently obsessed with "bullying," and it should be. Should we not argue that the world is being pushed to the brink by Pakistani, Afghan, Iranian and Iraqi bullies, who individually and collectively need to be stopped.

The first step is not to be afraid to put out their names.

Israel, Not-One-Inch!

I have watched with great interest all of the U.S. National-Jewish debate over the state of peace in Israel today. I find it wanting a third party, and I think there are a majority of Jews in America today who are not represented.

This is by its very nature a complicated issue. Although American Jews and the United States government are party to the debate, as a sovereign nation, the decision rightfully needs to be made in Israel. And while it is correct that both the American Jewish community and the U.S. government are more than just onlookers, the debate lacks authenticity, when we eliminate the population who have fought the wars and live with the consequences.

I have, like many of you, followed the interesting and emotional debates between Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz and J Street Director Jeremy Ben Ami, who are fighting for the conscience of American Jews and the support of the American government. (Also important are both world Jewry and the continued international support of the U.S. government, which has defended the State of Israel from its beginning.) But it is equally clear to me that the goals of the debaters and the goals of the U.S. government have been built and conceived through a filter of American Jewish and American governmental context that are different and distinct from what is best for the State of Israel.

And finally, we need to understand that this is a divisive issue at its source. Given the freedom of pressure from all

parties foreign to Israel, it is not clear that even by themselves the Israelis know what they want. What they wanted in 1948 was the freedom to exist after the Holocaust. They fought a costly war to win that freedom, which was granted by the world. The Palestinians and their Arab supporters denied the right of the United Nations to make that decision and determined to destroy what had just been awarded. Although it seemed impossible, the Israelis won the battle, but did not win the war. The world, then decided that what had always been the rule of war would be suspended, and for the last 62 years, everything that has been done in this sovereign country has been the subject of a world debate. I cannot think of another historical fact that has been unresolved in world view for such a length of time.

The series of wars that followed changed the boundaries, as wars do, but never settled the issue of how the world saw them, and nations who were both involved in the support of one of the two sides, never simply stood aside. The United States has come to the aid of many countries. In World War I and II, we came to the aid of Europe. In the World War II, American intervention clearly changed the outcome, but when it was over, we allowed our Allies to determine their own national interests. We sought their collaboration and cooperation, but never tried to direct their national policy. When Russia overran Europe, we opposed their action with vigor, because of the balance of power and the growing threat of nuclear war; we worried about human rights, but we didn't take the position of expectation based on our support when we were allied together.

There does not seem to be any template that we can look at for the unique way that the State of Israel has been treated. They are expected to behave on a transcendent level, making peace and compromises with nations who still refuse to guarantee their right to life, and who are doubtful partners in anything that might be resolved. There is no rational case that can be made that Mr. Abbas can assure any agreements that are made. The Palestinians are divided in both spirit and fact. The very fact that they have said "no" to every previous offer of peace has not swayed the critics.

At this point in history, almost as many years as the State of Israel has existed, the United States of America is still guarantying the state of nonwar between North and South Korea. They are still in a state of war. Do you believe that if Israel was able to come to any agreement about peace, that the American government, which has exit plans in Iraq and Iran, would enforce the peace? Israel's experience with United Nations forces has demonstrated that the body in which there was so much hope, is broken and unrepairable. In

(see Karsh, page NAT 15)



The Roads from Babel

BY SETH BEN-MORDECAI

Parts

An ideal translator exactly reproduces the meaning of a text from one language in a second language. Exact translations are possible when the author of a text and the translator are contemporaries in the same culture. So in Belgium, where French and Dutch speakers live side by side, exact translations from one language to the other are possible. But exact translations from ancient to modern languages are rare: Cultural differences and poor understanding of ancient vocabulary and grammar hinder the translator. Nonetheless, if a translation of an ancient text suggests that ancient people differ from modern in basic ways, a critical reader should suspect that the translator has failed to grasp a cultural difference or has misunderstood vocabulary or grammar.

In that regard, when a baby is born, a doctor or midwife quickly looks at the baby's genitalia and calls out "It's a boy!" or "It's a girl!" to the curious parents. The midwife does not look at the bed to determine the baby's sex. Yet translations of Exodus state that the midwives looked at the birthing stool, not the baby's anatomy, to determine its sex: "When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, ye shall look upon the birthstool: If it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live." (Exodus 1:16, JPS translation, 1917) The midwives' purported behavior runs counter to common sense, rendering the translation *look upon the birthstool* suspect.

The word translated as birthstool is אֲבִימָה ('*ovnayim*). It is usually translated as "birth stones" because its root, *aleph-bet-nun*, can pertain to stone and because Egyptian women are said to have placed each foot on a flat brick while giving birth. But in Hebrew, the root *aleph-bet-nun* also pertains to reproduction: *banim* means sons, i.e., male offspring, and *banot* means daughters, i.e., female offspring. Moreover, the Hebrew suffix *-ayim* in the word '*ovnayim*' is the common plural for body parts, suggesting that '*ovnayim*' refers to a body part, not a birthstool. Classical Arabic lends support to this notion: The root *aleph-bet-nun* almost pertains to offspring and birth. In Akkadian, that root pertains to organs, such as *abunnatu*, (navel), where the birth cord attaches to a newborn. Finally, the obvious body part a midwife would inspect to determine a baby's sex is its genitalia. Thus, a more reasonable translation of Exodus 1:16 might be: "When you midwife the Hebrew women and look at the [baby's] genitalia, if it's a boy, kill him. If it's a girl, she can live."

Email: Seth@Vayomer Publishing.com. ★



As I Heard It

By MORTON GOLD

Cantor Israel Alter's CDs get my highest recommendations

This column is about two separate CDs, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2 titled: *Cheif Cantor Israel Alter Sings: Liturgical Songs of the Synagogue* and *Cantor Israel Alter Sings: Yiddish Songs and Liturgical Songs* released by the European Society for Jewish Music, c. 2008. (Digital transfer is by Hartley Wyberg, Toronto; and Sound Restoration is by Andor Izsak, EZJM.) A modest booklet accompanies each CD. Unhappily (for me) it is written in German.

A brief biography of Hazzan Alter with the salient facts is included. He was born 1901 in Lemberg, Poland. At age 20 he acquired his first cantorial position at the Brigittenauer Temple in Vienna. In 1925, he became the chief cantor at a synagogue in Hanover and also concertized in synagogues and concerts halls in Europe. He toured the United States in 1929 and gave his first Carnegie Hall recital during that time. In 1935 he became cantor at the United Hebrew Congregation, the largest synagogue in Johannesburg. In 1961 he joined the faculty at the Hebrew Union College. He was renowned as much for his brilliant tenor voice as well as his significant compositions for the synagogue. He died in 1979.

