Chai~Lights

January 2011 25 Tevet - 26 Shevat 5771

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Keys Jewish Community Center

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President's Message
Alan Beth

Well, it is the end of another year as I write this. I reflect back on the year 2010, as others are. We all ask the question; was this a good year and what resolutions should we make for the coming year?

I am trying to decide what kind of Jew I am. I am not Orthodox, nor Reform. After much consideration I must conclude that I am a Gastronomic Jew! I love our Onegs and I especially love our Shabbat dinners. It is often said, "feed them and they shall come." Well, we saw that plentifully at our Chanukah celebration a few weeks ago. I know that a lot of people helped make this event such a wonderful success. For this we should thank Sisterhood. It is through the strength of Sisterhood that our synagogue survives.

If we did not have the Onegs, or the wonderful Shabbat dinners, or recently the Chanukah dinner, then the KJCC would not be as close-knit as we are. I gave a speech that evening asking for volunteers to help with a specific project. At least six people came up to me after services offering to help; but a special nine-year-old (Moira Knowles) offered as well. Moira also said: "*Alan, I see the web site is out of date. If you give me the user ID and password I can update it for you.*" How wonderful is this? Did I mention that she is nine years old?

This made me think about my own Sunday School growing up in England. We called it *Cheder* class. I honestly do not have fond memories of the torture we had to go through to learn Hebrew and Torah. Today, I see the kids at the KJCC, laughing, playing, running around and having a good time. I contrast that to how strict my *Cheder* classes were. I am 100 percent confident that the kids today will look back (years from now) upon their time at the KJCC with fondness and with warmth. They will have memories of good times, fun times, with song, with laughter and with generous praise.

The Chanukah play a few weeks ago was a good example of that. Our kids obviously are not shy to be seen on the *Bima*, nor to come running back afterwards to help with services. The highest praise one can give is due our teachers. Thanks to Yardena and Gloria for all your hard and magical work, and to Susan Gordon, our head of Education.

Wishing all of you a Happy New Year.

Alan

January 2011 — 25 Tevet – 26 Shevat

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	Names denote leaders of Friday services. *Italicized* names are Oneg sponsors. KJCC offers Shabbat services every Friday.					**1** Blessing of the Fleet, Whale Harbor, 10:30 a.m.
2 **Sisterhood Meeting** 9:30 a.m.	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7** Joyce Peckman *Roger & Danna Levy*	**8**
9 **KJCC Board Meeting** 9:00 a.m.	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14** Alan Beth **Potluck Dinner 6:30 p.m.** (fleishik)	**15**
16	**17**	**18** **Fashion Show at Braza Lena** 11:30 a.m.	**19**	**20** **Tu B'Shevat**	**21** George Swartz & Yardena Kamely	**22**
23 / **30**	**24** / **31**	**25** Upper Keys Concert Series Begins—Harry James Orch.	**26**	**27**	**28** Steve & Carol Steinbock 6:30 Service	**29**

Nosh

Attention Snowbirds

It's officially (and dramatically) winter up north, so most of you have made your way here by now. It's very important that Alan officially knows you're here so he can tell the database to use your Keys (or south Florida) address when we do mailings, such as for issues of Chai-Lights. Please don't presume that because you think we know your schedule, or we see you here, that things will be adjusted automatically. They won't. Alan likes e-mail best, so contact him at alanlbeth@yahoo.com or (for another month) at president@keysjewishcenter.com.

Care to Host a Havdalah?

No dates have yet been scheduled for January or February *Havdalah* Services, the short, sweet, aromatic ceremony on Saturday night that marks the juncture between the sacred of the Sabbath and the secular of the rest of the week. Anyone who would like to host a low-key but warm and meaningful Saturday evening get-together to say goodbye to Shabbat, please see Gloria or call her at 305-619-0216 to make arrangements.

BOOK PLATE

In Memory of Lillian Skolnick

By Jim and Joan Boruszak

Oneg Sponsors for January 2011

January 7th — Roger & Danna Levy in honor of their safe return to the Keys.

January Birthdays

1st.....Jerry Olsen
1st.....Justin Wade Gilson
1st.....Laura Goodman
2nd.....Sherrie Willner
2nd.....Stanley Rosenberg
4th.....Howard Gilson
4th.....Randi W. Freundlich
5th.....Gladdy Roberts
6th.....Janice Gorson
6th.....Stanley Margulies
8th.....Matthew Barrett
8th.....Roger Levy
9th.....Cathy Rakov
9th.....Sarah Kamely
10th.....Martin Fabian
11th.....Michelle Zinner
12th.....Alex Dutton
13th.....Amy Nobil
14th.....Murray Cooper
15th.....Charlie Horowitz
15th.....Heather Gilson
15th.....Jamie Goodman
15th.....Jill Taksey
16th.....Brieze Levy
16th.....Donald Zinner
17th.....Andrea Kluger
17th.....Neal Rakov
17th.....Suzi-Sarot Feder
18th.....Barry Alter
18th.....Henry Isenberg
19th.....Benjamin Friedman
19th.....Mark Kanarek
19th.....Sandy Seder
20th.....Mary Terner
22nd.....Sheila Olsen
24th.....Randy Kominsky
24th.....Stuart Grossman
26th.....Carol Ann Steinbock
27th.....Beth Hudson
27th.....Pat VanArtsdalen
28th.....Yardena Kamely
29th.....Beth Kaminstein
29th.....Jeffrey Boruszak
30th.....Kristen M. Schur
30th.....Mark Feinberg

The Harry James Orchestra

Tuesday night, January 25th will be the opening night of this year's Upper Keys Concert Series. The attraction will be today's touring version of the Harry James Orchestra. Anyone who enjoys the raucous, joyous, melodic and infectious sounds of Big Band music will want to be there. The performance will be held at the Island Community Church auditorium in Islamorada, MM 83.3 bayside, at 8 p.m. Individual tickets are $40, but season subscriptions are still available at $80 for all five concerts. Contact Joyce Peckman at 305-240-1000 for tickets or more information. Many KJCC people work very hard to make this program a success. Along with Dave Feder's I.C.E., it's an important source of quality entertainment during high season in the Keys.

Sisterhood Wants Your Cutlery

As part of its ongoing green drive, KJCC is attempting to cut down on its use of throw-aways. But we don't have enough stainless steel knives, forks and spoons for everyone. If you have stainless cutlery and/or serving utensils you'd like to donate to Sisterhood, please contact Erica Garrett at 853-1003 or via e-mail at hippiejap@hotmail.com.

January Anniversaries

		Years
1st	Thomas & Leslie Dillon	15
4th	Steve & Amelia Kasinof	30
12th	George & Muriel Swartz	31
17th	Alan & Elaine Schulberg	18
26th	David & Pamela Marmar	26

We Make it Easy to Donate

There are many ways, and many good reasons, to make donations to your KJCC. As Alan is fond of saying, dues make up less than half of our annual budget. Not only does KJCC benefit, but you can also honor loved ones or special moments in their lives (or your own) in unique ways. Each time a Siddur is opened, for example, or a member or visitor stands before our several sets of plaques in the sanctuary, or someone walks into our beautiful new Meditation Garden and sees the bricks or benches, your loved one is remembered anew. Please contact Carol Steinbock at 852-6152 or 393-1205 for details on wording or payment options.

Siddur Bookplates:	$ 25.00
Chair Plates:	300.00
Tree of Life Rock:	1,200.00
Tree of Life plaque:	50.00
Yahrzeit Board plaque:	400.00
Meditation Garden:	
Engraved Bench:	$ 750.00
Double Brick, 8 x 8:	200.00
Single Brick, 4 x 8:	125.00

The KJCC extends deepest condolences to

Susan Gordon and her family

on the death of Susan's mother

Lillian Skolnick

This Year's Blessing of the Fleet

The annual Upper Keys Blessing of the Fleet ceremony takes place on the first of January every year. This time-honored tradition is steeped in history and meaning. Charter boats and private boats alike line up at the head pin of the Whale Harbor channel just below Windley Key in Islamorada, and then proceed down the channel to the Whale Harbor Bridge where representative clergy await to "bless" the captains, crews, and vessels. Boats start gathering by 10 a.m. The blessing begins at 10:30 a.m. Over the years, Jim, Joel, and George have all blessed the boats of our Jewish captains. Last year was the first time a woman was among the clergy. I will be among the blessers again this year, representing KJCC. It is a beautiful way to greet the New Year. All are welcome.

