

# Chai~Lights



February 2016

22 Shevat - 20 Adar I 5776

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**Keys Jewish Community Center**

P.O. Box 1332 • Tavernier, FL 33070 • 305-852-5235 • [keysjewishcenter.com](http://keysjewishcenter.com)

# February 2015

22 Shevat - 20 Adar I

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 <b>Ground Hog Day</b>	3	4	5 Joyce Peckman & Susan Gordon  <i>Erica Lieberman-Garrett</i>	6
7 <b>Sisterhood</b> 9:00 a.m. <b>Board</b> 10:30 a.m. <b>KJCC Annual Meeting 12:00</b>	8	9	10	11	12 Beth Hayden & Linda Pollack  <i>Anonymous</i>	13
14	15 <b>President's Day</b>	16	17	18	19 Gloria Avner & Sam Vinicur  <i>Beth Hayden</i>	20
21	22	23	24	25	26  Steve Hartz	27  <b>Rabbi Agler Service</b> 10 a.m.
28 <b>Jewish Food Extravaganza</b> 5:00 p.m.	29					

## 2015 - 2016 Officers and Board

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Sam Vinicur

**Executive Vice President**  
Steve Steinbock

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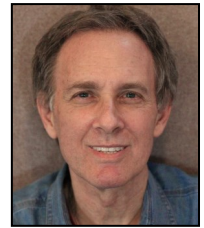
**Resident Scholar**  
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**CHAI-LIGHTS** is the  
monthly publication of the  
**Keys Jewish Community Center**  
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chailights@keysjewishcenter.com

## President's Message Sam Vinicur



So here I am, surely the unlikeliest synagogue president one could possibly imagine, at the end of a year on the job. I humbly submit myself as exhibit A to those doggedly combing through textual arcana or feverishly running scriptural passages through gazillions of computer filters or blissfully emptying their minds through meditation, all in a passionate quest for the same thing: a precious glimpse through the heavenly knothole and into the unfathomably perfect light of the Eternal. My presence in this job is palpable proof of three things: that there is a God, that (with apologies to Rabbi Agler for modestly warping one of his favorite *formulae*) it clearly isn't me, and that whatever else might profoundly be true, this God obviously has a devilish and broadly Marxian (Groucho, not Karl) sense of humor.

I do thank you (most days) for the honor of the experience, which I liken to innocently hitching a ride with an Olympic bobsled team, who smile and welcome me and then proceed to go careening down a snaky and nearly vertical drop, bouncing off sheer walls of ice, at about two hundred miles per hour.

At least I'm not bored. Ours isn't a sleepy little tropical hanger-on of a syna-

gogue, with droning, rote prayers and some thrice-defrosted Danish at the oneg. Not remotely. There's an incredible spirit here. The number of substantial things we manage to do is breathtaking. During every activity we can all just *feel* the vital, upward vibe.

Take our recent annual dinner honoring our advertisers and new members. As always, it was wonderful, the perfect blend of feted guests and a happy mob of KJCC to surround and embrace them. Though she frets and fears every year, Medina made everything run perfectly again. As they somehow do for each monthly dinner, our members contributed a stunning variety of yummy (even nutritious) fare. I was able to announce the (to me) amazing fact that we've welcomed fifteen new memberships in the past year. Though part of my job is to be schmoozer-in-chief, I know that this success is not mine; it's everyone's. We've had people come just for a visit, to say Kaddish or attend one of Gloria's art classes, and be so taken with us they requested a membership application on the spot. Just after Laura Wetzler's unforgettable concert here on January 10<sup>th</sup>, I had at least half a dozen long-time members grab me to say it was the best night they'd ever spent at KJCC.

I'm telling you, there's a vibe.

# Nosh

## Coming Attractions: March Havdalah

Linda Pollack and Steve Steinbock will team up to host a special Havdalah service for Shabbat Across America and Canada. For the last seven years, we have celebrated with a dinner at the beginning of Shabbat. Since we will still be *kvelling* and recovering from our Jewish Food extravaganza on the previous Shabbat, we will switch gears and round off our Shabbat with the shortest and sweetest of our ceremonies, the lighting of the many wicked candle, tuneful blessings of spices and wine as we say goodbye to the spiritual and prepare to re-enter secular reality. We will meet at Linda Pollack's home at 107 Long Ben Drive, Key Largo (where there is a perfect viewing place for counting out the requisite three stars). Coordinate food contributions with Erica Lieberman Garrett. Arrive at 6:00 P.M. to view the sunset. We'll begin the service at 7:00. Thank you Linda and Steve for help and co-sponsorship.

## February 27th 10 a.m. Torah Service

KJCC's Resident Scholar Rabbi Richard Agler will lead a Shabbat service on Saturday February 27th, beginning at 10 a.m. Unlike Saturday morning services in many other *shuls*, this one will begin on time, and every minute will be worthwhile. I always come away spiritually refreshed and intellectually intrigued. Join us to take advantage of this monthly gift.

## Thursday Night Jam Band at Oo-Tray,

Every Thursday evening Dave Feder presents an ever-changing roster of up-and-coming musicians playing solo and ensemble. At Oo-Tray MM 80.9 in Islamorada. Atmosphere is casual, without cover charge. (Lucky us – but don't forget to put money in the jars; it goes to the musicians.) The food is interesting too. The fun runs from 9:00 p.m. to midnight.

## 2016 KJCC Scholarship Applications

If your child has been part of our KJCC Religious School, is graduating from high school this year, and has applied for acceptance to an institution of higher learning, we encourage you to go to our website: [keysjewishcenter.com](http://keysjewishcenter.com). KJCC scholarship applications are now available. Click on the "School" button and scroll down to "eligibility requirements." If your child meets the requirements, download the application and return the completed form to us by April 1st. Decisions will be made by June and awards given out at the Coral Shores PAC before graduation. We wish our students well, love them, and take great pleasure in giving them an extra financial boost in their freshman year. Past recipients, of whom there are many, have made us very proud. For questions, call Gene Silverman at 954-562-0888.

## Bat Mitzvah Class for Adult Women

If your synagogue, or family, or general circumstances beyond your control, denied you the experience of the key coming-of-age Jewish experience known as Bat Mitzvah, it is not too late. (For many women of certain generations it was not encouraged or even offered.) If the possibility intrigues you or actively calls you now, and you are ready to study, prepare for a committed number of months, and create a *mitzvah* project as well, all under the guidance of Ritual Chair Gloria Avner along with selected guest speakers, call Gloria at (305) 619-0216 and an initial exploratory meeting will be held. No matter how much or how little you know, this rite of passage and the thoughtful study you do leading up to it will enhance your life. There is a good possibility the experience will feel even more meaningful now than it might have on (or before) your 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. If there are men among us who think pursuing an adult Bar Mitzvah (even a second one), would be a worthwhile endeavor, we can make that happen too. KJCC is your one-stop shop for important Jewish experiences, for all of our members.



## February Birthdays

1st .....	Evan Grossman
1st .....	Libby Shapiro
1st .....	Roy Pollack
3rd .....	Caeleigh Stuart
3rd .....	Dick Bromwich
3rd .....	Leslie Janowitz
5th.....	Rebecca Smith Strasser
6th.....	Evan Harvey
6th.....	Martin Field
7th.....	Erica Lieberman-Garrett
7th.....	Larry Jacobs
9th.....	Linda Pincus
9th.....	Ron Garrett
12th.....	Johnny Knowles
12th.....	Paul Roberts
13th.....	Jerrold Benowitz
14th.....	Debbie Madnick
15th.....	Judith Weber
18th.....	Beth Hayden
21st.....	David J. Marmar
21st.....	Stephen Harris
22nd.....	Harry Friedman
22nd.....	Tomar Gross
23rd.....	Sienna Rose Lebofsky
24th.....	Muriel Swartz
24th.....	Suzie Greenman
25th.....	Rita Conklin
26th.....	Jim Williams
26th.....	John D. Schur
27th.....	Betsy Grossman
28th.....	Arlene Line

### Oneg Sponsors for February 2016

- February 5th - Erica Lieberman-Garrett in celebration of her birthday.
- February 12th - Is being Anonymously sponsored in the Memory of Al Roller.
- February 19th - Beth Hayden to celebrate her birthday.
- February 26th - Sisterhood

## February Anniversaries

	Years
9th Uri & Liliam Kamely.....	24

### Itzhak Perlman

There are still some tickets available to the Itzhak Perlman concert "In the Fiddler's House" at the Adrienne Arsht Center in Miami on Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$86 each plus a \$4 handling fee. Log onto the Arsht Center website at [www.arshtcenter.org](http://www.arshtcenter.org), group sales, and use Promo Code KJCC to order tickets. Contact Mitch Harvey at [harveyaicp@yahoo.com](mailto:harveyaicp@yahoo.com) for further information.

### Yahrzeit Plaque

In Memory of

**Eileen Roaman**

*By Carol Roaman*

### Yahrzeit Plaque

In Memory of

**Martin Roaman**

*By Carol Roaman*

### Childhood Photos Needed

Do you have a cute childhood photo of yourself? In preparation for our March 23<sup>rd</sup> Purim Fest and Megillah reading, Medina Roy is collecting photos for a display. Please e-mail them to her at: [hiitsmedee@gmail.com](mailto:hiitsmedee@gmail.com). (Yes, they'll need to be scanned and digitized first.) Then plan to join us at KJCC for a good time on the evening of Purim, Wednesday March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## Leaf on the Tree of Life

In memory of  
**David and Annette Bitton**  
*Forever in our hearts.*

Michel and Sylvie Bitton and your  
beloved grandchildren.

## Reconsecration of our Holocaust Torah

Write March 13<sup>th</sup> on your calendar, and put two asterisks next to it. That is when we will celebrate the return of our Holocaust Torah, and take part in the completion of its restoration. Please see the article on page 39.

## Adult Hebrew

Yardena's Adult Hebrew classes are in full swing. Advanced conversation meets on Fridays from 11:30-1 p.m. The beginning/intermediate group meets on Sundays from 12-1:30. Drop in!

## Meditation Garden Brick

In Memory of

**Kim Koch**

*By Mary Brodhagen*

## Social Hall Chair Plate

*In Memory of David Bitton*

By

Michel Bitton and Sylvie Coeurjoly

## Ongoing Projects and Mitzvah Programs of KJCC

**SUNSHINE COMMITTEE:** If you know of any member who should receive a get well, congratulations or condolence card from the KJCC, call Gene Silverman, 305-664-3316.

