

Chai~Lights



April 2011

26 Adar II - 26 Nisan 5771

Deli Nite Recap - page 20

Safe Haven in the U.S. During World War II - page 26

The Music of Pesach - page 29

Keys Jewish Community Center

P.O. Box 1332 • Tavernier, FL 33070 • 305-852-5235 • keysjewishcenter.com

April 2011

26 Adar II - 26 Nisan

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Joyce Peckman <i>Nettie & Jules Seder</i>	2
Names denote leaders of Friday services. <i>Italicized</i> names are Oneg sponsors. KJCC conducts services every Friday.						
3 Sisterhood Meeting 9:00 a.m. Jewish Heritage Day	4 8th Annual Women's Seder 5:30 p.m. at KJCC	5	6 Men's Club Meeting & Poker Night at KJCC, 7:30 p.m.	7	8 George Swartz & Yardena Kamely <i>Elaine & Bernie</i>	9 Men's Club Movie Night at KJCC 7:00 p.m.
10 KJCC Board Meeting 9:00 a.m.	11	12	13	14	15 Stuart Sax <i>Pat & David Van Artsdalen Lauren &</i>	16
17 Search for Chometz (evening)	18 Burning of Chometz (morning) Erev Pesach First Seder	19 First Day of Passover; KJCC Second Seder eve. 6:30 p.m.	20	21	22 Jim Boruszak & Gloria Avner	23
24 KJCC "Chai-yaking" with Dave Mont	25	26 Eighth Day of Passover	27	28	29 Alan Beth 6:30 Service Yizkor service	30 Note: tomorrow, May 1st, is Yom HaShoah; PowerPoint presentation by Steve Smith at KJCC

2011 - 2012 Officers and Board

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Editor

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P.O. Box 1332
Tavernier, Florida 33070
chailights@keysjewishcenter.com

President's Message Stuart Sax



First of all, I am still picking remnants of my corned beef sandwich from my teeth following our recent Authentic Deli Nite event. It took me back to my childhood days at the Shoreline Delicatessen on 71st Street on the south side of Chicago. We cannot give thanks enough to Erica, Georgia, Kathy, Patti, Leslie, Roberta, Joan S. and master-slicer Marc for an incredible meal and wonderful evening of entertainment and reminiscing.

Our Men's Club is planning a wonderful series of events over the coming months. Some will be one-shot events and others will happen monthly – Poker Night, Movie Nite and “Chai-Yaking.” As with the women in Sisterhood, every male member of our congregation is automatically a member of the Men's Club.

I am appreciating more and more the level of love and involvement of the people in our congregation. From special dinners to the evolution of our new Meditation Garden and gazebo to new faces on the bima participating in services, ours is a congregation that is moving forward and embracing a broad spectrum of exciting events. Many thanks to Gloria and Susan for our religious and Sunday school offerings, to Yardena for continuing to bring the Jewish story to our multi-

denominational community, to Sisterhood for planning and executing meals and onegs with precision, to a growing Men's Club that is quickly boarding the “fun” and fundraising train, and to each member of this unique congregation for embracing all of the above.

Recently, the KJCC was invited to join a newly formed Interfaith Dialog Group, intended to bring various denominations together for a common purpose – to support each other's religious faiths and share calendars for the benefit of all. Gloria Avner and David Gitin have joined me in representing our congregation in this most worthwhile undertaking. Our first interaction was in January with the annual Blessing of the Fleet, and will continue with the upcoming revisit of the Tibetan monks later this month.

If there is a down side to what we are doing, it's that there remain many Jews in our community who are unaffiliated with our synagogue and have never experienced what we have to offer. Every member of the KJCC is on the membership committee. If you have a friend or a neighbor who is Jewish, invite them to attend a service and stay for the oneg. As they say, “Try it, you'll like it.” ♦ Chai-Lights April 2011 3

Nosh

Our New Online Calendar

Alan Beth, still the KJCC tech wizard, has lately been re-designing the KJCC web site. He has created a new, very user-friendly calendar where, at a glance, you can see all of KJCC's myriad of activities for the current month. Merely lay your mouse over a colorful tab and the full story of an event bursts into view over the calendar grid. The great part of an online calendar is that it can be updated regularly.

If you have something you think should go in the new KJCC calendar, contact Stuart Sax at his KJCC e-mail, president@keysjewishcenter.com. At least for now, we ask that all information go through Stuart.

Two Upcoming Yom HaShoah Events

Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, will be commemorated on May 1st this year. On April 29th, Yardená will offer some thoughts as part of the Friday service. Then on Sunday, May 1st, Steve Smith will honor KJCC with a Power-Point presentation he wrote and produced, about the role of doctors in the Holocaust. (Some portions may not be suitable for children.)

Looking for a First Seder to Attend?

KJCC members Aaron and Judy Schmidt of Ocean Reef have written Stuart to say that anyone looking for a place to celebrate the First Seder is welcome to contact them, phone 305-367-2565, or e-mail packagehse@aol.com.

Oneg Sponsors for April 2011

April 1st—Nettie & Jules Seder for their 45th Anniversary.

April 8th—Elaine & Bernie Solas in honor of the marriage of Amy Solas & Richard Klein

April 15th—Pat & David Van Artsdalen for Dave's birthday, and Lauren & Stuart Sax for Lauren's birthday.

We're Looking for Tee Shirt Ideas

Both Dave Mont, our new KJCC Membership Chair, and Susan and Roberta, the new doyens of the Gift Shop, would like to create a KJCC signature tee shirt to both give to new members and sell in the Gift Shop. If you have any ideas for slogans or designs, please send them to Stuart at president@keysjewishcenter.com.

April Anniversaries

	Years
3rd	Jules & Nettie Seder.....45
7th	Salomon & Mary Terner.....18
10th	Stuart & Geri Smith.....46
18th	Rick & Roberta McNew.....30
30th	Morton & Gene Silverman.....56



To raise funds for KJCC, Mort Silverman has generously offered his custom-built 50-footer for intimate fishing trips. The cost is only \$100 per person (and it's tax deductible), maximum of five people per day trip, with Mort providing chum and bait. All funds raised will be donated to KJCC. Contact Stuart Sax, president@keysjewishcenter.com to sign up.

The KJCC extends its deepest condolences to

Barney and Ellen Coltman

on the death of their daughter

Eve Greenstein

April Birthdays

3rd.....	Claire Cooper	17th.....	Katie Greenman
3rd.....	Harvey Kay	18th.....	Jennifer Garrett
3rd.....	Jonathon Lever	18th.....	Lauren Sax
3rd.....	Lauren Abrams	20th.....	Jonathan Nobil
4th.....	Larry Weber	20th.....	Larry Gilderman
4th.....	Lauren Lane	21st.....	Susan Temkin
6th.....	Faychesca Graham	22nd.....	Robin S. Denker
7th.....	Harvey Schwaid	24th.....	Lynn Nobil
9th.....	David Feder	24th.....	Susan Gordon
9th.....	Gene Silverman	24th.....	Tiffany McNew
10th.....	Abigail Everson	25th.....	Jared Scott Gershowitz
10th.....	Addison Greene-Barnett	25th.....	Samantha Schenker
10th.....	Ilese Vorcheimer	25th.....	Shirley Stein
11th.....	Max Logan Gershowitz	26th.....	Maryann Boruszak
12th.....	Richard Knowles	27th.....	Aaron Schmidt
13th.....	Moira Knowles	27th.....	Beverly Robins
13th.....	Samantha Grossinger	27th.....	Elinor Grossman
14th.....	Timothy J. O'Connor	29th.....	David Goldfinger
16th.....	Dave VanArtsdalen	29th.....	Jordan Neidenberg
16th.....	Ella Gilderman	29th.....	Linda Pollack
17th.....	Susan Ellner	30th.....	Rachel Barrett
		30th.....	Jason Sherman

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, 305-852-3959.

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, 305-852-0214.

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, 305-852-0833.

Oneg Shabbat Sponsor – To schedule your special date with Sisterhood, call Joyce Peckman, 305-451-0665.

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, 305-394-0143.

KJCC Tree of Life Leaves and Rocks, Sanctuary Seat Plates, Yahrzeit Memorial Plaques, Bookplates for Siddurim – Call Carol Steinbock to arrange your donation, 305-852-6152.

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, 305-852-4353.

Chai-Lights Mitzvah – Place a greeting or notice in Chai-Lights. Call Carol Steinbock, 305-852-6152 to make your donation.

Advertisement In Chai-Lights or Directory – Your business ad will appear in every issue of Chai-Lights and/or annually in the Directory. Call Gene Silverman 305-664-3316 for 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 General Fund.

KJCC Annual Passover Second Seder



Tuesday, April 19, 2011

6:30 pm

Islamorada Fishing Club

Contact Leslie Dillon at 305-853-2693,
222law@gmail.com, for information and reservations.