-Gloria

Jewish Definitions

Jewbilation (n.) - Pride in finding out that one's favorite celebrity is Jewish.

Torahfied (n.) - Inability to remember one's lines when called to read from the Torah at one's Bar or Bat Mitzvah. (OR from the Hagadah at Passover)

Matzilation (v.) - Smashing a piece of matzo to bits while trying to butter it.

Bubbegum (n.) - Candy one's mother gives to her grandchildren that she never gave to her own children.

Chutzpapa (n.) - A father who wakes his wife at 4:00 a.m. so she can change the baby's diaper.

Deja Nu (n.) - Having the feeling you've seen the same exasperated look on your mother's face, but not knowing exactly when.

Disoriyenta (n.) - When Aunt Golda gets lost in a department store and strikes up a conversation with everyone she passes.

Hebort (v.) - To forget all the Hebrew one ever learned immediately after one's Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Jewdo (n.) - A traditional form of self-defense based on talking one's way out of a tight spot.

Mamatzah Balls (n.) - Matzo balls that are as good as your mother used to make.

Mishpochadots (n.) - The assorted lipstick and make-up stains found on one's face and collar after kissing all one's aunts and cousins at a reception.

Our thanks to Bob Auston for sending these in.

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 KJCC, call Rene Rose, 852-3959.
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 Bea Graham, 852-0214.
Picture Postcards – We have beautiful picture postcards bearing the Millard Wells representation of the KJCC, which was commissioned by Sisterhood. Quantities to fit your needs and can be mailed to you or your gift recipient. The price is $36 per hundred but we will sell lesser quantities. Contact Joan Boruszak, 852-0833.
Oneg Shabbat Sponsor – To schedule your special date with Sisterhood, call Joyce Peckman, 451-0665.
Meditation Garden – Participate in our newest venture. A beautiful garden is in progress and you can be part of this exciting new project by making a donation for an engraved brick, an engraved bench, or for plants in honor or memory of a loved one or event. Call Steve Steinbock for information, 852-6152.
KJCC Tree of Life Leaves and Rocks, Sanctuary Seat Plates, Yahrzeit Memorial Plaques, Bookplates for Siddurim – Call Linda Pollack to arrange your donation, 852-8575.
JNF Trees In Israel – A gift of a tree, or two or more, makes a long-remembered way to honor a loved one, a relative, a friend or an occasion. Both Israel and the KJCC benefit. Call Nancy Kluger, 852-4353
Chai-Lights Mitzvah – Place a greeting or notice in Chai-Lights. Call Linda Pollack, 852-8575 to make your donation.
Advertisement In Chai-Lights – Your business ad will appear in every issue of Chai-Lights. Call Linda Pollack 852-8575 for annual rates.

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, Scholarship Fund, Sara Cohen Memorial Tzedukah Fund, or

In Memoriam January 2011

In Memory Of

Bernice Bernstein

By Paul & Barbara Bernstein

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In Memory Of

Laurie Beth

By Alan Beth & Candace Stanlake

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In Memory Of

Annette Bitton

By Michel Bitton & Sylvie Coeurjoly

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In Memory Of

Emma Kohlenbrener

By Jim & Joan Boruszak

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In Memory Of

Betty Weinstein

By Dick & Rita Bromwich

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In Memory Of

David Cohn

By Nancy L. Cohn

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In Memory Of

Yetta Hitzig

By Wes & Rita Conklin

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In Memory Of

Henry H. Rubin

By Foster Davidson & Carol Laskin

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In Memory Of

Nathan Weisberg

By Frank & Gerri Emkey

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In Memory Of

Marcus Weiss

By Janice Gorson

<><><><><><><><><><><><><><>

In Memory Of

Betty Weinstein

By Eric Grace & Ruth Schrader-Grace

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In Memory Of

Marvin Greenbaum

By Marilyn Greenbaum

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In Memory Of

Judy Lombardi

By Marilyn Greenbaum

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In Memory Of

Henry Gross

By Mollie Gross

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In Memory Of

Alvin Gross

By David & Patti Gross

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In Memory Of

Louis Hartz

By Steven Hartz

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In Memory Of

Ernest Isenberg

By Henry & Patricia Isenberg

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In Memory Of

Sylvia Emsig

By Lawrence & Pearl Jacobs

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In Memory Of

Irving Rosen

By Harvey & Joan Kay

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In Memory Of

Walter Hankin

By Richard & Barbara Knowles

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In Memory Of

Goldie Schweitzer

By Richard & Barbara Knowles

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In Memoriam January 2011

In Memory Of

Harry Stoler

By Randy & Eileen Kominsky

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In Memory Of

John Evans

By Stanley & Jenny Margulies

<><><><><><><><><><><><><>

In Memory Of

Sylvan Oser

By Marjorie Present

<><><><><><><><><><><><><>

In Memory Of

William Shapiro

By Michael & Arlene Rosenbach

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In Memory Of

Sally Sussman

By Richard & Sheila Steinberg

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In Memory Of

Eta Brownstein

By Pauline Roller

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In Memory Of

Morris Estrin

By Ralph & Lillian Tallent

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In Memory Of

Samuel Neubauer

By Jackie LePree

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In Memory Of

Ann Netzman

By Alan Netzman

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In Memory Of

Anna Savage

By Marjorie Present

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In Memory Of

Joseph Cohen

By Jules & Nettie Seder

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In Memory Of

Betty Weinstein

By Jerry & Sheila Olsen

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In Memory Of

Abraham Raij

By Salomon & Mary Terner

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In Memory Of

Sydney Zinner

By Donald & Nancy Zinner

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In Memory Of

Bernard Kaminstein

By Ron Levy & Beth Kaminstein

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Mishebeyrach List

For those of you who might not make it to services regularly, each week we read aloud the names of those we know to be ailing so that we may include their names in a special supplication to G-d to heal them. Our printed list is read, and then the leader asks if anyone in the congregation has names to add. If you can't be at services, and would like someone you care about to be included in the *mishebeyrach* prayer, call or e-mail and let us know. We'll happily include any name (or names) you tell us about. The main KJCC number is 852-5235. The website, which accepts e-mail, is keysjewishcenter.com.

YEDA VE'TORASHA

Yardena Kamely

The Carmel Fire In Israel

While we were busy with our Chanukah celebrations at the KJCC, a terrible fire was raging in northern Israel, on Mount Carmel, near my hometown of Haifa. I was reading the news on my computer: "…The death toll from Israel's worst-fire-ever reached 41 on Friday, as firefighting crews and equipment from around the world began arriving to help the nation battle the devastating blaze. The inferno, which also displaced thousands, is still raging through forests in northern Israel and on the outskirts of the country's third-largest city, Haifa. An unprecedented convoy of international assistance poured in after Israel issued a rare cry for help." Israel, of course, is better known for sending its rescue teams and medical personnel to other countries to help in their disaster-relief efforts.

I was shocked, worried, and saddened by each new bit of information received. The fire broke out around midday and quickly spread, fanned by unusually hot and dry conditions. My brother Uri, who got back from a trip to Israel two weeks before the fire broke out, told me that Israel experienced an exceptionally warm summer and has had little rain during the autumn.

Fond childhood memories of lovely places on the Carmel come to my mind. I have a vivid image of the Pines (*Oranim)* in one of Israel's few large forests, made up of natural growth, and planted areas, a favorite spot for camping, hiking, and picnics. Living in Haifa, our favorite place to spend Shabbat was the Carmel forest, going with a whole group of several families and their children, all of them being "my best friends," playing around, collecting natural objects from the ground, using them for decoration in our homes (even today I like to collect pieces of wood or special little stones on my hikes), and having the best picnic I can remember, delicious food prepared by our moms.

I remember *Kibbutz Bet Oren* (House of Pine), and its beautiful wooded area, a place to sit on hot summer days. It saddens me that it suffered significant damage after its residents were evacuated. In the small artist community of *Ein Hod* – another lovely place my childhood friends from Haifa liked to visit – one woman desperately tried to protect her home from the flames with only a garden hose. If my father (Z.L.), whose love was nature and agriculture, would have been in this situation, he would have reacted the same way.

For the Israelis the Carmel fire is a human tragedy. In Israel, there is a strong sense of connection to nature, a special relation between the people and the land. The loss of precious woodland, in a country where only seven percent of the land is forested, is devastating. 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. Though the woodland fire covered an area of only about eight square miles (21 square kilometers) — or some one percent of Israel's forest land — the destruction was felt as a deep national loss.

