Chai-Lights



March 2012

7 Adar - 8 Nisan 5772

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Keys Jewish Community Center

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

March 2012

7 Adar - 8 Nisan

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>Italicized</i> n	ote leaders of Fric ames are Oneg sp e conducted ever	onsors. Ser-		1	Gloria Avner, Beth Hayden & Sam Vinicur Kathy & Joe Shabathai	3
4 KJCC Sisterhood Meeting 9:30 a.m.	5	6	7 Megillah Reading & plzza 6:30 Men's Club Game Night 8:00	8 Purim	9 George Swartz & Yardena Kamely Carol & Steve Steinbock	10
KJCC Board Meeting 9 a.m. Daylight Savings Begins	12	13	14	15	16 Erica Lieber- man-Garrett Barbara & Steve Smith	17
18	19	20 First Day of Spring	21	22	23 Aidan Kahn & Gloria Avner Joan & Jim Boruszak	24 Aidan Kahn's Bar Mitzvah 10 a.m.
25	26	27	28	29	30Dave Mont & Georgia Landau (6:30 service) Jane & Steve Friedman; Lee Schur; Linda & Joel Pollack	Torah Learning w/Rabbi Agler, 10 a.m.

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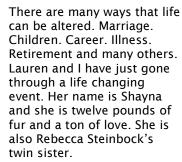
Newsletter

Lisa Richardson Rutherford Editor

CHAI-LIGHTS is the monthly publication of the Keys Jewish Community Center

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

President's Message Stuart Sax



Until she entered our lives about eight weeks ago, we pretty much came and went on our own schedule. Now we are ruled by Shavna's schedule and have learned to alter our own. Often the two collide. Like when I am ready to settle down in my easy chair and she decides it's time to go for a walk. She wins. And I have not spent less than three minutes in the bathroom getting ready since my days in the Army.

Puppies teach you time management and how to maintain a regular schedule of events on a daily basis. Come to think of it. isn't that a lesson that we all can learn? To make the hours of each day more meaningful. To replace idle time with something of value. Having a puppy or someone in your life that alters your regular flow, means planning in advance for what lies ahead. Like planning to attend free classes in computer skills, digital photography, and how to lead a Shabbat service.



Like attending presentations on a variety of subjects from Jerusalem, the holocaust, or a scholar in residence program that is in the planning stages.

As our synagogue approaches perhaps the biggest event of the year, have you planned to make this a part of vour schedule? There is no doubt in my mind that Sarge is going to be a huge hit. Partly because he will be a welcomed change to our normal routine. While the main thrust of this show has been the general admission tickets at \$60 each. please consider an upgrade to the preferred seating package for two including an autographed DVD of Sarge for \$250. Or how about a unique waterfront dinner experience for two with Sarge before the show along with his autographed DVD and preferred seating for a contribution of \$500.

It is understandable that many of you will not be available for the show for one reason or another, but I ask you to consider making a donation, in kind, to the Sisterhood to help defray the expenses like the wine and desserts, publicity, housing, etc. associated with this event.

If you don't plan in advance, these opportunities may pass you by. \diamond

Nosh

New Members

KJCC is delighted to welcome as new members Marcia Kreitman of Islamorada and Bunny Lohmann of Tavernier. Marcia is a long-time member of the Keys arts community and a regular at the Women's Seder, who many already know well. We all look forward to seeing and getting to know Bunny as well.

New Men's Club President

As of February I, KJCC has a new Men's Club president: Jeff Schocket. Activities increased greatly under his predecessor, Steve Friedman (thanks from all, Steve), and it's already clear that they'll continue with no letup under new leadership. Congrats, Jeff. And thanks also go to Bernie for reviving Men's Club in the first place.

Book Plates

By Pauline Roller
In honor of
Joel & Linda Pollack's
50th Anniversary

By Lee Schur In honor of Joel & Linda Pollack's 50th Anniversary

By George & Muriel Swartz
In honor of
Joel & Linda Pollack's
50th Anniversary

By Joel & Linda Pollack In Memory of Karen Hayhurst

TREE OF LIFE

Sam & Leslie Janowitz

in honor of

Michael & Lillian Janowitz and
Leo & Beulah Grossman

Steve & Carol Steinbock

In honor of
Joel & Linda Pollack's
50th Anniversary

George & Muriel Swartz

In honor of
Joel & Linda Pollack's
50th Anniversary

Ah, The Serious Merriment of Purim

Men's Club and The Religious Committee had a dilemma. Both had events scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, March 7. The first Wednesday of the month is always Men's Club Game Night. This particular Wednesday night would also be erev Purim, when Religious Committee wanted to stage our annual KJCC reading of the Megillah aloud. (It's a mitzvah, by the way.)

What to do? The solution, in a compromise not quite worthy of Solomon, was....both! After all, the festive atmosphere of Purim merges perfectly with the mirth and sport of KJCC Game Night. So here's the plan: our Megillah reading, replete with kids with costumes and graggers — in Hebrew it's called a ra'ashan — to drown out the name of Haman (hiss, boo) begins at 6:30. There will be pizza, and salad, and hamentaschen. (Julia Child was not consulted.) Then, after the Megillah reading is over, Game Night will begin, with assorted card games, board games and mah-jongg. (Tile games?) So come to fulfill the Purim mitzvah, eat and drink, then stay for fun and games. What could be better?

March Birthdays

	,
lst	Melvin L. Jacobson
lst	
2nd	
3rd	
3rd	
4th	
6th	
7th	
7th	
8th	Allen Holbrook
9th	
10th	
10th	Thomas Davis Smith
	Dman Cahan
	Bryan Schur
12th	Heath Greenbaum
13th	
13th	
l4th	
14th	
15th	
15th	
l6th	
17th	•
17th	Daniel E. Friedman
18th	Eric Grace
19th	
20th	Janet Palacino
20th	Susan Sachs
21st	
21st	Erwin Kantor
21st	
21st	
21st	
23rd	
24th	
24th	
25th	
25th	
25th	
27th	
28th	
29th	
Z/U1	joei rollack

30th	Anthony A. Gutierrez
	David VanArtsdalen
30th	Lee Schur
31st	Eva Faust
31st	Jane S. Friedman
31st	Robert Gintel
31st	Sari Elizabeth Goldstein

Aidan Kahn and Family Cordially Invite All of KJCC to Join Us for Aídan's Bar Mítzvah.