Mail your check to KJCC Sisterhood at PO Box 116,
Tavemier, FL 33070.

Your check is your reservation. Reserve early as we will
be opening this up to the public after April 1st.

PASSOVER

Adults \$50

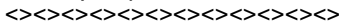
Children 12 and under are our guests.

In Memoriam April 2011

In Memory Of

Bozsi Schon Grunhut

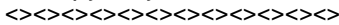
By Stephan & Eva Ban



In Memory Of

Baruch Epstein

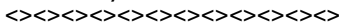
By Jim & Joan Boruszak



In Memory Of

Marty Graham

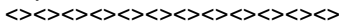
By Bea Graham



In Memory Of

Harry Grossman

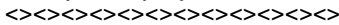
By Herbert & Elinor Grossman



In Memory Of

Nathan Klein

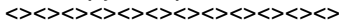
By Harvey & Judith Klein



In Memory Of

George Nobil

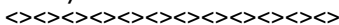
By Jim & Lynn Nobil



In Memory Of

Rabbi Milton Greenwald

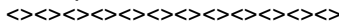
By Paul & Susan Roberts



In Memory Of

Clara Bloom

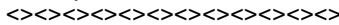
By Marc & Ellen Bloom



In Memory Of

Mark Hitzig

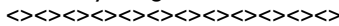
By Wes & Rita Conklin



In Memory Of

Lawrence Gross

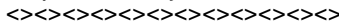
By Margaret Gross



In Memory Of

Sylvia Grossman

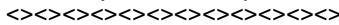
By Kenneth & Jerri Grossman



In Memory Of

Fred Klimpl

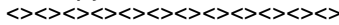
By Michael Klimpl



In Memory Of

Erwin Moss

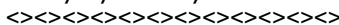
By Joel & Linda Pollack



In Memory Of

Herman Rubin

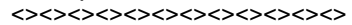
By Myron & Myrna Rubin



In Memory Of

Nat Feldblum

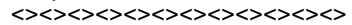
By Marc & Ellen Bloom



In Memory Of

Frances Wolfe

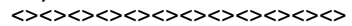
By Michael & Suzanne Gilson



In Memory Of

Belle Scaller

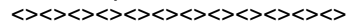
By Herbert & Elinor Grossman



In Memory Of

Stella Hartz

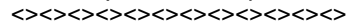
By Steven Hartz



In Memory Of

Marilyn Janet Barr

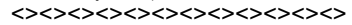
By Michael Klimpl



In Memory Of

Benjamin A. Savage

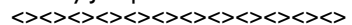
By Marjorie Present



In Memory Of

Louise Folks Baker

By Joseph & Susan Sachs

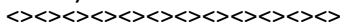


In Memoriam April 2011

In Memory Of

Sam Sax

By Stuart & Lauren Sax



In Memory Of

Ginger Lewis

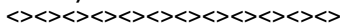
By Robert Silk



In Memory Of

Claire Smith

By Stuart & Geri Smith



In Memory Of

Benjamin Turner

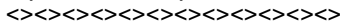
By Salomon & Mary Turner



In Memory Of

Donald Rich

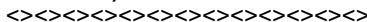
By Morris & Evelyn Zalmanovich



In Memory Of

Warren J. Sheinker

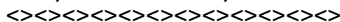
By Miltra Sheinker



In Memory Of

David Wernicoff

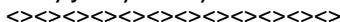
By Donald & Nancy Zinner



In Memory Of

Dolores Feldman

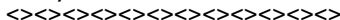
By Jeffrey & Patty Schocket



In Memory Of

Louis S. Smith

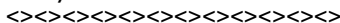
By Steven & Barbara Smith



In Memory Of

Cantor Alex Chapin

By Steven & Barbara Smith



In Memory Of

Luis Turner

By Salomon & Mary Turner



In Memory Of

Irwin Cutler

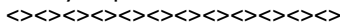
By Donald & Nancy Zinner



In Memory Of

Ida Tallent

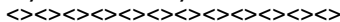
By Ralph & Lillian Tallent



In Memory Of

Samuel Zalmanovich

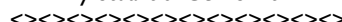
By Morris & Evelyn Zalmanovich



In Memory Of

Morris Smith

By Stuart & Geri Smith



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.



Check your KJCC Gift Shop and buy Israel.

30% OFF
Selected Items



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!



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



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



Blessing for the Home

May there be light, joy,
peace and friendship in
this house, with an
abundance of blessing
in every room.



Beautiful talit and kepehs from Jaffa

Individual orders can be accommodated.

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.

<i>Chai-Lights</i> Arthur Plutzer	<i>In Honor of</i> Pauline Roller Joel & Linda Pollack	<i>Oneg Fund Sponsors Cont.</i> Schur, Lee Solas, Bernard & Elaine Steinbock, Steve & Carol Wolfe, Larry & Dorothy	<i>In Honor of</i> Lee's birthday marriage of Amy Solas & Richard Klein Steve & Carol's birthdays & anniversary Larry's birthday
<i>General Fund</i> Fleischer, Adi & Linda Janowitz, Sam & Leslie Pollack, Joel & Linda Pollack, Joel & Linda Sachs, Joseph & Susan Sax, Stuart & Lauren	<i>In Honor of</i> Stu & Lauren Sax's presidencies Sewer project Gerri & Frank Emkey's new house Stan Margulies' speedy recovery Sewer project in appreciation of our good fortune Get well wishes to Jerry Hirsch, Stan Margulies, Beth Hayden	<i>Raffle</i> Bloom, Marc Ginsberg, Bernie Gross, David & Patti Hayden, Beth Hermann, Robert Hirsch, Jerry Kamely, Uri Krauer, Artie & Lee Liebowitz, Sandy Mont, Dave & Georgia Landau Nelson, Theodore Silverman, Mort & Gene Stanlake, Candy Tabasky, Suzanne Wasser, Mark & Sofy Willner, Arthur Lee & Johanna Wretzky, Gerald	
Schur, Lee Shutan, Alvina Solas, Bernard & Elaine Tobin, Andy Wohl, Milton & Joan	Lee's Chai year as a Member Stu Sax's presidency Sewer project Sewer project		
<i>General Fund</i> Kominsky, Randy & Eileen Pollack, Joel & Linda Pollack, Joel & Linda Sachs, Joseph & Susan	<i>In Memory of</i> Layne Shapiro's uncle Jimmy Gordon Eve Greenstein Doratheia Morris	<i>Scholarship Fund</i> Peckman, Joyce	<i>In honor of</i> Eve Greenstein
<i>JNF Certificates Sent By</i> Boruszak, Jim & Joan	<i>In Memory of</i> Lois Behm	<i>Yartzeit Contributions</i> Geller, Milton & Claire Isenberg, Henry & Patricia Lippman, Lillian Olsen, Jerry & Sheila Steinberg, Richard & Sheila	<i>In Memory of</i> Morris & Anna Shore Harry Phillips Jennie Lippman Louis Weinstein Sara Cohen
<i>Meditation Garden</i> Schur, Lee	<i>In Memory of</i> Robert E. Schur		
<i>Oneg Fund Sponsors</i> Friedman, Steve, Jane & Harry Lewis, Phil & Arlene	<i>In Honor of</i> Steve, Jane & Harry's birthdays Thank you to the KJCC for the warm welcome Jim's birthday		
Nobil, Jim & Lynn			

Sisterhood Lauren Sax



Another month, another deadline. For those of you who don't know me very well, I definitely *do not* have the gift of gab my husband constantly displays in his writings. I can see down the road that I may struggle to write the interesting column you deserve. However, this month was an *aha!* month. I have decided that I have finally become my mother!

When I think back to the time of my mother's Sisterhood presidency, I realize her entire term was spent on the telephone. Not just any telephone, but a telephone with an extra long cord so she could simultaneously fix our meals, do the laundry or, as we say now, "multi-task." In fact, she was on the telephone so much that the busy signal became a way of life whenever any one of us tried calling home. Consequently, the phone company gladly installed a second line so my father could call home when he was away on business!

Then there's me. The 2011 version of my mother. After settling down at the computer to SKYPE with our daughter, imagine my dismay and embarrassment when the telephone interrupts us not once, not twice, but three times! I also remember my father complaining about my mother being the first one in the temple and the last one out. Well...need I explain any more? But when I look at my 90-year-old mom and all that she has accomplished, her fabulous outlook and her zest for life, it's not so bad to emulate her – actually, I am rather proud of it.

Sisterhood continues with its (very) busy season via telephone and e-mails. What a pleasure it was to have the amazing Miami Acting Company in our own backyard! Their production of *Chicago!* was absolutely amazing. Many thank-yous to Linda Pollack for ordering the tickets and coordinating the evening. And I would be remiss if I didn't also thank Linda for all the creative flyers she

whips up at a moment's notice to publicize our many events.