Volume 1 has 15 selections. Disappointingly, the composers are not credited, nor are the organist, choir and other instrumentalists identified. But what follows are only superlatives. From the first track, it is obvious that Alter had a magnificent tenor voice and knew very well how to use it. Every note he sang was a very important note and each received great care. Anyone who claims to be a *hazzan* would do well to listen to these discs.

In these compositions there is an amalgamation of traditional as well as more modern elements in cantorial music. Some prayers are sung *a cappella*, others are performed with harp or strings, but most with organ and choir. In general the accompaniments are treated in the orthodox manner in that the accompanying forces contribute the bulk of their contributions at the conclusion of a phrase.



While not commenting on every work, I must observe that there is a marvelous Ya'ale, which is chanted during the Kol Nidre service. No, it is not the "traditional" one, nor is it intended to solicit the congregation to "join in." Why should this be expected? This is a service and a solemn, sacred one at that. (Kol Nidre is not a camp service!) The congregation should be there to pray, not to take over the service! It is clear (and not only in this piece) that it is the cantor, assisted often by organist and mixed choir that leads the service.

What exists in many Conservative temples these days (and often in others) is an unhappy, unsatisfactory and ultimately self-defeating situation. I surely am not opposed to congregational singing. However like seasoning in cooking, it should be sparingly employed.

The second of the two El Mole Rahamims is as moving a piece of synagogue music as one can hear. Then there is a most traditional (slow) performance of Lewandowski's "Ma Tovv." This is a genuine eye (and ear) opener, as it is rarely heard this way. Since he must have performed it this way in Hanover, one can deduce that his interpretation is the way it used to be sung. There is a setting of Adon Olam, which definitely is not intended for congregational singing. It is a moving, even spiritual setting, one that is befitting in a Jewish service. Then there is a setting of the Sh'ma and Boruch (sic) Shem.

I declare that I thought that the *hazzan* was Jussi Bjoerling. I cannot think of a greater compliment. The choir and organist are not slouches either. The irony here is that these essentially setting of prayers in Orthodox vocal style were probably meant for performance in a Reform temple.

Then there is a setting of the "R'tseh" prayer. It is unlikely that you have ever heard this prayer sung in most Conservative and many Reform congregations as well. While the cantor surely could chant it in an Orthodox *shul*, he could not use an organ or mixed choir there. It would be difficult to imagine hearing a more moving as well as traditional piece of Jewish music for the synagogue. (I recall conducting this prayer, minus organ, in a Boston area temple some 50 years ago!) Read this and weep. You see, these days most us "go" to services, mostly to be seen there, amuse ourselves while there (we "join in") and also listen to a sermon. Notice, please that I did not include having a moving spiritual or religious experience.

I did not recognize the setting of this L'cha Dodi. The style suggests Lewandowski to me. It is obvious that the composer did not intend for the congregation to "join in" during the refrain. The concluding selections (Hashkiveynu and V'hagen Baadenu) must have been recorded later in his career. Nevertheless the marvelous musicality and religiosity of his singing shine through.

Renowned artist turns struggling economy into opportunity to help others

When Bruce David first put his artistic creativity onto paper in 1976, it was not the insights or knowledge of a trained art student or seasoned professional that guided his hand. Even to this day, David confesses that his father was talked into helping him with his drawing projects, so that he could pass art classes in his early years. It wasn't until his dedicated wife gave him a pad of paper and some colored pencils that the creative inspiration began to flow.



Bruce David

"An artist is the last thing I thought I would be," David admits, "I truly feel fortunate to have been given such a wonderful gift." Using this "gift," Bruce David has been creating colorful and dynamic, biblical, storytelling pictures, filled with hidden multi-dimensional symbolism for over 30 years. And his efforts have proven successful. Receiving a major educational award from Hadassah and much international acclaim, Bruce David's art has found its way into the hearts and homes of communities around the world, as one of the leading Jewish artists of our time. When McGraw Hill Publishers chose



To say that I enjoyed listening to this CD would be an understatement. While I would surely agree that stylistically the music has its point of departure in the 19th century, the performance of this music is timeless because of the quality and sincerity of the forces involved. One would have to go far and wide to hear these pieces rendered during a service. This, I suspect is mostly due to a perceived lack of time in the service. To find the time, I would advocate (gasp) to leave out most if not all discussion, most of the insipid responsive reading and (gasp and more gasp) some of the *d'var torah*! For lovers of *hazzanut*, these two discs deserve the highest recommendation and are lovingly recommended.

Alter was a marvelous *hazzan*. It was an honor listening to his interpretations so lovingly, honestly and ever so musically rendered.

Dr. Gold is a composer, conductor and music critic for the Post & Opinion. He is the 2010 recipient of the Kavod Award given to him by the Cantors Assembly of North America at their recent convention. He can be reached at: drmortongold@yahoo.com. ★

one living and one deceased Jewish artist to represent Judaism in one of their college textbooks, Bruce David was highlighted alongside of Marc Chagall. Additionally, Hallmark Cards has used (and sold out of) multiple series of cards, utilizing David's dynamic designs.

During the past three decades, Bruce David has strived to create meaningful art that both reflects the beautiful and relevant aspects of Judaism, as well as serves as educational and inspirational tools for its viewers.

"I want people to look at my art and develop an appreciation for Judaism and Israel. My hope is that it will help others increase their conscious awareness of who and what they are, and what it means to be Jewish," he said.

Working side by side with his wife, Diane, David has been developing an educational curriculum to use his art in an enlightening manner. It was not until this past spring, when his son graduated from college that his dreams began to manifest. Graduating from Indiana University with a business degree, David's son, Joshua, agreed to rise to the challenge of turning those dreams into a reality. Over the course of the past six months, David and his son have already been to San Francisco for a two month exhibit in the fall, started a nonprofit organization to support Jewish education, and are ready to launch their new user-friendly website davidart.com.

Working together, the father-son team has started a program to assist students and young professionals across the country in supplementing their cost of living. The New S.O.N.G. (Supporting Our Next Generations) Mitzvah Project allows individuals, schools, and organizations to support their fundraising and financial needs, by sharing Bruce David's art in communities across the nation.

"By supporting our next generation of Jewish students, we are not only helping them attain financial stability, thereby supporting their own efforts, but we are also spreading the important and relevant aspects of Judaism that benefit our world as a whole."