As we teach our students each year on *Tu B'Shvat*, trees provide valuable habitat for wildlife, they prevent heat sinks from building up in cities, hold water in the earth, and provide a nourishing layer for undergrowth and new plants to grow. They can help revive economies and are the basic foundation of environmental conservation. Israel's national organization, the KKL-JNF (*Keren Kayemet Le'Israel* - Jewish National Fund) has made it a national priority to plant trees in Israel, and to look after them. Over the years, Israel's foresters have learned to select drought-hearty species to cope with the arid land in Israel. There is no formal education in forestry in Israel. JNF-KKL firefighters do take some courses in Israel, and most are sent to learn from foresters in the U.S., who are considered the best in the world. They also train with forest fire-fighters from Spain and France, countries with similar environments to Israel.

An aerial view of the Carmel Mountains and kibbutz of Bet Oren, in northern Israel, during the massive forest fire.

The Europe-to-Israel flow of knowledge is reversed when it comes to rehabilitating forests after they've been burned. Israel's extensive research and experience has shown that planted forests rehabilitate best on their own, and need only to be monitored and managed. Natural regeneration is healthier and more sustainable - that's a basic environmental rule - say the scientists.

The Mediterranean forest on the Carmel Mountains is naturally adapted to fires. "There are plant species that have developed resilience to fire and those that have developed a dependency on fire," says Professor Ido Izhaki, head of the Carmel Research Center at Israel's University of Haifa, who has been researching the Carmel region since its last big fire in 1989. "We have to let nature take its course," he advises, noting that planting new trees on a large scale at this point would be a mistake. "The forest needs to be left alone to recover, with only minimal human intervention." Izhaki notes that when isolating the ecological and biological perspectives, fires also have a positive contribution to a forest's growth. He explains: "Following the 1989 fire, we observed the development of flora and fauna in the region and saw that some fifteen to twenty years after the fire the forest reached a climax in terms of its fauna and vegetation diversity. This indicates that after about this amount of time following a fire, the forest will be home to more species of wildlife and vegetation than there were before the fire." But fires are only beneficial to biological diversity as long as they don't occur too often. Today, due to human factors, the frequency of fires is too high, and therefore the forest's recovery is likely to take longer.

While some people are mourning friends and relatives, and others the loss of their homes and businesses, many too are also mourning the loss of the Carmel itself, an area nicknamed Little Switzerland for its thick, green forests and mountainous hills. It will take a couple of decades, but hopefully this area will return to its former glory. This year celebrating *Tu B'Shvat*, *Chag La'llanot* (Birthday of the Trees), will have a special significance for all of us. ◊

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	*In Memory of*
Jim & Joan Boruszak	Lillian Skolnick

General Fund	*In Honor of*
Begam, Delores	pray for Susie
Tobin, Andrew	

General Fund	*In Memory of*
Carlson, Kenneth & Nancy	Jerry Tabasky
DeLuca, Anthony & Marie	David Levin
Pollack, Joel & Linda	Lillian Skolnick

JNF Certificates Sent By	*In Memory of*
Singer, Mary Lee	Sharon Horen
Graham, Bea & Mayk Families	Yvette Oddy

Meditation Garden

Gould, Maryon	*in memory of*	Paul & Richard Gould
Hayhurst, Karen		

Oneg Fund Sponsors	*In Honor of*
Gitin, David	Gloria Avner's birthday
Goldfinger, David & Toby	
Isenberg, Henry & Patricia	Emma Feig's birthday
Kasinof, Steve & Amelia	Birthdays
Peckman, Joyce	gratitude for my safe return to the Keys
Sachs, Joseph & Susan	Anniversary
Silverman, Mort & Gene	Anniversary
Ulpan Students	In gratitude for Yardena Kamely's safe return
Williams, Jim & Rita	
Biskar, Rosie	Arnold Biskar

Sisterhood

Beth, Alan and Candy Stanlake
Kluger, Kurt & Nancy
Wasser, Mark & Sofy

Yartzeit Contributions	*In Memory of*
Coltman, Barney & Ellen	Robert Coltman
Cooper, Murray & Claire	Edward Sandberg
Gould, Maryon	Jeanne Schneider
Krissel, Michael	Deborah Cannon
Steinberg, Richard & Sheila	Peter Steinberg
Steinberg, Richard & Sheila	Rose Steinberg
Willner, Arthur Lee & Johanna	Esther Gold Willner

Yizkor Book

Lessner, Howard & Shaloma
Olsen, Gerald & Sheila
Schocket, Jeffrey & Patty
Steinberg, Richard & Sheila

Do you know all the amazing things Sisterhood does for KJCC?

Things like The Annual KJCC Fundraiser, Shabbat and holiday dinners, the after-service Onegs, the annual Second Seder...and so much more. They do a great job for the KJCC, but they could always use your help! Please consider volunteering. They are experts at matching your skills and talents with the many tasks and events.

Contact Joyce at 305-451-0665 or at joyce@adoctorsbag.com

Sisterhood

Joyce Peckman

With decidedly mixed feelings I write my final Chai-Lights column as President of KJCC Sisterhood. I feel tremendous gratitude to all of you who worked so hard on the fundraisers, dinners and celebrations for which I was congratulated for a job well done. I was proud to represent us at religious services and festive events. I know that I was often the face, but you were the hands and often the heart and brain that made these two years so enjoyable and productive.

A wonderful group of women will make up Sisterhood's new Board of Directors: President Lauren Sax, Vice President Georgia Landau, Treasurer Nancy Kluger and Secretary Carol Steinbock. I look forward to working with them.

Simchas and food go together. Our Hannukah dinner was delicious, and well attended. Pauline Roller told me she made close to 100 latkes. Then on Sunday the children of the religious school invited us to join their party after our meeting, for more latkes and celebration. Thank you, Nettie, for making the gift bags for the kids.

The next potluck dinner will be on Friday evening, January 14th at 6:30. There will be a $5 donation. This should be a true Shabbat meal, complete with chicken, vegetables and *kugels*. (No dairy, please.) Contact Erica Garrett at 305-853-1003 – or email hippiejap@hotmail.com – for your reservation, and to let her know what covered dish you plan to bring, or to ask for suggestions.

Having these Shabbat dinners is one of the unique joys of being a KJCC member. We truly are a family, of which I am proud to be a member. Thank you to Erica and everyone who participates.

Those who attended Georgia's strudel workshop may have some new ideas for the potluck. Linda Perloff, Roberta McNew, Jane Friedman and Linda Pollack all got a lesson on the fun of phyllo dough and walked away with the delicious results. Bernie Ginsberg came in to purchase Georgia's sample.

Deli Night will be Sunday, February 27th. It will be a night of food and games, so mark your calendars. Still on the subject of dining, Sisterhood now possesses a set of real dishes to enhance special occasions. Candy Stanlake did the shopping and schlepping. She also donated towards the price of the china (actually Corelle), as did Nancy Kluger and Sofy Wasser.

Our fashion show, presented by Angelika, will be held at Braza Lena on Tuesday, January 18th. The focus this year will be on accessorizing the clothes we already own. Stuart and Lauren Sax always make the shows enjoyable, and we walk away with unexpected ideas.

Contact Nancy Kluger or me for your February 6th reservations to "The 25th Annual Putnam Valley Spelling Bee" at the Actors' Playhouse in Miami. This is an enjoyable musical that will leave you smiling for a week. Tickets are $40. We are also selling $20 tickets for "Chicago" on March 19th at Coral Shores Performing Arts Center.

I would like to thank Joan Boruszak for all of her hard work organizing and running the Gift Shop. It will take several people to fill her capable shoes. We have lovely items for your gift-giving or personal use, in large part because of how much Joan and Jim did to find and select them.

You should have received a letter from Sisterhood with the Membership Directory. Please fill it out and return with a check to sponsor one or more Onegs in 2011. (There is a minor error in the return address: Tavernier's zip code should be 33070.)