Somehow we all got up the next morning to be at the KJCC for the annual Purim Festival. Afterwards, Erica worked her magic again and we all feasted on a wonderful potluck lunch. Thanks so much to all who cooked and baked.

Our "Chai Tea" was a premier event plus a real treat for us ladies. Much applause and many accolades to Kathy Shabathai for a lovely afternoon and for her scrumptious goodies. Thank you to all who attended.

It's hard to believe, but our April 3rd meeting is the last scheduled Sisterhood meeting of the year. Our meeting will begin at 9 a.m. to accommodate those who want to attend the Jewish Heritage Day baseball game that afternoon with Men's Club.

Pretty soon our snowbirds will be leaving, which means fewer people to help with our Onegs. We could use sponsors, bakers, shoppers or even helpers in the kitchen on Friday evenings. If you think you could help with any of these things, please contact me or Georgia Landau to volunteer. The more people who help, the less we each have to do.

Don't forget to check out the wonderful and very helpful calendar Alan Beth created for Sisterhood on the KJCC website. It has all the current and future dates of our various activities so that you can plan your own calendar accordingly.

Our end-of-the-year luncheon will take place on Sunday, May 1st at a location yet to be determined. This is strictly a social event; we will not have a meeting. All KJCC women are invited as well as our KJCC Teaching Staff. Separate checks will be given. Please R.S.V.P. by April 25th to me – mrsdirtdevil@aol.com. ♦

Keys Jewish Community Center

MEN'S CLUB

Monthly Meeting &

POKER NIGHT

The best combination since peanut butter and jalapenos!

FIRST WEDNESDAY EVERY MONTH

7:30 PM AT THE KJCC

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

April 6, May 4, June 1, July 6, Aug 3, Sep 7

ALL KJCC MEN ARE AUTOMATICALLY MEMBERS

ALL WOMEN ARE INVITED

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

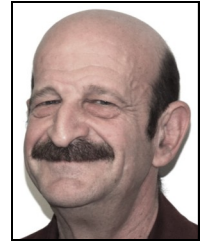
Light Snacks (Potluck)

Refreshments

Worst Player Prize!

FUN AND EXCITEMENT FOR ALL!

Men's Club Steve Friedman



As you know, due to the costs of our upcoming sewer connection, the KJCC has recently been more active than usual in some very needed fundraising (that's "Fund" with a "d") activities. The bad news is, the necessity for this. The good news is, that these activities have been an overwhelming success. I am still full from Deli Night! Every gathering has been a well-orchestrated and top-notch event. Erica, the Sisterhood, and the untiring labor of so many of our congregation have not only rallied to satisfy this costly need, but used the occasion to create a quality social opportunity which we all enjoyed and will fondly remember. Erica, the Sisterhood, and the many member volunteers who expend their time, labor, skills, and monetary efforts to support these endeavors cannot be thanked enough. Their results have indeed been impressive!

That said, and in all honesty, I do not believe anything the Men's Club will do, could come near to approaching the accomplishments of the others I have lauded. Therefore, the primary focus of the Men's Club for this year will simply be "Fun Raising" (that's "Fun" without a "d") activities. Hopefully, we can augment the "fun" factor here at the KJCC.

Here are some of the upcoming Men's Club events for April (*mark your calendars*):

- April 3rd, Sun., 10:30 a.m., meet at the KJCC – *Marlins Baseball* (an annual event, Jewish Heritage Day);
- April 6th, Wed., 7:30 p.m., at the KJCC – *Poker Night* (the first Wednesday every month);
- April 9th, Sat., 7:00 p.m., at the KJCC – *Movie Night* (the second Saturday every month);
- April 24th, Sun., 1:00 p.m., location t.b.a. – Chai-yakking with Dave Mont (usually planned to be the fourth Saturday every month...this Sunday is a one-time thing).

Our monthly Poker nights feature stakes

of nickels, dimes, and quarters, plus potluck snacks, refreshments, and lots of fun. Our new, monthly movie nights will show one film, either a drama, comedy, or action. Popcorn, pretzels, pickles, and sodas are provided. Chai-yakking (kayaking, for the Yiddish-impaired) can be with your kayak or one of Dave's; launching areas will vary. Bring sunscreen.

For more information, contact: Steve Friedman, sfried@ix.netcom.com, 305.720.1681 (for Marlins, Poker, and Movie Nights); Dave Mont, moogoodave@yahoo.com, 305-393-9883 (for Chai-yakking).

Later this year and other possible events are:

- Picnics and Barbeques;
- Stick Ball Game and Picnic (early September);
- Dance Night;
- Fishing Trips;
- Karaoke Night;
- Most importantly, everyone is encouraged to offer other suggestions; please let us know! By the way, and to clarify (just in case)...

ALL men of the KJCC are automatically members of the "Men's Club" (no dues or fees).

I apologize for the name "Men's Club," but there are NO gender restrictions; it's just a name!

All women are welcome (and many are regulars) at Men's Club events.

All Men's Club events are for the entirety of the KJCC.

Our events are open to *everyone*. That means bring yourself, family members, and friends, too! (A Men's Club event is the perfect opportunity to introduce a prospective new member to the KJCC!)

So look at what's offered monthly, mark your calendar, and *come on out* to a KJCC ("Men's Club") event, relax, have fun, and enjoy! ♠

A Passover Project in Clay

by Joyce Peckman

Each year we look forward to spending a few hours under Beth's gentle tutelage, engaged in creation with clay. Each year a different project is named: goblet, soup bowl, plate, covered dish. This year we aimed for a Miriam's cup – a vessel to contain water, symbolizing the water that flowed from a well that appeared during Miriam's lifetime, wherever the wandering tribes camped in the wilderness.

As in much of life, it's a lot more about the experience than about the end product: the lovely open air workshop, the camaraderie, Beth's soft encouragement as everyone focuses on trying to form a lump of earth into something of beauty. It takes imagination, good hands and a lot of patience. The clay does not readily roll into a smooth coil. It can't be too wet, or too dry. It must be worked, smoothed, built up, smoothed again. We encourage each other.

Beth is in constant motion, helping everyone.

My coils seem to want to take a shape different from the vision in my mind. Finally, a compromise is reached, and a satisfactory form created. Some are outstanding: Suzi's goblet, Jane's delicate leafed bowl, Lee's textured tumbler. But we all leave smiling, having created something.

Two weeks later we return to finish the pottery. To give us some idea of possibilities, Beth shows us the different colors and textures of her beautiful work. We relearn about wax, slips and glazes, and how one

can never be exactly sure how the colors will react in the firing. We choose color combinations; we dip and paint, and leave them with Beth to be fired. Since the slips and glazes look nothing like the final

colors, we will anxiously await the evening of the Women's Seder, when Beth will present us all with our finished projects. ♦



A Chai-Lights thanks to Susan Gordon, who was also there, for the photos.

World Jewish Report

Medina Roy



Hebraic Harmonizers

On college campuses across the country, a growing number of Jewish *a cappella* harmonizers are sprouting like weeds. The groups are touring and putting out CDs and it's no longer just for college auditoriums. The group *Six13* (613 mitzvot?) has sung "God Bless America" at five Mets games during the seventh-inning stretch, and the *Mac-cabeats*, an all-male Modern Orthodox group at Yeshiva University, had more than four million YouTube hits around Chanukah after recording their music video "Candlelight." Mike Boxer, director of *Six13*, estimates that today there are about 40 such Jewish groups. *Pizmon* is believed to have been the first collegiate Jewish-American *a cappella* group, formed in 1978. The group now has its ninth CD out. Boxer is leading the way to popularize the medium. His production company, Halfway Coherent Productions, provides musical services, plans events and produces the *KolCast*, a music and news roundup of the Jewish *a cappella* scene. Jewish *a cappella* groups incorporate many types of music, including Yiddish tunes, hip-hop and Israeli rock hits, and are quite inventive when it comes to giving themselves names: There's the *MeshugaNotes*, the *Mazal Tones* and *Honorable Menschen*. (*The Forward*, 2-16-11)

A Long Overdue Memorial

A campaign to memorialize thirteen fallen Jewish military chaplains with a monument in Arlington National Cemetery may soon become a reality. Senator Charles Schumer (D-New York) and House members Anthony Weiner (D-New York) and Tom Rooney (R-Florida) have sponsored a Congressional resolution to honor the memory of the Jewish chaplains in the same way fallen chaplains of other faiths have been honored at Arlington.

"Chaplains Hill in Arlington National Cemetery appropriately memorializes the names of 242 chaplains who perished while on active duty," said Cheryl Fishbein, of the Jewish Federations of North America. "But astonishingly, none of the thirteen Jewish chaplains who have died while serving are honored on Chaplains Hill."