**CEMETERY INFORMATION:** If you wish to plan for the very distant future, you can reserve space at the Kendall Mt. Nebo Cemetery in the KJCC section. Call Bernie Ginsberg, 305-852-9300.

**MEDITATION GARDEN:** Have you visited our beautiful garden? Call Steve Steinbock, 305-394-0143, to reserve a bench, brick or tree plaque for posterity.

**ONEG SHABBAT SPONSOR:** To schedule your special date with Sisterhood, call Joyce Peckman, 305-451-0665.

**KJCC TREE OF LIFE LEAVES and ROCKS, SANCTUARY SEAT PLATES, YARTZEIT MEMORIAL PLAQUES:** Call Mitch Harvey, 303-521-5240, to arrange your donation.

**KJCC BOOKPLATES for siddurim:** Call Linda Pollack, 305-852-8575 for information.

**CHAI-LIGHTS MITZVAH:** Place a greeting or notice in Chai-Lights. Call Linda Pollack, 305-852-8575, to make your donation.

**ADVERTISEMENT IN CHAI-LIGHTS or DIRECTORY:** Your business ad will appear in every issue of Chai-Lights. Call Linda Pollack, 305-852-8575, for annual rates.

**LIVE GREEN – RECYCLE:** We are recycling ink cartridges, laser toners, cell phones, laptops, idevices, tablets and more. Call Steve Steinbock, 305-394-0143, or just bring your items to the KJCC.

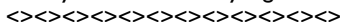
Call the names listed above for assistance or send your request and check to the KJCC, P.O. Box 1332, Tavernier, FL 33070. Recipients of your gifts will be notified by card and listings will appear in Chai-Lights as well. Honorarium and memorial cards can also be requested. Donations can be earmarked to our various ongoing funds; e.g. Holocaust Education Fund, Meditation Garden, Rabbi & Cantor Fund, Scholarship Fund, Sara Cohen Memorial Tzedukah Fund, Sunshine Fund, or General Fund.

# *In Memoriam February 2016*

In Memory Of

**Sue Steinberg**

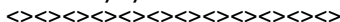
By Richard & Mindy Agler



In Memory Of

**Lou Roazen**

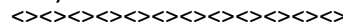
By Sylvia Berman



In Memory Of

**Sunnie Bernstein**

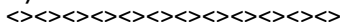
By Paul & Barbara Bernstein



In Memory Of

**Kitty Nyman**

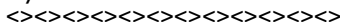
By Alan Beth & Candace Stanlake



In Memory Of

**Ted Nyman**

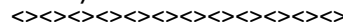
By Alan Beth & Candace Stanlake



In Memory Of

**Marvin Galanty**

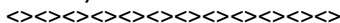
By Marc & Ellen Bloom



In Memory Of

**Sarah P. Zalk**

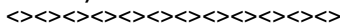
By Meredith A. Cline



In Memory Of

**Reuben L. Zalk**

By Meredith A. Cline



In Memory Of

**Eve Greenstein**

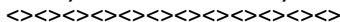
By Barnet O. Coltman



In Memory Of

**Robert Kinney**

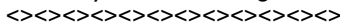
By Gerri & Frank Emkey



In Memory Of

**Barry Feinberg**

By Arthur Feinberg



In Memory Of

**William Feinberg**

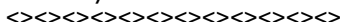
By Arthur Feinberg



In Memory Of

**Dr. Louis Fishman**

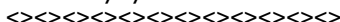
By Eina G. Fishman



In Memory Of

**Manya Gelbard**

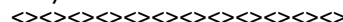
By Sy A. Gelbard



In Memory Of

**Rose Gilson**

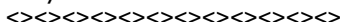
By Michael & Suzanne Gilson



In Memory Of

**Charles Gilson**

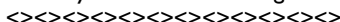
By Michael & Suzanne Gilson



In Memory Of

**Dr. Joseph Goldberg**

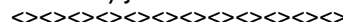
By Susan W. Goldberg



In Memory Of

**Joseph Gorson**

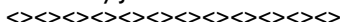
By Janice Gorson



In Memory Of

**A. James Weiss**

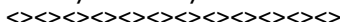
By Janice Gorson



In Memory Of

**Nicholas Goldenberg**

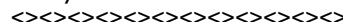
By Mrs. Marty Graham



In Memory Of

**Frances Weiser**

By Andrew & Randi Grant

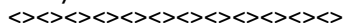


# *In Memoriam February 2016*

In Memory Of

**Leila Horne**

By Andrew & Randi Grant



In Memory Of

**Robert Greenbaum**

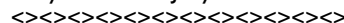
By Marilyn Greenbaum



In Memory Of

**Ilona Ban**

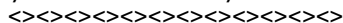
By Franklin & Judy Greenman



In Memory Of

**Nella Gross**

By Tomar Gross & Randy Klein-Gross



In Memory Of

**Chalom Haviv**

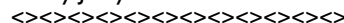
By Leo Haviv



In Memory Of

**Archie Zacks**

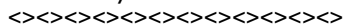
By Jerry & Barbara Herson



In Memory Of

**Ida Ratchik**

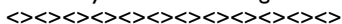
By Susan Horn



In Memory Of

**Fannie Phillips**

By Patricia Isenberg



In Memory Of

**Lillian Janowitz**

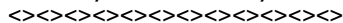
By Sam & Leslie Janowitz



In Memory Of

**Pinchas Kamely**

By Yardena Kamely



In Memory Of

**Sylvia Kay**

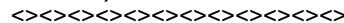
By Harvey & Joan Kay



In Memory Of

**Joseph Krissel**

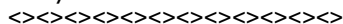
By Michael Krissel



In Memory Of

**Samuel Marmar**

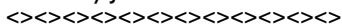
By David & Pamela Marmar



In Memory Of

**Joseph Kaufman**

By Jeff & Lisa Miller



In Memory Of

**Sara J. Cohen**

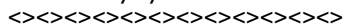
By Lynn Nobil



In Memory Of

**Irene Nobil**

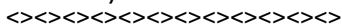
By Lynn Nobil



In Memory Of

**William Pollack**

By Linda Pollack



In Memory Of

**Malka Frank**

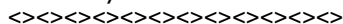
By Linda Pollack



In Memory Of

**Al Roller**

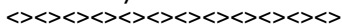
By Pauline Roller



In Memory Of

**John A. Schur**

By Lee Schur



In Memory Of

**Miriam Blinder**

By Steven & Barbara Smith



## *In Memoriam February 2016*

In Memory Of

**Sarah Felder**

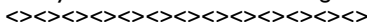
By Stuart & Geri Smith



In Memory Of

**Sara J. Cohen**

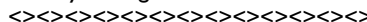
By Richard & Sheila Steinberg



In Memory Of

**Ann R. Kapulskey**

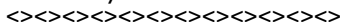
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In Memory Of

**Morris Estrin**

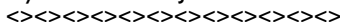
By Lillian Tallent



In Memory Of

**David C. Willner**

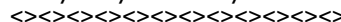
By Arthur Lee & Johanna Willner



In Memory Of

**Morris Feinberg**

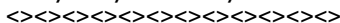
By Larry & Dorothy Wolfe



In Memory Of

**Samuel Wolfe**

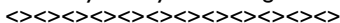
By Larry & Dorothy Wolfe



In Memory Of

**Jerry Oshinsky**

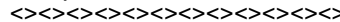
By Sherry Zwerdling



In Memory Of

**Leila Horne**

By Andrew & Randi Grant



### ***MISHEBERACH – A PRAYER FOR HEALING***

The 18th Century Jewish Mystic Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, wrote:

*God of wholeness,  
God of healing,  
Hear our words,  
Accept our prayers; Send a special blessing  
Of healing  
To (name) son/daughter of  
(mother's name),  
among all those of Your children  
who are in need of  
Your healing blessing*

When the Torah is read, we are granted an especially opportune moment to invoke blessing for those in need of divine intervention. So for hundreds of years it has been a tradition, before the Torah is returned to the ark, to recite the names of those who are ill, asking that Hashem, who blessed our founding ancestors, also bless those in need of healing. The person is not called by the standard Hebrew name (ex: *Moshe ben* {son of} *Amram*). Instead the mother's name is invoked (*Moshe ben Jochebed*.)

When the Reform movement moved the major Shabbat service from Saturday morning to Friday night, the prayer for healing, often in the form composed by Debbie Friedman, became an important element of their Friday night service.

The KJCC is non-denominational, but we too have incorporated the *Misheberach* prayer into our Friday evening service, after the *dvar Torah* (Torah talk.) We maintain a list of long-term and short-term names, as well as inviting names to be called from the congregation. There are even post cards at the back of the room to be used by anyone who wants to inform a friend or family member that they have been the subject of our community's prayer.

If you have someone that you wish to add or remove from KJCC's *Misheberach* list, please, call or e-mail and let us know. We'll happily include any name (or names) you tell us about. Contact Joyce Peckman at [joycepeckman@gmail.com](mailto:joycepeckman@gmail.com) The main KJCC number is 852-5235. The website, which accepts e-mail, is [keysjewishcenter.com](http://keysjewishcenter.com).

# Jewish Food Extravaganza

Sunday, February 28, 2016

5 pm - 7:30 pm

Keys Jewish Community Center

- 36th Anniversary -

MM 93.5 Oceanside



**Raffle, Jewish Schtick & Kibitzing  
Tickets \$20**



Enjoy a scrumptious smorgasbord of authentic delights including Matzoh Ball Soup, Brisket, Vegetarian Tzimmes, Knishes, Challah, Kugel, Chopped Liver, Gefilte Fish, Tabouli Salad, Babka, Mandel bread, Rugalah and more...

Limited Tickets available:

KJCC Gift Shop MM 93.5 Oceanside

Garrett Chiropractic MM 90 Bayside

For further information:

hippiejap@hotmail.com

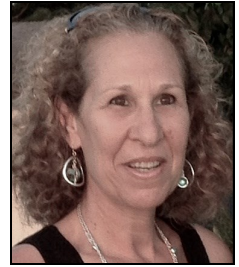
305-853-1003



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## Sisterhood

### Erica Lieberman-Garrett



The winter season is in full swing with the return of many of our snowbirds, along with seasonal guests and visitors. The shul is abuzz with activities and events each week, and sometimes even daily. I look forward to seeing my KJCC *mishpocha* each Friday night for services, and it is fun to enjoy each other's company at our onegs, drinking coffee and noshing on refreshments. Many new ideas and inspirations have come from these moments, and have led to special events and activities. We have enjoyed some very special onegs recently; it is such a joy to celebrate the different *simchas*. To celebrate the recent birth of her new grandson Rhett William, Susan Gordon, our resident decorator, went the extra step in beautifying the table, and made the oneg experience really memorable. I hope that you will all take the opportunity to celebrate your birthday, anniversary or other special *simcha*, and sponsor an oneg. Please contact Joyce Peckman at 305-451-0665 for more details.