Saturday, March 24, 2012 10:00 a.m. at KICC. Kiddush lunch to follow the service.

Rabbi Agler's Next Torah Service

Rabbi Richard Agler will lead another of his stimulating and interactive Torah learning services at 10 a.m. Saturday morning, March 31st in the KJCC sanctuary. Ask anyone who attends how invigorated (and Jewish!) they feel afterwards.

Rabbi Agler is also scheduled to give his first "Lunch & Learn" class on How to Lead A Friday Night Service, Sunday, April 1st at 1:00 p.m.

March Anniversaries

		Years
lst	Jerry & Sheila Olsen	53
2nd	Joe Gould & Marla Berenson	16
	Joseph & Susan Sachs	
I4th	Henry & Patricia Isenberg	42
22nd	David & Patti Gross	15
25th	Joseph & Susan Goldberg	19

This Year's Shabbat Across America

On March 2nd, hundreds of synagogues across North America, spearheaded by Jewish Community Outreach Service, will unite for a special Shabbat experience! We at the KJCC will be listed, as we have been for the past two years, in a national directory of synagogues sharing a meal (or, in our case this year, an Oneg — we will still be full from Joshua and Zoe's food enjoyed at Steve Smith's Romanian night), and all the sweet ritual observances of Shabbat, our

most important of all Jewish holidays. Any wandering Jew looking for a welcoming place to share this night in the Keys will know (or be told) where to find us. That night, at the service, we will observe the mitzvah to "remember the Sabbath and keeo it holy" with extra attention and songs.

-Gloria

The Seders Are Coming (and Soon)

Hard to believe, but it's almost time for the first of the three festivals mandated by the Torah. That's Passover, of course. Please make your reservations now for the annual KJCC Second Seder, to be held once again at the Islamorada Fishing Club. The ad on page 8 has specifics.

The Women's Seder, now in its ninth year, will take place at KJCC on Sunday, April 1st at 5:00. Please see the ad on page 28.

Susan and Patti, our Gift Shop managers, have a spanking new selection of seder plates, matzoh trays and matzoh covers, just in time. Come by and explore. Ask them to show you what else is new. \$\diams\$

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.

In Memory Of

In Memory Of	In Memory Of	In Memory Of	
Harvey Roazen	Robert Berman	Dorothy Stanlake	
By Sylvia Berman	By Sylvia Berman <>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>	By Alan L. Beth & Candace J. Stanlake	
In Memory Of	In Memory Of	In Memory Of	
Robert Kohlenbrener	Louis Abraham Weinstein	Hilda Dorf	
By Jim & Joan Boruszak	By Dick & Rita Bromwich	By Barry & Natalie Dorf	
In Memory Of	In Memory Of	In Memory Of	
Maurice Field	Maxime Kaplan	Louis Weinstein	
By Carol Field <>><><>>	By Marsha Garrettson	By Eric Grace & Ruth Schrader-Grace	
In Memory Of	In Memory Of	In Memory Of	
Selma Greenspan	Arlene R. Brenner	Louise Hermann	
By Mrs. Marty Graham	By Marilyn Greenbaum <>><><>>>>	By Robert Hermann <>>>>>>>>>>>	
In Memory Of	In Memory Of	In Memory Of	
Dorothy Hirsch	Harry Phillips	Rachamim Levy	
By Gerald Hirsch	By Henry & Patricia Isenberg	By Michal Kamely	
In Memory Of	In Memory Of	In Memory Of	
Judith N. Cooper	Marian Rose Klimpl	Samual Lieberman	
By David & Lois Kaufman	By Michael Klimpl <>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>	By Erica Lieberman-Garrett	
In Memory Of	In Memory Of	In Memory Of	
Irving Line	Lori Mills	Oscar Margulies	
By Jonathan & Arlene Line	By Bunny Lohmann	By Stanley & Jenny Margulies	
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~		Chai-Lights March 2012 7	

# In Memoriam March 2012

In Memory Of In Memory Of

Mathew Mirantz Louis Weinstein

In Memory Of In Memory Of

Denise Moss Dorothy Ross

By Joel & Linda Pollack By Joyce Peckman

In Memory Of In Memory Of

Cissie Rose Lang Esther Schur

In Memory Of In Memory Of

Ida Seder Isadore Seder

In Memory Of In Memory Of

George B. Sachs Anne Temkin

By Morton & Gene Silverman By Robert Temkin

In Memory Of In Memory Of

Theresa Steinbock Abe M. Reider

In Memory Of In Memory Of

Alice Weber Deborah Eichler

 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 vou can't be at services, and would like someone you care about to be included in the *mishebevrach* prayer, call or e-mail and let us know. We'll happily include any name (or names) you tell us about. The KJCC number is 852-5235. Or e-mail Stuart at president@ keysjewishcenter.com.

# Sisterhood Lauren Sax



isterhood has been very active, but then aren't we always?! If you haven't heard the news or read your various KICC materials, we now have a monthly women's discussion group. Joan Kay is the force behind it all, and we meet on the last Monday evening of the month at her condo. For 11/2 hours, we discuss a pertinent topic that we have decided on the month before. As this goes to print, we are looking forward to Erica speaking on a holistic way of life and herbal medications. Next month's topic might be "getting along with your daughter-in-law" or "living in a non-lewish world." Come see what we are all about. Make sure to respond to me if you are interested in joining us.

Speaking of active, after our next meeting on the 4th, Anna from Curves in Key Largo will be doing a Zumba presentation. Come to our meeting (rescheduled for 10:30 a.m. with Zumba at 12:30) and afterwards join all of us on the ins and outs of this new craze. This should be good for a pound or two!

Reminder: April and Passover are just around the corner. Make sure you check out the Women's Seder and KICC Seder pages in this issue and send your reservations in pronto. Both events are not to be missed. We also salute and wish a hearty Mazel Tov to Muriel Swartz, our Women's Seder honoree this year. An absolutely perfect choice.

Can't forget that a Mazel Tov is in order, as well, to Jeffrey Schocket, KJCC's new Men's Club president.

SARGE SARGE. Need I say more?

Much of my Sisterhood presidency revolves around emails. Emails have certainly become a way of life in our world today. Along with this computer life comes viruses and forwards. I detest forwards. However. once in a great while, I receive a decent one. I especially like the following because I felt it might help not only me but also my sister friends at the KICC. I hope you find the list of suggestions from experts below as informative as I did, and please: stay safe.