Chaplains Hill currently houses three monuments honoring chaplains of other faiths. The monument to the Jewish chaplains had hit a snag when organizers discovered this past November that Arlington's previous superintendent failed to mention that congressional approval for all new memorials is required. Among the Jewish thirteen is Rabbi Alexander Goode, one of four chaplains who relinquished their life jackets to soldiers in 1943 when the USS *Dorchester* was sunk by German torpedoes. The four chaplains, arm-in-arm, went down together in prayer. (www.washingtonjewishweek.com, 2-16-11)

It Possibly Saved Gabby's Life

An invention by Bernard Bar-Natan, an American immigrant to Israel, may have helped save the life of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords when she was shot on January 8th. First responders credited what they are calling the "Israeli Bandage" with saving lives in the aftermath of the shooting in Tucson, Arizona, that left six people dead and thirteen wounded. Less than a year ago, Pima County – which includes Tucson – switched to the upgraded emergency bandage. The shooting was its first major field test. It is likely, though not certain, that the Israeli bandage was applied to Giffords.

The bandage is known for, among other things, its ability to stop the flow of blood in

head wounds, one of the great challenges for conventional bandages, which require multiple standard bandages to keep a sterile pad in place. What distinguishes the Israeli bandage is that it has a built-in applicator, which applies the equivalent of up to 30 pounds of pressure over the pad. Only one Israeli bandage applies the needed pressure to the wound. Since the applicator is built-in, it's more stable than external pressures applied with conventional bandages. Since its 1993 invention, the Israeli bandage has become standard issue in militaries throughout the world, with the U.S. military making it standard issue in 2003, in time for the Iraq War. Bar-Natan is a Brooklyn boy, a son of Holocaust survivors. He immigrated to Israel in 1979. (www.jta.org, 2-13-11)

Jerusalem's Freedom Riders

In early January, the Israeli High Court declared that segregation on public transportation is illegal. Supreme Court Justice Elyakim Rubenstein expressed surprise that in the year 2011 the court needed to state the obvious – women are entitled to sit wherever they choose on public buses. He claimed that there had never been segregation on public buses until the issue was raised in the past decade by a group of religious extremists demanding that women sit in the back of the bus on certain routes that passed through *Haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) neighborhoods. The same group also demanded that women be dressed modestly as determined by their “modesty patrols.” The Egged bus company complied and women were directed to the rear of certain buses. When some women refused, they were subjected to verbal and, on occasion, physical abuse by some male extremists. Best-selling Orthodox writer Naomi Ragen was harassed while riding a bus to her Jerusalem home and decided to take action. Along with the Center for Religious Pluralism, Ragen filed a petition to the High Court of Justice; in 2009, segregated buses were declared illegal. Recognizing that some religiously observant men and women might wish to sit separately, the court ruled that in a pluralistic, multicultural society, everyone has

the right to sit where he or she chooses (except for seats designated for the disabled). (*Jerusalem Post*, 1-22-11)

Prestigious Accreditation

The Leo Baeck Day School in Toronto is the only Jewish school in North America to be accredited by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). The school is affiliated with the Reform movement and underwent a seven-year accreditation process. The IBO was established in 1968 in order to “promote K-12 education aimed at creating global citizens.” The organization works with more than 3,000 schools in 140 different countries. Founded in 1974, the school serves nearly 900 students from nursery school to eighth grade. (www.jta.org, 2-27-11)

No Pat-Downs Necessary

Airport security screeners in Israel have long relied on individual face-to-face interviews in order to ferret out potential terrorists. But now an Israeli company, WeCU Technologies, has developed a device that reportedly “detects a wide range of involuntary physical and biologic reactions based on measurements of heart rate, temperature, blood pressure, changes in breathing and more.” According to the machine’s developer, the device begins detection readings on individual travelers as they approach the device. It also tends to speed up the screening process. The developer further claims that the machine can differentiate between people who are anxious because they have a fear of flying and those who intend on doing harm. (*Dateline: World Jewry*, March 2011)

A Tragedy Remembered

March 25th marked the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, which claimed the lives of 146 garment workers – 102 of them Jewish - in Greenwich Village in 1911. The 22 victims of the fire who were buried by the Hebrew Free Burial Association (HFBA) were remembered in a ceremony in Staten Island, New York on March 1st. Most of the victims were young, underpaid immigrant women who worked long hours in unhealthy,

unsafe conditions. The fire was a major event in the history of the labor movement, leading to major changes in workplace labor and fire safety laws. (www.jta.org, 3-1-11)

The Lessons Continue

The Scottish government will be providing \$350,000 in the forthcoming financial year to ensure that two students from every secondary school continue to take part in the *Lessons from Auschwitz Project*, which is run by the Holocaust Educational Trust (HET). The four-part course involves a day trip to Auschwitz, in southern Poland just west of Krakow. Students are given a tour of the death camp and then must give a presentation to their schools on their experiences. The continued funding will enable over 350 Scottish students to participate. HET chief executive Karen Pollock welcomed the decision saying, "...thanks to this commitment, many more students will...visit Auschwitz-Birkenau, giving them an extraordinary insight into what can happen when racism and prejudice gain legitimacy." (*World Jewish Congress*, 2-28-11)

The Happiest Man in America is...

It's Alvin Wong, a 69-year-old Hawaiian Jew who is tall, married with children, and owns a business. He earns more than \$120,000 a year and keeps kosher. According to a recent Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, Wong is the exact statistical composite of the happiest person in America. (Observant Jews scored the highest.) Back in 2008, Gallup and Healthways, a company focusing on research aimed at improving overall health and lowering associated costs, started calling thousands of Americans each night asking a multitude of questions related to well-being. They then developed a well-being index for each state and even each Congressional district. Data showed that Hawaii had the highest well-being score and West Virginia had the lowest. (www.abcnews.go.com, 3-8-11)

Did You Know...

• On Sunday April 3rd, five of Los Angeles's most prominent Conservative rabbis will par-

ticipate in "Dancing with the Rabbis," an event hosted by the American Jewish University. The rabbis will compete for a donation to a charity of their choosing. (*The Forward*, 2-18-11)

• Davka Corporation, the Israeli company that pioneered computer usage in Jewish education, has released *Talmud Keys*, an application for beginning Talmud students. The program introduces 500 of the most common Hebrew and Aramaic words and expressions in an easily searchable format. Davka gives wired students anywhere in the world the ability to independently study and master the basics of the Talmud at a cost of \$2.99. (*Dateline: World Jewry*, March 2011)

• Rahm Emanuel, 51, President Obama's former chief of staff, has been elected the first Jewish mayor of Chicago in the city's history. His father is a Jerusalem-born pediatrician who was once a member of the Irgun, the Jewish paramilitary organization that operated in British-Mandate Palestine. During the first Gulf War in 1991, Rahm volunteered in the Israel Defense Forces as a civilian helping to maintain equipment. (*World Jewish Congress*, 2-23-11)

• Mary Rothstein recently turned 110, making her Australia's oldest Jew. She and her family escaped the pogroms of Russia and fled to England soon after she was born in 1901. She lived in London for half her life, working as a milliner, on occasion making hats for the royal family. But according to Robert Young, a senior researcher at the Gerontology Research Group, which specializes in verifying "super-centenarians" (those 100-years-old and older), Rothstein is not the oldest Jew in the world. That person would be Evelyn Kozak of New York City, who was born in August of 1899. (www.jta.org, 3-6-11)

• Alan Shatter, Ireland's only Jewish Member of Parliament, has been appointed new Irish Justice Minister. Shatter represents a constituency in the south of Dublin, where most of Ireland's Jews live. Shatter is the second Jewish cabinet minister in Ireland's history, the first having been Mervyn Taylor in the 1990s. Shatter is well known as a staunch supporter of Israel. (*World Jewish Congress*, 3-10-11) ◇

Keys Jewish Community Center
MEN'S CLUB

MOVIE NIGHT

**Get out of the house to relax and enjoy a film...
Bring yourself, your family, your friends!**

**SECOND SATURDAY EVERY MONTH
7:00 PM AT THE KJCC**

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

April 9, May 14, June 11, July 9, Aug 13, Sep 10

EVERYONE IS INVITED AND WELCOME

**Enjoy a big screen projection of a wide variety of films...
comedy, action, drama, fiction, classic, and others**

**Refreshments Provided
(popcorn, pretzels, pickles, and sodas)**

This should not be confused with our Poker Night. The flyer looks the same only because of a lack of imagination and artistic talent on the part of the author!

