

# Chai~Lights



**May 2012**

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**Keys Jewish Community Center**

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

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# May 2012

# 9 Iyar - 10 Sivan

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Men's Club Game Night 7 p.m.	3	4  Ken Atlas  <i>Carol Steinbock</i>	5
6 Sisterhood Meeting 10:30a.m., luncheon 12:30	7	8	9	10  Lag Ba-Omer	11 Erica Garrett & Marc Bloom  <i>Medina Roy &amp; Bernie Ginsberg</i>	12
13 KJCC Board Meeting 9 a.m.  Mother's Day	14	15 Digital Pho- tography with Barbara Knowles, 6:30 p.m.	16	17	18 George Swartz & Yardena Kamely  <i>Steve &amp; Barbara Smith, Medina &amp; Carl Roy</i>	19
20  Yom Yerushalayim	21	22	23	24	25 Medina Roy & Gloria Avner 6:30 Service Yizkor Service  <i>Joan &amp; Jim Boruszak</i>	26 Rabbi Agler Torah Learning Service 10 a.m.
27 First Day of Shavuot	28 Second Day of Shavuot; Women's Discussion Group 7 p.m.	29	30	31	<div>Names denote leaders of Friday services. <i>Italicized</i> names are Oneg sponsors. Services are held every Friday evening.</div>	

## 2012 - 2013 Officers and Board

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## President's Message Stuart Sax



Late last month there was a program held in Princeton, New Jersey to re-unite the Torah scrolls of Susice, Czechoslovakia along with survivor and guest of honor, Hana Bruna who escaped that small village. On the surface it seemed like a very wonderful tribute, but numerous questions arose from the organizers of the event and our interaction with them.

Firstly, the information stated that this event was an attempt to bring together the ten to twelve scrolls of Susice. Ten to twelve? We were told there were three. Thanks to the efforts of our valued member and Holocaust historian Dr. Steve Smith and others, we were able to sort out additional details of the story.

The records indicate that in the mid-1800s the population of Susice was about 300 and it is estimated that there were about 100 residents in 1930. It is believed that there were several synagogues within 50-100 miles when the pogrom began and the scroll from these communities were brought to Susice for later transport to Prague. When rescued, all of the scrolls were cataloged as being from Susice. There is more to this story and Dr. Smith is sorting the information and, when completed, we will print it in Chai Lights.

If you look at the calendar on the opposite page it is clear to see that there are fewer dates with information listed in them. Some would interpret this to mean that we are slowing down and heading into our own version of a recession.

I choose to see this as an opportunity especially for those of us that are here to endure the long, hot, and humid summer ahead. We may not have all the extra-curricular activities that we have "in season", but we still have opportunities. We will still gather each Friday evening for Shabbat services and then retire into the social hall to share in an oneg and spirited conversation. The women will still gather for their monthly discussion group. The men (and even some women) will play cards and socialize on the first Wednesday, and Dave Mont will continue to lead his monthly kayaking expeditions.

Beginning this month, with fewer planned events on our calendars, we have a golden opportunity to get together socially outside of the synagogue. Maybe see a movie together or meet at a local eatery for a good meal and some lively conversation. The summer months may be light activity wise, but they are what we make them. The opportunities are there, will you take advantage of them? ♦

# Nosh

## A Trip to Israel is Being Planned

Preliminary plans are being made for a KJCC trip to Israel early summer 2013, probably in June. Big deal, you say! People go to Israel all the time! But wait. The tour guide and leader of this trip will be none other than Rabbi Richard Agler. He speaks fluent Hebrew, and has been leading trips to Israel for years. Word is he's pretty good at this. He has a slew of contacts, both in the travel industry and in places of special interest for Diaspora Jews visiting, whether for the first or the tenth time. This is not intended to be a typical trip. Rabbi Agler says it will be customized to the interests of the group that goes. He's also said that Bar or Bat Mitzvahs could be scheduled as part of the trip; there's already interest in that.

Early projections are that the trip will cost approximately \$3,500 per person, excluding air fare. There needs to be at least a group of twenty. Coordination from the KJCC end is being handled by Dave Mont (305-393-9883 or moogoodave@yahoo.com). David Gitin (305-393-4979 or ddgitin@gmail.com) knows the itinerary and would be happy to share his experiences with anyone considering the trip.

## Sisterhood's Last Meeting of the Season

Sunday, May 6th, will be the last Sisterhood meeting of the season. As has become traditional, this meeting will not really be about business, but will be basically a social occasion, allowing everyone to offer their best wishes and good-byes to those who leave the Keys for the summer. The meeting will begin at KJCC at 10:30 (note the new time), and then all will repair to Bitton Bistro Café in Islamorada at 12:30 for a wonderful luncheon, where your hosts will be KJCC members Michel and Sylvie. (Well, okay, there might be a minimal amount of Sisterhood business conducted during the two hours.) Contact Lauren with any questions or to put yourself down as a definite.

## The 4th KJCC Tikkun Leil Shavuot

We at KJCC will count our 49th day of Omer one day early this year, on Friday night the 25th of May (so all can keep their Memorial Day Weekend plans, having already celebrated "Revelation," the receiving of the Torah.)

As early (beginning at 6:30) services conclude, we will close our eyes and imagine we are hearing that wake-up call, the blowing of the shofar, the deafening blasts of thunder and lightning as the sound echoed down Mt. Sinai. (The rabbis say all our souls were there.) Gathered around the bimah, we will receive the Ten Commandments and then move to the Social Hall for a "milchedicke" Oneg of cheesecake, blintzes, other dairy treats, discussion, and learning. It is a special night, our fourth annual observance of *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*. We repair the mistakes our ancestors made the first night of Shavuot, when they nearly missed the great gift of Torah by oversleeping. Save the date. (It is also our yearly opportunity to look over a list of all 613 mitzvot.)

-Gloria

*The KJCC offers its deepest condolences to*  
**Barney Coltman**  
*and his family on the death of*  
**Ellen Coltman**

## Rabbi Agler Service on May 26th

Rabbi Richard Agler will once again be here at KJCC on Saturday, May 26th, beginning at 10 a.m., to lead another in his series of Torah Learning services. (For those who like to know such things, the Torah portion that week will be *Bamidbar*, which translates as "in the desert." It's the first section of the Book of Numbers.)

For those who miss formality, we do open our Holocaust Torah during the service. But the real attraction is the ensuing discussion.



## May Birthdays

1st.....	Jonathan Schenker
2nd.....	Barney Coltman
4th.....	Pamela G. Marmar
4th.....	Ryan Curtis
5th.....	Richard Palacino
7th.....	Murray Rapoport
8th.....	Kelley Greenman
8th.....	Sidney Boruszak
9th.....	Reid Schur
9th.....	Rhett Curtis
11th.....	Richard Agler
11th.....	Sheila R. Steinberg
12th.....	Madelyn Ruby Pollack
12th.....	Nyan Feder
12th.....	Robert Silk
13th.....	Rose Marie Gordon
14th.....	Bernie Ginsberg
14th.....	Eva Ban
14th.....	John Temkin
14th.....	Mark Burnett
14th.....	Medina Roy
15th.....	Paul R. Schur
17th.....	Alex Shatz
18th.....	Andrea P. Silverman
18th.....	Jaime Boruszak
19th.....	Jonathon Hodgson
19th.....	Sylvie Coeurjoly
20th.....	Rita Williams
21st.....	Tracey Greenberg
22nd.....	Christian Strasser
22nd.....	Sharon Repka
23rd.....	Bianka Kirschenbaum
23rd.....	Jenny Margulies
23rd.....	Jules Seder
23rd.....	Nettie Seder
25th.....	Carolyn Kaufman
25th.....	Matthew Birnbaum
25th.....	Susan Schwaid
26th.....	Randy Robins
27th.....	Alan Beth
27th.....	Jeffrey Pollack
27th.....	Joan Boruszak
29th.....	Liati Mayk
29th.....	Nancy Zinner
29th.....	Robin Forman
30th.....	Julie Burnett
31st.....	Mark E. Silverman
31st.....	Robert Sherman
31st.....	Wes Conklin

## May Anniversaries

		Years
2nd	Bennett & Deborah Beinfest.....	22
4th	Alan & Susan Cooper.....	26
<b>24th</b>	<b>Alfred &amp; Sue Ann Wehl.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>29th</b>	<b>Lawrence &amp; Judith Weber.....</b>	<b>50</b>
30th	Harold & Shelley Schenker.....	19

## Bemah Melodies

At his lunch-and-learn session on Sunday, April 1st (what will surely go down in KJCC lore as by far the busiest day anyone can remember), Rabbi Agler talked a lot about flexibility in the service, about local *minhag* (custom) being an important component of how the service is structured. Many prayers or songs have a variety of melodies, and the ones each synagogue chooses to use are up to them.