Aside from trying to help our next generation financially and ideologically, David and his son have established a nonprofit organization that will utilize David's art for Jewish educational programming. The recently established nonprofit, Light of the Nations, provides communities around the country with contemporary educational programming, through art, music, and uniquely crafted interactive experiences, allowing participants to experience Judaism through the senses. When asked about the programs, David's son responded that, "our programs are designed to share the spirit, beauty, importance, and modern-day relevance of Judaism and its universally oriented ideology. Our experiential art, music, meditation, discussion, and action-based programs engage participants in interactive (see David, page NAT 16)



Media Watch

BY RABBI ELLIOT B. GERTEL

The Social Network

Jewish connections surface in *The Social Network*, a film portrait of Facebook founders and fellow Harvard students Mark Zuckerberg (Jesse Eisenberg) and Eduardo Saverin (Andrew Garfield), who both happen to be Jewish. Indeed, we are told that the idea for Facebook comes to computer prodigy Zuckerberg while he is appalled at a nerdy "Caribbean night" party at the Jewish fraternity. The only fascination that Mark finds at the party is the presence of "Asian girls" who seem to be drawn to the Jewish students.

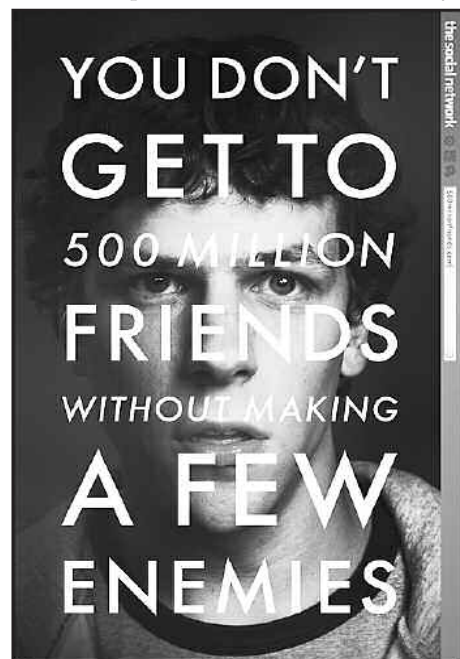
Eduardo prefers returning to a boring party than being alone. Ironically, this commitment to being a people person, which includes not snubbing his own people, may have opened for him the doors of acceptance at an elite Harvard club about which Mark can only dream. The film asks whether or not Mark nurses a rage against Eduardo for this reason.

According to filmmakers Aaron Sorkin (writer) and David Fincher (director), basing themselves on the purported tell-all book by Ben Mezrich, *The Accidental Billionaires*, Facebook's founding duo invented their site because they had little luck at dating. Mark is depicted as sabotaging his own good qualities and promising prospects because he has a chip on his shoulders, compounded by eruptions of arrogance and of alcohol. We first see him on a date with his bright and responsive girlfriend, Erica Albright (Rooney Mara), who breaks up with him after he persists at putting down her family and her social status, seemingly without realizing it. She tells him that dating him is "like dating a StairMaster." The metaphor is a clever and witty one, and most suggestive. Is Mark's "stair" social climbing or uncontrollable verbosity or creativity, or his constant rush to tinker at the computer?

The film suggests that Mark does caddish things. He reacts to the breakup by drinking too much, grabbing his computer, and demeaning his ex-girlfriend's looks and personality with a blog that would today get him cited for cyber-bullying. She faces the situation with dignity and strength, keeps her distance from him, and later even joins Facebook, we learn, while avoiding its founder, who, according to the movie, pines for her even after his great, early success comes. The film says that Mark's "social-networking" begins the very night of the break-up, with his hacking of many dormitory computer directories to mix and match photos of Harvard women for the purposes of "comparison" and "ranking," both "against" each other and "against" animal pictures.

The film's Mark Zuckerberg is no stranger to hearings and to trials and lawsuits, beginning at Harvard, where his hackings and the resultant overload to the internet servers by curious "hitters" wreak havoc and raise ethical questions. At such occasions Zuckerberg arrogantly hails his own abilities and declares that he should be thanked for revealing "holes in the system."

In the movie, Mark's best and "only" friend, Eduardo, tries to provide moral guidance from the very beginning, but cannot. Here, he is an enabler who gives in even when he believes that Mark is acting unethically. Eduardo's inner litmus test for doing the right thing is what his father would think. Generally, he takes moral responsibility after the fact, lamenting, "My father won't even look at me." Is Eduardo's homage to Mark's genius a blind adulation or a hope that he can harness it for purposes of social acceptance or, at least, sociability?



The filmmakers depict Eduardo as rather clueless about Mark. At one point, Eduardo says that Mark doesn't care about money, so he needs to be "protected." Eduardo's well-heeled dad provides the initial investments of over \$1,000 and then \$19,000 for Facebook. A grateful Mark dubs Eduardo the company's chief financial officer. Yet Mark is more than an obsessed cyber inventor. The film suggests that Mark senses that Eduardo cannot grow the company, and seeks out the brilliant and erratic and carousing Napster founder Sean Parker (Justin Timberlake), whom Mark regards as a more effective cyber entrepreneur. Parker comes with his own history of lawsuits, having created a system that could be used to pilfer copyrighted music.

Mark makes the astute decision to move the company to California one summer to corner the university markets there, but Eduardo petulantly insists on remaining in Manhattan to take advantage of an internship and to "walk the pavement." When Parker falls upon Mark's doorstep (or so Parker makes it seem), Mark knows well enough to utilize the latter's connections. Facebook soon reaches

a million subscribers. Sore at being circumvented, and frustrated by his own floundering efforts, Eduardo freezes his bank account, almost strangling the company just as it is about to attract major backers through Parker's skillful efforts. It is then, the film suggests, that Mark decides to banish Eduardo from the company and from rightful stock shares.

Just before he launches his Facebook idea, Mark is approached by some wealthy Harvard students of aristocratic and moneyed lineage who invite him to their prestigious and exclusive university club to entice him to create a Harvard dating network for them. The two leaders in this plan are the Winklevoss twins (both played by Armie Hammer). Even while being pursued for his genius, Mark is not allowed past the club's foyer. He accepts the offer but decides that he can invent a far more expansive and popular network. He puts his blue blood fellow students off with e-mails, at one point feigning technical glitches and obstructions, while forging his own concept of a social networking web site.

When the Winklevoss twins discover that Mark is producing an increasingly boundless network of his own, they feel betrayed but are reluctant to sue because of their sense of being Harvard gentlemen. They are depicted as young men of principle as well as breeding. They are also fine athletes. After first meeting them, Mark tells them that they are obviously no strangers to the gym, and they respond that they have to work out vigorously because they are on the rowing team and plan to compete in the Olympics. They are young men of resolve and of character, though they have their moments of sophomoric arrogance. While rowing in a competition in England, they are shocked and outraged to learn that Mark has had no problem creating a network that has by then reached to that country and others.