I wish the new Board and all of you a happy, healthy, productive 2011. It was a pleasure working with you. ◇

Accessories Show
Presented by ANGELIKA
with Audience Participation

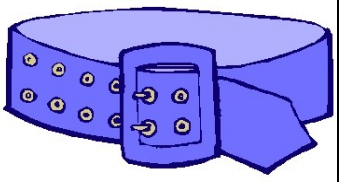
Keys Jewish Community Center Luncheon

Tuesday, January 18, 2011

11:30 am

Braza Lena Restaurant

83413 Overseas Hwy, Islamorada Oceanside



Contact Roberta for information & tickets

mcnewr@bellsouth.net

(305) 522 0643

Donation $30

World Jewish Report

Medina Roy

From Rockets to Roses

Yaron Bob, metal sculptor, blacksmith and part-time computer teacher, has found a way to create beauty from the ashes of Kassam rockets that fired into Israel from Gaza. Over 12,000 have landed in the southern Israeli towns of Sderot and Ofakim in the last eight years, causing chaos and destruction and traumatizing an entire generation of Israeli children. Bob's idea was to turn the shrapnel and rocket shells into artwork, namely roses. A plaque mounted on the base of every sculpture records the month and year of the landing of each sculpture's particular rocket. A portion of each sale is set aside to help "Operation Life Shield" build bomb shelters in the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon. To view Bob's artwork, visit www.rocketsintoroses.com.
(www.rocketsintoroses.com, 11-30-10)

Probing the Earth's History

(Warning: Biblical literalists should probably skip this item – Ed.) An international team of scientists are drilling deep below the Dead Sea – the lowest place on earth, roughly 1,300 feet below sea level – in an effort to extract material that could provide an unprecedented look at the history of the earth during the past 500,000 years. The project aims to examine layers of sediment over the course of millions of years, seeking clues about Earth's changing environment – shifting weather patterns, seismic activity and climate change. Details about these conditions could even provide insight into human migration in and out of the region. Once extracted, the soil will be studied by scientists from fields ranging from climate science to chemistry. The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities is a partner in the project.
(www.telegraph.co.uk, 11-17-10)

Nature Will Fix It

The raging wildfire that devastated the Carmel Forest near Haifa, the worst fire in Israel's history, killed 43 people, consumed close to 10,000 acres of forest, and required the evacuation of 17,000 residents. Close to four million trees were destroyed. Experts at the University of Haifa insist that although it will take years, nature will restore itself. Professor Ido Izhaki, head of the Carmel Research Center, said that the dominant tree species in the forest is the Jerusalem (Aleppo) pine, which is "very suited to fires. When the temperatures rise as with a fire, the pine cones open and shoot out their seeds. Warm temperatures promote germination, and if good – but not excessive - rains follow, in the spring there will be a carpet of sprouts." He and other ecologists oppose the planting of young trees, saying that not only would this be unnecessary but it could also very likely interfere with natural restoration.
(Jerusalem Post, 12-6-10)

New Hope for the Paralyzed

When Israeli entrepreneur Amit Goffer was paralyzed in a car accident in 1997, he was disturbed knowing that the wheelchair seemed to be the only way to get around. With that in mind, he invented a type of robotic "pants" that use sensors and motors to allow paralyzed patients to stand, walk and even climb stairs. He founded a company, Argo Medical Technologies. After several years of clinical trials in both Israel and the United States, Argo's units will go on sale this month to rehabilitation centers around the world. Called *ReWalk,* the 35-pound device,

worn over clothing, consists of leg braces containing motion sensors and motorized joints that respond to subtle changes in upper-body movement and shifts in balance. A harness around the patient's waist and shoulders keeps the suit in place, and a backpack holds the computer and rechargeable 3 ½ -hour battery. He said regular use of the device, which costs about $100,000, would prevent complications that often arise in people who can't walk, such as pressure sores and urinary, digestive, circulatory and cardiovascular problems.
(www.washingtonpost.com, 12-2-10)

Top Rating Once Again

For the fifth consecutive year, Charity Navigator, America's leading independent charity evaluator, has conferred its four-star rating on the Jewish National Fund (JNF) for the organization's sound fiscal management. Only five percent of the more than 5,400 charities rated have received this coveted evaluation five years in a row. JNF was recently named to *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*'s annual "Philanthropy 400" list of the nation's biggest charities. Of the 22 Jewish charities that made the list, JNF was one of only four Jewish organizations that saw a boost in fundraising totals, this at a time when so many organizations have seen a decrease in giving. The JNF began in 1901, collecting coins in little blue metal boxes, to purchase land and return the Jewish people to their homeland. In over 107 years, JNF has evolved into a global environmental leader.
(www.jnf.org, 11-10-10)

An Award Well Deserved

Gerda Weissman Klein, a Holocaust survivor who teachers children the value of citizenship, is among those who will be honored by President Obama with a Medal of Freedom. Klein, who survived the notorious death march at the end of the war, recently founded *Citizenship Counts,* an organization that teaches students to "cherish the value of their American citizenship." The Medal of Freedom is the highest U.S. civilian honor, "presented to individuals who have made especially meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors." The recipients will receive their medals in a ceremony early in 2011. Klein's memoir, "All But My Life," was made into an HBO special, "One Survivor Remembers," which received both an Emmy and an Academy Award (for best short documentary) in 1995. (The film is in the KJCC Library's audio-visual collection.)
(www.jta.org, 11-18-10)

R.I.P. Harry Potter

The grave of Harry Potter, not the literary character but a British soldier killed in Israel in 1939, has been drawing record numbers of tourists to the British military cemetery (the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery) in the Israeli town of Ramle, a working-class town in central Israel. Pvt. Harry Potter joined the British military in 1938. He arrived in British mandate Palestine later that year and was killed in battle in 1939. Potter was 18 years old. (The tombstone incorrectly lists his age as 19, Potter having lied about his age when he enlisted). The municipality said people began inquiring about the grave about five years ago and the city listed it, one of the cemetery's 4,500 graves, on its tourism website in early 2010. Thousands of tourists visit Ramle in large part because of its many archaeological ruins.
(The Associated Press, 11-16-10)

An Official Apology

Ben Girod, Bishop of the Amish community in Idaho, led a delegation of fifty Amish Christians from the U.S. and Switzerland on a visit to Israel. The reason: to officially apologize to the Jewish people for having rejected Israel and the Jews. The Amish have had a history of anti-Semitism, believing that Jews have been "replaced" by Christians and even that Hitler was G-d's agent in punishing the Jews for their rejection of Jesus. "We are here to say we are sorry," said Girod. "We no longer want to reject you or look at you as not being G-d's people. You were G-d's people long before we were." A declaration of

apology and commitment, beautifully printed on parchment, was presented to Western Wall Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovitch on behalf of the entire Amish community. In the declaration, the Amish ask Israel's forgiveness "for our collective sin of pride and selfishness by ignoring the plight of the Jewish people and the nation of Israel." The document states that the Amish will, from now on, speak out strongly in support of the Jews and the Jewish state. The Amish shun modern technology and normally do not ride in automobiles or fly in airplanes. They waived this restriction in order to travel to Israel for their public apology. (www.*israelnational news.com, 12-2-10)*

Update

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations has rejected Iran's bid for a seat on the Executive Board of the new U.N. agency to promote equality for women (U.N. Women). The story of Iran's mind-boggling bid was first noted in *World Jewish Report* in the June/July 2010 issue of Chai-Lights. We thought you'd like to know that their bid failed. *(World Jewish Congress, 11-10-10)*

The Bus Police

An unusual type of student protest has emerged in Israel. Israelis are not known for being very polite, and some students are just disgusted with the crude behavior of passengers on Israeli buses. Students from the College of Administration in Tel Aviv decided to establish some order; they've created a project they named *Mishtarbus* (a combination of the Hebrew word *mishtara,* which means "police," plus the English word "bus." Together the word translates to mean the "Good Manners Bus Police.") The group is seeking to eliminate such nuisances as loud ringtones, chattering across seats and ignoring senior citizens who are forced to stand. "Many bus travelers take over public space and treat it as their own," one of the students said. "They listen to music without earphones, talk very loudly on their cell phones and put their feet on the seats, and this affects the travel experience for every one of us." At the end of the semester, the students will be graded on their project. *(www.haaretz.com, 11-18-10)*

Tourist #3,000,001

Israel honored its 3,000,001st tourist since the beginning of 2010 – a pastor leading a group of 120 evangelical pilgrims from Brazil – in one of Israel's biggest tourism years in recent history. Pastor Jomber Araujo Vladislav was welcomed at Ben-Gurion International airport on November 22nd by Tourism Minister Stas Misezhnikov and other state officials in a special ceremony. Misezhnikov said that the fact that a tourist from Brazil is the three millionth (+1) visitor this year seems fitting, as incoming tourism from that country has increased 82 percent in 2010. Pastor Vladislav won a future six-day trip to Israel. *(www.haaretz.com, 11-22-10)*