Photo Gallery

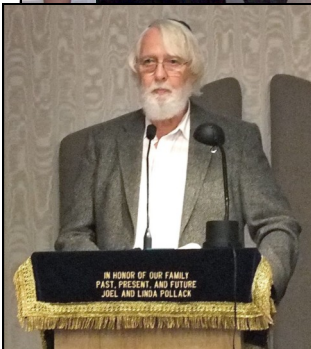


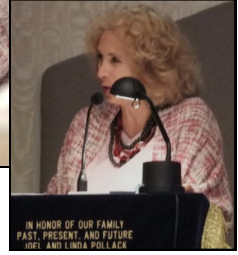
Some of the members of Boston's Far Cry Chamber Orchestra gather with Joyce and Gloria and Mary Lee and their volunteers, at the third of the 2011 Upper Keys Concert Series on February 14th, top left. The 16-member ensemble opened with a modern piece (written by an old friend of David Gitin's) that had the audience squirming a bit.



But the power and harmonies of the Rachmaninoff and Dvorak that followed gave them exactly what they came to hear.

The other photos on this page (which were, for those who would otherwise be horrified, taken without flash) are from David Gitin's inaugural evening leading KJCC services on February 18th. He was ably assisted at the Chazzon's side of the bema by partner Gloria and Susan Gordon.





The top five photos are all from the March 4th service, when KJCC added its voices and prayers to “Shabbat Across America,” celebrated throughout both the U.S. and Canada. The service was led by KJCC’s educators — Gloria, Yardena and Susan, along

with the KJCC religious students. At top left, Sylvie and Jane, helped by Moira, Natalie and

Michaela, begin Shabbat with the lighting of the candles.

At bottom, Stuart Sax gavels to order his first Board Meeting as the new KJCC president on March 13th. Past president Steve Steinbock

makes sure that new Board member Medina Roy feels right at home.





The photo at top shows all the KJCC members attending the January 15th annual luncheon of the children's advocacy group, Voices of the Florida Keys. At right, Maryon Gould holds the coveted plaque she was awarded as this year's Unsung Hero, the group's Volunteer of the Year.



Joe and Susan Sachs are affirmed as the winners in KJCC's Get-Outta-Town raffle by KJCC president Stuart Sax. They chose the New York trip. (And they only bought ONE ticket.) At right, the KJCC religious school students rehearse in costume for the upcoming Purim celebration on March 20th. The Sunday School is kept humming by Yardena and Gloria and David, but they did take time out to celebrate Harry Friedman's birthday, below.



Oh, What a Night...

Our “Authentic Deli Nite” Sisterhood fundraiser was a huge success, both socially and financially. Some 85 people gathered at KJCC on Sunday, February 27th – mostly members, some not – for some schmoozing, schnapps and kibbitzing, while enjoying the most delicious corned beef, pas-trami and turkey sandwiches on rye. You know, old-fashioned Jewish deli.

Thanks to the our hard-working committee, and with the advice of our resident KJCC “bagelman” Marc Bloom, we enjoyed the perfect deli sandwiches as well as our fantastic feast of knishes (graciously donated by Natalie Dorf and imported to the Keys with the help of Steve Hartz), homemade chopped liver (traditional and vegetarian), coleslaw, potato salad and more. (Thanks Roberta, Kathy, and Linda Perloff.)

After some fun rounds of bingo (thanks to Roberta), led by our peerless caller Bernie Ginsberg, and when the final, cherished prize of chicken soup had been won (made, alas, by Manischewitz, not Bubbe), we all proceeded to the sanctuary to watch “Old Jews

telling jokes” on video and enjoy some laughs together.

Thanks to the hard work of Patti Gross and Leslie Dillon, and the generous donation of our Sisterhood and our local community, we had over twenty baskets to raffle off, while we enjoyed our homemade strudel, courtesy of Georgia Landau and Linda Perloff, as well as our chocolate babka, imported from an authentic deli bakery. It was yummy, all of it!

After a few shots of schnapps (four different flavors), and a little more kibbitzing, we all left happy and full with an aluminum-foil-wrapped half-sandwich for the next day.

Thanks to Joan Stark, Roberta McNew, Kathy Shabathai, Georgia Landau, Leslie Dillon and Patti Gross – the Deli Nite committee – for an exciting, fun and prosperous event. Special thanks to Barbara Bernstein, Marc Bloom, Steve Friedman, Alan Beth, Natalie Dorf, and Linda Perloff for their help and support in making this a wonderful evening.

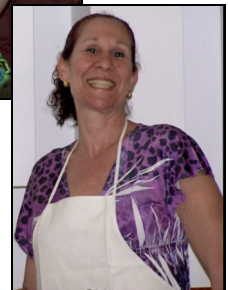
*Erica Lieberman-Garrett,
Deli Nite Chairperson*



The staff of Sisterhood (with honorary member Marc) who did the work for Deli Nite, all wearing one of a limited series of hand-painted aprons by Rosie Biskar.



It was Deli Nite, so the first order of business was the food. (Surely someone, somewhere was trying to kill us; they failed, of course, so it was time to eat.) It was crowded inside, and a lovely day, so Medina, Rosie, Candy and Susan dined al fresco on the terrace.



After the food, it was time for some old-fashioned bingo fun. (Some had never played before.) If you were starting a bingo game, who would you want as your caller? Bernie, of course. And it just so happened that Bernie was available.





After Bingo, it was time to draw the winners for the auction table items. (Bernie had the magic touch, winning five times.) All the winners are shown together at left.



The final event of the day was to gather in the sanctuary to watch a video of "Old Jews Telling Jokes," most of which were actually funny. Of course, Bernie and Jules already knew all the punch lines.

Those who had the winning tickets pose with their prizes. Deli Nite was, indeed, a day of smiles. Don't be surprised if there's a sequel.



A big Chai-Lights thanks to Mary Lee Singer, who shot many of the Deli Nite photos.

Stained Glass of KJCC

The final entry in our closer look at the story behind the art.

We've completed our months-long look at the stained glass art gracing the KJCC sanctuary. Six of the original tribes of Israel are represented, one in each of the sanctuary's large windows near the roofline. We have also examined the two complex and symbol-laden windows mounted high above either side of our bema.

There is actually one more stained-glass window of KJCC. It's far larger than the others, yet it's placed so that we tend not to fully notice it, above the true front door to our building, the one that we never use. It's a simple, straightforward, strong, uncluttered image – a hexagram, a six-pointed star, two equilateral triangles merged pointing in opposite directions – recognized the world over today as *the* symbol of Judaism, though it doesn't even have one particular name. The more traditional name is *Magen David* – the Shield of David – though it's also widely known, and more frequently described as the “Jewish Star,” and occasionally as the Star of David. It's an image we've all known all our lives. Could it have a story of its own worth telling? Yes, it does.

It would surely have been inconceivable to the founders of KJCC, or to those of any modern synagogue anywhere of any denomination (except perhaps a few on the outer periphery of Orthodox), to not include depictions of the *Magen David* on or in the various rooms of its new building, especially the sanctuary. But were a Jewish couple of a thousand years ago, from either the splendid elegance of Moorish Spain or the dark and dank medieval cities of central Europe or even the

still-great academies of learning and Talmudic development in what was once Babylonia, to stroll down U.S. 1 at night and see the huge, beautiful, stained-glass six-pointed star adorning the public side of KJCC's building, they would surely smile at its beauty. But they would not recognize it as having anything to do with the religion of Judaism.

On the strictly temporal and historic side of this story, there are lots of gaps, and dots that don't connect, and unanswered questions. Perhaps modern scholarship, with its overflowing quiver of tools, will manage to pinpoint the exact time when the hexagram became synonymous with Judaism. But so far it has not. We do know that the symbol is not mentioned in reference to Hebrews or Israelites or Jews in either the Bible or the Talmud. (The Torah was declared closed and unalterable by Ezra and Nehemiah in the 5th century B.C.E.; the Talmud was basically finished by the time of Rashi in the 13th century C.E., though in the *Shulchan Aruch* there were still new codifications around the time English settlers began appearing on the eastern shores of North America.) So up through medieval times the symbol was not considered by anyone to be a “Jewish” star. Of course there are numerous references in scripture and all the Talmudic commentary about the *Magen David*. But to the ancient rabbis the “shield of David” had only one meaning — the force that created the universe and that stood by to guide and protect the young poet and warrior king: the God of Israel.