# Things To Do In An Emergency Situation:

- The elbow is the strongest point on your body. If you are close enough, use it!
- If a robber asks for your purse or wallet, toss it AWAY from you and run in the opposite direction.
- If you are ever thrown into the trunk of a car, kick out the back tail lights. stick your arm out of the hole and start waving like crazy.
- If someone is in the car with a gun to your head, do not drive off. Instead, gun the engine and speed into anything, wrecking the car. Your airbag will save you. If the gun-wielder is in the back seat, they will get the worst of it. As soon as the car crashes bail out and run.
- When getting into your car in a parking lot, be aware. Look around you, look into your car, at the passenger side floor and in the back seat.
- If you hear a crying baby outside or think you left the water running outside, especially if it is at night, DO NOT go outside or open the door. Call the police. >



# Saturday, April 7, 2012 6:30 pm

# Islamorada Fishing Club

For information and reservations contact:

Mary Lee Singer 305-240-0061, mizzleez3@yahoo.com or Maryon Gould 305-853-2541.

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

Your check is your reservation. Reserve early as we will be opening this to the public after March 15th.



Donations

Members: Adults \$50; Children 12 and under are our guests.

Non-Members: \$75

# YEDA VETORASHA

Yardena Kamely



οf

# The Mashhadis: A History of The **Double Life of Persian Jews**

X X hen I think of Purim and the lews of Persia, I remember the stories of my grandparents, who all lived in Persia before they immigrated to Israel. Their stories were of survival and their complicated life as Jews; but they also remembered Persia with a fondness and love for the Persian culture. They liked the stories of the "good" Kings, and of the majestic life at the Persian courts.

Today, most people are familiar with the "hidden Jews" of Spain and Portugal, the

Anusim (Marranos) who were forced to convert to Christianity, but who, in secret, continued to practice Judaism. Less is commonly known about the "Mashhadi," the Jews of Mashhad. Persia. who from the 1830s were forced to convert to Islam but who also, secretly, continued to live as Jews.

The Persian Jewish community is the oldest documented community of the Diaspora. Jewish life in Persia can be

traced back to the First Exile, the deportation of the Israelites in 722 BCE from Samaria (by the Assyrians) and later the nation of Judea in 586 BCE (by the Babylonians) to the cities of Medea and Persia - known as "Iran" since 1935. During the Cyrus declaration (538 BCE, after Persia had conquered Babylon), some Jews were allowed back to their homeland, Judea. But many also stayed, especially those who were financially well established. These communities were probably the original Jews

Persia, who also expanded into the provinces of Ecbatan and Susan (Shushan). The tolerant attitude of the rulers at the time allowed personalities such as Ezra. Daniel. Esther and Mordechai to play a role in the Persian court.

Under Islamic rule (which began in 637 CE), Jewish colonies were established in all the Persian provinces. Later, during the Safawid's dynasty, Shiism was proclaimed as the state religion (c.1600). Intolerance for minorities burst forth. The second half of the

> 17th century was a difficult time for lews. Shah Abbas II destroyed Hebrew books. Jews were made to wear special hand- and headgear for identification purposes. Then followed forced conversion, especially in the city of Isfahan. Despite the Islamization of the lews, most adhered tenaciously in secret to their religion and began to live a dual life. In the 18th century the

Jews began to migrate to Afghanistan, Turkestan, Samarkand, Bukhara, Kurdistan, Egypt, and into India. The Kajar Dynasty, until well into the 19th century, was intolerant towards the Jews. Oppression and persecution followed as Jews were forced to convert, notably in the city of Mashhad under Muhammad Shah (1839).

The Jews of Mashhad (a city in far northeastern Persia, just below Turkmenistan and just west of the border with Afghanistan) deserve a special mention, as their life in Persia

Under Islamic rule (which began in 637 CE), Jewish colonies were established in all the Persian provinces.

was so remarkable and different from that of other Persian Jews. During the reign of Nader Shah (1736-1747) a group of Jews, some forty merchant families, had been ordered transferred from the northern provinces to the city of Kelat (the proposed capital at the time). This was because of their talents as business people, their reputation for trustworthiness, and their business and international connections. They were invited to participate in the running of the Shah's vast fortune and financial institutions. Hardly had the first family settled in the city when the Shah (a member of the Sunni Moslem

minority) was assassinated. There was no longer a reason to keep them in Kelat and the community dispersed. Many eventually moved to the nearby city of Mashhad for the next two centuries and were subject to all the usual constraints, often made even more difficult because of the importance of the city as a center of pilgrimage and its holiness in the Islamic world.

The Mashhad Jewish community was disciplined and self -motivated, with almost no in-

ter-marriages, not just with non-lews but even with Jewish communities of other Persian provinces. Although outwardly made to convert to Islam, this community never lost its Jewish faith or neglected its religious rituals, remarkably surviving throughout its difficult history. It continued its Jewish religious activities to the full, even in secret.

In struggling for survival it developed a highly organized society and resolved its problems relying on an internal and integrated network of people and religious figures. My grandfather (on my mother's side) was one of those religious leaders. My mother told me stories about him and their life as Anusim. Jews attended services at the mosque. They appeared to fast during Ramadan, wore Muslim garb, and bought at Muslim shops. But at home, in basements, behind closed doors and shuttered windows, they

secretly continued to observe Jewish law. They had many little ways of maintaining their Jewishness: Shabbat candles, for example, were always lit under cover, so they couldn't be seen from the windows. Families kept dogs and cats, so they could feed them the Muslim meat they bought while they themselves ate kosher meat, shechted (ritually slaughtered) in secret and smuggled home under the women's chadors (long cloaks). In the market, the Mashhadi lews purchased Muslim bread like everyone else, but as they walked home, they gave the

> bread to the Muslim poor. In their basements they ground their own wheat and baked their own bread. My grandmother and my mother's aunts made wine in the basement, and matzah for Pessah. They'd give all the maids the day off, and then they'd cook and bake.