In January, the women of Sisterhood led their annual Shabbat Service. It is always a nice opportunity for the women of the KJCC to step up to the *bimah* and participate in a different way than usual and to unite their voices in song and prayer. Lee Schur had encouraged us to add a special section about Miriam's song, with meaning for women, so we thank Lee and Dana Levy for that lovely presentation. January was Dana's first Sisterhood meeting, and she jumped right in to participate.

February is a special month for me since it is my birthday. We will be having our monthly sisterhood meeting on that Sunday, February 7th at 9 a.m., and we will be putting the final touches on the planning of our annual Sisterhood fundraiser, the Jewish Food Extravaganza. This event will be on Sunday, February 28th, at 5 p.m. We will be having a delicious

smorgasbord of traditional Jewish food, both Ashkenazi and Sephardic, including matzah ball soup, brisket, *kugel*, babka, and more. There will be a bit of *shtick*, lots of *kibitzing*, and a lovely selection of gift baskets will be raffled. Please contact me if you would like to help this annual event by sponsoring or help underwrite the cost, or donating an item for raffle. We are grateful to the members of the KJCC who pull together and make this event very successful, delicious and fun each year! Tickets for the dinner, costing \$20, are limited. They are available through the gift shop (see Susan Gordon) or contact me at [hippiejap@hotmail.com](mailto:hippiejap@hotmail.com). Tickets will become available to the public after February 14<sup>th</sup>; so don't forget to get yours early, as they do get sold out. The word is out that the KJCC has scrumptious dinners!!

The first Saturday night in March there will be a lovely *Havdalah* service after light potluck dinner at the home of Linda Pollack. Please contact me to let me know if you will be bringing any food.

At our January Sisterhood meeting, our treasurer Linda Kaplan handed over the baton, or should I say calculator, to our new treasurer Beth Hayden, who graciously volunteered and accepted the position. We thank Linda for doing such a great job in keeping our financial status in good order, and also thank Beth for stepping up to fill a very important position for Sisterhood. We are still hoping to find a new secretary by April, when Marsha Harris will be moving on to other ventures. In our *shul*, all women are automatically members of Sisterhood. Please join us at our monthly meetings to become more involved and find out how you can help. There are lots of ways ◊

# Contributions to KJCC

We appreciate the thoughtfulness of those who support the Keys Jewish Community Center by remembering and honoring their friends and loved ones through their generous contributions. All donations made after the fifth of the month will appear in the following month's Chai-Lights. When you make a donation, please signify the fund it is to go to and the recognition of the name or names to be listed.

## Book Plates

Coltman, Barney

## In Memory of

Robert S. Coltman

## Tree of Life - Leaves

Bitton, Michel & Sylvie Coeurjoly

## General Fund

Avner, Gloria

Susan Gordon's new grand  
- baby, Rhett William

Bofshever, Joel & Toby

Eliana Peckman's  
bat mitzvah

Pollack, Linda Susan's Grandson Rhett William  
Sherman, Robert & Adriana

## In Memory of

Pollack, Linda

Barbara Bernstein's  
103-year-old mother

Pollack, Linda

Jacob Shabathai

## Meditation Garden

Brodhagen, Mary

## In Memory of

brick – Kim Koch

## Social Hall Chair Plates

Bitton, Michel & Sylvie Coeurjoly

## In Honor of

David Bitton

## Yahrzeit Plaques

Roaman, Carol

Roaman, Carol

## Yahrzeits

Avner, Gloria

Boruszak, Joan

Cohn, Nancy

Coltman, Barney

Harvey, Mitchell

Olsen, Gerald & Sheila

Schulberg, Alan & Elaine

Schulberg, Alan & Elaine

Taramona, Hermine

## In Memory of

Eileen Roaman

Martin Roaman

## In Memory of

Alex Avner, Perren Gerber

David Cohn

Eva Levine

Daniel Harvey

Betty Weinstein

Shirley Schulberg,

Albert Kaminsky

Nat Gulkis,  
Bea Gulkis, Joan Kaminsky

Norma Robinson

## How Certain Contributions to KJCC Can Instantly Become Permanent, Living Memorials

*Book Plates:* We are, after all, the People of the Book. For \$36 an inscription of your choice will be placed in one of our Siddurim or Tanakhs. An example: "In Loving Memory of my grandfather, who first taught me about the treasures that lie between these covers."

*Tree of Life Leaves:* We have three beautiful, six-foot Trees of Life — the world's most enduring spiritual metaphor — adorning the wall at the rear of the KJCC sanctuary. For \$75 an individual, golden leaf can be engraved with your message of memory or love. An example: "To our grandchildren: May they always be in the presence of the Eternal Light."

*Garden Bricks:* \$125 buys a single brick and \$200 a double brick in our magnificent Meditation Garden walkway, engraved with your personal message. An example: "You were the best, Aunt Goldie. Well, you and those amazing cheese blintzes." For \$300 we'll plant the native tree of your choice as the ultimate living tribute; an outdoor plaque is included in the price.

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# YEDA VE'TORASHA

Yardena Kamely



## The Israelis' Love Of Trees

This past month we celebrated Tu B'Shvat, *Chag La'llanot* (birthday of the trees), one of Israel's favorite festivities. In Israel there is a strong sense of connection to nature, a special relation between the people and the land. Israelis love nature, agriculture and the land with its variety of landscapes (*nofim*). In northern Israel, on the rocky hills of the *Galil* (Galilee) we find wooded areas of pine trees, and in fields, magnificent ancient olive trees. Near the Golan Heights, the almond trees that blossom on *Tu B'Shvat* are a



**Fruit from the Acacia tree fed the prophets.**

spectacular sight. Around Haifa, on Mount Carmel, typical Mediterranean pines (*oranim*) grow in one of Israel's few large forests, in part made up of natural growth and in part of planted areas.

Tree-planting has an almost mystical quality here: For decades, Jews all over the world have dropped coins into blue-and-white boxes of the Jewish National Fund (JNF), which has planted 240 million trees in the Carmel Forest and elsewhere across Israel since its founding in 1901.

The Carmel forest is one of the Israelis' favorite places for camping, hiking, and picnics. Fond childhood memories come to my mind. Living in Haifa, our family and friends,

all with a bunch of children, all of them "my best friends", used to spend Shabbat in the Carmel forest. We kids would play, climb rocks, and collect natural objects from the ground to use for decoration in our homes. (I still like to collect pieces of wood and special

little stones on my hikes.). The 2011 Carmel fire was a tragedy. The loss of precious woodland, in a country where only seven percent of the land is forested, was devastating. Although the fire covered an area of only about eight square

miles (21 square kilometers) — or some one percent of Israel's forest land — the fire was felt as a deep national loss.

Along the coast, we grow Israel's famous Jaffa oranges in the *pardesim* (orange groves). Farmers also plant pomegranate trees in this area; the red color of these orchards adds beauty to the landscape. Traveling inland up the road to Jerusalem through the mountains of Judea, you'll see forests of pine trees. The Israelis protect their trees with passion; we consider them a very valuable treasure. We don't have them in abundance and don't want to lose even one tree.

Since 2006, KKL-JNF (*Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael* - Jewish National Fund) foresters have

been combating an aphid (harmful insect) that has been destroying Israel's pine trees. The woolly pine aphid kills from ten to twenty-five percent of the trees it attacks. This aphid was identified first in Northern Israel, in *Baram Forest* in the Upper Galilee, and in several other forests, but it spread and recently reached forests in the Jerusalem region. Research done by KKL-JNF foresters found that a fly which preys on this aphid was used as a biological pesticide in Hawaii by the US Forest Service about thirty years ago to solve a similar problem. This past year "David Brand, KKL-JNF Chief Forester, and Prof. Zvi Mandel of the Volcani Institute, went to the islands of Hawaii. Assisted by the US Forestry Service and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), they succeeded in locating the predatory fly and gathered a number of flies in containers. The flies were brought to Israel, and, after thorough testing done by the Plant Protection Service of the Israel Ministry of Agriculture, they will be set free for their first "job" in Baram Forest in the Upper Galilee." (KKL report)

The southern half of Israel's territory is desert, the *Negev*. It is actually a fertile land; once water is supplied with an effective irrigation system, trees can grow. Some kibbutzim in the Negev planted palm trees and now export the famous Medjool dates. The largest planted forest in Israel is *Yatir Forest*, located on the southern slopes of Mount Hebron, on the edge of the *Negev* Desert.

The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI) was established in 1953 and is Israel's leading environmental organization. For over sixty years SPNI has been dedicated to protecting and preserving Israel's natural resources, environment and unique landscape. SPNI's latest success story is the *Gazelle Valley*. Last year, thousands of families,

young and old, came to celebrate the official opening of the *Gazelle Valley*, Jerusalem's newest park. There the *Rakefet* stream that flows down from Jerusalem's neighborhoods has been collected and purified in four pools along the length of the valley, before filling a new half-acre pond. Within a few years the pond will become an oasis for migrating water birds.