The Winklevoss brothers do end up suing Mark but not before they attempt bringing their grievances before Harvard president Larry Summers (Douglas Urbanski) for arbitration. In this film, Mark is not the only testy and cranky Jew with a certain ethical myopia. While not as quirky as Mark, the film's Summers is equally as arrogant and as unconcerned about matters of right and wrong. He goes so far as to say that Harvard students enter an ethical covenant with the university but not necessarily with one another. He also urges them to address their grievances in the civil courts. So the Harvard president who happens to be Jewish discourages the twins from settling their grievances with arbitration that would be more in keeping with Harvard traditions!

Eduardo, for his part, sues Mark after Mark's lawyers mislead him into signing away top dollar for shares in the company that has made Mark the world's youngest billionaire. Eduardo feels betrayed as a friend as well as a partner and as the first major investor. Throughout the trial,

Mark's major self-defense is his own dispassionate dedication to creating his concept for social interaction. "I don't hate anybody," he says. As for the Winklevoss twins, Mark tells their lawyers, "We're doing things at Facebook that no one in this room, especially your clients...[is] capable of doing." Or, as he puts it elsewhere, "They came to me with an idea. I had a better one." Is this pure haughtiness, or blatant rationalization, or simply the impatience with others of one whose genius is all-absorbing?

Yet Mark is far from dispassionate. He definitely has more than a computer chip on his shoulders. Hence his crack that the Winklevoss brothers are suing him because this is the first time in their lives that things did not go their way. Why does he care so much about which social clubs will accept him or allow him all the way in for a visit?

Does Mark regard himself as an outsider because he is Jewish? Sorkin suggests that Mark's detachment is primarily a personality problem, but he does suggest that Mark obsesses over the "Jewish problem," as well. In the opening scene, Mark castigates Erica for accepting her parents' change of name from Albrecht to Albright. "Albrecht" can be both a German or Jewish name. While Mark Zuckerberg's generation may not care about name changes, Sorkin is more of an age to be cognizant and contemptuous of perceived assimilationism.

For a brief moment, the sight of the Winklevoss twins by the Thames reminded me of the principled Christian and the angry Jew in *Chariots of Fire* (1981). Yet Mark's anger in this film is more an impatience with those who reach the generally admired goals of everyday life because they are not obsessed with visionary projects. In *Chariots of Fire*, also based on a "true story," Jew and Christian are both obsessed with running. The Jew remains angry even after assimilating while the Christian finds equilibrium in his faith.

Whether by design or overall effect, *The Social Network* suggests that its two principal characters, who frequent a Jewish fraternity, Zuckerberg and Saverin, are clueless when it comes to the simplest social and ethical decisions. This film's Zuckerberg is completely driven by his genius with computers. He does not derive much pleasure from the fame and adulation that his notoriety brings. Eduardo enjoys his share of the fame, but is conscious of any bad choices he makes and of bad behavior on the part of others (including Zuckerberg), though he cannot bring himself either to forestall bad decisions or at least to address them later. Zuckerberg is horrified by Parker's bad behavior only when it might jeopardize Facebook. It appears in this film that Mark's drive to cyber virtuosity encompasses not only the technical aspects of "interfacing," but the supremacy of his company, both financially, and in numbers and notoriety.

(see Gertel, page NAT 16)

Book Reviews

REVIEWED BY MORTON I. TEICHER

The polio epidemic of 1944 in Newark

Nemesis. By Philip Roth. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010. 280 Pages. \$26.

Philip Roth has done it again! For his 32nd book, America's outstanding writer has once again demonstrated his mastery of the short novel with his newest contribution, *Nemesis*. This achievement is especially noteworthy since Roth is now 77 years old, but advanced age has not dimmed his unusual capacity to engage and delight his readers. Perhaps one noteworthy effect of Roth's age on this new book is the atypical omission of the steamy sex scenes that are a feature of his previous books. To be sure, there are two instances of sex, but these are minimally described and can hardly offend those readers who objected to Roth's preoccupation with sex in his other works.

The theme of this new book is the polio epidemic of 1944 in Newark, N.J., Roth's former home. Weequahic, the Jewish section of Newark, where Roth grew up, was struck by a large incidence of the disease, including several deaths. Roth was 11 years old at the time so that his personal recollections probably play only a small part in the book. Roth acknowledges his indebtedness to several books on the subject as well as on related topics that figure in the story.

Roth's protagonist is Bucky Cantor, the playground director in Weequahic during the summer of 1944. He was the 23-year-old graduate of a physical education program and a superior athlete, especially in those sports such as diving, javelin throwing, and weightlifting that did not require good vision. His vision was so poor that he was rejected for military service in America's armed forces during World War II.

Cantor's mother died in childbirth and his father served two years in prison for stealing from his employer to cover his gambling debts. He then disappeared except for a brief failed attempt to get Cantor to live with him after he remarried. Cantor was raised by his grandparents, immigrants from Galicia, who made sure that he had a *bar mitzvah*. By 1944, Cantor's grandfather was dead and he lived with his grandmother.

Cantor was popular with the boys who came to the playground and his affection

for them produced a mutual regard that was challenged when a number of the boys came down with polio. The interaction among Cantor, the boys, and their parents, especially those whose sons died, became problematic as the epidemic grew in virulence and in number of victims.

With considerable guilt, Cantor left the playground to become waterfront director at a camp in the Poconos where his girl friend, Marcia, was a counselor. The job had become open when its occupant was drafted and Cantor's girl friend importuned him to take the job. The tragic consequences of this decision and its impact on the relationship between Cantor and Marcia occupy the rest of the narrative. Once again, Roth explores the consequences of the choices we make during the course of our lives. The superb character portrayal that results from this examination is a prime example of Roth's dazzling literary skills. Moreover, the book demonstrates that Roth can write without raunchiness and without self-hatred.

Ever since he published *Goodbye Columbus* in 1959, Roth has received numerous prizes, although, thus far, the Nobel Prize has eluded him. The quality and the quantity of his work more than justify his receiving this award. His new book adds to the luster of his well-deserved reputation and adds still another argument in favor of his becoming a Nobel Laureate.

Leader of American Jewry and first chancellor of Hebrew University

Judah L. Magnes. By Daniel P. Kotzin. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2010. 448 Pages. \$49.95.

The name of Judah L. Magnes is little known today even though, at one time, he was a leader of American Jewry and the first chancellor of Hebrew University. Kotzin's monumental biography may remedy our failure to recognize Magnes, although its highly academic approach will limit any general appeal. Based on Kotzin's doctoral dissertation, the text has 332 pages, and the scholarly apparatus – notes and bibliography – take up 112 pages. Moreover, the dense language of the presentation, its focus on convoluted disputes, and its limited information about Magnes's personal life may give some readers pause. More's the pity! The endless conflict between Israelis and Arabs demands consideration of every conceivable approach to a resolution, even including some modern

refashioning of Magnes's (and Martin Buber's) advocacy for a binational state.