Except, he said laughing, there are two that have to be sung a certain way, and we do both of them, well, incorrectly. (He has a patent on the Yiddish shrug.) The melody we use when lighting the candles should only be used when lighting Chanukah candles. And the melody we use for the Barchu, the call to prayer, should actually only be used for aliyahs at the Torah. Oops. Gloria now has the correct melodies. She'll be teaching them to all of us, little by little.

## Book Plates

In Honor of  
**Georgia Landau & Dave Mont's  
 Marriage on 12/27/2011**

*By Muriel & George Swartz*

*From Stuart & Lauren Sax*  
**In Loving Memory of  
 Sam & Babe Sax**

## One Rabbi Honors Another

For boring technical reasons, the only way to get the photo on page 20 of the Center for Girls in Nairobi, Kenya named after Talia Agler was to go to the web site Rich and Mindy have set up. Something posted there jumped out, which Rabbi Agler has give us permission to reprint:

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg of Boca Raton Synagogue, which is Orthodox, went to pay a *shiva* call on the Aglers after the death of their daughter Tali...

"...Rabbi Broide and I went to the Aglers' home to simply communicate that we care, feel their pain and pray for their comfort.

"The time we spent together, and the inspiration Rabbi Broide and I received that day, were remarkable. I asked Rabbi Agler how this tragedy impacts his faith in the Almighty. As a rabbi, he undoubtedly has spoken about bad things happening to good people, but now he had lived it.

"His answer blew me away. He said, 'My Judaism, my relationship with God and my faith are

what empowered me to raise such a wonderful daughter, and these values are what gave her life meaning and purpose. Why would I throw away the very things that made her so special, just because she was taken so prematurely and tragically? Faith allowed me to raise a special daughter, and faith will guide me through the tragedy of her death.' "

## May Oneg Sponsors

**May 4th:** Carol Steinbock, in honor of Mother's Day.

**May 11th:** Medina Roy and Bernie Ginsberg in honor of their shared birthday.

**May 18th:** Steve & Barbara Smith in honor of son-in-law Christian Strasser's birthday, and Medina & Carl Roy in honor of Medina's Mom Bianka's 97th birthday.

**May 25th:** Jim & Joan Boruszak in honor of Joan's birthday.

## 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.*





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## Sisterhood Lauren Sax



**A**pril came and went in two seconds! Unfortunately, we had to say good-bye to many of our snowbirds. Not only do we enjoy socializing with them, but they are also a source of support for many of our activities.

A whopping *thank you* to all those involved with our Passover seders. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend either seder; however, the buzz was extremely positive for both of them. Beth Kaminstein, Erica Garrett and Gloria Avner and the rest of their crew outdid themselves. It seems as though the Women's Seder keeps getting bigger and better each year. In the spirit of *Tikkun Olam*, they have decided to donate their proceeds to the Children's Shelter of the Upper Keys, to Tornado Relief through The Temple in Louisville, Kentucky and to our own KJCC Holocaust Fund. Thanks, ladies, for a job well done!

Our new chairperson this year for the KJCC Family Seder, Mary Lee Singer, showed off her organizational expertise and pulled off a beautiful evening, about which we are still getting phone calls thanking us for a wonderful time. Maryon Gould was Mary Lee's able-bodied assistant; Jim and Joan Boruszak are to be applauded, as they were the behind-the-scenes coordinators. Jim and Gloria used new Haggadahs and the service was concise but yet very meaningful. And thank you to all who attended.

Our final (not possible!) Sisterhood meeting of the year is Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup>. Note our time change to 10:30 a.m. in the social hall. From the meeting we will proceed to Bitton Bistro Café in Islamorada for our end-of-the-year luncheon. Separate checks as usual and the crepes are to die for. If you haven't responded to me, do it now!

Finally, I never expected this to happen. One day I am a congregant and the next a Sisterhood president. But I had done this before. Presidencies in various other organiza-

tions would give me the experience I needed for my reincarnation as a KJCC Sisterhood President. Not a big deal. I could do this yet again. However, I never imagined how protective I would turn out to be with this presidency. This time around I feel like a mother hen with her chicks. I am ever so grateful for "my girls" and their willingness to be there for me when needed. Yet I am also very conscious of the work and how much they do. I never want "my girls" to feel over-worked or under-appreciated. The problem is that there doesn't seem to be a large enough flock. We have a nice membership, but, like many other organizations today, it is always the same people doing the work.

In order for the KJCC Sisterhood to move forward with the times, we need some new chicks. New faces bring new ideas. Our season is coming to an end. Notices for next year's events will be in the mail shortly. I implore you to think hard and long about what you would like to see at the KJCC. What can Sisterhood do for you? More luncheons, an enhanced discussion group, card games, health or investment seminars? Please contact me. I will try to fill those needs. Just know that those things take manpower. Onegs don't just happen. Neither do Shabbat dinners or installation brunches. If you want those things, plus what you have come to expect from the KJCC, step up to the plate. We need to continue to make next year, and those that follow, winning years. ♦

*The KJCC is looking for good homes for the piano and electric organ in the sanctuary. These would be good starter instruments for anyone interested in learning to play. For a modest donation, either or both can be yours. Contact Stuart for additional information. -Lauren*

# 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>Book Plates</i> Swartz, George & Muriel	<i>In Honor of</i> Dave Mont & Georgia Landau - wedding nuptials	<i>Meditation Garden</i> Graham, Bea	<i>In Memory of</i> bricks - Talia Agler & Karen Hayhurst
<i>Book Plates</i> Sax, Stuart & Lauren	<i>In Memory of</i> Sam & Babe Sax	Rose, Skip & Rene	bricks - Talia Agler & Karen Hayhurst
<i>General Fund</i> Begam, Delores	<i>In Honor of</i> pray for us	<i>Scholarship Fund</i> Eisman, Mildred	<i>In Honor of</i> Herbert Schulman
Ehrenreich, David & Roberta	Joel & Linda Pollack's 50th anniversary	Sax, Stuart & Lauren	Sam Vinicur receiving Joel S. Cohen Award
Gelbard, Sy		<i>Sisterhood</i>	<i>In Honor of</i>
Kwalick, Teresa	Joel & Linda Pollack's 50th anniversary	Davidson, Foster & Carol Laskin	Joel & Linda Pollack's 50th anniversary
Lewis, Phil & Arleen	We love your synagogue	Ellner, Susan	My birthday
Schur, Lee	Dave Mont & Georgia Landau wedding nuptials	Steinbock, Steve & Carol	Happy Mother's Day
<i>General Fund</i> Pollack, Joel & Linda	<i>In Memory of</i> Ralph Tallent	<i>Yartzeits</i> Coltman, Barney & Ellen	<i>In Memory of</i> Eve Greenstein
		Graham, Bea	Marty Graham
		Rubin, Mike & Myrna	Herman Rubin
		Sheinker, Miltra	Warren Sheinker
<i>Meditation Garden</i> Sax, Stuart & Lauren	<i>In Honor of</i> Dave Mont & Georgia Landau wedding nuptials	Tallent Family	Ida Tallent
		Temkin, Robert	Anne Temkin

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

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

**Tree of Life Leaves:** We have two beautiful, six-foot Trees of Life — the world's most enduring spiritual metaphor — adorning the wall at the rear of the KJCC sanctuary. For \$50 an individual, golden leaf can be engraved with your message of memory or love. An example: "To our grandchildren: May they always be in the presence of the Eternal Light."

**Garden Bricks:** \$125 buys a single brick and \$200 a double brick in our magnificent Meditation Garden walkway, engraved with your personal message. An example: "You were the best, Aunt Goldie. Well, you and those yummy blintzes."

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# YEDA VE'TORASHA

Yardena Kamely



## Jerusalem of Gold

*"Yerushalayim Shel Zahav"* – Jerusalem of Gold – was written as a personal song, a song of longing and nostalgia. But for a nation once again at war, once again fighting for survival, it became a hymn of victory.

In Israel, after *Yom Ha'atzmaut* (Independence Day) of 1967, one song was sung everywhere: *"Yerushalayim Shel Zahav."* Within three weeks it became a national hymn and prayer. Over thirty versions appeared in Israel. Eddie Fisher recorded it in London, Larry Adler played it on the harmonica, and in America it was soon heard in every Jewish community. "Jerusalem of Gold" is in the heart of every Israeli and lives on as a reminder of the Six-Day-War in June 1967.

In Tel-Aviv, Naomi Shemer was sitting and reflecting over her latest composition. For her, it was a miracle that began on May 15, 1967. Some 3,500 people had crowded into *Beit Ha'umot*, Nation Hall in modern Jerusalem, to attend the annual Song Festival commemorating Israel's Independence Day. That year, five of the country's top composers had been assigned to create songs. The director of the festival said that they were free to write about anything they wanted, but then Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem expressed a strong wish that one of the five compose a song about Jerusalem. Four were not interested. Naomi Shemer, then 36, the popular composer of more than 200 songs, accepted.