> Iran, spreading out all over Milan, New York, and Jerusalem. It remains remarkable

By the end of World War II all the Mashhadi Iews had left the world, with larger communities congregating in London,

that, though forced to flee many times in their history, they resolutely resettle in neighborhoods with other Mashhadis and conserve their uniquely Jewish/Persian cultural life. There are still about 15,000 Mashhadi Jews, with the majority living in New York and Israel. In Israel, life as a Mashhadi has become difficult for a different reason. "Here, life is very open. The ties have loosened," says Betsalelya, a Mashhadi woman living in Herzelia. "Before, the families were together, they did business together. But here, with the freedom, it's not necessary to do that anymore." But my relatives, whose life is within the big Mashhadi community in Great Neck, Long Island, are very conservative. They continue to live their very traditional Mashhadi lewish culture, and, as always, they will celebrate Purim with rich oriental. Persian-lewish traditions. >

# World Jewish Report Medina Roy



# A Disturbing Statistic

A recent survey published in the German magazine Stern indicated that more than 21 percent of young Germans between the ages of 18 and 30 know neither the name Auschwitz, by far the most notorious Nazi extermination camp, nor the crimes committed there. Almost half of those canvassed by the Forsa Research Institute said they had never visited a concentration camp. (This despite the fact that Germany has carefully turned all of them into permanent memorials to the dead.) The 67th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by the Russians was commemorated at the end of January. By the time Russian soldiers arrived at the camp in 1945, some 1.2 million people, most of them Jews, had been murdered there. The same survey showed that 95 percent of people over the age of 30 had indeed heard of Auschwitz and the crimes perpetrated there. Why the survey? The German government is concerned about a spike in neo-Nazi crime and that young people ignorant of the past make easy targets for the propaganda of far-right neofascist groups. (www.dailymail.com, 1-26-12)

# A Pledge for Tu B'Shvat

In early February, just before Tu B'Shvat (the new year for trees), the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) announced that fifty Jewish leaders, from all branches of Judaism, had signed the "Jewish Environment and Energy Imperative" declaration. The signers' goal were a significant reduction in greenhouse-gas emissions plus advocacy for energy independence and security. They also pledged to reduce the Jewish community's energy consumption fourteen percent by the year 2014, which is the next Shmitah (the sabbatical year), the seventh year in the Jewish calendar's seven-year agricultural cycle when we are commanded to let the land lie dormant and refrain from any

form of working the land, allowing it to rest. Tu B'Shvat was celebrated on February 8th. (The Forward, 2-7-12)

# A Super Bet

Jona Rechnitz, a graduate of Yeshiva University and an observant Jew, won \$50,000 betting that the New York Giants would win the Super Bowl. Rechnitz, 29, and a life-long Giants fan, placed a \$1,000 bet at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, where the casino gave him 50-to-1 odds. He bet that the first score of the game would be a safety in favor of the Giants. And that's exactly what happened. Rechnitz will be donating almost all of his winnings to charity. \$5.000 of which will be donated to a charity selected by Tom Brady, the guarterback for the other team, the New England Patriots. The Giants' defensive linemen will also select a charity where some of the money will go. When asked why he's giving the money away, Rechnitz said that it is "a nice way to make a kiddus HaShem" (sanctifying the name of G-d). (www.israelnationalnews.com, 2-8-12)

### Finally, After 1,500 Years....

The Talmud is an arduous body of work: 63 volumes of rabbinical discourse and disputation that, after the Torah, form Judaism's central scripture. It has been around for 1,500 years and is studied daily by tens of thousands of Jews. Trying to navigate through it can be difficult, if not exhausting, because the one thing that's been missing in this monumental work is an accessible index. But there is one now and it's been compiled not by a Torah scholar but by Daniel Retter, a 66-year-old immigration lawyer from the Bronx. Called *HaMafteach*, Hebrew for "the key," the index, representing seven years of work by Retter, contains 6,600 topical entries and 27,000 sub-

topical entries that direct users to the treatises and pages of text they are seeking. It's available in both English and Hebrew, the English version costing \$29.99. The first printing of 2,000 books – a market test – sold out in just a few days. When asked why the Talmud has never had a workable index, Rabbi Benjamin Blech, professor of Talmud at Yeshiva University, said that study of the Talmud is not supposed to be easy. "We want people to struggle with the text, because by figuring it out you will have a deeper comprehension," he said. "[The rabbis] wanted a living index, not a printed index."

The market for the index will be a boon for the thousands of Jews who participate in *Daf Yomi*, (literally, "the daily page") the page-aday cycle in which everyone studies the same *daf* (it's actually two full pages) every day for seven and a half years until all 5,422 pages are completed, when, as with the reading of the Torah, they begin all over again. (www.nytimes.com, 12-27-11)

# 2012 Sydney Taylor Book Awards

The 2012 winners of the prestigious Sydney Taylor Book Awards (named for the author of the classic children's book series, *All-of-a-Kind Family*) were recently announced. The award honors new books for children and teens that "exemplify the highest literary standards while authentically portraying the Jewish experience." The winners are:

Younger readers Category: Chanukah Lights, by Michael J. Rosen and Robert Sabuda.

Honor Books: *Naamah and the Ark at Night,* by Susan Campbell Bartoletti, and *Around the World in One Shabbat,* by Durga Yael Bernhard.

Older Readers Category: Music Was It: Young Leonard Bernstein, by Susan G. Rubin

Honor Books: Lily Renee, Escape Artist: from Holocaust Survivor to Comic Book Pioneer, by Trina Robbins; Hammerin' Hank Greenberg: Baseball Pioneer, by Shelley Sommer, and Irena's Jars of Secrets, by Marcia Vaughan.

<u>Teen Readers Category</u>: *The Berlin Boxing Club*, by Robert Sharenow.

Honor Books: *Then*, by Morris Gleitzman, and *The Blood Lie*, by Shirley Reva Vernick.