Magnes was born in San Francisco in 1877. He was ordained by the Hebrew Union College (HUC) in Cincinnati where he also earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Cincinnati. He was a dissenter at both institutions, developing a determination to follow his own conscience, a position he maintained throughout his life. The negative attitude of Reform Judaism to Zionism was rejected by Magnes, and his interest in Zionism was furthered when he studied for his doctorate in Germany. After a year on the faculty of HUC, where his Zionist views clashed with the administration, Magnes left to become the rabbi of Temple Israel in Brooklyn. He argued with its Board of Trustees and resigned to accept a position at New York's prestigious Temple Emanu-el. There, he came to know wealthy German Jews including Louis Marshall, who later became his brother-in-law. However, the Board saw as heretic Magnes's Zionism, his criticism from the pulpit of HUC's anti-Zionist views, and his effort to incorporate elements of traditional Judaism into the services, including the bar mitzvah ceremony. He quit and then spent a year at B'Nai Bishurim, trying unsuccessfully to lead it to a middle path between Orthodox and Reform.

While working as a rabbi, Magnes participated in forming several organizations including the American Jewish Committee, the Joint Distribution Committee, and the umbrella community organization, New York's Kehillah, where he served as chairman from 1909 to 1922. This failed effort to unite New York's fractured elements involved many activities including industrial relations, social welfare, and Jewish education. Magnes's pacifist position during World War I put him at odds with others in the Kehillah as well as with a number of Jewish organizations. In 1922, Magnes and his family moved to Palestine.

He participated actively in establishing Hebrew University, a complicated task involving several factions seeking control. Although Magnes was appointed as the university's first chancellor in 1925, he argued with Chaim Weizmann and Albert Einstein who played important roles in developing the university. He was also at odds with various blocs on the Board and in the faculty. His powerful position as chancellor included responsibility for financial and academic matters, but he encountered considerable opposition. In 1935, his opponents won out and he was demoted to the honorary job of president.

Before he died in 1948, five months after the State of Israel was born, Magnes was active in negotiations with the Arabs, the British, and other Zionist leaders. Opposed to partition, he clashed with Ben Gurion, calling for a United States of Palestine and arguing for Mahatma Gandhi's advocacy of

nonviolence. This attitude resulted in his being labeled an anti-patriotic defeatist.

Judah Magnes is largely a forgotten figure despite his major role in the establishment of Hebrew University. He should also be remembered for helping to change the attitude toward Zionism among Reform Jews. Author Kotzin deserves our gratitude for telling the story of Magnes's contributions.

Fascinating history of South Africa

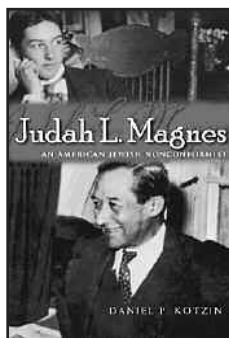
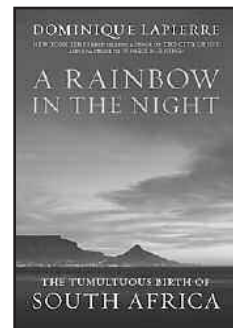
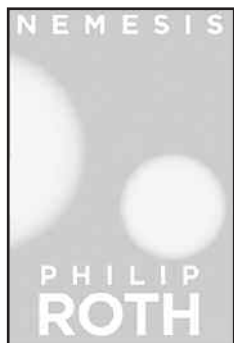
A Rainbow in the Night. By Dominique Lapierre. New York: Da Capo Press, 2009. 288 Pages. \$26.

The history of South Africa is filled with mayhem, massacres, and murders. Much of that gory story is captured in this eloquent recital of what happened in South Africa since 1652 when about a hundred men under the command of Jan van Riebeck landed on the southern tip of Africa, charged by the Dutch East India Company with the task of growing lettuce for the crews of spice ships that rounded the Cape of Good Hope en route to Asia. Because of the lack of vegetables, these sailors were developing scurvy, and van Riebeck's mission was to prevent this dread disease by providing them with lettuce.

Disappointed by this unglamorous assignment, van Riebeck proceeded to carry it out, establishing an enclave separate from the native African people. A shipwrecked slave ship provided laborers enabling van Riebeck and his men to expand their crops and to add chicken and sheep farming. Later, they grew grapes for wine and their numbers increased when they were joined by 175 Huguenots from France. Eventually, some members of van Riebeck's settlement established their own farms and set off with caravans further north. They called themselves Afrikaners, renouncing their association with Holland. They came into conflict with the Black Africans, setting in motion a struggle that persisted for 350 years. Complicating matters was the intrusion of the British whose humanistic attitudes toward the Black Africans were different from those of the Afrikaners who also called themselves Boers, establishing the Orange Free State and the Republic of the Transvaal.

War between the British and the Boers broke out in 1899 and ended in 1902 with the defeat of the Boers who became British subjects. In 1906, when the Liberal Party took over the government of Great Britain, it formed the Union of South Africa that united all of Southern

(see Teicher, page NAT 15)





My Kosher Kitchen

BY SYBIL KAPLAN

Dishes for Thanksgiving and Chanukah

One thing about writing for papers that come out ahead of holidays, you are always somewhat out of sync. For example, this column was written in late October with Thanksgiving a month away and Chanukah six weeks away!

Many Americans who live in Israel do observe Thanksgiving although one has to order whole turkeys ahead, and they tend to make the dinners on Friday evening. Since our weekend is Friday-Saturday and people work on Thursday, it makes it easier for cooking and baking. Here are two favorite recipes to use for Thanksgiving and two for Chanukah.

Pumpkin Custard (8–10 servings)

4 eggs
1 cup brown sugar
2 cups pureed pumpkin
1/2 tsp. ginger
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/8 tsp. cloves
2 Tbsp. boiling water
2 cups nondairy creamer

Preheat oven to 325°F. Grease a baking dish. Beat eggs in mixer or food processor. Add sugar and pumpkin. Mix ginger, nutmeg, cinnamon and cloves with boiling water. Add to pumpkin mixture. Stir in creamer. Pour mixture into baking dish. Place dish in a larger dish of hot water. Bake for one hour or until a knife inserted near the edge comes out clean.