She thought about the Jerusalem she had known as a girl. She remembered how her Polish parents spoke of their hometown Vilna (now Vilnius), a marvelous city, as "the Jerusalem of the Diaspora." She remembered the colors, the sounds, "the silent mood" of Jeru-

salem, her childhood visits to Biblical places, closed to her since 1948. She thought, too, of a story from the Talmud in which the wife of the great Rabbi Akiva lived in poverty for years, so that her husband could study. When Rabbi Akiva became a famous and learned man, he gave his wife a "Jerusalem of Gold," a gold brooch in the shape of the ancient city, to wear as a symbol of her devotion.

Naomi Shemer took the Talmudic phrase, *"Yerushalayim shel zahav,"* and used it as the title for her song. It was to be a song of nostalgia for a city she had personally lost. "Jerusalem of gold, of copper, and of light," went the refrain; then, quoting from the medieval Hebrew writer, Yehuda Halevi, she continued, "Let me be a violin for all your songs..." For the first time in modern song, she referred to the "ancient wall" which Jerusalem "carries around her heart," and talked of the sights of the old city, sights that could not be visited by Jews:

*The water cisterns are dry,  
The marketplace is empty.  
We cannot visit our temple in the ancient  
city,  
Where winds wail in the rocky caves.*

*Over the mountains,  
We cannot go to the Dead Sea  
By way of Jericho.  
Your name burns my lips like a Seraphim's  
kiss,  
Let me not forget thee, O Jerusalem of gold!*

At the Song Festival in Jerusalem, it was already close to midnight when the song was sung. Fourteen other songs had already been

performed. Then a young girl, discovered by the composer only a few days before, and unknown to the audience, walked out on stage. Her only accompaniment was her guitar. "As she sang *Yerushalayim Shel Zahav*,"



**A photo then and now: After the recapture of East Jerusalem in June, 1967, three young Israeli soldiers gaze toward the Temple Mount. They were reunited recently for the same photo, over forty years later.**

described the newspapers, "the audience grew hushed. When the young singer finished there was a second silence, then earsplitting applause for nearly seven minutes." Naomi Shemer's personal sense of loss was felt by every Israeli. "Jerusalem of Gold" was played once more, and the entire audience joined in the refrain.

On the same night that the audience in the Festival was singing of a Jerusalem they could not visit, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt was moving his troops into Sinai. The soldiers of Israel began to leave

their homes and prepare for war. Naomi's song was played over and over on the radio during the early days of mobilization. Soldiers wrote to tell Naomi Shemer how they sang her song in the fields during the evening. A high commander of *Tzahal*, the IDF, called to invite Naomi to sing her song for the troops stationed near Jerusalem. Although she didn't perform often, she accepted. Many of the faces in her audience she recognized. (Israel is a small country.) Some, she remembered, had fought in 1948 and 1956. They stood around her in a circle, with only the headlights of a truck giving some light in the darkness, and she sang to them, and with strong voices the soldiers joined in the refrain.

On Sunday, June 4, Naomi Shemer was introduced to some of the top military commanders – Ezer Weitzman, Itzhak Rabin, and the man who was to lead the Sinai campaign, Ariel Sharon. Sharon turned to her, and in his usual *tachles* – blunt – style said, "It's important you should come to sing for us." Naomi Shemer flew down to the *Negev*, to the encampment of the troops, in Ezer Weitzman's plane. A light dinner was served. Nobody talked much. Naomi waited to be asked to sing, but she was not. Finally, Sharon's aide told her: "The war will be tough. And we have reason to believe it will

be soon, very soon. We have decided there will be no singing tonight." She said nothing. "Still," he added, "you do not know how important it is to us to have you here. It's difficult to explain, but you are a poet, a musician, and somehow we wanted someone with a soul to share this time with us." Late that night, very late, the men moved out from the base, and on Monday



**Israeli Army troops rest at the Kotel — the Wailing Wall — after dramatically recapturing it during the Six-Day War.**



morning, radios announced that war had broken out. Naomi Shemer stayed with the troops in Sinai, helping in the only way she knew, singing for them in the evening. On Wednesday they moved to *El Arish*; fighting was still going on. She and other singers (soldiers themselves) were listening to someone's transistor radio. Suddenly they heard the announcement: "The city of Jerusalem has been taken!" Gunfire could be heard in the background as the announcer described the paratroopers' street-by-street fight into the heart of the Old City. "They are advancing towards the *Kotel* (Wailing Wall)," the announcer said. Then, in the background, the radio listeners could hear the sound of a song, "or rather a hymn, sung by what sounded like hundreds of men, in hoarse voices: *Yerushalayim shel zahav, ve'shel nechoshet, ve'shel or. Halo lechol shirayich ani kinor* (Jerusalem of gold, of copper, and of light. Let me be a violin for all your songs)," remembers Naomi Shemer.

As Naomi listened to the broadcast describing the tanks and trucks coming into the Old City, many of them with banners reading "Yerushalayim Shel Zahav," tears ran down her cheeks. Then, in the middle of the sounds of battle still going on in El Arish and Jerusalem, a thought came to her: she would have to rewrite the second stanza of her song. There was no longer the need for nostalgia: Jerusalem was reunited.

Later that evening, when the Israeli soldiers had gathered in their camp in the desert, Naomi Shemer got up and told them: "I shall sing for you a stanza I have just added to 'Jerusalem of Gold', because when I first wrote the song, Jerusalem was just a beautiful dream for all of us. And now...." As the soldiers listened, she sang:

*We have come back now to the water cisterns.*

*Back to the marketplace.*

*The sound of the shofar is heard*

*From the Wailing Wall in the ancient city.*

*And from the rocky caves in the mountains,*

*A thousand suns are rising.*

*We shall go now to the Dead Sea,  
Go by way of Jericho.*

*Yom Yerushalayim*, Jerusalem Day, will be commemorated this year on Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup>. In 1983, Naomi Shemer was awarded the Israel Prize for her great contribution to Israeli music. She died in 2004 and is buried in Kibbutz Kinneret on the Israeli shores of the Jordan River, where she was born in 1930. ♦

## Mount Herzl

Jerusalem is a city of many ancient memorial sites. In the western part of the New City, there are two of the most emotionally draining sites in the entire city: Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Memorial, and Mount Herzl. To experience a particularly Israeli sorrow, walk through the quiet lanes of Mount Herzl, the burial site for prominent Zionists, Israeli politicians and those figures who greatly influenced the development of the State of Israel – Theodor Herzl, Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin, and other leaders. But there is an even more hallowed and moving section. Mt. Herzl is also the location of the Israel Defense Forces' official military cemetery.

The initial impression of Mount Herzl is that no country so young should have a military cemetery so full, and that feeling grows as one sees the graves, the thousands of modest engravings honoring those who fell for their country, many still in their teens. On *Yom Hazikaron* (Memorial Day) we honor the fallen soldiers of the IDF with ceremonies on Mount Herzl. The day officially ends between 7-8 p.m., and somber reflection turns to celebration. At that point *Yom Ha'atzmaut* – Israeli Independence Day – begins, and the flag of Israel is returned to full staff.

*-Yardena*

## Keys Jewish Community Center

# Becky's New Car



**Date:** Sunday, May 20, 2012

**Time:** 2:00 PM

**Location:** Actors Playhouse, Coral Gables

A smart, comic cruise through the perils of middle-aged longing and regret, *Becky's New Car*, is a laugh-out-loud amusement park ride where the comedy spins out of control like a bumper car. In this new play, playwright Steven Dietz maps out a very funny and touching trip about "the life not taken." Becky is married, in her 40's, and working at a car dealership when one night by chance she's offered an opportunity to step into another life, and takes it. This fresh, new, delightful and devious comedy is about life, love, marriage, and the detours we make on our way to happiness.

For tickets and for information about carpooling,  
contact Joyce Peckman (305) 451-0665  
[joycepeckman@gmail.com](mailto:joycepeckman@gmail.com)

**Donation:** \$40

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# World Jewish Report

## Medina Roy



### It's Like Waiting for the Messiah...

Observant Jews living in high-rise apartments or staying at towering hotels depend on a "Shabbat elevator," an elevator that is set to stop on every floor automatically. Waiting for such elevators has been described as like waiting for the arrival of the Messiah. But that is about to change, thanks to Shlomo Friedman, a 24-year-old Jerusalem inventor and biomedical engineering student.