In addition to the aforementioned winners, the Award Committee designated eighteen Notable Books of Jewish Content. For a full listing, along with annotations, go to www.jewishlibraries.org. (www.jewishlibraries.org, 1-17-12)

### MHK, the Patriots' Jewish Mother

Did you happen to notice the patch worn by the New England Patriots at the Super Bowl last month, the one that had the letters MHK? It was meant to honor the memory of the team's "Jewish Mother," Myra Hiatt Kraft. Mrs. Kraft on her own was a major philanthropist, and together with her husband Robert, the Krafts were generous benefactors of Israeli institutions and of Brandeis University, her alma mater. From 1983 to 2011, Myra Hiatt Kraft served on the board of the Boston Boys and Girls Club and, in 1995, became the first woman to chair that board. She also ran the Patriots' Charitable Foundation. More than 70,000 "MHK" pins were distributed to fans as they entered the stadium. (Jewish Women's Archive, www.iwa.org, 2-3-12)

### **Educated Israelis**

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Israel is among the world's most highly educated countries. The organization highlighted Israel for the high percentage of its population that holds post-secondary degrees. With 45 percent of Israelis completing university degrees, Israel ranks ahead of Japan (44 percent), the United States (41 percent), and the United Kingdom (37 percent), but lags behind Canada (50 percent). But the OECD also noted that the percentage of Israeli citizens obtaining post-secondary degrees is slowing down dramatically. (The Jerusalem Post, 2-1-12)

### Y.U. at Number 4

According to a recent *U.S. News and World Report* ranking, Yeshiva University is the fourth most popular school in this country. The annual rankings are based on the percentage of students who attend a university out of the total number who are accepted to the school. According to the report, 70 per-

cent of the accepted students enroll at YU. The top three spots went to Harvard, Brigham Young and Stanford universities, in that order. YU President Richard Ioel said. "Most of our students have grown up with certain values and a certain belief system and we believe that those should not be compromised when they hit college. Our students are looking to continue growing in their Jewish and secular studies and they know that we provide the pre-eminent platform for them to grow Jewishly and intellectually. (www.ita.org, 2-2-12)

# A Challenge to Hugo

Venezuelan opposition leader Enrique Capriles Radonski, governor of the Miranda state and the grandson of Holocaust survivors, will challenge President Hugo Chavez in the election scheduled for early October. Capriles, 39, won the primary in mid-February with 61 percent of the vote, making him the unity candidate against Chavez, who has held the presidency for thirteen years. Some three million people voted in the country's firstever primary. Capriles' maternal grandmother is lewish, but he was raised and considers himself a devout Catholic. "Because of my mother and grandmother, for Jews I'm Jewish, but I'm Catholic," he said. Yet Capriles has not escaped anti-Semitic attacks, despite considering himself to be a Christian. During the governor's race in 2008, government-aligned media described him as a member of the "Jewish-Zionist bourgeoisie," and "genetically fascist." In 2009, pro-government supporters surrounded his house and painted swastikas on the outer walls. (www.jta.org, 2-13-12)

### In Memoriam

· Adrienne Cooper, American-born singer, teacher and curator of Yiddish music who worked tirelessly to keep the Yiddish language alive for younger generations, died recently at the age of 65. In the 1970s and 80s, Cooper and a handful of others started a Yiddish revival movement. They understood that people who were fluent in Yiddish were primarily Holocaust survivors and children of turn-of-the-century Jewish immigrants, two

groups who were rapidly dying out. As a result of Cooper's efforts, numerous colleges began to offer Yiddish courses. She was one of the two founders of KlezKamp, which since 1985 has convened annually in the Catskills, drawing hundreds of musicians, lovers of the Yiddish language and those interested in learning about Jewish cultures of Eastern Europe. She called this annual gathering "a flying shtetl." On the liner notes of her last album, "Enchanted," Ms. Cooper noted that she embraced Yiddish for its "hard-to-describe delights, for the rage it brings to injustice and for its wonderful weight on the tongue." (www.nytimes.com, 12-28-11)

- · Bill Mardo, a longtime sportswriter for the Communist Party newspaper "The Daily Worker" and one of the leading voices for integrating baseball in the 1940s, has died at the age of 89. Along with other Jewish colleagues, Mardo's columns and articles over the course of many years greatly helped create the moral case for opening Major League baseball to African Americans. Mardo is also credited with initiating the campaign to convince Brooklyn Dodgers general manager Branch Rickey to integrate the team. After lackie Robinson broke Major League baseball's color line, he and Mardo became good friends. Born William Bloom in Manhattan, he changed his name to Mardo as a tribute to his sisters Marion and Doris, using the first few letters of their first names. His interest in left-wing politics began when, as a teenager, he read "The Daily Worker," and then joined the Communist Party. Mardo began working for "The Daily Worker" in 1942. (www.nytimes.com, 1-24-12)
- · Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, best known for authoring "The Torah: A Modern Commentary," the Bible widely used by Reform congregations (two copies of which are in the KICC library), died recently. He was 99. Born in Munster, Germany, Plaut earned a law degree in 1935, fled Nazi Germany and came to the United States, where he was ordained at Hebrew Union College in 1939. Plaut was an internationally recognized religious leader and prolific writer and scholar. His papers are housed at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. (The Forward, 2-10-12) ◊

# Contributions to KJCC

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

**Book Plates** In Honor of Roller, Pauline Joel & Linda Pollack's 50th anniversary Schur, Lee Joel & Linda Pollack's 50th anniversary Swartz, George & Muriel loel & Linda Pollack's 50th anniversary

**Book Plates** In Memory of Pollack, Joel & Linda Karen Hayhurst

Chai-Lights In Honor of Plutzer, Arthur Ioel & Linda Pollack Pauline Roller In Memory of Al Roller

General Fund In Honor of

Anonymous Begam, Delores pray for us Cole, Ronald love offering Knowles, Richard & Barbara loel & Linda

Pollack's 50th anniversary Peckman, Joyce loel & Linda Pollack's

50th anniversary Sax. Stuart & Lauren loel & Linda Pollack's

50th anniversary Schulberg, Alan & Elaine Jim Boruszak's birthday

General Fund In Memory of Pollack, Joel & Linda Talia Agler Pollack, Joel & Linda Iris Jackson

Meditation Garden

Beth, Alan & Candy Stanlake brick - Joel & Linda Pollack's 50th anniversary

Silverman, Mort & Gene brick - Joel & Linda Pollack's 50th anniversary

Werthamer, Robert & Heide

Sax. Stuart & Lauren Talia Agler Sax. Stuart & Lauren Karen Hayhurst Oneg Fund In Honor of Thank you KICC for the Ellner, Susan

warm welcome Janowitz, Sam & Leslie Leslie's birthday Pollack, Linda Joel's birthday Schur, Lee Lee's birthday Gross, David & Patti Alvin Gross

Scholarship Fund Graham, Bea

Tallent, Ralph & Lillian

Wolfe, Larry & Dorothy

Tree of Life

Michael & Lillian Janowitz; Janowitz, Sam & Leslie Leo & Beulah Grossman Steinbock, Steve & Carol loel & Linda Pollack's 50th anniversary

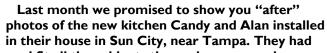
Swartz, George & Muriel loel & Linda Pollack's 50th anniversary

Yartzeit Contributions In Memory of Emkey, Gerri Robert Kinney Feinberg, Arthur William Feinberg Friedman, Ingrid Max Friedman Friedman, Ingrid Flora Rosenthal Friedman, Ingrid Max Rosenthal Geller, Milton Louis Geller Gilderman, Larry & Stephanie Elsie Gilderman Isenberg, Henry & Patricia Fannie Phillips Krissel, Michael Deborah Cannon Krissel, Michael Joseph Krissel Roller, Pauline Al Roller Rubin, Mike & Myrna Milton Applebaum

Morris Estrin

Samuel Wolfe

# Photo Gallery



to assemble and fit all the cabinets themselves, remember. They did the tile work, too. But someone else did the granite countertops, though Candy was tempted.