Cranberry Jello Mold (12–16 servings)

Barry's Aunt Dorothy (z"l) made this for all family occasions and all of us loved it. It is terrific for either Thanksgiving or Chanukah.

margarine, oil or spray vegetable oil
4 slices canned pineapple, pear halves or peaches
1 3-ounce package lemon gelatin
1 cup boiling water
1 cup cold water
2 3-ounce packages cranberry or strawberry or cherry gelatin
2 1/2 cups boiling water
1 10-ounce frozen cranberry-orange sauce or 1 can whole berry cranberry sauce
1 cup crushed pineapple with juice

Grease a gelatin mold. Layer pineapple or pear or peach slices in bottom. In a



Shipley Speaks

BY JIM SHIPLEY

Of battles and brains

Nir Barkat, the mayor of Jerusalem has a dream. He sees a city that can be the number one tourist attraction in the world. It would involve the natural beauty

mixing bowl, dissolve lemon gelatin in 1 cup boiling water. Add cold water. Pour over fruit. Refrigerate until firm. In a mixing bowl, mix red gelatin with boiling water. Add cranberry-orange sauce or whole berry cranberry sauce and pineapple with juice. Let cool in refrigerator but don't let it get firm. Pour cooled red gelatin-cranberry-orange-pineapple mixture over lemon gelatin mixture. Refrigerate until firm.

Carrot-Potato Latkes (12 servings)

4 eggs
6 Tbsp. flour
1/4 cup milk or nondairy creamer
3 pounds finely shredded potatoes
4 large finely shredded carrots
6 Tbsp. minced green onions
6 Tbsp. minced parsley
salt and pepper to taste
oil

In a bowl, combine eggs, flour and milk or nondairy creamer. Add potatoes, carrots, green onions, parsley, salt and pepper and mix thoroughly. Heat oil in a frying pan. Spoon batter around pan. Cook until brown on both sides. Drain on paper towels.

Keep warm in a foil pan in the oven.

Vegetable Feta Latkes

2 cups shredded potatoes
2 cups shredded carrots
1 cup shredded onions
4 cups shredded squash
1 tsp. salt
pepper to taste
6 eggs
1 1/2 cups flour
1 cup crumbled feta cheese
1 cup chopped parsley
oil

Combine shredded potatoes, carrots, onions and squash in a mixing bowl. Add salt, pepper, eggs, flour, cheese and parsley and blend. Heat oil in a frying pan. Drop batter around pan and fry until brown on both sides. Drain on paper towels. Transfer to a foil pan and keep warm in the oven until ready to serve.

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, book reviewer, food columnist and feature writer. ★

of this historic city. It would be meaningful to Jews, Christians and Moslems. It would put a solid fiscal base to the city and allow the municipality to upgrade the ancient infrastructure to make it more livable for its inhabitants. But it requires a ton of urban renewal – 2,000 years worth.

Other cities have gone through this. New York is constantly tearing down and building up. Citizens have to relocate, certain sensibilities and traditions are upended, but if the planning is well done with an objective beyond uprooting a neighborhood, usually the city is better off for it.

But this is Jerusalem and that makes for a whole new set of issues. The Arabs, those who call themselves Palestinians, don't want any of this. What they mostly don't want are Jews in Jerusalem or anywhere in Israel for that matter.

Well, truth is that Israel has had an indigenous city government (this time) of Jerusalem for the past 62 plus years, the first time in better than 2,000-plus years. There were the Greeks, the Romans, the Crusaders, the Moors, the Turks and the British. Followed by the Third Jewish Commonwealth. Finally, and mostly under Mayor Teddy Kollek, of blessed memory, Jerusalem rose from its dirty, unkempt, uncared-for past to the magnificent city it is today.

On the east side of the city are slums in rabbit warrens of alleys. There is building without permits and therefore without safety, oversight for plumbing, and building codes and sanitation. If the city is to prosper, this has to stop.

Mr. Barkat, the mayor of Jerusalem (all of Jerusalem), has this vision. He wants to upgrade much of the housing. He wants to work out a traffic system that would eliminate some of the worst traffic tie ups in the civilized world. He wants a better life for all the citizens of his city. But those Arabs who call themselves Palestinians don't want it. They would rather turn the entire city into that disreputable, unlivable hovel that Mark Twain discovered in the early part of the last century. They would rather do that than live side by side with the Jews.

The Jews, who created a couple of the finest hospitals in the world in Jerusalem. The Jews, who created an economic environment wherein everyone can flourish. The Jews, who are home again after all these millennia. Nir Barkat is doing urban renewal in his city. He will tear down the slums as they have in New York and Chicago. He will provide better housing for his citizens. All his citizens. And, as in Chicago and New York, those who cannot handle the upgrade, let them choose. Move up or move out.

The people of Jerusalem deserve that kind of city. They have this incredible worldwide heritage to protect. No, the city is not that meaningful in the Muslim world (it is not even mentioned in the Koran). But to Christians and Jews and various other sects, this is the place.

A week ago, at the monthly International Round Table here in Orlando that Rachel and I have been hosting for the past 14 years, the Israeli consul general for Puerto Rico and Florida was our guest speaker. He was appearing basically on behalf of the American Israeli Forum, an ad hoc group of business people interested in fostering economic ties between Florida and Israel. But he covered a number of interesting subjects.

He spoke of the unique gifts of the Israeli people. Israel, he said, cannot export oil or coal or other minerals. No, the number one export of Israel is brains. He told of being commander of a unit of soldiers whose sole duty during their compulsory service was to sit in a room with some other brainy young soldiers and a super computer. There, in that room they had three years to conceive great things. Yes, these concepts were to have military functions, but not aiming guns or creating a more effective bomb.

It is out of such rooms and such computers and such young soldiers that concepts such as voice mail and instant chat have emerged. Designed for military purposes, look how they have changed our lives. As I listened to Ofer Bavly, the consul general, speak, I thought of the news stories (very quickly buried, did you notice?) about a computer worm that had invaded the Iranian nuclear reactor computers and in essence, took them over.

Now, where on earth could such a thing have originated? Think of a brilliant Jewish kid, sitting in his chair, with this monster computer at his beck and call, charged with the task of inventing something. What? Anything that would help Israel.

Sitting there, I got the mental picture of the commander of the unit telling his rookie charges, "What is the biggest threat to the Israeli people today? Iran!" And so the kid goes to work. He devises this thing that will indeed take over the Iranian nuclear computers and totally control them.

I pictured him going to his commanding officer and telling him "Look, I developed this thing? Well, I think I may have solved the Iranian problem." I have no knowledge of this. I am conjecturing. But, the worm worked. Iran now knows that until they solve this problem, the entire nuclear arsenal is useless. Wouldn't that be something? Wars with bad guys with no casualties. I'm just sayin'...

Israel. God bless Nir Barkat. God bless those kids whose Jewish mothers just knew they were raising geniuses. God help those Arabs who cannot fathom what their lives could be. I'm just sayin'.

Jim Shipley has had careers in broadcasting, distribution, advertising, and telecommunications. He began his working life in radio in Philadelphia. He has written his JPO column for 20 years and is director of Trading Wise, an international trade and marketing company in Orlando, Fla. ★

ADLAND*(continued from page NAT 2)*

non-Orthodox Israelis have stopped journeying to this sacred place as they feel it has been co-opted by the Orthodox with no place left for them.