There is a stone bearing a hexagram from



The large stained-glass *Magen David* of KJCC, above the door facing rte. 1

the arch of a 4th century C.E. Galilee synagogue, though most experts consider it strictly ornamental. (A swastika, another popular ancient motif, appears alongside the hexagram on the synagogue wall.) The first potentially meaningful use of the hexagram in a Jewish context comes as a decoration on a page of the famous Leningrad Codex, dated 1008 C.E. In the Jewish Encyclopedia there is a reference to a 12th century Karaite document mentioning a sign called the “Shield of David,” but no specific shape is described. In 1354, Jews of Prague in Bohemia were allowed by Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV to display their own flag. What they produced had a large six-pointed star at its center. (It also included two pentagrams, five-pointed stars, often associated with David’s son Solomon. The oldest synagogue in Prague, the *Altneuschul*, still flies such a flag.) The first Hebrew prayer book, printed in Prague in 1512, displays a large six-pointed star on its cover. In 1592, another Prague synagogue was allowed “a flag of King David, similar to that located on the main synagogue.” In 1648, the Jews of Prague, being rewarded for helping defend Prague against marauding Swedes, were again allowed a flag. The central image they chose was a yellow Shield of David. But it’s important to note that the hexagram was not then an exclusively Jewish image. It was also used as decoration on many medieval Christian buildings. It adorns a variety of surviving cathedrals and churches.

It would appear that the use of the hexagram as a Jewish symbol spread from Prague. In Vienna, in the 17th century, the Jewish quarter was officially separated from the Christian quarter by a boundary stone; on the Christian side was carved a cross, on the Jewish side a hexagram. At that time hexagrams also began appearing on the outside of synagogues. By the time Napoleon broke down the medieval ghetto walls and thrust Jews into modern Europe, the six-pointed star was widely accepted as denoting something Jewish, even appearing on Jewish tombstones. When Theodor Herzl was casting about for a symbol for Zionism, the nationalist yearning

of Jews, he selected the six-pointed star, and at this point, at the end of the nineteenth century, the association was complete.

There is, of course, also a mystical side to the hexagram-as-Jewish-symbol story. It may well have been Jewish mystics who first used the symbol, or at least made it popular. There is evidence of the use of hexagrams on *segulot* – magic, protective amulets – as early as the 11th century. To mystics, the symmetry and specific shape of the hexagram told a detailed and multi-layered story. One of the two equal triangles pointed toward heaven, the other toward earth. The six points of the star are believed to symbolize God’s rule over all six directions of the universe: east, west, north, south, up and down. In the hexagram there are also seven spaces – the interiors of the six small triangles plus the center – that to mystics correspond to the seven spiritual building blocks (*sefirot*) with which God built the world. The upward-pointing triangle symbolizes the masculine, and the element fire; the downward-pointing triangle represents the feminine, and the element water. So the six-pointed star is the balance between masculine and feminine, and the balance between the elements fire and water. The union of masculine and feminine also represents the ultimate of God’s works: creation. (Similar ideas about the hexagram are also held in Hindu mysticism.) Mysticism and the use of protective amulets were far more prevalent in Europe than in other spheres of the Jewish world during medieval times. Was Europe, not ancient Israel or Judah, where the popularity, and eventual dominance, of the hexagram as Jewish icon all began?

Either way, kindly take pity on the poor, jilted menorah. It was the unchallenged symbol of Jews and Judaism for much of Jewish history, until the dawn of modern times. There was even a controversy over which image to include on the new Israeli flag in the late ‘40s. When the hexagram, the “Shield of David,” was chosen, it had now taken the absolute final step on its journey from ornamental design to mystical symbol to full representation of an entire people. It was now, finally and undeniably, the “Jewish Star.” ◇

Eleanor Roosevelt Had an Idea...

A KJCC Member's Novel Tells the True Story of European Jewish Refugees Welcomed to Upper New York State During World War II

by Judith Weber

Sometimes the most exciting adventure starts by chance. I've been writing children's books for 35 years and was researching a possible book about Dr. Mary Walker, the only woman to win the Medal of Honor. Historical information was available at the local museum in her hometown, Oswego, New York. On a beautiful summer day I drove to Oswego, twenty-some miles north of Syracuse on Lake Ontario. When I checked into my motel the desk clerk asked, "are you here for the reunion?"

"No, I'm here to research Mary Walker."

Everywhere I went that afternoon, I was asked if I was going to the reunion. Finally I asked someone: "what reunion?" I expected to hear about a high school reunion, but instead I was told it was the fifth reunion of the refugees who were brought to the United States during WWII in 1944.

Fort Ontario, which wasn't being used by the Army at that time, became the only refugee camp in the United States. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt had had a humanitarian idea: If every free country took one thousand refugees off the streets of war-torn Europe and gave them sanctuary, thousands of innocent people would be saved. To set an example, she arranged for the first group to come to America and live at Fort Ontario in Oswego - which had been built in its first incarnation by the British during the Revolutionary War to use as a raiding base against upstate New York, and which was not being used by the U.S. Army during World War II - until the war was over. The plan was for the refugees to be returned to their countries of origin at war's end, and they had to agree to that. Almost all of the refugees ended up being Jewish, and the last thing they wanted was to go back, but to get out of Europe at that moment, 982 men, women and children signed the con-

tract. Their countries of origin were Yugoslavia, Poland, Germany, Austria and Hungary.

The refugees traveled for two weeks on a U.S. troop transport ship, the almost-500-foot "Henry Gibbins." Half the ship was filled with wounded soldiers returning to the States and the other half were the refugees. They landed at Pier 84 in New York. Above them on the berth the sign read the "Hamburg-American Line." (I illustrated the irony of this otherwise dry fact in "Seeking Safety" by having Ida, the mother of my ten-year-old heroine, say, "We have escaped the Germans only to arrive in America at the pier that the German shipping company once owned.")

The American Red Cross met the ship and tended to the soldiers first. Then they gave out sandwiches, sodas and doughnuts. Officials tagged every refugee, then bused them to a train that took them to Oswego, a long train ride of many hours.

Fort Ontario was far from luxurious, but it was livable, and, above all, safe. It had wooden cabins with double-decker beds, a social hall, dining room, kitchen and a parade ground with an American flag flying from the top of the pole. It became a small village and self-sufficient except for the government food and clothing donated by the local churches and synagogues. Everyone was assigned a job.

But Fort Ontario also had one thing the refugees didn't enjoy. The entire Fort was fenced. A person had to get special permission to go outside the fort's grounds. They could talk to people through the fence, but they couldn't leave. Many of the refugees had family in the United States who wanted to take them home, but it wasn't allowed. As I delved into individual stories while doing research for my book, it was very painful hearing about families wanting to reunite. Packages were sent and received, as were clothing, favorite foods, letters and pictures, but

only on rare occasions were Eleanor Roosevelt's refugees allowed to go into the town of Oswego. Soon the refugees learned a popular America song, "Don't Fence Me In," and it became their anthem.

But there was one big exception. The children were allowed to attend the local school. At school, elementary through high school, the refugee children learned English and made friends with local children. I learned that many of those friendships continued throughout their lives.

A very young Ruth Gruber was put in charge of the rescue mission because, besides working for the State Department, she could speak Yiddish and German. (Ruth is today 99 years old and lives in New York City. Her comments are on the back of the book.)

The refugees lived in the camp from August 1944 until February 1946. A very few families decided to return to Europe, mostly because they wanted to be near relatives. Others wanted to claim businesses and homes they hoped would be returned to them. But staying wasn't so easy, either. To stay in America a person needed a visa. There was a very long wait for those from European countries. According to the rules, the refugees would have to return to Europe and re-apply for visas, a process that would take years. Ruth, with the help of the State Department, found a legal way to get the refugees into America as permanent immigrants.

This is what Ruth wrote in her own book, "Haven": *"On January 17, 1946, the first three busloads, carrying ninety-five refugees, drove across western New York State to Buffalo, where the community invited them to a roast beef lunch at Temple Beth El. Then the buses traveled to Niagara Falls, and crossed the Rainbow Bridge to the town of Niagara Falls in Ontario, Canada. They were greeted by George Graves, the American consul, who gave each refugee the longed-for visa embellished with a red seal and ribbon. They were driven across the Rainbow Bridge again, and at last, entered America, not as a refugee, but as immigrants bound for United States citizenship."*

My novel "Seeking Safety" is told through

the eyes of ten-year-old Yugoslavian refugee Lillian. The story starts in Italy, includes her journey with her mother to Oswego, her experiences in the local school, friendships and life in the refugee camp. The KJCC Sisterhood has copies of "Seeking Safety" in the Gift Shop. It is appropriate for children 8 to 12.

Judy and Larry Weber live in Islamorada.

Ruth Gruber – Journalist, Rescuer, Hero

If not for Ruth Gruber, the thousand Fort Ontario Jewish refugees would never have made it to New York and safety during World War II. Without her untiring efforts, and access to highly placed ears, they would never have been allowed to stay at the end of the war. For most lives this would have been its most exciting and dramatic chapter. But helping save the Oswego Jews was not the first time in Ruth Gruber's life that she had stood astride and helped shape history, and it would by far not be the last. She truly became one of the most remarkable women of the twentieth century.