The three photos at left were taken by David Gitin at Gloria's booth at San Pedro Church's Annual Art Among the Oaks on January 15th, where Gloria was showing at least twenty of her paintings. Many from KJCC stopped by, including Teresa, who'd be happy, we're sure, to tell the full story of the

> plunger. Susan was there when real friends come, during set-up early in the morning, below.

The photo at bottom shows Brieze and Stellar Levy cavorting with paint Jackson Pollock-style during one of the "Third Thursday" evenings on the Islamorada Art Walk.



# The Most Amazing Single Evening of Entertainment in the Upper Keys this Season.

One night only. Saturday, March 10, 2012. Wine Reception begins 7:30 p.m. At Keys Jewish Community Center in Tavernier. Sarge: the greatest entertainer you've never heard of. Brilliant vocalist and interpreter of the Great American Songbook. In his own voice plus uncanny impressions of many others. Double-over-funny stand-up comedy. Concert quality pianist. Tickets \$60 and up. (Ask. we'll explain.) Contact Nancy at 305-393-2129 or Georgia at 305-393-9885.





The three photos at left are from the early service on January 27th, led by Joyce Peckman and Beth Hayden. Carol and Steve Steinbock sponsored the Oneg in

honor of Carol's birthday. As you can see, there were several options for cake. In the photo at top, Yardena stands before her display in the KJCC lobby that same evening,

commemorating International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the day that Russian troops liberated Auschwitz.

The photos above, left and right are from the February I I th Saturday morning service led by Rabbi Richard Agler. Those of us who were there enjoyed a riveting discussion of the Ten Commandments. When's the last time you were sorry to see a service end?



All the photos on this page are from Sunday, February 12. At top, the newly sworn in KICC Board is serenaded by the **Sunday School** students. Moira,

at top, had found a special **English version of Shalom** Aleichem. At the end of the meeting, current president Stuart Sax joined with past presidents George Swartz, Alan Beth and Steve Steinbock to read final prayers seeking wisdom and also health for the members of

> the congregation. The Sunday School celebrated their Tu B'Shvat seder, center, then went outside to plant two new fruitbearing trees in the KJCC garden.



# KJCC Gift Shop



Mezuzzot Handpainted by Rosie Biskar



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



For further information contact Susan Gordon (305) 766-3585 Patti Gross (305) 664-5168

# -This Month in Jewish History-March

515 BCE - Construction of the Second Temple is completed, according to the Book of Ezra. It is 71 years since its destruction by Babylonians.

322 BCE - Aristotle dies. He is almost universally held in high esteem by Jews, then and for millennia afterwards. The writings of Maimonides, some 1,500 years later, include this: "The words of Plato, Aristotle's teacher, are obscure and figurative: they are superfluous to the man of intelligence, inasmuch as Aristotle supplanted all his predecessors. The thorough understanding of Aristotle is the highest achievement to which man can attain, with the sole exception of the understanding of the Prophets."

1126 - Alfonso VII is proclaimed king of Castile and Leon. Under his reign Christian Spain becomes a refuge for persecuted Andalusian lews. The capital city of Toledo becomes a new center for Jewish learning. The major reason for this great turn of Jewish fortune is the king's relationship with Yehuda Ibn-Ezra, who the king promotes to commander of the fortress of Calatrava as a reward for his braverv during its conquest. Ibn-Ezra then uses his influence to create a refuge for Jews fleeing Almohades, a religiously fervent Berber Moslem dynasty in southern Spain after successful conquests in parts of North Africa.

1152 - Frederick Barbarossa is elected Roman -German king. Known to history as Barbarossa or Frederick I. he rules as Holv Roman Emperor for forty years. He fiercely protects his Jewish subjects, warning local priests and monks not to preach against the Jews. He tells Parliament that anybody who kills a Jew will forfeit his own life. Thanks to Frederick, German bishops threaten excommunication for those who attack lews. lews sincerely grieve his death, and a Jewish commentator of the time writes: "Frederick defended us with all his might and enabled us to live among our enemies, so that no one harmed the lews."

1239 - Spanish King James I codifies privileges of the lews of Aragon with his Edict of Valencia. lewish courts (The Bet Din) are authorized to try all cases except capital offenses. A little over two hundred years later, life for the Jews of Aragon will be decidedly worse.

1693 - Carlo Della Torre di Rezzonico is born. As Pope Clement XIII he will rule that there is no substance to the claim that lews use blood in the preparation of their unleavened bread.

1791 - A Christian in Alsace is punished by the Church for lighting a fire for a Jew on Shabbat. Israel Jacobs of Pennsylvania takes his seat as the first lewish member of the United States House of Representatives.

1799 - The French army under the command of Napoleon Bonaparte reaches the outskirts of Jaffa. This military action has nothing whatever to do with the Jewish people. It is, though, one of hundreds of examples throughout history. not to be the last, of Palestine being a magnet for armies because it is the land bridge between Africa, Asia and indirectly, Europe.

1801 - David Emanuel takes office as Governor of Georgia, the first lew to serve as Governor in any of the United States. Emanuel is appointed to serve the last eight months of the unfinished gubernatorial term of a predecessor selected by the state legislature to serve a term in the U.S. Senate.

1820 - Alexander I of Russia prohibits the employment of Christian servants by Jews. On the other side of Europe, the revolutionary military leader and de facto Spanish leader. Riego of Spain, issues a decree ending the Inquisition. The Spanish Inquisition is officially and finally

brought to an end in 1834, over 350 years after it is instituted in 1480.