So we struggle for a rightful place at the Wall. Women struggle for a rightful place at the Wall. Many want this to be free space, not a place filled with doctrine, and I am right there with them.

Judaism is filled with struggles just as many of us struggle within in our Jewish lives. We struggle to understand God. We struggle to preserve Judaism for the next generation. We struggle to feel fully connected and accepted and committed within our community. Struggling will help us understand who we are and who we want to be in our Jewish lives. Sometimes the struggle is for a lifetime and sometimes we are able to find our answers sooner or more easily. The struggle for control over the Wall will go on for a long time I am afraid, but in understanding the basis of this struggle we may become stronger for it.

When you light your Shabbat candles this evening, light one for the journey that we travel. May the light of the Shabbat candle help us navigate. Light the other candle for the strength we have inside of us to let our voices be heard within our community and on behalf of those unable to speak.

Rabbi Adland has been leading Reform congregations for more than 25 years in Lexington, Ky., and Indianapolis, Ind. ★

LEDERMAN*(continued from page NAT 6)*

What I do know is that I would sleep better at night if I knew that, despite the political and ideological divisiveness that exists in politics today, the men and women who represent me are, at the very least, true mentsches.

Lederman is an award winning author, Jewish educator, public speaker and attorney who lives in Tucson. Visit her website at amyhirshberglederman.com. ★

SASSO*(continued from page NAT 6)*

Recently I was reading Dr. Suess' "All the Places You'll Go" to my 3-year-old grandson. I thought he was a bit young for the story, but he had been drawn to the pictures. After a first reading, he had me return to his favorite page. It had no words. After a series of questions through which he tried to identify what things were, he treated me to this incredible flight of imagination, of all the places he would go.

Children's author Katherine Patterson reminds us that when we read to children we give them a gift. Give your children a gift, open up a beautiful picture book and read to them. You

will not only offer the gift of a story, you will share the gift of yourself.

Sasso is senior rabbi at Congregation Beth-El Zedeck in Indianapolis, Ind. She and her husband Rabbi Dennis Sasso are the first rabbinic couple.

(This is reprinted with permission from the Indianapolis Star Oct. 26, 2010.) ★

WIENER*(continued from page NAT 7)*

pay the debt we owe those who serve our country by wearing its uniform with courage and distinction?

This country is involved in a great struggle. There is an enemy we cannot know or understand because there is no logic to their destructive behavior other than to dominate and control the very essence of our individuality. And it is a different world with senseless killing and unnecessary dying, scary and intimidating. But each instance has produced its share of volunteers and patriots and heroes. I would imagine the generations that fought in previous wars felt the same apprehension and fright; whether it was the Revolutionary War or the War to End All Wars.

We volunteered because we were motivated by love of country and understood the value of freedom. Each generation packaged the gift of freedom because the gravest error that can be made is to take freedom for granted. Each generation knew that it was their determination and fortitude that would protect it and guard it for the next generation and the next.

Not everyone is motivated by love of country. Most, however, answered the call to duty. In times past we would romanticize war until we were faced with the reality of it and all its horrors. There are graves, millions of them, on what was once, blood-soaked ground, and each marker indicates that there once stood a person who lived and died. That was then. What about now?

Now we, from the comfort of our homes, can watch the slaughter. We erect monuments and arrange parades and pin medals. Everyone seems to be an expert about yesterday. But through it all, we still send our men and women to war because it is the only way humans have of protecting life and limb. We have not found the secret to survival through discourse.

This soldier who lost his limbs is truly "no less of a person," and we owe a debt that can never be repaid. He represents all that is good in us and all that is bad as well. The goodness is the sacrifice we are willing to make to protect, defend and preserve a dream that began 234 years ago and resonates today even more. The goodness can be found in the millions who serve, who give of themselves so that we can enjoy the beauty of freedom and the values established by a few for so many.

The bad is displayed by our indifference and the lack of respect we display by

ignoring the traumas of these dedicated individuals. The bad can be found in our neglect of the homeless veterans and the disgrace in not giving them the proper care and attention because it "costs too much."

Perhaps one day we will wake-up to our responsibilities. In the meantime all we can do is pray that those in harm's way will find their way back home in peace and whole. In the meantime we should never lose sight of their sacrifice for honor and country. We all pray that God will watch over them as we look with pride on their achievements understanding full well that the debt we owe can never be repaid, but we never stop trying.

Rabbi Irwin Wiener is spiritual leader of the Sun Lakes Jewish Congregation near Phoenix, Ariz. He welcomes comments at ravyitz@cox.net. ★

NEWS*(continued from page NAT 7)*

Identity Travel seeks to assist groups in planning trips in Israel/the Holy Land that will include Israel's history from 3500 BCE to today – "From a Stone's Prospective".

Mr. Kaplan and Identity Tours' co-founders Ilan Scolnik and Eran Kolran are available to show both planned trips for the Christian and Jewish groups, churches, synagogues and affiliated groups, as well as planning specialized pilgrimage trips to Israel/the Holy land. Mr. Kaplan can be reached at barry@identitytour.com. Please visit our website at www.identitytour.com.

Kaplan is the husband of long-time P&O contributing columnist Sybil Kaplan. ★

KAPLAN/ISRAEL*(continued from page NAT 8)*

For more information, contact www.jewishagency.org/aliyah

Sybil Kaplan is a journalist, food writer, lecturer and cookbook author who lives in Jerusalem. ★

KARSH*(continued from page NAT 10)*

every country where there was a role to play, they have failed to meet any acceptable standards. They stood by and watched hundreds of thousands die in Rwanda. Why would we believe that they would do differently in Israel.

There are, I believe, an overwhelming number of American Jews and Americans who are astonished that any right-minded people can support Israel compromising on any issue of importance, perhaps ever, but certainly not while the best scenario of the opposition is still driving us into the sea.

We are the party of Israel, not-one-inch, and our motto should be taken from the words of political commentator,

Dick Morris, "If the Palestinians put down their arms today, there would be peace in Israel. If the Israelis put down their arms today, there would be no Israel."

It is that clear, "ISRAEL, NOT-ONE-INCH."

Howard W. Karsh lives and writes in Milwaukee, Wisc. His e-mail is howkar@wi.rr.com. ★

TEICHER*(continued from page NAT 13)*

Africa. Since the Afrikaners were the majority white population, the Black Africans having been excluded, they formed the government, reluctantly agreeing to become a dominion in the British Commonwealth. The country was actually run by British capitalists who controlled the production of gold and diamonds. Notable among them were the Oppenheims, originally Jews, who owned DeBeers and the Anglo-American Corporation.