"BeeOnTime," the first tracking device to inform individuals when the elevator will reach their floor (while they remain in their rooms or apartments) will soon be on the market, and has been approved by rabbis for use on Shabbat. Friedman graduated from high school at 16 and started building "smart homes" (whose functions are monitored and controlled by a computer system) four years ago. Working for a family in a luxurious penthouse, Friedman heard that sometimes they had to wait more than fifteen minutes until the elevator arrived, since it is programmed to move only one floor at a time. (According to *halacha*, one may not press the elevator button on Shabbat or festivals.) Friedman's innovation was a timer that would tell building residents how many minutes and seconds remained until the elevator's arrival. The invention is believed to have a potential market of 30,000 five-star Israeli hotel rooms, 70,000 high-rise apartments in Israel that use Shabbat elevators, as well as vast numbers of tall buildings abroad where religious residents now must just stand and wait till the elevator arrives. The device can be installed over an apartment door in a few minutes. (*Jerusalem Post*, 3-15-12)

### Einstein Goes Digital

Israel's Hebrew University recently announced that it is expanding its digital ver-

sion of Albert Einstein's archives, bringing the number of items listed online to 80,000. The items include Einstein's scientific work as well as documents from both his public and private lives. New items include a 1930 letter Einstein sent to the editor of the Arab newspaper *Falastin*, proposing that Jewish and Arab sages work together to find a solution to the Jewish-Arab conflict. Also included is a letter from Betty Neumann, a former lover, fifteen years after their relationship ended, plus an invitation to Einstein's wedding to his first wife, Mileva. The Einstein archive initially went online in 2003 with a catalog listing 43,000 of the documents the famed physicist bequeathed to the university. Digitization is funded by the London-based Polonsky Foundation, the same organization that digitized the Isaac Newton archives (reported on in the April *Chai-Lights*) at Cambridge University. (By the way, the Newton papers had more than 23 million views within the first 24 hours of going online). ([www.haaretz.com](http://www.haaretz.com), 3-20-12)

### Future Nobel Prize Winners?

Spanish tenor Placido Domingo, who got his operatic singing start with the Israeli Opera Company, is this year's co-winner of the exclusive Israeli Wolf Prize for his contributions to the musical arts. Sharing the prize with him is famed British conductor Sir Simon Rattle. The Wolf Prize, established in 1976 to promote achievements in the arts and sciences, is named for Dr. Ricardo Wolf, a former Cuban attaché to Israel. The awards ceremony will be held in the *Knesset* later this year. As a side note, many of the four decades of Wolf Prize recipients have gone on to

be honored with the Nobel Prize. (*World Jewry Digest*, April 2012)

### **Anne Frank's Tree Lives in Jerusalem**

At the end of March, a sapling from the chestnut tree that Anne Frank wrote about numerous times in her diary was planted at *Yad Vashem*, near the *Children's Memorial* and the *International School for Holocaust Studies*. The sapling, donated by The Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, was taken from the 150-year-old tree that was toppled by a storm in 2010. Hanna Pick, a Holocaust survivor and childhood friend of Anne, attended the ceremony. Other saplings have been sent to institutions around the world. The tree, which gave Anne hope for the future, was last entered in her diary on May 13, 1944. You can view the recent planting of the sapling on YouTube at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EN\\_8iF37a0I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EN_8iF37a0I) (*The Forward*, 3-22-12)

### **The New Mayor of Frankfurt**

Peter Feldmann, 53, has been elected the first Jewish mayor of Frankfurt, Germany (or, for that matter, of any major German city) since the end of World War II. He received 57 percent of the vote. With a population of 700,000, Frankfurt is Germany's fifth largest city and its main financial center. It has, along with Berlin and Munich, one of Germany's most active Jewish communities. An estimated 7,200 Jews live in Frankfurt today. In 1924, the city had the second largest Jewish community, after Berlin. At that time, Ludwig Landmann was elected its first, and up till now only, Jewish mayor. He served till 1933, when the Nazis expelled him. He later died of starvation while hiding in the Netherlands during their "Hunger Winter" in 1945. Feldmann, a member of modern Germany's Social Democratic Party, will take office on July 1<sup>st</sup>. (*World Jewish Congress*, 3-26-12)

### **They Went to South America**

German prosecutors were recently granted access to secret files in Brazil and Chile that confirmed the true number of Nazi war criminals that escaped to South America after World War II. According to the documents, an

estimated 9,000 fled there, including Holocaust mastermind Adolf Eichmann and Auschwitz doctor Josef Mengele (who hid out in Argentina till his death in 1979). It is thought that perhaps as many as 5,000 went to Argentina, 1,500 to 2,000 to Brazil, 500 to 1,000 to Chile, and the rest to Paraguay and Uruguay. The total number includes some who aided the Nazis, but does not include several hundred more who fled to the safety of right-wing regimes in the Middle East. The files also show that during the war, Argentine President General Juan Peron sold 10,000 blank Argentine passports to ODESSA – the organization set up to protect former SS men in the event of defeat. As important as these documents are for historical purposes, they may also provide clues to Nazis who managed to sneak back to the Fatherland to live out their days undetected. It is also possible that a living fugitive might be located. ([www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk), 3-19-12)

### **Song of The Century's Forgotten Author**

Time Magazine called it the song of the century in 1999. Billie Holiday dared to record it in 1939, then claimed to have written it. But the real author of the song, still haunting to listen to and still famous on its 75th anniversary, was a Jewish high-school teacher in New York, Abel Meeropol. "Strange Fruit" was first a poem, then he wrote music for it. ("Southern trees bear strange fruit, blood on the leaves and blood at the root.") Meeropol's songs always had a social element. (He also wrote "The House I Live In.") But now Meeropol has escaped anonymity. His name has been added to the American National Tree in Washington, one of 100 "whose actions have helped write the story of the Constitution." (*The Forward Online*, 3-27-12)

### **In Memoriam**

- Stan Stearns, the photographer who captured one of the most poignant and reproduced images of the last 50 years, namely John F. Kennedy, Jr. saluting his father's coffin, has died. He was 76. The 1963 photo (the younger Kennedy back then was known as "John-John") falls into the group of iconic im-

ages such as the flag-raising at Iwo Jima during World War II, a South Vietnamese general executing a suspected Viet Cong, and the picture of a naked Vietnamese girl fleeing a napalm bomb. Stearns was born in Annapolis, Maryland, where his parents owned a jewelry shop. For his Bar Mitzvah, he received a Brownie Flash Six-20 camera. At age 16, he worked as a photographer at the Capital newspaper in Annapolis. He later became an Air Force photographer and then went to UPI. The only extra compensation Stearns received for the JFK, Jr. photo, reprinted probably thousands of times over the years, was \$25. The photo won "picture of the month" at UPI. ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), 3-2-12)

- Samuel Glazer, a co-founder of the company that gave the world "Mr. Coffee," the automatic drip coffee maker, has died at the age of 89. Before Glazer and his partner Vincent Marotta developed the "Mr. Coffee," people made coffee at home either by percolating it (smells good but can taste bitter) or using instant coffee mixed with boiling water (not as good as brewed). The partners hired two former Westinghouse engineers to create a compact version of commercial-type dispensers. "Mr. Coffee" was introduced in 1972 and caught on quickly, with more than a million sold within the first three years. Although many other companies developed their own version, "Mr. Coffee" held almost 50 percent of the market share into the late 1970s, mainly because of its association with baseball legend Joe DiMaggio. DiMaggio promoted the coffee maker in television and print advertisements for 14 years. In 2002, the trade publication *Home Furnishings News* listed "Mr. Coffee" among the most important home products of the last 75 years. The company was sold in 1987 to a securities firm in an \$82 million leveraged buyout. ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), 3-21-12)

- Albert Abramson, a principal force in the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., has died at 94. Abramson joined the drive to create an American memorial to the Holocaust in the mid-1980s, a time when Holocaust survivors were aging and dying. Abramson was frus-

trated by the slow pace of raising money and developing architectural plans. His aggressive approach put him at odds with Elie Wiesel, chairman of the council overseeing the museum. Wiesel wanted to remodel two existing red brick buildings, claiming that they reminded him of concentration camps. The two men argued, and Abramson threatened to resign unless given more autonomy. After receiving the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize, Wiesel resigned as chairman, saying the organization needed someone with expertise in administration, finance and construction, exactly Mr. Abramson's argument. The museum was dedicated in 1993. In 1998, President Clinton awarded Abramson the Presidential Citizens Medal, the second-highest civilian honor a president can bestow. ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), 3-13-12)

- Gerald (Jerry) Estrin, a computer pioneer who built the first computer in the Middle East, has died. He was 90. Both Estrin and Thelma, his wife of 70 years, earned their doctorates in electrical engineering and worked for John von Neumann, the principal architect of the computer age, at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. In 1953, the Estrins accepted an offer from the Weizmann Institute of Science to build from scratch the first computer in the Middle East and the first outside the United States and Western Europe. The computer, named WEIZAC – is the final "C" secretly pronounced like an "S?" I wouldn't be surprised! – with its closet-sized main frame, went online in 1955 and was retired in 1963, after 46,000 hours of solid service. Estrin's legacy was important because WEIZAC produced a group of engineers and technicians who, with their successors, went on to staff Israel's much-admired high-tech industries and academic institutions. In 1956, both Estrins joined the UCLA faculty in Los Angeles, Jerry to create a program in computer engineering and Thelma as a pioneer developer of data processing in brain research. Jerry later developed the concept of "reconfigurable computing," which led to the creation of new types of programmable computer chips that are still in use today. He also served more than two decades on the Weizmann Institute's Board of Governors. ([www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org), 4-3-12) ◇



# KJCC Gift Shop

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# Photo Gallery



The four photos at top were taken after the KJCC theater outing on March 18th. Wouldn't you go for Chinese food after

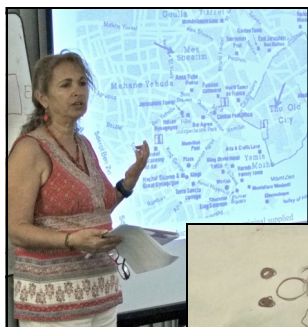
seeing a live performance of "Joseph and His Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat?"