The love of the Israelis for nature and the land is part of our Jewish heritage. In Biblical times, the language of nature came to the people naturally. They understood how to treat the land well, not only to give it rest in the Sabbathical Year and the Jubilee (Leviticus 25), but to respect and plant trees, keep water sources clean, create parks near urban areas, and regulate sewage disposal. And they



**Date palms grow on Negev kibbutzim.**

also understood intuitively the connection between justice and the responsibility to care for the environment: Since the land was God's, not only should it be protected, but its rich produce should be shared with the poorest of God's children (Leviticus 19). In a world where warfare typically included actions by the enemies to damage the environment of the adversary - cutting down trees, fouling waters, and salting the earth - our ancestors behaved exceptionally, with a different ethic. They developed the principle of *bal tashchit*, do not destroy (Deuteronomy 20:19). Do not cut down trees even to prevent ambush or to build siege engines. Do not foul waters or burn crops even to cause an enemy's submission. If, even in extreme situations, one is to avoid causing needless harm to the environment, *al akhat kama v'khama*, then how much the more so, during the ordinary course of life? Even with the continuing wars in Israel today, we strive to behave according to the same Jewish ethics. We love the land, protect nature and educate to work for *tikkun olam*. ◇

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## **EYE ON THE ARTS**

Gloria Avner



*We are at full strength now, both in numbers of KJCC mishpocha and opportunities for unique cultural experiences here "on the rock." We get to support our local talent, our entrepreneurs who bring in world-class entertainment, and we have a good time, forge deeper friendships and do good in the process. When we go to an event brought to us by Dave Feder, for example, we are also raising money to fund scholarships for local children who want higher education in the arts. The Annual Gigantic Nautical Flea Market provides our kids with scholarships too (as well as bargains). Call a friend, or many, have dinner ahead of time and/or drinks afterward. Carpool. And speaking of opportunities, in case any of you have forgotten, this is a leap year. The Keys Community Concert Band has not forgotten and will be passing out flowers on February 27th in honor of Sadie Hawkins Day.*

**February 2<sup>nd</sup>, William Hagen, Rising Star Violinist, FLKCA Concert Series.** In this third concert of the series, we'll hear a budding superstar (who has performed with Itzhak Perlman) accompanied by pianist Christopher Ohanian. Island Community Church, MM 83.3 at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased on-line: [www.FloridaKeysConcerts.com](http://www.FloridaKeysConcerts.com) .

**February 9<sup>th</sup>, Karolina Syrovatkova, Pianist Extraordinaire, FLKCA Concert Series.** 7:30 p.m. at Island Community Church, MM 83.3. Doors open at 7:00. Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased at the door or on-line: [www.FloridaKeysConcerts.com](http://www.FloridaKeysConcerts.com)

**February 18<sup>th</sup>, Morada Way Third Thursday Art Walk.** Outdoor festival featuring art vendors, food, adult beverages, and live music. Runs from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. MM 81.8 Oceanside.

**February 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup><sup>nd</sup>**

**The Gigantic Nautical Flea Market.** At Founders Park in Islamorada, MM 87. Visit over 200 vendors, selling items way beyond the bounds of "Nautical," and also raising college scholarship money for Upper Keys youth. Many of our KJCC students have been recipients. A fun time, but be prepared for traffic. (305)-712-1818 or [giganticnauticalmarket@gmail.com](mailto:giganticnauticalmarket@gmail.com)

**February 21<sup>st</sup>. Key Largo Civic Club Hootenanny.** Local fun. 2-4 p.m. 209 Ocean Drive

**February 23<sup>rd</sup>, Miami String Quartet, FLKCA Concert Series.** An exceptional ensemble! 7:30 p.m. at Island Community Church, MM 83.3. Doors open at 7:00. Tickets are \$30 and can be purchased at the door or on-line: [www.FloridaKeysConcerts.com](http://www.FloridaKeysConcerts.com) .

**February 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>, Shrek the Musical** 7:30 p.m. At Coral Shores High School Performing Arts Center, MM 89.9 Oceanside. The theatrical productions at this school are near professional in quality, well worth the \$20 admission, \$10 for students.

**February 27<sup>th</sup>, Garden Walk of the Upper Keys.** 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Start at Francis Tracy Garden Center, MM 94, Gulfside; then visit private tropical gardens at your own pace. Be inspired. Go with your gardening friends. Tickets: \$25. More information at [www.gardenclubupperkeys.org](http://www.gardenclubupperkeys.org).

**February 27<sup>th</sup>, Pops in the Park; Love is in the Air, Keys Community Concert Band.** 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Founders Park, MM 87, Bayside. Give your feet a rest and listen to music after the garden tours. Free admission, [www.keyscommunityconcertband.org](http://www.keyscommunityconcertband.org) ◇

# Keys Jewish Community Center, Inc.

P.O. Box 1332, Tavernier, FL 33070 • 305-852-5235 • [keysjewishcenter.com](http://keysjewishcenter.com)

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To all KJCC members:

The KJCC Annual Meeting, mandated by our by-laws, is scheduled for Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at noon in the KJCC sanctuary.

The February Board meeting, in the Ruth Richardson Social Hall, is scheduled for the same day at 10:30 a.m. All members in good standing are invited to attend both meetings.

The primary order of business at the Annual Meeting is the election and installation of Officers and the Board of Directors. According to our by-laws, nominations from the floor can be presented at that time.

Light refreshments will be served to all present immediately following the installation of Officers and Board of Directors.

The Nominating Committee has met as required and selected the following slate of 2016-2017 Officers and Board Members. This slate was approved at the January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Board Meeting:

*President* – Sam Vinicur

*Executive Vice President* – Steve Steinbock

*Vice Presidents* – Gloria Avner, Susan Gordon, Steve Hartz

*Treasurer* – Linda Pollack

*Recording Secretary* – Art Itkin

*Financial Secretary* – Mitch Harvey

*Corresponding Secretary* – Joyce Peckman

*Directors:*

Ken Atlas

Marc Bloom

Dave Feder

Linda Kaplan

Michael Kaufman

Skip Rose

Medina Roy

Gene Silverman

(Note: Past presidents who maintain regular attendance are automatically voting members of KJCC's Board.)

Respectfully submitted by the 2016 Nominating Committee:

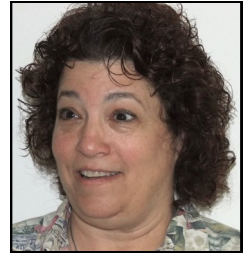
Linda Kaplan (chair), Bernie Ginsberg, Linda Pollack, Gene Silverman



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# World Jewish Report

## Medina Roy



### “A Decisive Victory”

It took the Israeli Mission to the United Nations more than a year of diplomatic efforts to persuade the U.N. that it was time to recognize Yom Kippur as an official U.N. holiday. The designation means that no official meetings will take place on these days and employees can choose to take the day off. In an earlier issue of *Chai-Lights*, we reported that the United Nations had recognized ten official holidays – including Good Friday and Christmas and the Muslim holidays of Id al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha – but did not include Yom Kippur. In 2014, the 69<sup>th</sup> General Assembly did manage to recognize Yom Kippur as the holiest day of the Jewish year, but still did not denote it an official holiday. Ambassador Danny Danon called the move “a decisive victory” that “finally provides an official place for the Jewish religion in the world’s parliament.” (My Jewish ear detects just a tinge of mockery in that diplomatic nicety, but maybe it’s just me.) Danon went on to say that the recognition would not have been possible without the assistance of Samantha Power, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., who prevented the U.N.’s anti-Israel majority from blocking the resolution. This past Yom Kippur, Ron Prosor, Danon’s Israeli predecessor, had held the first-ever *Tashlich* ceremony at the U.N. as part of the campaign to gain recognition. (*Tashlich*, the High Holiday ritual where sins and wrongdoings of the previous year are symbolically thrown into the water, thus letting go of the burdens of the past, allows us to start the new year with a clean slate. The question arises, of course, as to whose sins and wrongdoings were being addressed; and what other people has more millennia of experience in knowing how to tweak oppressors through acts that on the surface might appear to honor them?) ([www.jpost.com](http://www.jpost.com), 12-18-15)

### 2016 Genesis Prize Winner

Now in its third year, the annual \$1 million *Genesis Prize*, dubbed the “Jewish Nobel,” goes to Itzhak Perlman, the Israeli-born violin virtuoso. Perlman, 70, joins the two previous recipients, former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and actor-director Michael Douglas. Perlman was born in Tel Aviv. At age three-and-a-half he asked for a violin, which his parents bought for him at a local thrift store. When he was four he contracted polio, permanently paralyzing his legs. Perlman was identified as a musical prodigy at an early age and went on to study at New York’s Juilliard School. He has won 16 Grammy Awards, played for heads of state and appeared in TV shows and commercials. He performed the haunting violin solo on the soundtrack of the film “Schindler’s List” (which won both a Grammy and an Oscar). In addition to his world-wide performance schedule, Perlman teaches young musicians through the *Perlman Music Program*, an initiative founded by his wife, Toby. The *Genesis Prize* was established in 2012 by a consortium of Russian-Jewish philanthropists and is presented annually “to someone who has achieved international renown in their professional field and serves as a role model through their commitment to Jewish values.” Perlman indicated he will most likely use the prize money in ways that involve music and helping those with disabilities. He will receive the prize at a ceremony in Jerusalem in June. This past November, Perlman was awarded the *Presidential Medal of Freedom* by President Obama. (Perlman will be performing at the *Adrienne Arsht Center* in Miami on March 9<sup>th</sup>. Check with Mitch Harvey, head of KJCC’s Activities Committee, for tickets in the reduced-price KJCC block.) ([www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org), 12-14-15)

## “Kosher” Marijuana – A Mitzvah

This past July, the New York State Health Department granted licenses to five companies to grow and sell marijuana in the state and in New York City. One of them, the Minneapolis-based company *Vireo Health*, produces “pharmaceutical-grade cannabis-derived medicine.” At the end of December, the company announced that all of its products had received kosher certification from the Orthodox Union. (These products apparently are the first of their kind to have the “OU” trademark attached to it). By law, *Vireo*’s marijuana products are intended for use by patients who suffer from a variety of serious illnesses, including cancer, Parkinson’s disease, epilepsy, and HIV/AIDS, among others. Rabbi Menachem Genack, the CEO of *OU Kosher*, said, “Judaism prioritizes health and encourages the use of medicine designed to improve one’s health or reduce pain. Using medical cannabis products recommended by a physician should not be regarded as a *chet*, a sinful act, but rather as a *mitzvah*, an imperative, a commandment.” *Vireo* will operate four dispensaries in New York – and they will be collecting taxes on it. ([www.tabletmag.com](http://www.tabletmag.com), 12-30-15)