Did You Know…

• Leo Apotheker, Hewlett-Packard's new CEO, studied in Israel, loves hummus and speaks fluent Hebrew (as well as four other languages). *(www.ynetnews.com, 10-8-10)*

· Elizabeth Emanuel, the Jewish fashion designer who, along with her husband David, designed Princess Diana's wedding dress, may be selected to design the gown in which Kate Middleton, the future queen of England, will walk down the aisle when she weds Prince William in April. *(www.thejc.com, 11-17-10)*

· Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio is looking to build a house in Israel so that he can have a base in which to stay during his visits with his girlfriend, Israeli supermodel Bar Refaeli. *(www.haaretz.com, 11-16-10)*

· The Daily Beast ranked the thirty most-Jewish cities in America, using three *per capita* criteria: Jewish population, number of synagogues and kosher restaurants. Not surprisingly, New York City claimed the top spot, with a Jewish population of 9.6 percent, four synagogues per capita and 504 kosher restaurants. Miami, Philadelphia, Boston and the Washington, D.C / Baltimore area followed. *(The Forward, 12-7-10) We'd guess that L.A. and Chicago will ask for a recount—Ed.* ◇

KJCC
SISTERHOOD SHABBAT DINNER
FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 2011

6:30 PM

COVERED DISH

~FLEYSHIK~

Contact Erica @ (305) 853-1003
hippiejap@hotmail.com to reserve your spot and coordinate your covered dish.

VOLUNTARY DONATION @ $5
PREPAYMENT WELCOME
CHILDREN 12 AND UNDER @ NO CHARGE

Photo Gallery

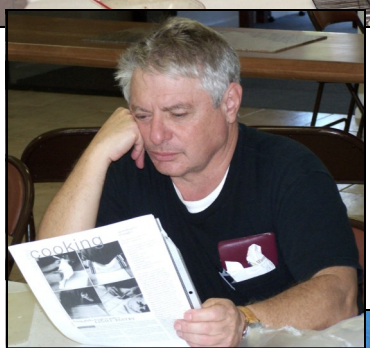
The top three photos are from the Pollack family Chanukah at son Roy and Vippi's house near Austin, Texas. In the photo top left are Maddy, Roy, Linda, Vippi and Will. Top right, Joel and Linda are joined by nephew David. The inset Chanukiyah was hand-made by Will.

Joyce Peckman rented a condo in Orlando and flew son Dan and his three children there for Chanukah. Which explains the two large smiling rodents in the picture above, along with Joyce, Dan, and grandchildren Michal, Eliana and Yosef. At right, lighting Chanukiyot with the children on the eighth night.

Some photos of the developing KJCC Meditation Garden, to show you its progress. Steve has begun to lay in the paths, which eventually will become brick. The Silver Buttonwoods along its outer borders are thriving. The path you see will culminate in a pergola to be sponsored and built by Alan and Candy.

The three photos at left were taken at the December 18th Havdalah at Joyce Peckman's house in Key Largo. A lot is going on in the center shot: Gloria is saying the blessing and about to pass around the sweet spice for everyone to savor, while Medina holds up her cell phone so her mom Bianka in Miami Beach can participate in the service.

The photo top right of Rene and Maryon was taken by Mary Lee at the Christmas party given by Voices for Florida Children on December 4th in Islamorada.



Georgia Landau often brings an apple strudel to potluck dinners that everyone raves about. So Sisterhood prevailed upon her to conduct a class at KJCC to teach others how to make it. Not being the hoarding sort, Georgia agreed, and the class took place on Sunday, December 12th at KJCC.

That's Georgia at the head of the table, explaining the fine points of wrapping the prepared apples. And what, you ask, was Bernie doing there? Did he take the class? No, he'd arranged with Georgia to buy the strudel she was making, but he did stay to kibbitz and expertly supervise the baking.

GET OUTTA TOWN

A fundraiser for the Keys Jewish Community Center

Tickets $100 each

Only 100 tickets will be sold.

Where else can you fly to an exciting weekend destination for $100?

Rules are simple. Buy a raffle ticket and when you win, you choose your destination from one of these four exciting weekend packages.

New York Long Weekend

Includes 3 nights at the Hilton New York, dinner at one of three premier restaurants, and a Broadway experience for two.

Sonoma, CA VIP Wine Experience

Includes lodging at the Fairmont Sonoma Inn & Spa and limousine service to a privately hosted tour of the Jacuzzi Family Winery.

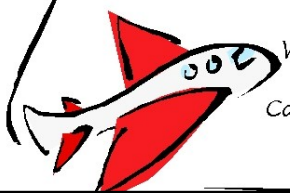
New Orleans Jazz & Dining Package

Includes 3 nights at the Renaissance Pere Marquette Hotel, VIP seats at Preservation Hall, and five-course dinner for two at Commander's Palace Restaurant.

Ultimate Sports Fan Getaway

Priority seats at your favorite MLB, NBA, NFL, NHL, PGA, or College Bowl Game. Deluxe accommodations with breakfast included.

All packages are for two and include air travel and lodging. Travel times and itineraries are flexible.



Winner to be drawn February 13, 2011

Call Stuart Sax @ 305-852-2353 or email SLJJSAX@aol.com

A KJCC Welcome to Tani

Dear Family and Friends,

It is with great pleasure that we share with you the news that our very first grandchild/grandson — Matanel Naim ben Doron David and Liati Natanya Mayk-Hai — having been born on the first day of Chanukah (at 7 lbs. 14 oz.), had his brit on the 8th day at the Jewish Theological Seminary Women's League Sanctuary in Manhattan.

Israel had the great honor and pleasure of being his sandak, and Nissan was the kvatter. Great Grandma Bea and Aunt Shyella opened the ceremony by lighting two candles to bring the baby's light (soul/neshama) into harmony with the light in the world. As Nissan walked into the sanctuary carrying Tani on a pillow, all the gathered family and friends sang "hee-nay ma-tov." During the actual "cutting," we all sang "eli-yahu ha-navi" as Israel sat high upon the carved Elijah HaNavi chair and the baby rested on a pillow in his lap.

Doron and Liati spoke beautifully (following the brit and prayers) about the history and meaning of their son's name and the achievements of the people he was named after: Saba Marty and Saba Naim. After the mishabeirach for Liati and the baby, the mohel covered the new family (mom, dad and baby) in Doron's wedding tallit and recited the priestly blessing. We all said "she-he-cheyanu" together and danced around the room as Liati and Doron left to take care of Tani. All are doing well except that Liati and Doron are both exhausted!

Love,
Israel and Nissan

CHANUKAH, OH CHANUKAH...

A reprise in text and photos of the December 3rd celebration at KJCC, from dinner to the children's play to services

by Gloria Avner

There are many miracles that take place on Chanukah at the KJCC, first of which is the production of a delicious, aesthetically beautiful dinner and the wondrous community turnout of members and friends young and old to enjoy it.

We all offer much gratitude to Linda and Joel Pollack for another year of generously sponsoring this event, to Erica Garrett for organizing it, and to all who decorated and cooked for this happy holiday feast. With so many faces returning from summers away, our Chanukah party feels like the beginning of "the season."

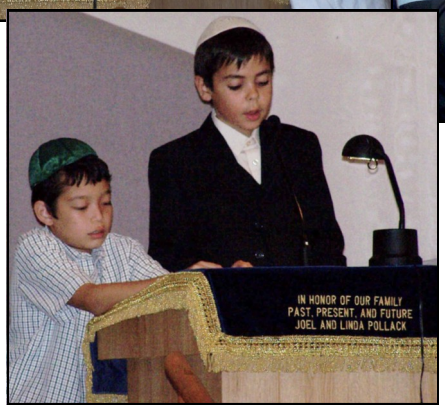
The second miracle was the rebirth of the ShabbaTones, our adult chorus, which sang *Maoz Tsur* and *Mi Yimalel* better than ever (especially the second time). Many thanks to Jules Seder for his organization, patience and pitch pipe.