Ruth Gruber as photojournalist after World War II.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y. in 1911, Ruth Gruber graduated from N.Y.U. at age eighteen. In 1931 she was offered a fellowship to study in Germany, which against her parents' wishes she accepted. She attended Nazi rallies, and in person heard Hitler mesmerize his audience, ranting against Americans and, of course, Jews. Professors asked her to stay in Germany and pursue a PhD, which she did in

the unheard-of time frame of one year, analyzing the feminist tendencies of a not-yet-widely-read young British author named Virginia Woolf. According to the *New York Times*, she was, at age twenty, the youngest PhD in the world.

In 1935 she became the first foreign correspondent allowed into Siberia, where she spent months interviewing prisoners of Stalin's gulag, many of them Jews. From this came her first book, "I Went to the Soviet Arctic."

Harold Ickes, FDR's influential Interior Secretary, read the book and hired Ruth as his special assistant, sending her in 1941 to Alaska to report on its social and economic potential. She spent eighteen months there, traversing the vast and primitive territory by plane, truck and, when necessary, bobsled. In 1944, when FDR decided to bring the 1,000 Jewish refugees here (as "visitors," to circumvent the stringent wartime immigration laws), Harold Ickes vested her with the temporary rank of general. His reasoning was simple: she was entering Europe secretly, on a secret mission, and if captured the Nazis would surely execute her as a spy. But if she carried the rank of general, they'd have to feed her and keep her alive. She spent much of the voyage home on the U.S.S. Henry Gibbins listening and writing as the refugees told their stories. Out of this came another book, "Haven: The Dramatic Story of 1,000 World War II Refugees and How They Came to America."

Returning to journalism after the war, she was sent by the *New York Post* to accompany the joint British/American committee on its tour of European Displaced-Persons camps, to decide what to do with all the Jews who wanted to go to Palestine. The refugees were pathetic, the camps squalid. She asked a 16-year-old survivor of Bergen-Belsen why he wanted to go to Palestine: "Why? Everybody has a home. The British. The Americans. The

French. The Russians. Only we Jews have no home. Don't ask us. Ask the World." The Committee filed its report, which was received by Ernest Bevin, Britain's Foreign Minister, who proceeded to do nothing.

The issue was next taken up by the new United Nations. Ruth accompanied the Special Committee on Palestine to the camps and then to Palestine itself. While in Jerusalem, she learned that a former pleasure boat – now renamed The *Exodus* – had tried to deliver 4,500 Jewish refugees, including 600 children, mostly orphans, when it was attacked by six British warships. Ruth arrived in Haifa to see the *Exodus* limp into the harbor – two children and Bill Bernstein, the American second mate, dead – looking, as she wrote, "like a matchbox splintered by a nutcracker."

Hearing that the *Exodus* prisoners were being transferred to Cyprus (where 52,000 Holocaust survivors were imprisoned between 1945 -1948), she flew there. But the British sent the ship to southern France instead, where the refugees famously refused to disembark. After 18 days of increasingly bad publicity, the British decided to ship the Jews back to Germany. Out of hundreds of journalists, only Ruth Gruber was allowed on board to accompany the ship, and the homeless DPs, on this dismal leg of the journey. Her photo of refugees holding up a Union Jack onto which they had defiantly painted a swastika became the photo of the week in *Life Magazine*. Her book, "Exodus 1947: The Ship that Launched a Nation," was used as source material by Leon Uris for his novel.

Ruth Gruber has now written 19 books. She has received numerous international honors, and at least one documentary and one feature film have been made about her. She has lived in the same New York City apartment for over 50 years, and in September will achieve 100 years of an amazing, awe-inspiring life. ♦



**Ruth Gruber today,
living in New York. She'll
turn 100 in September.**

Make a Joyful Noise!!

The role of Jewish Music in Telling the Passover Tale

by Gloria Avner

“Sing, sing, sing, sing . . . Everybody’s got to sing.”

It’s January 1938. Germany is marching towards Czechoslovakia, less than two years away from the invasion of Poland and the start of World War II.

In New York City, a band filled with Jewish and black musicians, led by Benny Goodman, are playing “jazz” for the first time in what was strictly “classical” Carnegie Hall. Breaking all boundaries, they enter into a jazz rendition of “Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen.” (Poor Sholom Secunda, who sold his half of the song for \$15.) In the middle of the song, Gene Krupa gets wild, and with trumpet player Ziggy Elman interpolates a swinging version of “Freilich,” the “Jewish Wedding Dance.” Their music brings down the house.

Jewish music has reached out and touched the world for decades – think Irving Berlin, Harold Arlen, and George Gershwin just for starters. There is a reason. It comes from a rich place with serious celebrational intent, a Biblical place, from great cantorial tradition, and from centuries of folk adaptation. It is the accompaniment to the Jewish story, essential to its telling, and it is especially important on Passover.

We know there are two essential *mitzvot* in observing Pesach. One is a purely physical act, ripe with multi-layered meaning, a kind of mnemonic device, the commandment to eat only unleavened bread for the duration of the holidays. The other involves “the Hag-gadah,” the telling (and the re-telling) of the entire Pesach story.

Four times in the Bible we are commanded to do this recounting. God tells us in the Exodus chapter “Sh’mot” to teach and re-teach in every generation the story of Passover.

We tell the story by reading it aloud and

by singing it. The plentiful Passover/Pesach songs help create and reinforce the holiday’s major themes—physical freedom; redemption; spring, the season of re-birth; generosity to others; trust; and gratitude.

Songs with simple, rhythmic melodies are easy to remember and fun to sing. They deliver the intended message, but they do something else as well. They connect us, horizontally through space and vertically through time, to all Jews everywhere. Before we begin, we even chant the order (the very meaning of the word “seder”) of the fifteen steps that must be followed in order to properly conduct the Passover Seder meal.

There are many happy Passover songs that are sung in joyous reminder of having been released from bondage. Passover music spans the gamut from universal traditional melodies to exotic-sounding tunes that are customary for Jewish people of a specific community. Yet each table of Jews, in dining rooms throughout the Diaspora, looks to its youngest child, whether or not there are four sons present, to ask the “Four Questions” and open the dialogue.

The youngest begins the dialogue because the youngest needs it the most. Chanting the rhythmic, repetitive “Ma Nishtanah--Why is this night different from all other nights,” is meant to convey and symbolize the differences between slavery and freedom, a mind-broadening theme ever-present and interwoven throughout all fifteen steps. The invitation is made to tell a story, not as if it were ancient history, but as if it had personally happened to us. Ownership, connection, is not someone else’s, but “mine.” *Ours*. (The only thing “evil” about the “wicked” son is that he does not take on the community story as his own, but looks at it detached, from a

distance).

Shortly after the “Four Questions,” we sing “Avadim Chayinu,” celebrating the essential fact of our escape from Egypt. “Once we were slaves; now we are free.” The words are simple. They are stunning. The chorus soars. Even if one did not know Hebrew, one would feel the deep ecstatic joy inherent in this piece.

Some of our favorite songs are expressions of gratitude for what we, as a people, were given, not just in escape from slavery in Egypt, but fifty days later, when Moses came down from the Mountain with the “laws” in his hands, 613 “Mitzvot” that would take us from the lowest level of slave consciousness to a higher level of being, in which we could be responsible not only for ourselves but for the world.

Think of the three verses we sing in the most popular song of all, “Dayenu.” Eyes light up and energy revives when we get to this part of the seder. (It can’t just be the wine, can it?)

“If God had just given us freedom from slavery in Egypt, that would have been enough. If God had just given us Shabbat, that would have been enough. If God had just given us the Torah, surely that by itself would have been enough. “Dayenu!”

An embarrassment of riches. Yet we go on for more verses. Because we were given more. We are not just to be grateful for favors large and small from God, but for favors from everyone and everything in life; we are even wordlessly grateful for the song, the joining of voices in which everyone knows, or soon will know and understand, the significant word.

We may not know all the words to “Echad Mi Yodea,” (“Who knows One”), another song of many verses in which we explore the meaning of numbers 1-13 as they relate to concepts of Jewish life and thought. But any-

one who hears or reads the verses will soon get the idea, and enjoy the fun of trying to sing their numbered verse all in one breath. From God being One on Heaven and Earth to Two being the Tablets of the Covenant to Three being our Fathers and Four our Mothers, Five the books of Torah, and on and on to Thirteen, we create another musical way to appreciate our gifts and tell the milestones in our history. The circle of the song begins and ends with God as One, the beginning and end of all that is Judaism.

We are getting close to the last hurrah. A seder does not seem complete until “Chad Gadya,” the “baby goat” song, is sung. On one level, it seems like a nonsense song akin to “I know an old lady who swallowed a fly,” a song mainly to keep small children amused until it’s time to find the “afikomen.”