At left are two photos from Friday, March 23rd, as Aidan Kahn led services (with Gloria's help) the evening before his Bar Mitzvah.

The two photos at bottom are from Passover. Or rather, the one at left is just before Passover. Keith Peckman and daughter Libby burn *chametz* at their home in New Jersey. And as you can see, Milton and Joan Wohl had a full house for their first-night family seder in Philadelphia.

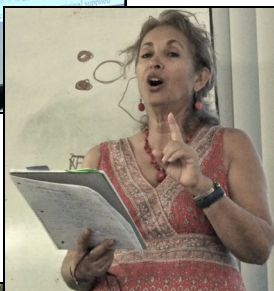






**The four photos at top were Taken on March 24th, during the Redbone Cystic Fibrosis Walk.**

**Elaine and Alan Schulberg were Co-Chairmen.**



**The two photos at left were taken during the Third of Yardena's lectures on the history of Jerusalem, on March 25th at KJCC.**

**The three photos at bottom were taken by David Gitin on March 27th at Bitton Café in Islamorada.**

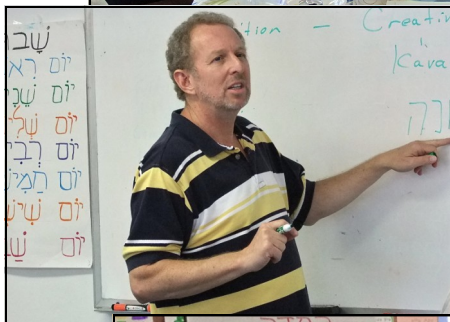
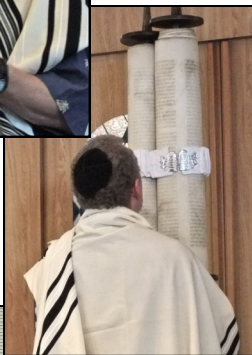
**The monks were here once again this year as guests of Keys to Peace. Yes, they once again created a magnificent sand mandala, only to once again destroy it as a symbol of earthly vanity and impermanence. Gloria was one of the artists who helped with Keys To Peace fundraising by painting an old diving bell. She calls her creation "Infinite Blue," (in**

**the photo lower right) and says it was probably the most unusual "canvas" she's ever worked on. (It's to be auctioned off.)**





The four photos at top are from Rabbi Richard Agler's Torah Learning service on Saturday, March 31st. This series has already become an important part of the life of KJCC. We open the Torah, we listen, we sing. As a group we all discuss the Torah, and it comes magically to life.



The center three photos are from Rabbi Agler's lunch-and-learn class at KJCC on April 1st. The topic? How to effectively lead a Friday service. (A good thing to know since we're lay-led.) The two photos at bottom were taken by David Gitin just before lunch during the Sunday School seder. The Women's Seder was that same night. It was a very busy April 1st at KJCC.





On April 10, Bernie Ginsberg, top photo, represented KJCC at the interfaith discussion series being held at Mariners Hospital. The topic was caring for the poor among us. The photo far right is of a large poster featuring Pauline Roller in the main hallway of the first floor at Mariners. It's one of a series of posters celebrating Mariners' 50th year, and Pauline was chosen to represent their volunteers.

The building in the photo near right is the newly named Talia Agler Girls Shelter in Nairobi, Kenya, intended to help the many local girls ages 10-18 who are victims of trafficking. Talia had worked tirelessly on this project.



As part of a study series on Israel and Judaism, members of the Calvary Chapel Florida Keys conducted an outreach program with the KJCC. Pastor Jeff Denis, his wife Kathleen, Jacob DeVries, Patty Cook, and Cindy McClain joined Steve Steinbock, Stuart Sax, and Joshua Bernstein in sprucing up the Meditation Garden on Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. (Two photos at left.) Debris was collected and disposed of, rocks added around many plantings, bricks and mulch added along the pathway, and new flowers added, courtesy of our guests.

-Stuart Sax

## *-This Month in Jewish History-*

# May

1096 – On their way to join eastern Christians in Byzantium for the first Crusade, both knights and peasants attack the synagogue at Speyer, in southwestern Germany. It is the first in a series of attacks that will gather momentum over centuries, though not all atrocities are committed against Jews and not all local authorities, civic or clerical, turn a blind eye. According to Maggie Anton, author of the book series about Rashi's daughters, the local bishop, Bishop John, actually meets the Crusaders with an army, which routs the mob and cuts off the hands of the worst offenders. Far worse massacres occur later in the month in the cities of Worms, Mainz and Cologne, who make middling efforts to protect their Jewish citizens.

1260 – Kublai Khan becomes ruler of the Mongol Empire. Many travelers report meeting Jews engaged in trade there. Marco Polo records that Kublai Khan himself celebrates the festivals of Muslims, Christians and Jews alike, indicating enough Jews in the country to warrant attention by its rulers. Historical sources also describe Jewish communities at various trade ports, including Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Ningbo, Yangzhou, and Kaifeng.

1348 – Charles University in Prague, Bohemia is established as the first university in Central Europe. Over four hundred years later, near the end of the 18th century, Jews (as well as Protestants) are allowed to attend. In 1911, Albert Einstein is appointed a full professor at the school, a position he holds until 1914.

1588 – The Council of Hanover in Germany orders the severance of all business connections between Jews and Christians.

1847 – The first Australian opera is performed at Sydney's Royal Victoria Theatre. "Don John of Austria" is a collaboration of composer Isaac Nathan and librettist Jacob Levi Montefiore.

1849 – An uprising in Dresden begins, the last of the German Revolutions of 1848, also called the "March Revolution." These uprisings are a widespread rebellion against the rigid, autocratic structure of the states of central Europe that occupy the former territory of the Holy Roman Empire. Middle and working class Germans demand increased political freedom, democracy and liberalization of social policies. The conservative aristocracy withstands this challenge to their rule and the movement fails. Many Jews participate in this movement toward liberalism and modernism. Its failure is a major spur toward the large migration of German Jews to the United States in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, bringing with them Reform Judaism, education, banking and commerce, widespread middle-class prosperity, and a thorough change to the face of American Judaism.

1861 – Dr. David Camden De Leon, known as the "Fighting Doctor," is appointed as first surgeon general of the Confederate Army. Born in South Carolina in 1822, De Leon receives medical training at the University of Pennsylvania. Following graduation, he joins the United States Army, where he serves with distinction during the Mexican War. As a native of the South, he chooses to resign his commission and join the Confederacy. His Union counterpart as surgeon general is one Dr. Jonathan Horowitz.

1863 – The Battle of Chancellorsville ends in the Shenandoah foothills. Perhaps its greatest importance is the death there of Robert E. Lee's top lieutenant, Stonewall Jackson. (Many claim his absence is deeply felt at Gettysburg two months later.) During the battle, Lt. Col. Edward Salomon leads the 82nd Illinois, which contains a heavily Jewish company from Chicago. Salomon will become a hero at Gettysburg and one of the highest-ranking Jewish officers in the Union Army, ultimately being brevetted as Brigadier General.

1864 – Leopold Karpeles, a young flag-bearer in

the Union army, rallies Union troops retreating under heavy fire during the Battle of the Wilderness, a bewildering, mostly smoke-enshrouded bloodletting that takes place in a dense thicket with minimal visibility. Born in Prague, the Jewish immigrant moves to Texas, but unable to identify with slave-holding joins the U.S. Army at the beginning of the Civil War. He receives the Congressional Medal of Honor for his bravery during the Battle of the Wilderness.

1873 – Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis receive a patent for their unique manner of manufacturing durable blue denim work pants.