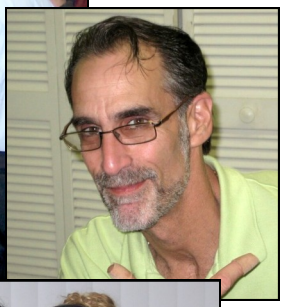
Third but not last, on this Shabbat Eve and third night of Chanukah, was the performance of our youngsters. With energy, humor, and enthusiasm they blessed candles, sang songs, told the story of the Maccabees (in a version inspired by and dedicated to the memory of recently departed Harriet Feder, mother of our own music man David Feder), and twirled like the dreidels they were (until some adults among us were a wee bit dizzy). Mikhaela Bitton, Lili and Natalie Werthamer, and Moira Knowles never stopped smiling, even when they eventually needed to sit down. Moira and Max Schrader-Grace made wonderful narrators, and we could not have asked for a more charismatic Judah, the "Boy who said NO," than Zach Schrader-

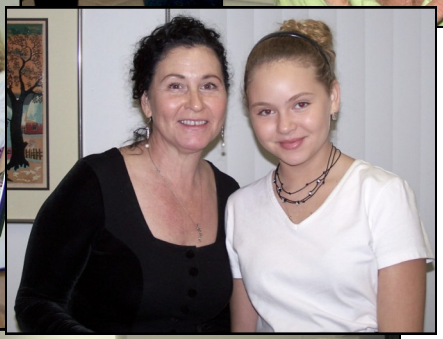
Grace. Harry Friedman, Noah Bitton, and Joshua Bernstein did a great job playing multiple roles from soldiers to King to brothers of Judah.

Most important, our young students (and Max the tutor) made a coherent presentation, not one child absent, while having fun, proving that Antiochus and all other would-be destroyers of the Jewish faith have not been successful. Jews have not assimilated. We still study Torah. We observe Shabbat. We relish our culture and our customs while we re-tell our stories. We instruct our young and pass on our values of *Tzedakah* and repairing the world – *Tikkun Olam*.

Teachers Gloria Avner and Yardena Kamely led the service after the play, calling on our students time and again to come up to the *bimah* and join in song. Even the youngest ran eagerly up the steps to take part. Both Bernie and Alan made wise and much appreciated observations in their talks from the *bimah* that night. Long story short (always a



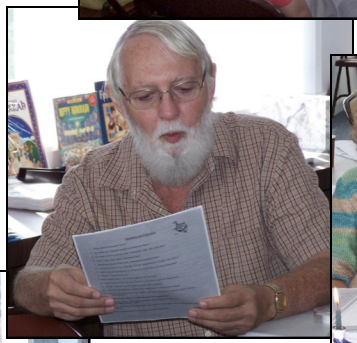




good thing), as long as the sound of excited young people enjoying themselves while observing centuries-old customs and ceremonies fills our sanctuary, as long as they read Hebrew and sing songs and shout out "NAYS GADOL HAYAH SHAM (A Great Miracle Happened There)," Judaism is alive and well in the Florida Keys. This is the real miracle. "NAYS GADOL HAYAH PO." (A Great Miracle Happened *Here!*) ◊

Chai-Lights sends its appreciation to Mary Lee Singer, who shot many of the Chanukah photos.

On Sunday the 5th, the KJCC Sunday School held its own Chanukah celebration. Teachers, parents and guests all participated in perhaps the most important mitzvah of all — to teach our children.



Stained Glass of KJCC

Part five of our closer look at the story behind the art.

We have three stained-glass sanctuary windows left to explore. The first one, closest to the sanctuary entrance, and directly across from the sword of Simeon, is the window of the Tribe of Levi.

At first glance the window's image seems strangely plain, a white rectangle with glazed panes amid the stark rays of nature's blue and green that also form the background of Simeon's window. But look carefully. It is not one white rectangle with dividers, but a set of twelve joined together as one, as if tiles set in a mosaic. From each side at the top extends a large-linked, golden chain. The image seemingly is designed to hang from something. It was. According to the Midrash, the Tribe of Levi adopted this replica of the Breastplate of Judgment, worn by the priests over their ephods, as their symbol. The only thing missing from our window are the twelve gemstones representing each of the twelve tribes.

KJCC's stained glass window of the Tribe of Levi.

Levi himself, the progenitor of the tribe, was the third son, after Reuben and Simeon, of Jacob with his first wife, Leah. (The Torah eventually got around to banning the marriage of one man to two sisters at the same time.) Like Simeon, to whom he is often linked, Levi is prominent in only two Torah stories. It was Levi who joined Simeon in blood-soaked revenge against Shechem, who they accused of defiling their sister Dinah. And, like Simeon, Levi was also said to have been an active plotter in the attempt to first kill and then later sell their brother Joseph into slavery.

But the true importance of Levi, both in the Bible and in Jewish history, was as an ancestor. Descendants of his changed, well, everything.

According to the Bible and masoretic texts, Levi had three sons: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. (Some texts speak of daughters, too, but bloodlines were then patrilinear, so only males typically get full mention. Ironically, though Judaism has long-since begun tracing lineage through its mothers, the lines of Kohanes and Levites, to this day, are traced through the father.) Kohath had four sons, one of whom, Amram, had three children of his own (some sources say with Jochebed, his father's sister). Those children were, in order, Miriam, Aaron and Moses. So Moses and Aaron, the Bible says, were both Levites, and the great-grandsons of Levi. (This doesn't seem to match up well with the four hundred years that elapsed between the time Joseph went to Egypt and Moses led them out, but let's not quibble. The Torah's about ideas, not math.)

After descending from Sinai with the first set of Ten Commandment tablets, a furious Moses discovers the existence of the golden calf and demands to know who among his people has shunned the idol and remained loyal to the God who delivered them from Egypt. It is his own tribe, the Levites, who gather before him. At Moses' instruction the Levites raise their swords to the idol worshippers, slaying some three thousand. From this moment forth they are separated from the other tribes.

The priesthood had once been envisioned as

drawing representatives from each of the tribes. But after Sinai only Levites are to be entrusted with the highest offices and the various duties surrounding them. Aaron and his sons, and their sons, will become the *Kohanim*, the priesthood, while other Levites will attend them and perform other, varied duties related to the service of God now considered too holy for other tribes to be entrusted with. It was the Levites who carried the Tabernacle throughout the remaining years in the desert, and were responsible for setting it up and taking it down, and guarding it. To assure that only men in their physical prime would handle the precious cargo, no Levite could assume their sacred duty until they were at least thirty years old. The job required not only reverence but also great focus and care: the penalty for mishandling any of the sacred components was death.

Levites carrying the Mishkan.

Levites were said to have been the builders of Solomon's Temple. Only they were allowed to sing the sacred music inside it, and play musical instruments there. They were also the Temple's gatekeepers, and its maintenance crew. They assisted the *Kohanim* during the performance of all priestly duties.

Levites were the only tribe to receive no territorial allotment in the land of Canaan. (They were also exempt from military service, and played no part in the conquest.) They were dispersed in forty-two cities – including the Cities of Refuge – scattered throughout all the other tribes' territories, inhabiting familiar names like Hebron, and Shechem, and Gezer, and Golan, to serve as spiritual teachers until a central sanctuary could be constructed. (It can be a little confusing that, even though the tribe of Levi had no land, there are still twelve tribes shown on maps in the land assigned them by Joshua. The answer is that two of the names that appear, those of Manasseh and Ephraim, were sons of Joseph, who himself is not listed.) Since they had no land of their own, the Levites were economically dependent on the other tribes, who were all expected to tithe local harvests – the *Maaser Rishon* – to support them and enable them to concentrate on their spiritual duties.

Chagall's stained glass Levite window in Jerusalem.

There is ongoing scholarly debate as to whether a tribe of Levi existed at all. Some, following the "J" documents, say the Levites did exist as a tribe. Others, following the "E" documents and texts, believe that "Levi" was but a general term for a priest, and that Moses and Aaron were of one of the tribes of Joseph.

What is not disputed is that, with the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., the Levites – the priests and their less exalted attendants – ceased to have a function, and with the rise of Rabbinic Judaism their positions and status quickly disappeared. What remains today are many variations of names stemming from Kohane or Levi, and a few ingrained synagogue courtesies such as calling Kohanes first for *aliyot* and on special occasions asking them to confer a priestly blessing, even though it has been nearly two millennia since there actually were Jewish priests. ◊

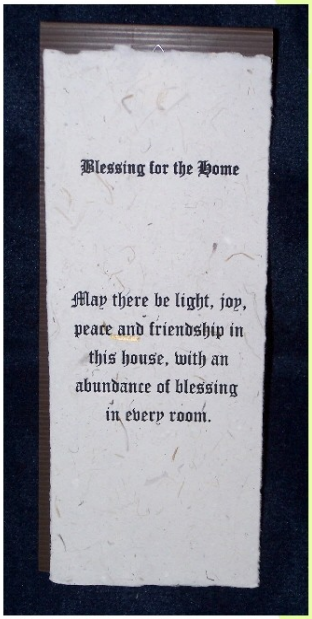
The Banner of Levi, with the twelve gems inset.