## \$9.3 Million: A Record Sale

A rare 16<sup>th</sup> century Babylonian Talmud recently sold at auction for \$9.3 million, a record price for a piece of Judaica. The sale, of a copy of Daniel Bomberg’s Babylonian Talmud, took place at Sotheby’s in New York at the end of December. It was purchased by Stephan Loewentheil of the *19<sup>th</sup> Century Rare Book & Photograph Shop* located in Brooklyn. Prior to the sale, the volume – still in pristine condition – had only been owned by four people. The auction included twelve other items of Judaica from the British-based *Valmadonna Trust Library* and took in \$14.9 million, making it the most valuable auction of Judaic material ever held. Daniel Bomberg (not Jewish) printed the first complete edition of the Babylonian Talmud between 1519 and 1523 in Venice. It is recognized as one of the most significant books in the history of Hebrew printing. Only 14 complete 16<sup>th</sup> century Bom-

berg Talmud sets are believed to exist today. The *Valmadonna Library*’s set had been kept for centuries in London’s Westminster Abbey. The auction also featured the only known illustrated manuscript *Haggadah* from India. It sold for \$418,000. According to Sotheby’s, the previous record for a piece of Judaica took place at Christie’s auction house in Paris in 2014, when a Hebrew Bible printed in Bologna in 1482 sold for about \$3.85 million. ([www.israelnationalnews.com](http://www.israelnationalnews.com), 12-24-15)

## A Landmark for Israeli Women

*Radio Kol Barama* is a publicly funded, ultra-Orthodox radio station in Israel. Until recently, the station never allowed women to speak or be heard on the air. *Kol Barama* would bleep out the voices of female Knesset members when proceedings were aired. A special fax line was used for women to send in their comments or questions, which would then be read on air by men. But fortunately, things change. This past September, the *Israel Religious Action Center* (IRAC), won a class action lawsuit against the radio station on behalf of all women affected by its discriminatory policies. The station appealed the decision, but in mid-December Israel’s Supreme Court rejected the appeal. Supreme Court Justice Yoram Danziger expressed “disgust at this phenomenon,” stating that the exclusion of women “fatally harms human dignity and the basic and inherent rights of women.” The Supreme Court’s decision is being hailed as a “precedent-setting ruling that will serve as a milestone in the fight for gender equality.” The ruling means that even private entities in Israel may not violate Israel’s antidiscrimination laws. ([www.reformjudaism.org/blog/2015/12/21](http://www.reformjudaism.org/blog/2015/12/21))

## The Highest Figure Since 2003

According to the *Jewish Agency for Israel* and *Ministry of Immigrant Absorption* report, immigration to the Jewish state reached a 12-year high in 2015. More than 30,000 immigrants came to Israel in 2015, the highest immigration figure since 2003. France and Ukraine provided the highest number of immigrants. France had 7,900 emigrating to

make *aliyah*, a record figure from that country. The repeated terror attacks in France are believed to account for that figure, breaking the record from just last year. (Over 1,000 Jews have come to Israel since the Paris terrorist attacks in November 2015.) The fighting between Ukraine and Russia has also boosted immigration. From Ukraine, 7,000 immigrants reached Israel in 2015, up 15 percent from 2014. Some 6,600 immigrants arrived from Russia, up 40 percent from 2014. Immigration from North America fell slightly, to 3,768 in 2015. Half of all the new immigrants to Israel were under the age of 30. ([www.globes.co.il](http://www.globes.co.il), 12-29-15)

### Could Be a Winner

"Son of Saul," a Hungarian Holocaust film, won the Best Foreign Film award at the Golden Globe Award ceremony in mid-January and is now a finalist for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Picture. The film is about a man, Saul Auslander, who is a member of the *Sonderkommando* at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. (The *Sonderkommando* units were Jewish male prisoners selected for their youth and relative good health. It was their job to cremate the bodies of fellow prisoners gassed by the Waffen SS. These men were forced into this position. Their only other option was death in the gas chambers or being shot on the spot by an SS guard.) As Saul goes about his bleak task, he thinks he sees his son among the bodies. As the men plan a rebellion, Saul vows that he will save the boy's body from the flames and find a rabbi to say *Kaddish* at a proper Jewish funeral. Saul is portrayed by Geza Rohrig, who was born in Budapest and founded an underground punk band under Communist rule. He later moved to New York, studying at a Hasidic yeshiva and then graduating from the Conservative movement's *Jewish Theological Seminary*. Another Holocaust-themed film, "Labyrinth of Lies," submitted by Germany, did not make the cut. (The Academy Award nominees were announced on January 14<sup>th</sup>.) The Oscars – televised to over 255 countries – will air on February 28<sup>th</sup>. ([www.haaretz.com](http://www.haaretz.com), 1-11-16)

### In Memoriam

· Andreja Preger, a noted concert pianist who participated in Yugoslavia's anti-Nazi partisans, died in December. He was 104. Preger was born in Hungary but grew up in Zagreb (capital of Croatia), where he attended the local Jewish school. In addition to music, he also studied law. As a teenager, he was active in *Hashomer Hatzair*, the leftist Zionist youth group. After the establishment of independent Croatia in 1941, a Nazi puppet state, he hid out in Zagreb, where the Fascist authorities went after lawyers, law clerks and members of *Hashomer Hatzair*, depriving the community of its leaders. Preger's father and uncle were killed at the infamous Jasecovac camp. In 1943, Preger joined the anti-fascist partisans led by Josip Broz Tito in Bosnia. After the war, he settled in Belgrade. Preger taught piano and performed widely, founding the *Belgrade Trio*, which performed concerts all over Europe as well as in the United States and the Soviet Union. Throughout his life, Preger remained active in the Jewish community's cultural activities. He headed the cultural department of the *Federation of Jewish Communities*. ([www.timesofisrael.com](http://www.timesofisrael.com), 12-21-15)

### Did You Know...

· In 2015, more than 1.72 million people, a record number of visitors, came to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum in Poland. Poland had the most visitors (425,000) followed by the United Kingdom (220,000), the United States (141,000), Germany (93,000) and Italy (76,000). ([www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org), 1-4-16)

· Two Israeli actors will appear in the upcoming sixth season of the hit HBO series, "Game of Thrones." Ania Bukstein and Yousef Sweid will have yet-to-be-determined roles in the show. Bukstein, 33, is a household name in Israel, well-known for roles in shows and movies. Sweid, 39, an Arab-Israeli, has been in the Showtime thriller "Homeland." New episodes will begin airing in April 2016. ([www.timesofisrael.com](http://www.timesofisrael.com), 1-2-16) ◇



# KJCC Meditation Garden

**Our extended brick walkway is in place. Come and spend some time walking around our peaceful and beautiful Meditation Garden. Bricks and benches can be purchased as honorariums or memorials and as gifts. Trees line the walkway and are available for dedication to our loved ones or to memorialize a happy occasion.**

**Also newly dedicated is our Orchid Pergola. We invite you to become a part of this fresh undertaking. Make your donation toward a new and beautiful orchid. The orchid will be tagged with the name of the donor and the name of the person being honored or remembered.**

Information regarding pricing for orchids, bricks and benches can be obtained by visiting our website, [keysjewishcenter.com](http://keysjewishcenter.com).



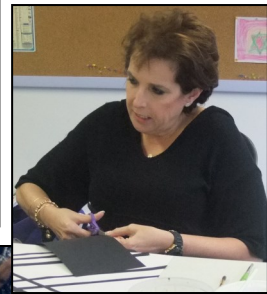


# Creating Mondrian Masterpieces

*Working with scissors, black paper strips, primary color paint and patient instruction by Gloria Avner, fourteen KJCC members and two visitors took Dutch artist Piet Mondrian's principles of order and negative space to new heights. The process was fun and the results were lovely.*



**At left, Gloria encourages Lee Schur in her decision making, while Medina Roy focuses intently on color placement. They loved their results.**



**Above, Randi Grant prepares her grid before painting.**



**At right, two generations (plus) work in artistic harmony.**





**At left, Yardena enjoys being a student rather than a teacher. At right, Gene Silverman displays her work with pride.**



**Don't worry Joyce....**

**...see?? It turned out great!**



**Budding artists proudly display their work.**

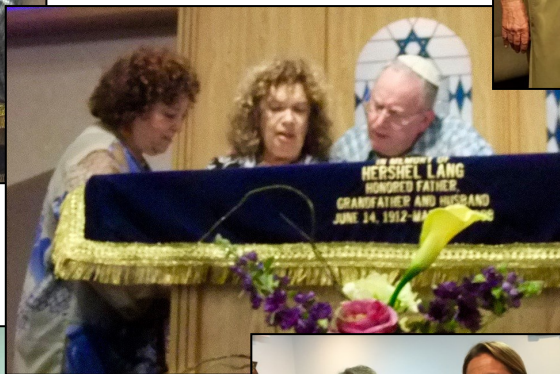
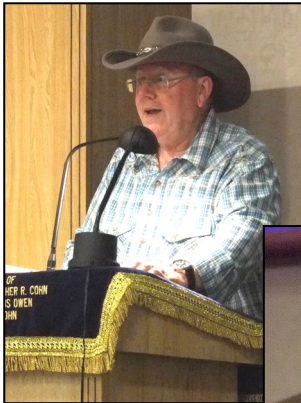




# Photo Gallery

*Wrapping up the year*

Riding in from Texas, Stuart Sax (left and below) delivers an entertaining “country d’var” during the last service of the year, led by Medina Roy. The first service of 2016 was led by the team of George Swartz and Yardena Kamely (at right).



**Geri and Stuart Smith, former members, happily return to the Keys and KJCC.**



**Susan Gordon sponsored an oneg in honor of the birth of her grandson. The blue cupcakes, posters and photos (below) proclaim the glad tidings.**



**Above, Will and Maddie Pollack join Gene and the Levys in a joyous Kiddush.**



# Open House

**Steve Steinbock's annual Dec. 25th open house brought together a happy group of friends and members. We have our own long-standing Keys tradition — thanks to Carol and Steve's initiative, we don't do Chinese food on this day!**







**Out of Africa**  
 Rabbi Rich and Mindy Agler, along with Dr. Bernie Ginsberg, fresh from their trip to the Talia Agler Girls' Shelter in Nairobi, Kenya, shared moving and inspiring experiences from their trip with KJCC.



The sanctuary was filled with fascinated members of the greater community as well as KJCC people.



At left, Bernie models the Masai blanket given to him as a gift from the girls at TAGS in gratitude for his help. (He became a rock star.)

For more information about the valuable work done at Talia Agler Girls' Shelter, visit [Rabbiagler.net](http://Rabbiagler.net).