And yet, there is a lot of research that says this Passover song about a baby goat which “my father bought for two *zuzim*,” a pitifully small

sum of money, actually chronologically describes all the empires throughout Jewish history that have occupied the Land of Israel which, one by one, have been destroyed by successive empires, with the Jewish nation at the bottom, symbolized by the baby goat. The purpose of this song is to teach that every evildoer, no matter how strong, will eventually suffer the consequences of their actions at the hands of God. A seemingly childish song inspires a firm, mature faith and belief in the power of God.

There are many other Passover songs we sing, including “Adir Hu,” concerned with praising God’s glory, and there are songs that focus on Elijah – the forerunner to “Moshiach,” or Messiah. When we sing about Elijah we also combine song with the physical act of opening a door, a welcome, an expression of hope and trust, that teaches as much in its theatrics as the reading of any paragraph could.

We are not just to be grateful for favors large and small from God, but for favors from everyone and everything in life.

Still, the most important song of the night is Miriam's Song. In all of Judaism, this Song with a Capital S, describing events near the end of the Passover Story, sung after we realized we were saved by God and that the Egyptian army once in hot pursuit had drowned in the no-longer-parted "Sea of Reeds," is Number Two in the All Time Hit Parade of the Ten Most Important Songs ("Ten Shirot") ever created.

The Ten *Shirot* mark historical events in Jewish history. They are not mere melodies, but they express the harmony of Creation as well as marking these events in human history. The Ten *Shirot* are separated from other songs by their being written with a capital "S" for "Shirot" in Hebrew and in English with a capital "S" for "Songs."

Miriam's song (Think "Mi Chamocha") comes right behind Song Number One, "A Psalm for the Sabbath Day," the Song that Adam sang after the Creation was completed. This may have been an important, even solemn song, but it is filled with joy and gratitude, this call-and-response chant of praise, the women calling and the men responding. If we close our eyes and open our minds, we can see the women dancing, playing

vigorously on their hand-drum timbrels, their bodies and hair swaying freely as they sing without restriction.

We don't have a clue as to the rhythm they beat or the melody they sung, but with nearly empty hands, a supply of unleavened bread, and a song in their hearts and mouths, the newly escaped Jewish slaves, our mothers and our fathers, our selves and our children, made a joyful noise before stepping into the unknown. *Dayenu.* ◇

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ELIJAH

THE ETERNAL PROPHET



**A depiction of
Elijah from a 1526
Prague Haggadah**

No single earthly figure looms larger in the Passover Haggadah – or arguably in all of Jewish literature – than the prophet Elijah. He is by far the most famous of all the prophets. His guidance and assistance has been regularly sought, by paupers and sages alike, ever since he first thundered disapproval at King Ahab and Queen Jezebel in the northern kingdom of Israel about three thousand years ago. With Seders worldwide about to open their doors to welcome him, now seemed like a good time to take a closer look at this complex, enigmatic figure.

Elijah's story is told in the First and Second Books of Kings. Queen Jezebel of Israel (whose reputation has not softened at all over time), the daughter of a Phoenician king, had grown up worshipping the Canaanite deity Baal and had no wish to adopt the God of Israel. To please her, King Ahab erected a temple to Baal in his capital city of Samaria. It was in response to this idol worship that Elijah began his public career. Publicly scolding absolute rulers and railing that their actions will cause drought and famine is not a strategy to earn one a comfy life, and in fact Elijah was forced into hiding at least twice.

God was more powerful. He asked 450 of them to meet him on Mt. Carmel. Two twin bullocks were brought, and both were slaughtered. Whose God would accept the sacrifice? Hundreds or thousands turned out to watch. The priests of Baal went first, chanting and pleading for hours. Nothing happened. As their religion called for, they then began to mutilate themselves, offering their own blood to Baal. Again, nothing happened, and after many hours they withdrew, exhausted. Elijah then stepped up and prayed to God to accept the sacrifice. Immediately, fire crashed down from the heavens and consumed the bull. After a brief, awed silence (imagine seeing something like that), all present bowed down in fear and reverence to the God of Israel. But proving his point wasn't enough; Elijah then had his followers kill all 450 of the priests of Baal, which so infuriated Jezebel that she ordered Elijah himself killed. Ultimately God led him to Mt. Horeb (Mt. Sinai), the same mountain where Moses had brought the law to the Israelites some 400 years before. It was here that the transformation of Elijah from misanthrope to philanthrope began. Probably no important Biblical figure ever underwent such a complete metamorphosis, particularly in the rabbinical literature, where he has enjoyed a prolific second career as a protector of the weak and spiritual guide to the learned.

Elijah's most famous act was to challenge the priests of Baal to a public test of whose

There are hundreds of stories recounting Elijah's legendary appearances through the

ages. The stories vary widely, often including miracles, but many revolve around the theme of an old man wrapped in his mantle who mysteriously appears to teach an ethical lesson, impart hope to those in despair, aid the destitute or confront injustice.

In the literature Elijah becomes a favored symbol for the whole Jewish people, “exiled and tortured but alive and hopeful.” As one of only two figures in the Bible to not die yet still ascend to heaven, he becomes the ultimate bridge between the two worlds. In rabbinic lore he often takes the role of interlocutor with God for men and also guide to the earthly sages on the mysteries of God’s laws. Since he never dies, and frequently returns to earth in various guises to combat injustice or instruct the learned in the secrets of the Torah, Elijah has also become to many the prototype of the Wandering Jew.

Ultimately, especially in Ashkenazic tradition, Elijah takes on many roles. In a tradition going back at least twelve hundred years, an empty chair – the chair of Elijah – is placed to the right of every male child at his circumcision. Elijah is also said to be the guardian of all infants for the first thirty very vulnerable days of life. His other roles in rabbinic literature include peacemaker, recorder of marriages decreed in heaven, blesser of barren women, and protector of slaves, the poor and the oppressed.

The prophet Malachai, in the last book of the Hebrew Bible, implies that it will be Elijah to herald the coming of the Messiah, one reason Elijah is given such an important role in the Passover Seder. (And at the conclusion of every Shabbat we sing “Eliyahu Ha-Navi,” a song urging Elijah to return with the Messiah, speedily and in our time.) Upon completing the blessing after the Passover meal, in one of the Seder’s more dramatic moments, we pour the Cup of Elijah and open the door for

the prophet, hoping that he will have arrived to usher in the Messiah.

Most scholars believe it was in the Middle Ages in Europe, after the Crusades, when the Seder door was first opened in the hope that Elijah was there with the Messiah. (Sephardim typically do not open the door.) Passover was then a particularly hazardous time for Ashkenazi Jews, as “blood libel” fever – the belief that Jews would kill a Christian child and use his blood to bake the matzoh – was at its peak. Jewish folklore began to teach that it was Elijah himself who came to defend the accused. One school of thought says that opening the door was the ultimate act of faith. Another says that opening the door had the practical advantage of being able to see anyone sneaking into the courtyard to falsely plant evidence of blood libel or otherwise disrupt the Seder.

The other major role Elijah plays in the Seder is through what is now called “Elijah’s Cup.” When Seder rituals were first being developed in the second century C.E., there was dispute over whether there should be a fifth cup of wine. The rabbis simply couldn’t agree, so they decided, just in case, to produce a fifth cup, but not to actually drink this one. So why call it “Elijah’s Cup?” Because one of the beliefs is that as he ushers in the Messianic Age, Elijah will also answer all the questions that have stumped and bedeviled the rabbis over the centuries. And Elijah will not drink from the cup. The idea is that we are waiting to hear from Elijah whether we should drink from the fifth cup.

Ultimately, at the Seder, we pray that Elijah will help us resolve our disputes with one another; enable us to open our hearts to one another; and bring peace to Israel, her neighbors, and to all places filled with fear and hatred. Menachem Mendel, the 19th century Rebbe of Kotsk, said: “We err if we believe that Elijah the Prophet comes through the door. Rather he must enter through our hearts and souls.” ◇

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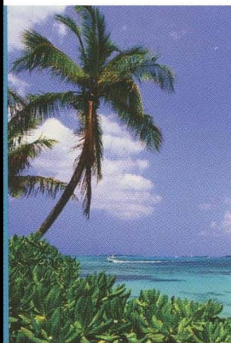
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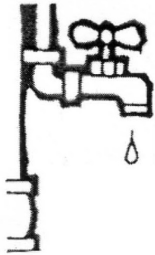
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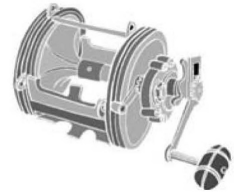
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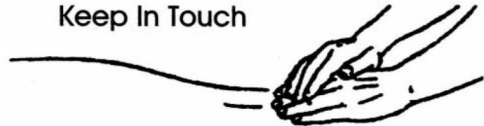


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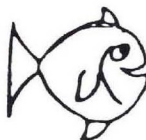
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