SHOP ISRAEL

Check your KJCC Gift Shop and buy Israel.

Multi-colored over-the-shoulder fabric purses and challah covers from Rifkas in the Old City of Jerusalem

Magnificent crystal mezuzahs designed by the artist Udi from the Blue and White gallery in the Cardo in the Old City of Jerusalem - Wonderful wedding gifts!



Also: Silver star necklaces with multi colored stones and hand made parchment note paper from Zickran Yaakov.

Beautiful talit and kepahs from Jaffa

Individual orders can be accommodated.

-This Month in Jewish History-

January

49 B.C.E. – Julius Caesar crosses the Rubicon, signaling the start of civil war against fellow triumvirate member Pompey, who had defiled the Holy of Holies, mocked the Jewish religion and shipped thousands of Jewish slaves to Rome. Once Caesar wins the war, he allows the walls of Jerusalem to be rebuilt, institutes a taxation system that takes the sabbatical year into consideration and makes it possible for Jews living in the Italian peninsula to form into communities. Romans of the time note the unusual grief displayed by Jews when Caesar is assassinated.

1180 – Philip Augustus, the new king of France, arrests large numbers of Jews while his father, Louis VII, a sometime protector of the Jews, is still alive. All Jews found in synagogue on the Sabbath are arrested. Philip agrees to free them, however, for 15,000 silver marks.

1232 – In London, The *Domus Conversorum* known in English as the House of the Converts, is founded by order of Henry III – a weak and extravagant grandson of the Lion Himself, Henry II, and son to King John of Robin Hood fame – to provide a home and free maintenance for Jews converting to Christianity.

1301 – Andrew III of Hungary dies, ending the Arpad dynasty in Hungary. As king, Andrew reverses the anti-Jewish practices of his predecessor, insists that Jews in Posonium (Bratislava) should enjoy all the liberties of citizens. Things go downhill for the Jews of Hungary after Andrew's death. They are expelled from the kingdom in 1349 under the belief (not restricted to Hungary) that Jews were responsible for the Black Death that wiped out a third of Europe.

1600 – The 400 Jews of Verona complete their synagogue after their move into the ghetto. The occasion is actually celebrated as a "Purim" until the 1789 French Revolution, since many feel that the ghetto provides some protection, and since in an unusual move the keys of the ghetto are given to the Jewish leaders.

1606 – The Governor of Puerto Rico reports that one-fifth of the white population of the island is Portuguese. Many of these "white" Portuguese are most likely *conversos*.

1625 – John Milton, author of "Paradise Lost," is admitted to Christ's College, Cambridge, at the age of 16. During Milton's lifetime, Jews are still officially not allowed to settle in the British Isles. But like many Puritans living in the England of Oliver Cromwell, Milton sees a connection between his brand of Christianity and the Israelites. Until his eyes weaken, he reads the Hebrew Bible on a daily basis and expresses a positive view of Mosaic Law. Milton also serves as a secretary to Oliver Cromwell and, according to one of his biographers, is part of the group who negotiates for the return of the Jews to England.

1706 – Benjamin Franklin – printer, publisher, scientist, author, statesmen and vital American – is born in Boston. Franklin sees the American Revolution as a replaying of the story of the Jewish Exodus from Egypt, and suggests that the Great Seal of America depict Moses standing on the shore of the Red Sea, while Pharaoh drowns in his chariot in its midst. When the Jewish community in Philadelphia builds their synagogue, "Mikveh Israel," Franklin contributes to the building fund. On July 4, 1788, too sick and weak to get out of bed, Franklin instructs that the Independence Day parade in Philadelphia include the clergy of different Christian denominations, "with the rabbi of the Jews,"

walking arm in arm.

1788 – Georgia becomes the fourth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution. A year later it becomes the third state to ban religious discrimination. The first Jewish families had arrived in Georgia in July of 1733. Two years before the ratification vote, the Jewish community of Savannah feels stable enough to reorganize Congregation Mikve Israel, elect officers and rent a house to be used as a synagogue.

1815 – General Andrew Jackson defeats the British at the Battle of New Orleans. At his side fight two Jews famous for very different reasons: Pirate Jean Lafitte, whose mother's Separdic family had fled the Inquisition, and Judah Touro, scion of the famed New England Touro family (the Touro Synagogue).

1836 – Mendele Mocher Sforim, "Mendele the bookseller," the pseudonym of Sholem Yakov Abramovich, Jewish author and one of the founders of modern Yiddish and Modern Hebrew literature, is born to a poor family in Kopyl, near Minsk. His first article, "Letter on Education", appears in a Hebrew newspaper, *Hamagid*, in 1857. Initially writing in Hebrew, coining many words in that language, he ultimately switches to Yiddish in order to expand his audience. Like Sholom Aleichem, he uses a pseudonym because of the perception at the time that as a ghetto vernacular, Yiddish is not suited to serious literary work. It is an idea he will do much to dispel.

1852 – Mt. Sinai Hospital is incorporated in New York City by Sampson Simson and eight associates. It is the first Jewish hospital in the United States.

1858 – Eliëzer Ben-Yehuda, the father of modern Hebrew, is born in Lithuania as Eliezer Yitzhak Perelman. His plan to restore Hebrew as a spoken language of Jews in Palestine is three-pronged: "Hebrew in the Home," "Hebrew in the School," and "Words, Words, Words." By the time of his death in 1922, Ben-Yehuda has almost single-handedly transformed Hebrew into a revitalized and thriving modern language.

1876 – Konrad Adenauer, the first post-war Chancellor of West Germany, is born. Imprisoned by the Nazis during World War II, Adenauer seeks to return Germany to the world community. To make amends to Jews everywhere, he offers war reparations to the government of Israel. Under Adenauer, Germany recognizes Israel and provides arms for her defense despite threats from Arab governments.

1887 – The Jewish Theological Seminary Association opens under the leadership of Rabbi Sabato Morais in New York. The idea is to train Rabbis who will help preserve Jewish traditions being eroded by the "reformers" and their Pittsburgh platform. In 1902 Solomon Schechter reorganizes the Seminary and changes the name to JTS, or the Jewish Theological Seminary. It becomes the central foundation for the Conservative Movement, a role it still plays today.

1895 – Theodor Herzl writes of personally witnessing Capt. Alfred Dreyfus being "drummed out of the army in the courtyard of the [French] Ecole Militaire as huge crowds outside shout 'Death to the Jews!'"

1908 – Abraham Goldfaden dies at the age of 67. Born in 1840 in part of the Russian Empire, Golfaden is a driving force in the Yiddish theatre during its golden period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as author, composer (yes, there were musicals), director and producer. One of his early comedies is called *Shmendrik*, whose title-hero is the proverbial gullible, good-natured schlemiel. The play is so popular that the word Shmendrik becomes part of the Yiddish language and survives today in American slang. Goldfaden is so famous at the time of his death that he rates an obituary in the New York Times referring to him as "the Yiddish Shakespeare." Some 75,000 people attend his funeral procession from the People's Theater in the Bowery to Washington Cemetery in Brooklyn. ◇

David Gitin
Author in the House

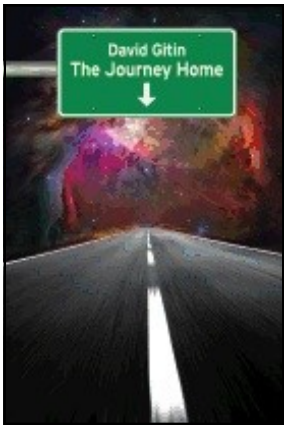
by Gloria Avner

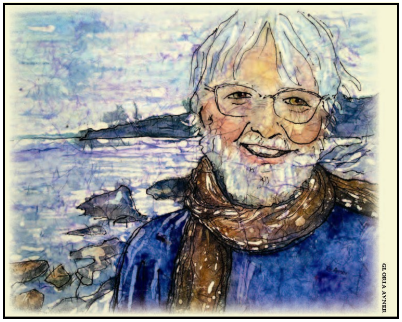
The year just past, 2010, was a big year for David Gitin. For one thing, he joined a *shul* (ours). For another, he moved 3,000 miles from California to the Keys to live with a girl he met more than a half-century ago at Hebrew-speaking Camp Massad in Northern Ontario. For a third (good things come in threes), his *tenth* book of poetry was just published December first, the last poem written less than six months ago while he looked out a kitchen window in Bar Harbor, Maine. It has been quite a journey.