**A huge contingent of KJCC people went to OO-Tray's open mike night to support Nyan Feder on sax, and the father-and-son team of Roy and Will Pollack on guitars. Dave Feder played impresario while grandma Linda Pollack kvelled.**



**Above, Lee Schur is beaming between grandchildren Michael and Becky. They are in Chicago celebrating the wedding of Michael and Felice, seen at right.**



**Below, Beth Hayden's Ollie — Canine Good citizen, Certified Therapy Dog and Rally Novice — will be the first certified therapy dog at Mariners' Hospital. We are so proud!**

**Below, Yadena with Holocaust survivor Sam Schleider at this year's Holocaust Remembrance Day in Miami.**





# From Monaco to Dubai

Gene is our guide as she and Mort cruise the Mediterranean—Part Two

by Gene Silverman

Good morning, or rather *buongiorno*, as we will be arriving in Livorno, Italy this morning at 7 a.m. The temperature is supposed to be a low of 57 and only a high of 68 so I think we may be a bit chilly. The wind is only supposed to be six knots, but it's coming from the northwest, where cold comes from.

We are going to be seeking the Jewish community that may be left there. We opted not to take a tour to Florence, as we've already been there too many times to count, and it is at least 1.5 hours away from our port – each way! Pisa is closer, but again, we've been there many times, and didn't want to "trolley train" there nor browse at the souvenir stalls. So this time we decided to explore on our own.

Livorno is a port city on the western coast of Italy's province of Tuscany, roughly due

of products and prices, from the popular Livorno markets to shops and stores selling designer-label clothes, shoes, jewelry, leather goods and accessories.

In the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when Livorno was a miserable, malaria-infested village, its rulers, the Medici family, decided to turn it into an important port and attract foreigners to settle. In 1548, Cosimo I issued an invitation to foreigners, including displaced Marranos, to come to the new port. His project, however, met with little success.

A few years later, in 1587, the Grand Duke invited merchants of all nations to come settle in Livorno and Pisa. A further invitation was issued by Ferdinand I on June 10, 1593, offering asylum to all Levantines, Spanish, Portuguese, Germans and Italians. The majority of Ferdinand's invitation articles were directed to the Jews who had been living secretly as Christians in Spain and Portugal. The charter – referred to as "Livornina" – offered Jews and other nationalities many rights and privileges. They were to be guaranteed full religious liberty, amnesty for crimes previously committed, the opportunity for "Marranos" to return to Judaism unmolested, a large exemption from taxation, commercial freedom, full Tuscan citizenship and special courts with civil and criminal jurisdictions. Safe passage of goods and persons was guaranteed to all Jews who moved to Livorno. Jews would be able to own houses, inherit property, carry arms at any hour, open shops in all parts of the city, have Christian servants and nursemaids, study at the university, work as doctors and not have to wear the Jewish badge. Finally, unlike many other cities in Tuscany, Jews would not have to live in a ghetto.

These conditions proved attractive to Marranos and Levantines. The Jewish population swelled from 114 in 1601 to 3,000 by 1689. Jews came to be the most important nation



**This is one of the main shopping streets in Livorno.**

west of Florence, on the Ligurian Sea, a branch of the Mediterranean. There are only about 175,000 residents there, so we thought it would be an easy place to find what we were seeking.

Shopping in Livorno offers a whole range

living in Livorno. Spanish and Portuguese became the official language of Jewish merchants in Livorno and remained so until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### Jewish Traders

Jews were involved in a variety of industries, besides money-lending. One of the specialized industries was the coral industry; Jews exported products to Russia and India and used coral to make ritual objects. The soap, paper, sugar-refining and wine distillation industries were also run by Jews. In 1632, the Jews imported the first coffee into Italy and opened coffee-houses in Livorno.

In 1765, more than one-third of Livorno's 150 commercial houses were owned by Jews. The Jews' fame and fortune were well

known throughout Europe and inspired an offer by Louis XIV, King of France, to resettle the whole community in Marseilles.

Livorno also became a center of Hebrew printing in Italy. Jedidiah Gabbai set up the first Hebrew press in 1659 and published a Midrash on the Torah. About 80 years later, Abraham ben Raphael Medola and his son opened another active Hebrew press. Between 1763 and 1870, sixteen other Hebrew printing presses were active in Livorno. The printing press of Solomon Belforte (established in 1838) was also significant.

From 1600 to 1899, almost 1,300 Hebrew books were printed in Livorno, second in Italy only to Venice.

The Synagogue that was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century was one of the supposed finest and well known in Europe, but it was badly damaged during WWII and was replaced with a modern synagogue in the 1960s. (We had a map of Livorno and my very rudimentary Italian so, we thought, how lost could we get?



(We also had to manage to be back on the ship before 6:30.) There had been four Jewish cemeteries. Now, we were informed, there were only two. One, on the Viale Ippolito Nievo,

**Here is a photo of the very modern synagogue of Livorno. We were unable to see the interior as you had to make reservations ahead of time. And, they never answered the telephone. After seeing the synagogue we were going to seek out the old Jewish cemetery.**

which dates back to 1840, contains the tombs of Elia Benamozegh, Israel Costa and the Montefiore and Belforte families. It also has the Attias family chapel.

Apparently our taxi driver had something against cemeteries, so he dropped us off and then disappeared. But we're experienced travelers. I had a map, and figured if we just kept aiming for a busy street, we would surely see another taxi.

Livorno served as a center for Jewish study and mysticism, led by Rabbi Joseph ben Emanuel Ergas (1685-1732) and other kabbalists. A special Talmudic court opened and elders of the community (Massari) presided over the cases. Because of the existence of the Talmud Torah school in Livorno, illiteracy among Jewish males was unknown from the 17<sup>th</sup> century on.

The legendary Moses Montefiore was born in Leghorn (Livorno in Italian), Tuscany in 1784, to an Italian Jewish family. His grandfather, Moses Vita (Haim) Montefiore had emi-



grated from Livorno to London in the 1740s, but retained close contact with the town, then famous for its straw bonnets. Montefiore was born while his parents, Joseph Elias Montefiore and his young wife Rachel, the daughter of Abraham Mocatta, a powerful bullion broker in London, were in the town on a business journey; he was their first child.

The family returned to Kensington in London, where Montefiore went to school and began his career as an apprentice to a firm of grocers and tea merchants. He then entered a counting house in the City of London, and ultimately became one of the twelve "Jew brokers" licensed by the city. His brother Abraham joined him in the business, and their firm gained a high reputation. In 1812, Moses Montefiore married Judith Cohen, whose sister, Henriette (or Hannah), married Nathan Mayer Rothschild, for whom Montefiore's firm acted as stockbrokers. Nathan Rothschild headed the family's banking business in England, and the two brothers-in-law became business partners. Montefiore retired from business in 1824, and then used his time and fortune for communal and civic responsibilities. Physically imposing at 6'3", he was elected Sheriff of London in 1837 and served until 1838. He was also knighted that same year by Queen Victoria and received

a baronetcy in 1846 in recognition of his services to humanitarian causes on behalf of the Jewish people.

The next local family I researched was the Belfortes. I was aware that he had been a very prominent printer in Livorno, but was interested in doing some more probing. There is still a book shop in Livorno that is owned and operated by a Belforte, and from what I understand they are still involved in Jewish activities in Livorno!

The Belforte adventure began 211 years

ago in Livorno, with a student who printed a book of prayers, of *selichot*, in Hebrew at his own expense. In 1834 his son, Salomone, founded S. Belforte & Company, which for generations published elegant, beautifully produced prayer books, which spread throughout all the communities of the Mediterranean, Turkey, Greece, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and even to India!

Amedeo Clemente Modigliani was born into a Jewish family in Livorno. His maternal great-great-grandfather was one Solomon Garsin, who had immigrated to Livorno in the eighteenth century as a religious refugee.

There is a plaque near the Attias tomb in the third Jewish cemetery commemorating this noted early 20<sup>th</sup> century painter.

So, there we were at the Jewish cemetery, with no ride in sight, but we walked among the tombstones and graves and looked for any of the names that I had researched. There are too many headstones, all in Italian, to be able to decipher who was who. Besides, they were in terrible condition. And we were cold. So we decided to head back to town, but first to find a ride.

Luck was with us. We saw a single car coming down the road. Being us, we flagged it down; luckily, it stopped, and took us back all the way to the ship. I guess having white hair

sometimes works to one's advantage.

We were a little late for lunch, but the grill by the pool was open, so up we went. They had great sandwiches and salads, so we were happy. Tonight we were looking forward to hearing a piano concert by Rustem Hayroudi-noff and just relaxing.

Tomorrow: Calvi, Corsica, the large island off Italy and owned by France where Napoleon was born. We should be there by 8 in the morning and not depart until 4:30, so that will give us plenty of time to sightsee. ◇



**Moses Montefiore at 98.**

# KJCC Gift Shop



Tallit, Kipot, Kiddush Cups, Candlesticks  
Mezuzzot, Jewelry and More!



For further information contact:  
Susan Gordon (305) 766-3585

# KJCC Remembers the Homeless

by Gloria Avner

Imagine. A blond boy picks a small square piece of paper from a basket and hands it to you. In the center is a simple heart with the name, age and the date on which one homeless person died this year in the Florida Keys. We are, as in years past, taking part in the annual International Memorial for the Homeless. It is always held the same time of

year, winter solstice, the darkest day. In other years, we gathered at Settler's Park in Tavernier. This year we assemble in the soaring sanctuary of Father Tom Graf's St. James the Fisherman Episcopal Church, with large black-and-white photos on the walls, powerful portraits of Key West's homeless, reminiscent of Dorothea Lange's or Walker Evans' photos of the depression.

Sam Vinicur and I, asked to be among the readers, take turns along with clergy from all faiths in the Upper Keys, announcing loud and clear, one by one, the name, age and date written on each slip of paper. One of three ministers on the other side of the altar gives each a heartfelt blessing and a volunteer from the community in attendance comes forward to light a candle. The slip of paper goes back in a basket, as if being gently laid to rest. Seventy-eight times we say a name. Seventy-eight candles are lit, four of them for infants, one of whom we have to call

"baby boy" because he had been given no name. Five were veterans who had nobly served our country.

This ritual moves me, the beautiful simplicity of it – spare, majestic, painful. When I am given a piece of paper with the name "Caroline" I can't help but think of my 95-year-old mother Bea, Medina's 100-year-old mother Bianka, and our matriarchs Pauline Roller and Bea Graham. Caroline was 90 years old when she died homeless on the oddly appropriate date of July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015. How do we let people in their 90s live homeless? How do we let veterans who fought for us, losing limbs and lightness of heart, live on the street?

KJCC is represented by well over the *minyán* required to pray in public (ten adult Jews); we have our

*Yizkor* books with us. After the naming, we rise as a group and recite the *Kaddish*, our prayer for the dead that never mentions death. Sam points out that the prayer is not written in Hebrew, but in Aramaic, the language of Je-

sus. There is a murmur, and I am struck by the strength and sincerity of the "Amen" when we finish reading the prayer in both languages.