1884 – Judah P. Benjamin dies in exile and is buried in Paris by his only daughter. Born in the West Indies in 1811 to observant Jewish parents, Benjamin is raised in Charleston, South Carolina, where his father is co-founder of the first Reform Congregation in the United States. At age 14 he attends Yale Law School and then practices law in New Orleans. A founder of the Illinois Central Railroad, a state legislator, a planter and slaveholder, Benjamin is elected to the U.S. Senate from Louisiana during the 1850s. He twice declines appointments to the U.S. Supreme Court. (It will be another 62 years, until 1916, until Louis Brandeis becomes the first Jew to sit on the Supreme Court.) When the South secedes, Benjamin joins the Confederate government, appointed by Jefferson Davis in turn to the three highest cabinet positions: Attorney General, Secretary of War and Secretary of State. After the war, Benjamin seeks refuge in England, where he prospers in a second legal career.

1891 – An article entitled “Russian Jews” appears in the *New York Times*. It opens with the statement that “Every American will be glad to see the announcement of a scheme to colonize the Jews who are expelled from the Czar’s dominions on an immense tract” of land in Argentina, in a project being underwritten by Baron Hirsch. The United States, says the article, already has too many Jewish immigrants from Russia. It describes Russian

Jews as impoverished, ignorant, a burden on society and a mass that will never assimilate into American life.

1902 – Theodore Herzl writes to the Sultan of Turkey appealing for the establishment of a Jewish university in Palestine. The idea of a Jewish university, and all that such a university implies, quickly becomes an important part of the Zionist vision.

1904 – The United States begins construction of the Panama Canal. A Jewish community already exists in Panama, founded as *Kol Shearith Israel* in 1876 in territory then part of the nation of Colombia. By 1911, when the canal is almost ready to open, the Jewish community numbers approximately 500.

1910 – Tel Aviv is founded, according to most sources. Seeking a healthier environment than that of crowded and noisy Jaffa, Palestinian Jews form a company called *Ahuzat-Bayit* and, with the help of the Jewish National Fund, purchase twelve acres of sand dunes north of Jaffa. In 1910, the suburb is named Tel Aviv after Nahum Sokolow’s translation of “Altneuland,” Herzl’s fictional, utopian depiction of a Jewish State written in 1902.

1912 – Columbia University approves plans to award prizes in several categories of American letters as proposed by the late German-Jewish immigrant Joseph Pulitzer. Pulitzer’s will provides a \$2 million endowment for the establishment of a school of journalism at Columbia University and a fund to establish annual prizes for literature, drama, music and journalism. In 1922 a prize is added for cartoonists.

1930 – Roberta Peterman is born, the only child of Ruth (née) Hirsch and Sol Peterman, a shoe salesman and hat maker. As Roberta Peters, she will achieve the longest tenure of any soprano in the history of the Metropolitan Opera, a lead coloratura for over 35 years. She also appears on *The Ed Sullivan Show* a record 65 times. ♦



# AIDAN'S BAR MITZVAH

We met Aidan's mother, Jessica Herstadt, one year ago at our Women's Seder. She like us. We liked her. A conversation about her son Aidan led to a meeting, then a study plan, commitment, friendship, affection, hard work and lots of travel from Marathon, alternating with computer sessions via Skype. The result was a beautiful Bar Mitzvah.

This bright, enthusiastic young man, Aidan Kahn, is taking his place among the young, future

On Saturday morning, March 24th, our sanctuary was full. Friends from Marathon and Miami, KJCC members, and family from as far away as Maine had all con-

verged to witness this event. Passing the Torah from generation to generation was especially moving, as so many of Aidan's grandparents and extended family members took part. We KJCCers *kvelled*, too, as Bernie and Susan Gordon made personal, glowing speeches and presented our congregation's gifts, a Tanakh and a Kiddish cup.

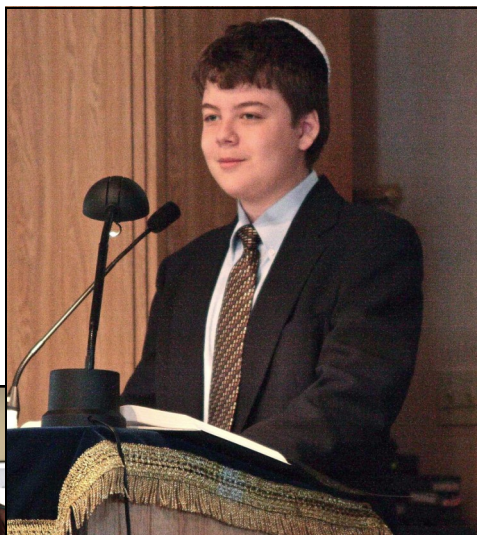
As Aidan's tutor, I was especially proud of him, and moved by his statements on Friday night as he and I led services: "I used to think going to Temple was boring," he said, "but now I think it's fun. I have met

so many nice people here, I want to keep coming to services once my Bar Mitzvah is over." We are grateful to have Aidan and his family among our *mishpacha*. (And we are especially grateful that he recovered so well from his emer-

gency appendicitis surgery—just two days after his Bar Mitzvah!). *Mazel Tov*.

-Gloria

Chai-Lights May 2012 25



leaders of our Jewish community. Aidan chanted his *maftir* from the Torah like a pro. Our own Yeshiva scholar, Dr. Bernie Ginsberg, who ably assisted in this rite of passage, was impressed. Aidan genuinely liked learning trope and took pride in puzzling out the melody of each new verse, building on what he had learned the weeks before.

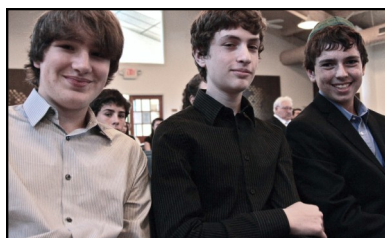












*All of the photos of Aidan's Bar Mitzvah were taken by Barbara & Richard Knowles. We thank both for allowing us to reproduce their work here.*



# Shavuot Shards

*Shavuot is the culmination of probably the most intense fifty days on the Jewish calendar. First there's Passover, which some rabbis and scholars think is pre-eminent because, well, one has to throw off one's shackles before one can even think about forming a nation. Then the Omer counting begins, filled with ancient meaning, though practically forgotten. There's the seven weeks of sadness broken only by Lag B'Omer, a period also almost exploding with mystical explanations and interpretations. It all leads to Shavuot, according to the Torah one of the mandated festivals, but to the rabbis the day the Torah itself was given and therefore the day the real history of the Jewish people began. Happy birthday, Torah. Yours is a rich and never-ending story.*

- Shavuot, as other Jewish holidays, is known by a variety of names, each one representing different aspects of the festival. It is the *Hag HaKatzir* (harvest festival), *Hag Ha-Shavuot* (festival of weeks) and *Hag Habikkurim* (festival of first fruits). The Torah describes the biblical festival in all three ways.

- In the Talmud, the word *atzeret*, meaning "cessation" or "solemn assembly," is used to reflect how the rabbis viewed Shavuot as a conclusion to Passover and the Omer-counting period of 49 days that immediately follows. Talmudic rabbis also used the description *z'man matan torateynu* ("time of the reception of the Torah"), thereby anointing Shavuot as the moment when all Israelites gathered at the foot of Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah. (The Bible is not specific as to when this momentous event actually took place. So naturally the rabbis spent many years studying and arguing about it. All the Bible says, in Exodus 19:1, is that "on the third new moon after the Israelites had gone forth from the land of Egypt...they entered the wilderness at Sinai." The calculations go from there, and they finally agreed that the day was Shavuot.) By linking Shavuot to the day Torah was received – merely the most important day in the history of the Jewish people – rabbis assured that the celebration of a middle-eastern agricultural harvest would forever be infused with powerful and lasting significance. Indeed, today Shavuot is known

mainly as the "birthday of the Torah." References to its origins as an agricultural festival persist but are secondary and seem almost quaint.

- Religious scholars speculate that Shavuot was probably not celebrated until Solomon's Temple was built, some 300 or so years later. (Until that point, the simple child might ask, where would one have taken their grain offering?) It would also have been the most difficult festival to observe, coming as it does in the middle of the growing season. Still, there is evidence of its dutiful observance: the Roman/Jewish historian Josephus (first century C.E.) speaks of large attendance in Jerusalem for Shavuot. The Mishnah, in the section known as *bikkurim*, describes the bringing of first fruits as a gala affair, and included all seven species for which the land of Israel is praised: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates.

- One might today consider it a simple thing – especially with the issue now resolved – but there was great controversy in the beginning about when to begin counting the Omer. The Torah says to make the first offering (and therefore begin the counting) "on the morrow after the Sabbath" of Passover. Clear and direct, right? Well, no. A serious dispute arose over what "Sabbath" meant here. The Pharisees (who were not evil as western culture often has them; in fact, they

were the centrists among the sects and castes and Hellenizers and barefoot ascetics of their day) were the first to say that “Sabbath” here meant any prescribed day of rest, and therefore referred to Passover itself. Over the centuries, the rabbis and sages came to agree with this view, and mandated that we begin counting the day after Passover. This is, of course, now considered settled practice. But the Sadducees, who included the Second Temple priestly class and who tended to be more literal in their readings, claimed that “Sabbath” meant nothing other than the Sabbath itself, and therefore counting must begin only after the first Saturday during Passover. And the Sadducees were not alone in this view. Their sub-sect the Boethusians also held this view, as did later Biblical literalists the Karaites (a few of whom still exist), and, interestingly, Catholics (they get to vote?) and much secular scholarship. The author of the fascinating and controversial Book of Jubilees, which was not included in the Hebrew canon, also begins counting on the Sunday after Shabbat, so his math does not agree with that of the Talmudic rabbis.