And that is the name of his new book: "The Journey Home," Poems: 1962-2010.

To us, David is a presence with deep voice and rabbinic beard (he actually does come from a long line of rabbis. Uncle Joe Gitin, chief rabbi for generations at Temple Emmanuel in San Jose, was until a few months ago the oldest living Reform Rabbi in America. He died at 104. David's grandfather, Samuel Gitin, was an Orthodox Rabbi in Buffalo, talked about for many pages in Selig Adler's book on the Diaspora, "From Ararat to Suburbia." We also know David takes good photos for Chai-Lights, is a font of knowledge about music and film, and helps teach our kids at Religious School every Sunday.

The front cover of David's latest book.





Gloria's beautiful portrait of David was painted in Maine.

"The Journey Home" has received rave reviews: *"The world in Gitin's poems is astonishing, layered with multiple suggestions and significances, fleeting and awesome. His deceptively simple seeming technique is built out of shrewd connections among contexts."* Curtis Faville, in *"Compass Rose."*

Dialogue

East West North South
burning down the house

until water from the well
seasoned my lips

to words that mend
I see the face

of my ancestor
once again

(Reviews and more information about David's books and readings can be found at www.davidgitin.com.)

Now we are learning about the national reputation of his poetry. Allen Ginsberg called David's work "commonsense appreciation of minute particulars, perhaps the clearest sort of writing anyone can do." Robert Creeley said "David Gitin's an old-time serious poet, with a happily light touch. Dance to the music!" Now we can dance and read. The book is in our gift shop: a percentage of all sales will be donated to the KJCC. David will happily sign copies.

There is a bonus for KJCC members in this book. Most books have a photograph of the author on the back. This one has a painting, "Portrait of a Poet." It is a batik painting, created this summer by, um, me, the long-lost "girl" with whom David has re-united. The last section of the book celebrates love. ◊

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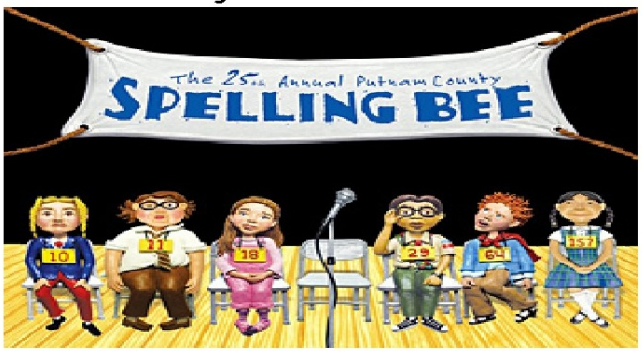

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Mah Nishtanah Ha New Year *Hazeh?*

by Gloria Avner

Why is this New Year different from other New Years?

Here is a hint: in one culture other than our own, there would be a Sadie Hawkins dance. That's right. In addition to Judaism observing four special New Years in every single year (that's in addition to the secular one we're now celebrating), Jews observe more leap years than almost any other culture. In fact we make seven "leaps" in every nineteen years. The 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th years are leap years in this cycle.

We are also one of the very few cultures (including the Chinese, Hindu, and Persian) to add "leap months" to compensate for astronomical differences. Our calendar (which has many technical names and rules I will spare you), in addition to being used to set *yahrzeits*, *rosh chodesh*, new moon dates, and *Parasha* readings, uses both solar and lunar time-marking systems to insure that we celebrate our core rituals in proper season.

We as a people have always paid heed to both solar and lunar cycles. It's about time. We watch the stars too, as anyone who has attended one of our short, sweet Havdalah services knows. (You have to love a religion that does not put a specific number on the hours necessary to call a day a day. It is enough for us that the day begins and ends at sundown). We honor our weekdays by naming them solely after their relation to the days of Creation and cessation/rest. (Friday, for example, is *Yom HaShiShi* in Hebrew – the sixth day.) We continue to be tied to our agrarian-based earth-honoring origins while remaining in tune with the secular world, a necessity in a world where governments throughout history have required the timely payment of all kinds of taxes.

Hillel and his fellow scholars were so smart (credit given in the *Mishnah*). Over all these hundreds of years, their codified system has never needed more than a few seconds adjustment.

Here's how it works, in simplified form: Most years, we have twelve months, six with 29 days and six with 30. Accordingly, a non-leap year consists of 354 days. Whoops, that's eleven short of the Gregorian calendar around which the secular world and our date books revolve. What do we do so that we don't get hopelessly behind? We can't celebrate *Pesach* in November or *Rosh HaShanah* in June. We know that our rituals are tied to earth's seasons and cycles.

This is what we do:

Right now, after the month of *Sh'vat* and the upcoming lovely celebration of "The New Year of the Trees" (don't miss our students' favorite ritual, adding to our orchard on *Tu B'Shvat*), we will be approximately thirty days behind. At the end of *Sh'vat*, we add an extra month of either 29 or thirty days (depending on which is necessary in order to avoid any fast day occurring the day after or before Shabbat--intelligently avoiding the problem of not being able to cook a meal before or after fasting). We call this extra month *Adar 1*. It is followed by our regular month of *Adar*. All is then in place for us to be in harmony with the energy of the seasons as they relate to our ritual cycles and holy days (until it is time for the next "leap").

A leap year is referred to in Hebrew as *Shanah Me'uberet*, a pregnant year. According to Jewish tradition, *Adar* is a lucky and happy month. May this leap month and year be pregnant with all kinds of possibilities for you, your family, and our worldwide community. May it give birth to good fortune, good health, creativity, and continued supportive, warm community life among our KJCC *mishpachah.* ◊

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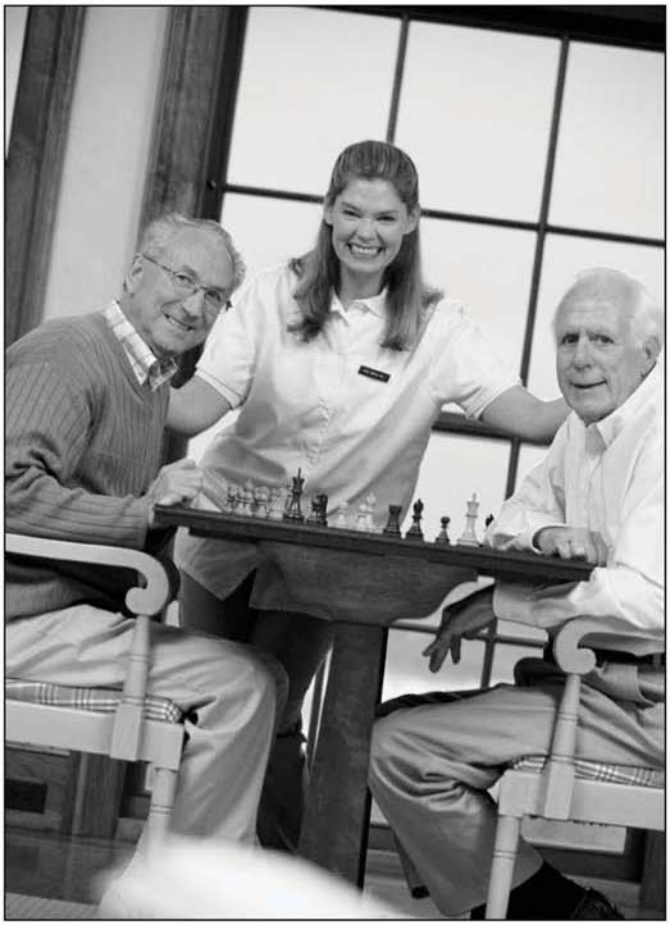

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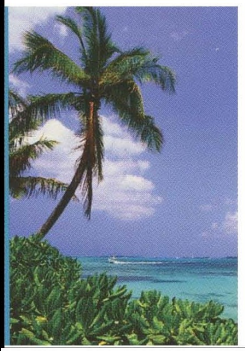

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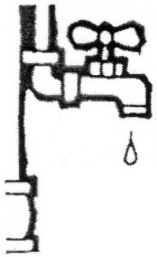

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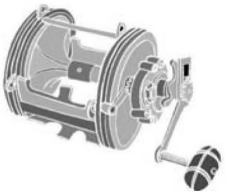

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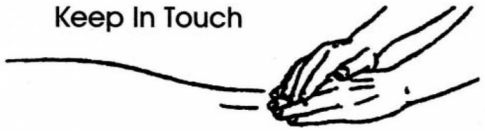

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