**Below, KJCC's Art Itkin speaks to Richard Meister of San Pedro. At bottom are the clergy and leaders who participated in the memorial.**

"Tikkun Olam" (Repair the World) Committee and seeing the involvement of so many faiths, so many people, and the establishment of an Upper Keys branch of CEO Rev. Stephen Braddock's Florida Keys Outreach Coalition (FKOC), newly staffed by Americorps Vista volunteers Rev. Pam Feeser and Laurie Scop. Meetings will be held, Art Itkin will be our KJCC representative and strategies will be sought and found.

Finally, we walk in procession to the church garden. Somehow I've become the guardian of the basket filled with paper names. It feels precious, both light and heavy at the same time. The names flutter into a black metal impromptu crematorium. Fire is started, the lid is sealed and homeless smoke rises to the sky, spirits rising to the heavens. The ceremony ends with Steve Steinbock reading the beautiful poem we read each Yizkor that reminds us "no one is ever lost as long as someone remembers."



The names ring out, simply and clearly, a moment of acknowledgement, of dignity. We know that each person was more than a name. They all had stories. We hear a powerful one about a man



**Rev. Kerby Avedovech, the afternoon's host Father Tom Graf of St. James Episcopal and Rev. Pam Feeser.**

named Robert, who after years of violence and destructive behavior, traded in his anger for garden-tending at a Baptist church in Islamorada that took him in as part of its family. Any one of us could have been one of the names on those slips of paper. What a

I remember Carol Steinbock. She is the one who made sure that people from our *shul* took part in this memorial. She would have loved being a part of our new

gift it would be to read fewer names next winter solstice. We hope, we pray, we work. ◇



# We Honor our Advertisers and New Members: *An Evening of Appreciation*

by Gloria Avner

If you arrived early to the KJCC dinner honoring our advertisers and new members, you breathed in the full effect of Medina Roy's cool, calm turquoise-tropical-waters-and-white-lace color

Our Shabbat celebration began as always with the ritual lighting of candles and singing of blessings. Our president, Sam Vinicur, welcoming our 85 guests, set the tone for the evening when he focused on the underlying meaning of the three blessings we say at every Shabbat meal for light, wine, and bread. Gratitude is the common theme. Our agrarian ancestors were grateful for the rain that made the crops grow. We may no longer be agrarian, but we, like them, are forever grateful for everything –



scheme. (Kudos to Medee and her set-up team of Susan, Joyce, Erica, Yardena, Sam and Gene.) Everyone noticed and all were pleased. As seats filled with all our

for light, for our

favorite community people, some of whom we only see on this yearly occasion – and when we patronize their businesses – it



was clear this was to be a joyous occasion. There were smiles and hugs happening everywhere.

community members who support us and with whom we share our lives.

The meal itself was splendid and



day of rest, for ceremonial food and drink, but also for the prayers themselves, the reminder to take note and not to take for granted our heritage, our history and the





inite rumblings of recipe requests. Cheesecake, divine cookies, fruit and a never-before-seen M&M cake rounded out the evening and our bellies.



abundant, thoroughly enjoyed, literally to the last drop. Thanks to all who made our perennial favorites - the



This special dinner is planned and run each year by Medina Roy and this one was her best yet.

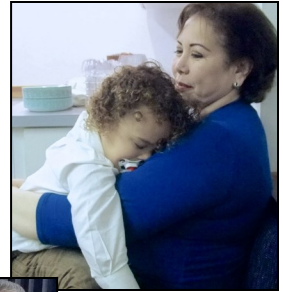
varied and creative salads, blintz soufflés, couscous, fish, veggie noodles, black bean soup, and corn pudding as well as the new arrivals: the soon-to-be favorite veggie pie, Moroccan tajine, broccoli-with-cheese casserole, and cauliflower-chickpea curry. There were def-



Who thought so many people would stay for services?







More than 60 people filled the sanctuary. The feedback was a fond and grateful embrace of the Sisterhood members who as a group led that night's service, coordinated by Sisterhood president Erica Lieberman-Garrett. Members and visitors alike had fun while they wor-

shipped. They enjoyed the animated singing of the full congregation and the stirring voices of our women readers. After a rousing version of *Adon Olam* and yet more



hugging, we made our way to the Ruth Richardson Social Hall to cap off our evening with an *oneg* (the literal translation of which accurately describes the evening "exquisite delight"). ♦



# Laura Wetzler Concert Raises The KJCC Roof

by Gloria Avner



The lucky members and friends of KJCC who showed up on Sunday, January 10<sup>th</sup> for that evening's Laura Wetzler concert were taken on a glorious, unforgettable Jewish journey – from the *shtetls* of Eastern Europe to the plains of Tunisia, Sephardic refuges in Greece and the Balkans and Turkey and, to the surprise of many, villages in Uganda. The sounds of *Lecha Dodi* and the *Sh'ma* sung in Ugandan, with melody, rhythm and whole-body verve so new and exciting to our ears, rocked us. It brought us something in that last full-out, extended wail of *Sh'ma* that was both astonishing and familiar, a cry from a place and lifetime and Jewish soul just beyond reach of memory. Many did not know Laura's name or renown when we first received word of her

availability to perform for us, but after spending an evening grinning, clapping, toe-tapping, singing along and, yes, dancing with this brilliantly talented and captivating performer, we will never forget her.

She didn't just take us through a wide swath of geographical places; she took us to places of the heart. We time-travelled with her, remembering the Yiddish songs we'd heard as children. Yardena *kvelled* hearing Ladino songs she'd heard growing up in Haifa and has sung all her life. Bernie and others of us – including matriarch Pauline (with whom Laura spent a lot of tête-à-tête time at the after-concert party and then of course fully fell under Pauline's spell) and even some who came to KJCC for the first time – knew all the words to the Yiddish Ashkenazi songs. Dozens sang along with gusto and joy. We also revisited the 60s and accompanied Laura's "Carole King" self on "You've got a Friend," during the portion celebrating Jewish songwriters in America. There were meaningful medleys of familiar and unfamiliar songs, but the



irresistible magic lay in the weaving together of song and story, climaxing in the sad but inspiring song Laura had written about Ursula and Helga, the brave idealistic sisters who

smuggled underground resistance literature in their ski-poles as they "flew" down the mountains of 1930s Germany, not knowing that only one of them would survive. The



Island who listened to her mother's seminal Jewish music radio show, who has traveled



the world searching out and studying that music's roots and branches in a journey that must have been "*bashert*." She now

survivor, Ursula, had been her grandmother.

Despair, courage, joy, ritual, commen-

tary on the centuries-old difficulty of getting young peoples' *tushes* in seats (she left us laughing with a story about twelfth-century rabbis complaining about exactly the same thing), Laura covered it all in 60 minutes of beautiful, full-voiced musicianship – the girl from Long



lives in the Massachusetts Berkshires and spends about half the year cataloging and unearthing and performing Jewish music all over the



world. On this unforgettable night she made her way to us, and we are happily the richer for the evening's experience (as you can tell from the smiles in these



photos). Did I mention that it wasn't just the music, but that her voice was clear and ringing and soaring and rich and







beautiful and sent shivers of joy down everyone's spine? Did I mention that people were dancing in their seats during the stirring,

praise and even indulging the few who just couldn't resist a hug. When she finally joined everyone in the social hall for chats and a



nosh, the entire room did something I'm not sure I've seen before: they burst as one into spontaneous applause. Laura returned the love, staying and

up-tempo songs, and then spontaneously leapt to their feet to express their joy during the final number, a rousing and full-throated version of *Hava Nagila*?



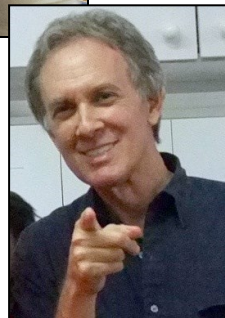
chatting (and basking in the glow a little) for another hour. As to the dancing to *Hava Nagila*? "That took bravery," she said. But

After she left us, we realized we wanted to interview Laura for this article and asked Joyce Peckman to talk with her, since Joyce was to be her host for the night. Ultimately though, she interviewed us, and that says a lot about this woman. Joyce said, "I blush to say that she spent more time interviewing me than vice versa. She was fascinated by the KJCC, with its eclectic mix of people, and loved the welcoming, laid-back, non-judgmental attitude."



she is the one who brought us to our feet. And consensus among all present was clearly "let's do this again next year." ♦

There was a long line after the concert for those who wanted to buy her CDs. She warmly and patiently signed them all, thanking everyone for their



# On the Return of Our Holocaust Torah to KJCC

*An upcoming day of celebration and ceremony and inspiration*

*by Sam Vinicur, KJCC president*

**I**t was on June 10, 1982 that Guss Zeldich, one of KJCC's original founders, first sent a letter to the Czech Memorial Scrolls Committee at London's Westminster Synagogue asking how a synagogue, a new Florida Keys synagogue that had been chartered just a year before, might obtain one of their rescued European Holocaust scrolls. Religious services so far had been held in the home of Sara and Joel Cohen, and then at the Seventh Day Adventist Church. For two additional years after Guss Zeldich's letter, services would be held in Tavernier's Coral Isles Church, until the building that now serves as KJCC's Ruth Richardson Social Hall was purchased in May of 1984.

Mrs. Ruth Shaffer of the Czech Memorial Scrolls Trust wrote back to KJCC with instructions. In June of 1983, Milton and Lillian Lippman hand-delivered a letter from Lillian's brother Joel Cohen to Mrs. Shaffer in London. Arrangements were made. A check for \$500 was sent to the Scrolls Trust by then-KJCC-president Ron Horn. Ron received a letter back a week later; Czech scroll number 418 was en route to the United States and would arrive at Miami International Airport on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1983. It was picked up and brought to the Keys that same day.

So, for a little perspective, this sacred Holocaust Torah, and all it represents, has been a member of the KJCC *mishpocha* – yes, I do know that technically it's not ours but on "permanent loan" – longer than anyone still directly connected to KJCC except a very few founding members: Susan Horn, her parents Ron and Dorothy (both Ron, as noted above, and Susan are also past-presidents), our current matriarch and ageless wonder Pauline Roller, Estelle Incociati (who stays in touch but now lives in California), Jackie LePre

(Jackie Neubauer in 1981) and Andy Tobin. (As I pointed out in my column last month, our Torah, hard as it might be to believe, is even older than Pauline. They were, however, both born in Europe, the Torah in Bohemia, Pauline a few hundred miles away in Romania.)