- Because of Shavuot’s connection to the gift of Torah, Eastern Europeans Jews in the 17<sup>th</sup> century began the practice of introducing very young children – often between the ages of three and five – to Torah study on Shavuot. This initiation would include cakes, honey and candy so that the children would quickly associate Torah study with sweetness. Some would even daub honey onto the Torah pages for the children to literally lick off. The early Reform movement, using similar reasoning, initiated their confirmation ceremonies for 15 - and 16-year-olds on Shavuot; this practice is still in widespread use today.

- Some say the *Zohar*, the major work of mystical Judaism, was written by Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai in the second century C.E. Others, including most scholars, believe it was written in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by Moses de Leon. It’s fairly well established that de Leon was the first to publish it. Since the days of Rabbi Isaac Luria in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, mystical practices and ideas have been connected to Shavuot. It was probably Luria and his Safed mystics who began the practice of *Tikkun Leil*



**Israeli farmers still have their harvest at Shavuot. But now, in addition to *bikkurim*, they have something else to showcase: their modern farm equipment.**

*Shavuot*, the reading of sacred literature the entire night of Erev Shavuot. To mystics, the nation of Israel is seen as a groom and the Torah as its bride. Shavuot then becomes a kind of anniversary. The counting of the omer has been especially infused with mystical meaning. The number seven repeats. There are 7 x 7 weeks of counting the omer. Seven equals the days of creation.

“Sefirah” means the counting of the omer; but “sefirah” also is the word for each of the levels of divine emanation in Jewish mysticism. (Of the ten levels, the lower seven are seen as within human comprehension.) Those of a mystical bent often spend the seven weeks of the Omer preparing and studying to be ready, on Shavuot, for the gift of the Torah. In Jerusalem, beginning in 1967 after the city’s reunification, tens of thousands of Jews finish off a night of study by walking to the *Kotel*, the Western Wall, to join a sunrise minyan.

- Some customs connected to Shavuot reveal old remnants of its agricultural traditions. Because arid Mt. Sinai was said to have suddenly blossomed with flowers in anticipation of the giving of the Torah, many synagogues honor Shavuot by decorating their bemahts with plants, colorful flowers and leafy branches, some creating a canopy of

flowers and plants so that it resembles a chuppah. Some eastern Sephardim actually read out a ketubah between God and the nation of Israel as part of their service. (The Vilna Gaon in the 18<sup>th</sup> century once cancelled the tradition of decorating with plants because it was too similar to the decorations Christians used for their holidays.)

- Kibbutzim and Moshavim in Israel offer a special celebration of the agricultural origins of Shavuot. In parades and other ceremonies, they show off the fruits produced in their fields, in the manner of the *bikkurim* taken to the Temple in Jerusalem two thousand years ago. Agricultural equipment is also put on display, aids to farming not available to those making pilgrimages to the Temple.

- There are no firm rules regarding Jewish rituals or practices on Shavuot. But one important custom (*minhag*) is the consumption of milk and cheese dishes. There is no clear trail here of rabbinic instruction, but one explanation focuses on Solomon's verse in the Song of Songs, where he talks of spring in the Holy Land and compares the study of Torah to a taste: "like honey and milk, it lies under your tongue." Since Torah was given on Shavuot, Jews honor the holiday by eating milk products. (Many traditional Jews eat dairy as the main meal on the first day and meat as the main meal on the second day.) The *gematria* (numerical equivalence) of the Hebrew word *chalav* (milk) is 40, exactly the number of days and nights Moses spent on Mt. Sinai before returning with the Torah.

Another explanation is that, prior to receiving the Torah, Jews were not obligated to follow its dietary rules. But after receipt of it they immediately realized that their existing

meat had not been slaughtered in a kosher manner, and their pots and dishes were unclean. So they opted to eat dairy. As part of our celebration of Shavuot we do the same.

- It is traditional to read the Book of Ruth on Shavuot. That book's story actually takes place during the spring barley and wheat harvest seasons. (A hungry, widowed Ruth goes to the fields of Boaz during the harvest to glean un-



**Ruth gathers grain for herself and Naomi from the fields of Boaz. Her Book is read at Shavuot, in part because that's when it takes place.**

gathered grain as food for herself and mother-in-law Naomi.) Her desire to become a member of the Jewish people is also seen as a parallel to Shavuot, when through accepting Torah the Jewish people actually became...the Jewish people. Also, the final lines of the Book of Ruth detail her lineage; King David, Ruth's great-grandson – Ruth's son was Obed, whose son was Ishai, whose son was David – is believed by tradition to have both been born and died on Shavuot.

- Just before the morning reading of the Torah on the first day of Shavuot, Ashkenazi Jews hear *Akdamut*, a liturgical poem written in Aramaic by Rabbi Meir of Worms late in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The renowned rabbi had been forced to defend Torah in debates with local priests, and this poem conveys his love of God, the Jewish people, and reverence for Torah. It is one of two *piyyutim* (medieval poems usually set to music) meant to strengthen the faith of Jews during the Crusades. (Rabbi Meir's son had been killed during the First Crusade in 1096.) The other *piyyutim*, also in Aramaic, is a poem of praise and wish for protection written by Rabbenu Tam and read on the second day. Sephardim do not read *Akdamut*, but before the evening service sing *Azharot*, a poem that sets out all 613 *mitzvot*. Positive commandments are recited on the first day and negative commandments the second. ◇

# The Ninth Annual Women's Seder

Once again this year, over 50 women, KJCC members and not, from at least four generations, celebrated women's roles in the Exodus. Miriam, we lift our cup.



Two women were joint honorees at this year's Women's Seder, and their names will soon be added to the Women's Seder Quilt of Honor. Muriel Swartz, a woman of grace and letters and friend to all, was there to be honored. The late B.Z. Slutzker, KJCC's first historian, was fondly remembered as an important early member of KJCC.



Our great appreciation and thanks to Holly Padgett, who for the second year in a row took all the photos you see here of the Women's Seder.







Once a librarian...



In the photo just above, 2012 honoree Muriel Swartz stands with her two daughters, who flew in for the event. At left, in the white top, is Diane Sredl; to the right is Karen Ray.











# KJCC'S ANNUAL SECOND SEDER

*A Report on the 2012 Version, Memories Made in Words and Pictures.*

**P**eople started filing in early, some that we had not seen in years (what a treat to welcome Barbara Galanty, one of our founding members), some that were brand-new faces; by 6:30 we were nearly ready to start. (Okay, so one couple thought the event was at the Islamorada Fish Company and couldn't find us until the meal was about to start; we were still happy to see them and they had a wonderful time.)

Jim Boruszak and I led the seder again this year, with Stuart Sax doing pass-the-microphone duty, commuting from table to table so that the whole room could participate.

There were 98 of us, including 13 chil-



was excellent and plentiful (almost as many doggie bags going home as plates coming out of the kitchen); we loved our own personal seder plates and sang lots of songs. Best of all,

everyone stayed until the last glass of wine was drunk and *Hatikvah* sung. We obeyed the *mitzvah* of telling this most important of our stories to the next generation. And because not one of the children could guess where Jim had hidden the matzoh (he had hidden it in his



dren. It was wonderful having a crowd of youngsters gathered at the mike to chant the four questions. The food



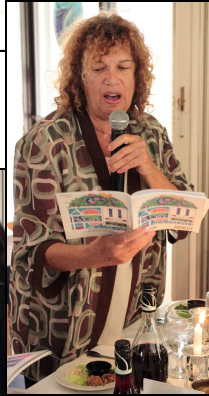


mind), there was no lack of reward for "afikomen" hunters. Faces were beaming as each child who ventured a guess (or two or three) received a crisp \$2.00 bill.

Kudos go to Mary Lee Singer and Maryon Gould, who did excellent planning and coordination this year, with advice and assistance from last year's coordinator, Joan Boruszak, and Lauren Sax. *L'Shanah Ha Ba*. Next year in Jerusalem...or Islamorada? -Gloria









*Our sincere thanks to Richard & Barbara Knowles and also KJCC Historian Mary Lee Singer for photography of the Annual KJCC Second Night Seder.*



# On the Path From Pesach to Shavuot

## *A New Look at Old Words: "Pirkei Avot"*

by Gloria Avner

A group of us were discussing Torah on a recent Shabbat morning. One of our members made a comment. "When a Torah talk gets boring," he said, "I just turn to the back of the *Siddur* and read from "*Pirkei Avot*." I had forgotten all about this book's maxims and nuggets of wisdom. As synchronicity would have it, we are *supposed* to read one of the six chapters of this book on each of the six Shabbats between Pesach and Shavuot. Who knew? What an opportunity to look at one of the best-known and most quoted texts in Jewish literature.