The Afrikaner government pressed the policy of apartheid, invigorated by young Afrikaners who studied at German universities in the 1930s where they were enthralled by the Nazi philosophy and by the determination to emulate Hitler. Black Africans formed a Youth League, led by Nelson Mandela, to foster African nationalism, but their efforts to achieve their goals by nonviolent approaches failed. The leaders, including Mandela, were arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment, beginning in 1964, in the Robben Island penal colony where they were subjected to brutally harsh treatment. However, turmoil continued and, by 1989, the country was on the brink of civil war. A new president, F. W. de Klerk, decided to free the political prisoners. On Feb. 11, 1990, Mandela was released. Four years later, there was a general election and he became the president of South Africa. He served until 1999 when he withdrew from political life.

This remarkable story is told simply and clearly. There are only scant references to Jews, although there were 120,000 South African Jews in the 1970s. Two of them were Christiaan Barnard's first patients to receive heart transplants. The third was Helen Lieberman, a Cape Town speech therapist who worked in a Black township, risking her life to do community development work that established schools, a nursery and a clinic. Lapierre should have mentioned universally recognized Helen Suzman who served in the South African parliament for 36 years, speaking out vigorously and fearlessly against apartheid.

To capture the fascinating history of South Africa in so short a book is a great achievement for which we are indebted to Dominique Lapierre.

Dr. Morton I. Teicher is the Founding Dean, Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University and Dean Emeritus, School of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. ★



Musings from Shiloh

By BATYA MEDAD

Jerusalem, mixed bag

You never know what you're going to see in Jerusalem.



That's why this post is a "mixed bag." Downtown has more surprises and more personality than the newer neighborhoods.



Spied in Jerusalem!

I always go around with my camera strapped to my waist, so if I spy something interesting, it just takes a few seconds to shoot it (photograph it, of course).



Admittedly, I haven't the vaguest idea who appears in these pictures, but something made me preserve them on...well, it's not film!

Quite a few were taken in Jerusalem's Emek Refaim area. It's not far from Matan where I study Bible every week.



I'm a walker, which gives me a great vantage and lots of opportunities, though the picture below was taken from a bus.

Women's Prayers at Tel Shiloh, Rosh Chodesh Kislev

Women let's gather where Chana prayed for a son to save the Jewish People. Rain or shine.

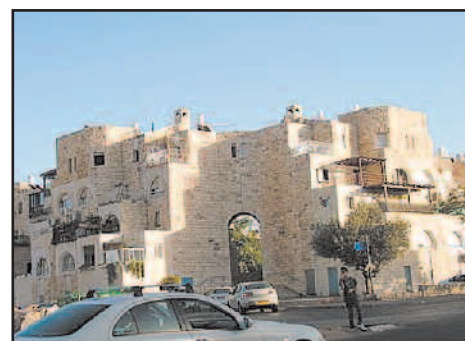


Tel Shiloh is open for tours and visitors. For more information, contact telshilo@gmail.com.



Gilo rhymes with Shiloh, but they are very different

I've been tutoring a child in Gilo recently. Until then, I have very few occasions or reasons to ever go to Gilo. Of course, I've passed pretty close by when going to *Kever Rachel*, Rachel's Tomb. Gilo, a Jerusalem neighborhood, is enormous. It's the size and population of an Israeli city. Here's a tiny peek.



Batya Medad is a veteran American olah (immigrant) in Israel since 1970 and has lived in Shiloh since 1981. She's a wife, mother, grandmother, EFL Teacher, writer

DAVID

(continued from page NAT 11)

experiences, designed to offer unique opportunities for individuals to reconnect with their Jewish identity and culture."

Though still in formation, Light of the Nations has achieved 501(c)(3) status, begun their fundraising efforts, and is already taking reservations for their day and weekend programming, beginning in 2011. Light of the Nations temporarily has information on Bruce David's website, but will shortly be creating their own. For more information, take a look at Bruce David's new website: davidart.com. ★

30% Discount on all art by Bruce David

As a longtime supporter and contributor of both art and spiritual sharings to the *Jewish Post & Opinion's* newspapers and directories, Bruce David is also offering its readers a 30% discount on all his art, in celebration of the new website launch and the festive Chanukah season. For more information, see Bruce David's new website: davidart.com. (expires 12/31/10)

COVER

(continued from page NAT 2)

Jackie Olenick is an artist who creates Judaic illuminations in several mediums based upon her favorite Torah text, psalms and prayers. She also designs personalized, illuminated ketubot for brides and grooms. The images Jackie creates are joyful, contemporary and inspirational and they speak to issues that guide us on our day-to-day journey. They are intended to bring blessing and holy reminders to every Jewish home.

Jackie presents and teaches hands-on workshops for temples, schools and organizations where participants of all ages and all levels of skill can learn about Judaic art and create their own unique piece for their home.

Her images adorn book, CD and songbook covers and greeting cards, which can be purchased at fine gift and Judaica shops throughout America.

She has nine grandchildren from whom she constantly draws inspiration and *naches*. Visit her website at www.jackieolenickart.com or email her at olenick@cybershuk.com. ★

and photographer. Besides her articles and photographs featured in this publication for a number of years, Batya is very involved in the international cyber community as a Jewish blogger. She has two active blogs, <http://shilohmusings.blogspot.com> and <http://me-ander.blogspot.com>, besides having established the Kosher Cooking Carnival. Contact her at shilohmuse@yahoo.com. ★



Heart & Soul by Bruce David.

GERTEL

(continued from page NAT 12)

At one point, Mark protests, "I'm not a bad guy." An attorney sympathizes or, better, empathizes with him enough to tell him, at the end of a trial, "You're not an asshole, Mark. You just try so hard to be." Here, I suppose, the filmmakers want to make the point that Mark just doesn't know and has not learned how to behave graciously, and how to check his deep resentments, whatever their source. The bottom line is that *The Social Network's* Mark is vicious with those whom he believes are opposing or shunning him. He is the one who lashes out when things don't go *his* way. The rest of the time he gives in to his impulses to expand his cyber world.

These protagonists, whether depicted fairly or not, emerge as all the more redeemable because of their youth. They have time to grow and change, and enough money to look beyond greed. While brilliantly written, produced and acted, the film never carries through its "I'm not a bad guy" message by allowing the characters to somehow plead their own capacity for redemption. It therefore lets its own characters, and us, down, by not being a bit more imaginative. Would a better opening scene have brought Mark, Eduardo, the twins and Erica for a 25th or 50th class reunion, and depicted the characters at full maturity, in that postcyber world?

Rabbi Gertel has been spiritual leader of Conservative Congregation Rodfei Zedek since 1988. A native of Springfield, Mass., he attended Columbia University and Jewish Theological Seminary. He is the author of two books, *What Jews Know About Salvation* and *Over the Top Judaism: Precedents and Trends in the Depiction of Jewish Beliefs and Observances in Film and Television*. He has been media critic for The National Jewish Post & Opinion since 1979. ★