As I'm sure you noticed from the dates above, our Holocaust Torah became a vital part of KJCC at least a year before our founders bought the little conch house that for years saw every function of KJCC, including services, take place under its sturdy roof. Our Torah preceded the beautiful wooden ark now on our sanctuary bema; in fact, the ark was commissioned in large part to provide an appropriately dignified home for this Torah. It was here to be blessed, and to bless us, almost eight years before KJCC expanded and built the soaring new sanctuary it and we now call home.

Torahs are probably the one aspect of Judaism that have never been modernized. They're a living link to our ancient past. How far back? No one knows exactly, but it's likely that the laws of Moses read from a scroll to the remaining residents of Judah by Ezra the Scribe (who might well have written the document himself) in about 530 B.C.E., after return from the Babylonian exile, bore some resemblance to the scrolls of today. Synagogue design has evolved dramatically. No one in ancient Israel or Judah wore *kipot*. ("Yarmulka" is a Yiddish word, probably not coming into usage for another 1,500 years.) Even the Judaism of the time, that of the Second Temple period, no longer exists. It has been two thousand years since Jewish priests sacrificed animals and performed other sacred rituals. Rabbis emerged to substitute prayer for animal sacrifice, a very sensible innovation after the Temple had been destroyed, since there was

no longer a consecrated place where sacrifices could be performed. The rabbis made Judaism portable, made it a religion of the heart and not a particular place, and thereby saved it. Yes, it's probable that some revisions and edits continued to be made to the earliest versions of the Books of Moses, but we do know that the rabbis of Yavneh in the first century C.E. closed the sacred writings, excluding anything not written before the Macabean revolt some two hundred years before. So our Holocaust Torah reads and looks the same as Torahs from about two thousand years ago. Pause and think about that. It's okay to be awed. It is awesome – in this case



**Our Torah lies completely unrolled for inspection on a table in the sofers' workshop. Just by looking, they knew immediately when it was written and even in what part of Bohemia.**

more accurately awe-*inspiring* – that a moral and ethical code promulgated perhaps 3,000 years ago, in a world where cultures actually sacrificed their children to bloodthirsty gods and where the most advanced society on earth believed that their gods came lustfully to earth to rape unsuspecting young girls, has proven, beyond any historical doubt, that ideas and noble yearnings are more powerful than swords. It is awesome that this code came to the first culture on earth to possess a true alphabet, so that their rich and complex ideas could actually be written down, and that what they wrote down is clearly discernable for us to study today. It is awesome that all this emanated from a tiny tribe of desert dwellers who established no great empire and who often struggled to survive under the boots of the long procession of those who did successfully march and conquer. It is awesome that the words of our Torah have had an impact like no other in the arduous process of humanizing and civilizing the earth.

Our Torah was also made exactly the same

way as every Torah from every era. Rules were laid down by the ancients, and never changed, so from that time Torahs have been made according to the same strict practices. Only animal skins are used, never paper, and the animals are specially selected and raised for just that purpose. Sections of the skins are sewn together with very specific techniques, and with special sinew taken from cows. The ink used today is the same as de-

veloped and mixed at the beginning of the Common Era. Only quill pens are used for writing, just as quill pens were used on the first Torahs. No writing or marks can be put down other than the sa-

cred words, yet every Hebrew letter must be perfect, and the rows and columns must be perfectly straight. In its own way, every Torah is a masterpiece of art. Still, our precious Holocaust Torah apparently exceeds many others in beauty. When the *sofers* charged with doing the repairs and restoration first saw it, they audibly oohed and called colleagues to come look. They recognized it immediately as one of special quality and elegance, made during a special period of Torah art in a special region noted for its Torahs of magnificence.

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016, our Holocaust Torah, Czech Scroll No. 418, will be back at KJCC. That day will probably be one of the most important and inspirational in the history of our synagogue. On that day our Torah will once again be made fully complete and, to give its presence and the prayers that ring out around it even more heft and holiness, once again fully kosher. A *sofer* will be with us at KJCC to effect the completion. He will

not do this in some cloistered, barren room or a basement workshop. He will do this in the full presence of the assembled membership of KJCC. We will all be called as witnesses. We will all be partners in the completion. We will all be able to fulfill the final mitzvah, number 613, which mandates that each of us complete a Torah in our lifetimes. We can fulfill this mitzvah, according to rules argued and refined by centuries of rabbis, through standing beside the *sofer* and gently touching his quill as he completes a letter, a word, or a sentence. I myself have never done this, not yet fulfilled this gentle and profound act of Jewishness. But I've been told that the moment is unforgettable, and – even to those who think they're secular and beyond the reach of religious moments – even life-changing. It's almost as though, for that moment, you are grasping the hands of every Jew who ever lived – the proud, the humble, the martyred, the devout, the unlettered, the acclaimed, the forgotten – in a circle of continuity and warmth, bathed in the light of the noble ideas that our people bequeathed to the entire world.

Every member of KJCC will be welcome to join us on this special day. Each who chooses to be part of the completion process will have a personal discussion with the *sofer*, who will further enrich the moment by sharing learned or mystical significance of the letter or letters you've just helped complete.

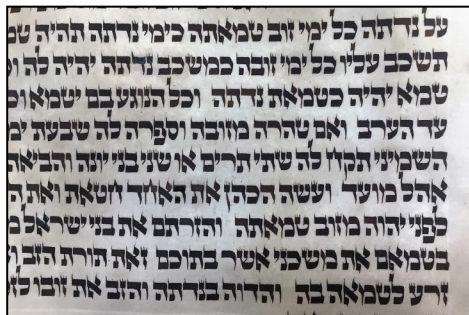
But the day will be so much more than your appointment with the *sofer*. It will be an entire day of celebration, of our Torah coming home renewed and restored and of our deep connection to it and, if those of us doing the planning do a proper job, to each other. The *sofers* call the collection of activities a Torah Project. We will have a number of educational opportunities going on all day. The planning is not complete, but there will be exhibits, and videos, and music, and litera-

ture, and discussions, and workshops. (And, yes, Sisterhood will see to it that there's food.) The *sofer's* company has designed and developed Torah Learning and community-building programs for synagogues and other organizations all over the country. They'll be working with us to develop the perfect combination of activities for KJCC.

It would also be dishonest to imply that the day, and all activities surrounding it, is only to be one of connection, and inspiration, and education, and Jewish joy, and the occasional tear of either remembrance or a fully open heart, though it certainly will be all of that. Though most of my time is devoted to the enrichment of all current experiences for members, part of my job here is to see to the sustenance and future of KJCC. We do need to make sure we have the resources now (and for KJCC's future stewards) to keep the grounds and buildings safe and invit-

ing, and to further develop programs and an atmosphere that make you want to be part of it. Part of community-building is fundraising. We'll be asking those who can to contribute as generously as their hearts move them to. No one will be excluded who can't contribute, but we'll also have a number of ways and categories, so that all can participate. Please contact me if you have any questions or wish to make a commitment. I'm delighted to tell you, with admitted awe, that the pledges and contributions have already begun to pour in.

For many of us, this could well be, without exaggeration, one of the most important emotional experiences of our lifetime. It certainly will be one of the most important days, and activities, in the history of KJCC. We'll be working very hard to make it so, to make it enriching and memorable for all of our members, those we know and love today and those we don't yet know who we trust will follow us in the years to come. ◇



**A sample of KJCC's Holocaust Torah. Note the beautiful, elegant and highly readable text.**



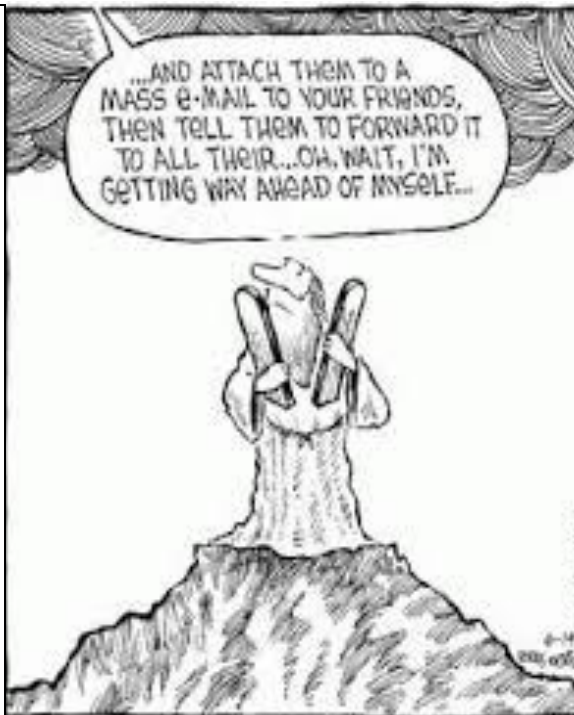


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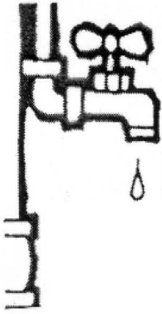
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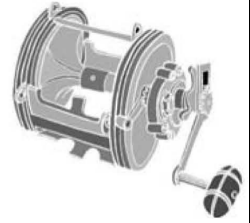
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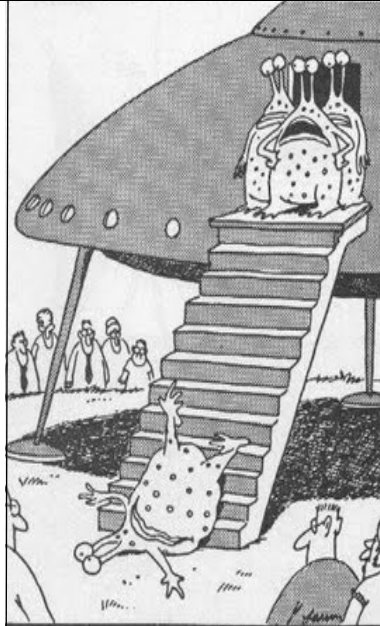
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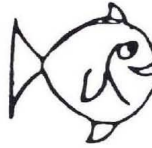
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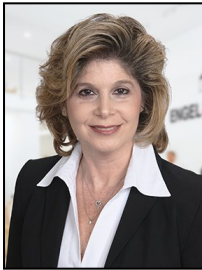
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