"*Pirkei Avot*" translates literally as "Chapters of our Fathers," but is known by most as "The Ethics of our Fathers." The book is filled with easy-to-remember, spot-on lessons to live by. Even if we were not familiar with this book, found in the *Avot* section of the *Mishnah* and compiled by our great rabbis on the cusp of the first millennium (100 BCE to 200 CE), we would recognize its sayings. These are Hillel's words: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? (1:14)" Shammai, Hillel's rival, said: "Say little and do much (1:15)." Ben Zoma taught: "Who is wise? He who learns from every man. Who is a hero? He who controls his passions." Ben Zoma also gave us what has to be the world's best definition of happiness: "Who is rich? He who is happy with what he has."

One of the songs we sing on Shabbat, "*Al Shloscha D'varim*," comes directly from *Pirkei Avot*: "The world is built on three things: Torah, prayer, and acts of loving-kindness (1:27)."

In some communities, it is customary to read a section of *Pirkei Avot* every Shabbat. I can understand why. The words are clear, the concepts are basic; they pierce the heart of things. "Do not do unto others that which is hateful unto you," said Rabbi Hillel. He was

standing on one foot, responding to a mocking questioner who thought to embarrass him by asking for a one-footed explanation of Torah. Hillel takes up the challenge, espouses the golden rule, and tells the chastened mocker that the one statement contains the whole of Torah. The rest is commentary, Hillel says, as he exhorts us as well as the questioner to go forth and learn.

Hillel and the other rabbis quoted here were brilliant, dedicated men. As they saw the Temple being destroyed, they had no choice but to write down the wisdom of our oral legacy, foreseeing the devastating loss that exile could bring.

I used to dislike the parts of the Torah that seemed mere lists of names. Now I think I get it. In fact I am impressed with the foresight of our fathers. They sought to establish the chain of transmission of our heritage. It is clearly laid out in the first sentence of *Pirkei Avot*: Moses received the Torah from God at Sinai, transmitted it to Joshua, who passed it to the elders, who gave it to the prophets, who passed it to the members of the Great Assembly, the brilliant rabbis of the day (1,1).

Placing themselves in a line that begins with Sinai, the rabbis of the *Mishnah* define themselves as the possessors of the authentic tradition and establish their authority to make the legal rulings that make up most of the book.

One of the most appealing things about *Pirkei Avot* is that it does not deal with the complexities of *Halacha* or case law. Instead, the text offers simply stated teachings by each of the rabbis mentioned.

Here's one example: "Shemayah and Avtalyon received the tradition from [their teachers]. Shemayah taught: Love work; hate positions of domination; do not make yourself known to the authorities. Avtalyon taught:

Sages, be careful of what you say lest you be exiled by the authorities. Hillel and Shammai in turn received the Torah from them. Hillel taught: Be a disciple of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace...Shammai taught: Make the study of Torah your primary occupation... (1:10-15)."

From their teachings, we not only get a sense of the personality of each rabbi, but we also get insight into their times. Shemaya and Avtalyon, who were the heads of the rabbinic court in Jerusalem in the first century BCE, are clearly worried about upsetting the authorities. The Jewish community in Jerusalem must have felt how precarious it was to live under Roman rule in the period just before the destruction of the second Temple.

The aphorisms that make up the first four chapters of *Pirkei* range in topic from the ethics of everyday human interaction to advice for aspiring sages to statements about the relationship of God and humanity. The rabbis' worldview emphasizes learning, service to God, ethical behavior, humility, and fair judgment. Another personal favorite comes from Hillel: "A person who is [too] shy [to ask questions] will never learn, and a teacher who is too strict cannot teach (2:5)."

The next two chapters were probably added later. Chapter Five is made up almost entirely of anonymous numerical lists, all containing ten, seven, or four items, a standard device in rabbinic discourse: "The world was created by ten utterances...There were ten generations from Adam to Noah...there

were ten generations from Noah to Abraham...Ten things were created on the eve of the Sabbath of creation at twilight...There are seven characteristics which typify the clod and seven the wise person...(5:1-9)." The lists must have been helpful learning devices.

**Individual Pirkei Avot have often been designed and framed as artwork. At top is "This World is an Antechamber," at right "Who is Wise?" Below left is "Truth Stands Large."**



The sixth and final chapter, *Kinyan Torah* (the acquisition of Torah), is a rabbinic statement that glorifies the study of Torah and lays out a program by which students can come to possess Torah.

Ah, we come to the point. What are we supposed to be doing from *Pesach* to *Shavuot*? Yes, we keep track of

our journey through the desert by counting out loud the 49 days from bringing the Omer (the grain offering) to the Temple on the second day of Passover. But the purpose of the entire process is to become worthy to possess Torah. In short, transmission not only happens in every generation; it happens every year. We are next in line.

It is just a few weeks since we sat together in community and family seders, being exhorted by these same ancient rabbis to act and feel at that moment as if we personally were leaving Egypt, wandering the desert, uplifting ourselves and our ethical behavior so that we can rise above the 49 degrees of degradation we sank to over the course of hundreds of years in slavery. When the deafening blast of thunder from Mt. Sinai assaults

our ears on the fiftieth day of our desert journey from *Mitzraim* (Egypt) to Sinai, when we close our eyes and listen to Bernie blowing the Shofar on *Erev Shavuot*, we want to be wide awake. *Shavuot* is the culmination of our seven-week journey. Like Joshua, the elders, and the ancient Rabbis, we want to be worthy of receiving Torah. ♦

P.S. Although Jews no longer bring *omer* to the Temple, the forty-nine days are still called

"the *Omer*." Many *kabbalists* (Jewish mystics) saw it as a period of preparing oneself to receive the Torah by reflecting on how to become a better person. They taught that each week of the *Omer* should be dedicated to enhancing a different spiritual quality, such as *hesed* (kindness), *gevurah* (strength), *tiferet* (balance) and *yesod* (confidence). We have workbooks in the office that anyone interested in this process of self-betterment can borrow.

## A Pirkei Avot Sampler

*As with most of Rabbinic literature, to fully understand Pirkei Avot one must devote long hours of study. As we know, sometimes what we initially think the text might mean isn't what was intended at all. Context is important. Ideally one should know Hebrew, and Aramaic, because there are nuances in the original that simply can't be translated perfectly. That said, here are some sayings and guidance taken from the six chapters. Items overtly insulting to women have been omitted.*

-Let your house be a meetinghouse for the sages and sit amid the dust of their feet and drink in their words with thirst.

-Provide for yourself a teacher and get yourself a friend; and judge every man towards merit.

-He who aggrandizes his name, loses his name. He who does not increase his knowledge, decreases it. He who learns not, forfeits his life. He who makes unworthy use of the crown of Torah shall pass away.

-Great is study of the Torah when combined with a worldly occupation, for toil in them both puts sin out of mind. All study of the Torah which is not supplemented by work is destined to prove futile and causes sin.

-Do not separate yourself from the community; and do not trust in yourself until the day of your death. Do not judge your fellow until you are in his place. Do not say something that cannot be understood but will be understood in the end. Say not: When I have time I will study because you may never have the time.

-A brutish man cannot fear sin; an ignorant man cannot be pious, nor can the shy man learn, or the impatient man teach. He who engages excessively in business cannot become wise. In a place where there are no men strive to be a man.

-If you have learnt much Torah, do not claim for yourself moral excellence, for to this end you were created.

-He in whom fellow people find no delight, in him the G-d finds no pleasure.

-It is not in our power to explain the well-being of the wicked or the sorrows of the righteous.

-Let the honor of your student be as precious to you as your own; and the honor of your colleague as the respect due your teacher; and the respect towards your teacher as your reverence for God.

-Whoever leads the masses in the right path will not come to any sin, but whoever leads the masses astray will not be able to repent for all the wrong he commits.

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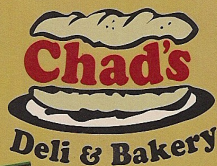


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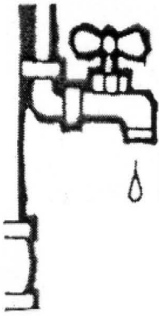
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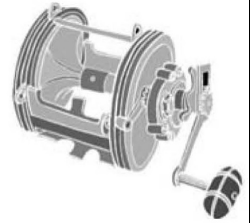
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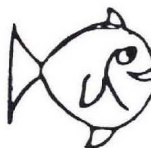
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