1845 - Florida becomes the 27th state to join the Union. In 1763, the first recorded Jews in Florida come to Pensacola. More lews move to north Florida in the next few decades, but the Jewish population remains small during this time, numbering no more than a dozen individuals. When Florida becomes a state, there are less than 100 Jews in a population of 66,500. The first U.S. Senator from Florida is a lew. David Levy Yulee.

1866 - An article is published in New York describing the annual Purim Ball entitled "The Purim Ball: The Wonders of a Persian Temple - A Glimpse of the Glories of Babylon Fun. Frolic and Phantasmagoria." (They just don't make headline-writers like that any more.)

1893 - R.H. Macy & Co. advertises "Passover Goods for the Holiday" on the fifth floor of its new building, including "Matzoths, Matzoth Flour and Potato Flour" for nine cents a pound.

1894 - Coca-Cola is sold in bottles for the first time. Coca-Cola's initial introduction is in 1886 at the fountain of Jacob's Pharmacy in Atlanta, owned by Dr. Joe Jacobs, who becomes one of Atlanta's most prominent Jews. Coke is certified as Kosher and Kosher for Passover in 1935, thanks to the efforts of an orthodox Atlanta rabbi named Tobias Geffen.

1899 - Bayer registers aspirin as a trademark, claiming that Felix Hoffman, an "Aryan" scientist, develops the drug to alleviate the symptoms of his rheumatic father. But according to Diarmuid leffreys, the author of Aspirin: The Story of a Wonder Drug, it is in fact a Jew named Arthur Eichengrün who is the Bayer chemist who first finds an aspirin formulation tolerable to the human stomach and without the unpleasant side effects of nausea and gastric pain. Jeffreys writes that Eichengrün also invents the name "aspirin" and is the first person to use the new formulation to test its safety and efficacy. Eichengrün, however, is

excluded from the official version of Bayer's history in 1934 because he is Jewish.

1901 - Master bridge player Charles Goren is born. The lawyer from Philadelphia probably does more to popularize the game of bridge than any other single American.

1903 - Congress passes legislation to curb immigration to the United States. The bill requires immigrants to pay a two-dollar head tax each (possibly more money than many poor immigrants have ever seen). It also gives immigration officers the right to peremptorily exclude those whom they deem anarchists. The legislation is obviously aimed at the flood of hopefuls coming from Southern and Eastern Europe, including large Jewish populations from the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires.

1911 - Fire breaks out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. At least 146 workers die, many of them immigrant Jewish women, some as young as fourteen. This single event causes laws to be passed mandating worker safety and is largely responsible for the growth of the New York garment unions.

1912 - Hadassah is founded by Henrietta Szold. At a meeting at Temple Emanu-El in New York City, Szold - scholar, teacher, journalist, editor, social worker and pioneer Zionist - convinces the Daughters of Zion study circle to expand its purpose and embrace "practical Zionism," work to help meet the health needs of Palestine's people. The meeting is held around the time of Purim. so the women call themselves "The Hadassah chapter of the Daughters of Zion," adopting the Hebrew name of Queen Esther.

1914 - Arthur Ruppin writes in his diary: "Today I succeeded in buying from Sir John Gray Hill his large and magnificently situated property on Mount Scopus, thus acquiring the first piece of ground for the Jewish University in Ierusalem."

1938 - Oil is discovered in Saudi Arabia. The connection with modern Jewish history has been continuous and complex ever since. >

# . Foel and Linda Pollack

Were married on February 11, 1962 in Miami. At the Friday night service on February 10, 2012, a few hours before their 50th anniversary and in front of a full sanctuary of KJCC friends and admirers, plus family and lifelong friends from Texas, New York and California, they renewed their vows. Rabbi Richard Agler performed the ceremony. As Joel pointed out in his invitation to all of KJCC to join them that night, it's been a pretty special run for two young kids who had barely known each other for eight weeks.



pages. Our great thanks to Barbara and Richard Knowles and Mary Lee Singer for their photo contributions.









# Keys Jewish Community Center

Sunday April 1, 2011 5:00 PM @ KJCC Homemade Seder Dinner w/Wine

Come celebrate the 9th Women's Seder

Donation: \$18 chai + \$9.00 for 9 years =\$27.00

Join us in celebration as we continue our efforts of Tikkun Olam - repair the world.

Limited seating - Contacts: Beth (305) 393-4013 bethkam@bellsouth.net Erica (305) 853-1003 hippiejap@hotmail.com



# **A** Brief History of the Purimspiel

# The Evolution of a Uniquely European-Jewish Art Form

Readings of

the Meaillah

tended not to

be synagogue

rituals but

public enter-

tainments.

ife for the Jews of 12th century Europe _was gray, bleak, and precarious. Yes, there was Rashi, and a generation later Maimonides, and the great Jewish poet Abraham ibn Ezra. But there was also the relentless looting and pillaging of the grim slog history called the Second Crusade, as well as Genghis Khan's Mongol cavalry swooping in for conquest and additional pillaging from the opposite direction. Yet somehow the Jews persevered, kept the Sabbath and their identities, and whenever possible studied. They don't

seem to have celebrated the holidays and festivals quite as Jews did during the Temple period or as their descendants would during later periods of European history. Passover seems to have been important, but not Succot or Shavuot. Chanukah was acknowledged more than celebrated, with Chanukah menorahs often lit in secrecy so as not to draw the attention of unfriendly neighbors.

Interestingly, the one lesser holiday that seems to have been considered important and whose practices were dutifully followed was Purim. Scholars don't seem to fully agree as to why, but perhaps people trying desperately to cope with the typically horrid and Jew-phobic conditions of Europe found a way to identify with the difficulties and persecutions suffered by the Persian Jews in the Book of Esther. (As they apparently also did with the enslaved Jews craving deliverance from Pharaoh's Egypt.)

At any rate, they do seem to have regularly celebrated Purim. As the 12th century dawned the readings of the Purim Megillah tended not to be synagogue rituals but public entertainments, a reader holding the scroll aloft and booming out its contents to as many as could be assembled. This made sense. It wasn't going to the synagogue that was the mitzvah; it was the hearing of the

story. For people like these, typically eking out a miserable living, it was hard enough to stop working for a day on the Sabbath. They were going to forego another day of work, and possibly eating, just to go listen to the Book of Esther? At this time, in such a place, it made perfect sense for the scroll and story to be literally brought to them. If God was portable, why not Purim?

There had, since the days of the dueling Talmuds in Palestine and Babylon, been a merriment component to Purim. (Purim's importance

was also underscored by how many Talmudic tractates were devoted to explaining its proper observation.) Unlike many Biblical stories, this one is a flat-out triumph for the Jews, not a complex story with a heavily lavered set of moral lessons. It engenders joy and celebration, which was encouraged by the rabbis. (Of course, there was that small matter of slaughtering 75,000 Persians even after they'd won, just in case, though that aspect of the story never seems to get

into the summaries.) Soon, the out-loud readings began to diverge from the actual text. Rhymed couplets began to appear, which enabled both easier assimilation of the material and also an opportunity for the readers to add their own creative elements to the story. This slippage of the prim mask of sobriety was abetted by that virtual command to revelry issued from the sage Rava in his now-famous dictum in the Babylonian Talmud, that "a man is obligated to get drunk on Purim to the point where he can no longer distinguish between 'cursed is Haman' and 'Blessed is Mordechai.'" (This excess so horrified Maimonides that he tried to re -formulate the instruction to be that we should drink only enough to fall asleep. But the vox populi was far more attuned to the first guy.) Jews in Italy, southern France (in Provence) and elsewhere soon began to see Purim represented Chai-Lights March 2012 31

by full parodies on the Purim text and other stories of the Bible and Talmud, plus the liturgy and other familiar aspects of Jewish life.

By the 1400s, as the Renaissance began to spread from Italy throughout Europe, Jewish creativity, though not quite offered a full seat at the banquet that would forever banish the darkness of medieval Europe, exploded into the opening created by Purim. In Provence they had begun to don masks and costumes for Purim. Even sermons were occasionally played for laughs. Monologues began to give way to simple plays, with expanded characters and even more divergence from the actual Purim story. These activities began to be called Purimspiels, "spiel" being the Yiddish word for story, play, or skit.

By the 1500s Purimspiels would often become staged entertainment at the homes of wealthy Jews. Yeshiva students would be recruited as actors (or stooges), and they would usually wear masks and costumes. By the 1600s, the repertoire broadened considerably (both meanings intended). Satire and teasing often gave way to lampoons and grotesque parodies. It was inevitable, since these were pure examples of folk art, that vulgarity and profanity would also become incorporated into the Purimspiel writing. And it did, to the point in the 1700s that the city fathers of Frankfort actually staged a public burning of a printed Purimspiel because of its undisguised vulgarity. As you can imagine, the writers of these skits took great liberties with the events and characters of the Purim story. Many threw off the con-

straints of the original story altogether, some satirizing other Bible stories such as David and Goliath or the selling of Joseph by his brothers, some dropping any Biblical pretext at all and lampooning elements of contemporary Jewish life and politics. It was all an irreverence that would be tolerated only on Purim.

By the 1800s, many Purimspiels had become full-fledged plays, usually still with a satiric edge, often with music and dance influenced by European opera - and were commonly produced and staged by professional acting companies with large casts.

These spiels were often performed in public places and charged admission. It seems clear that the Yiddish Theater, which began about this time, had its roots in the writing and production skills and creative imagination learned from creating Purimspiels.

So Mel Brooks had his antecedents. There's a long history of satiric or broadly comic musical plays in the Jewish tradition, all of it seemingly evolving from the simple mitzvah of hearing the Purim story. It's a shame those grand and passionate productions from the 17th and 18th centuries aren't available on CD. How wonderful it would be if we were able to enjoy and groan and hoot at their audacity now. >

# **An Artist Remembers** pre-Holocaust Purim in Poland



From They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the Holocaust. - Mayer Kirshenblatt and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. His entire collection of paintings can be viewed at nyu.edu.

"A highlight of the holiday was the Purim play, one of which, "The Cracow Wedding," is the subject of this painting. The troop would rehearse for months in advance. Most of the performers were laborers and artisans. They wore homemade costumes, the styles going

back to the 18th century. The female characters are wearing the national costume of the Cracow region. You can see them to this day at folk festivals. If the women look masculine. it is because men are playing the female parts. In the Jewish tradition, women would not perform this sort of thing. Those playing male roles are wearing shako hats, inspired by the hats that soldiers wore during the Napoleonic Wars to make them look taller and more intimidating. "The Cracow Wedding" was the only Purim play that required instrumental music.

"The Purim players would perform for five or six families in an evening. They did not visit every house, only those of prominent citizens. They wouldn't come to my house. We loved to follow the Purim players from place to place. You can see us standing outside Zayfman's home, watching the Purim play through the window."

# The World-Famous Story of Purim

by Meish Goldish

The story of Purim in an international tale, told Purimspiel-style.

King Achashverosh was Finnish with his disobedient wife Vashti. "You Congo now!" he ordered her. After she had Ghana way, the King's messengers went Roman the land to find a new queen. And India end, the beautiful Esther won the crown.

Meanwhile. Mordechai sat outside the palace, where the Chile Haman would Czech up on him daily.

"I Haiti you because you refuse to bow to me!" Haman scolded Mordechai. "USA very stubborn man. You Jews are such Bahamas! If you keep this up. Denmark my words! I will have all your people killed! Just Kuwait and see, you Turkey!"

Mordechai went into mourning and tore his clothes - a custom known as Korea. He urged Esther to plead with the King. The Jews fasted for three days and grew very Hungary.

Esther approached the King and asked. "Kenya Belize come to a banquet I've prepared for you and Haman?" At the feast, she invited her guests to a second banquet to eat Samoa.

The King asked: "Esther, why Jamaica big meal like this? Just tell me what you want. Unto half my United Kingdom will I give you." Esther replied: "Spain full for me to say this, but Haman is Russian to kill my people."

Haman's loud Wales could be heard as he carried Honduran this scene. "Oman!" Haman cried bitterly. "Iraq my brains in an effort to destroy the Jews. But that sneaky Mordechai...Egypt me!"

Haman and his ten sons were hanged and went immediately to the Netherlands. And to Sweden the deal, the lews were allowed to Polish off the rest of their foes as well. "You lost your enemies and Uganda friend," the Kina smiled.

And that is why the Purim story Israeli a miracle. God decided to China light on His chosen people.

So now, let's celebrate. Forget all your Syria's business and just be happy! Serb up some wine and Taiwan on! Happy Purim!

# What A Purimspiel Playbill Might Look Like

From the title page of the Purimspiel "Squanto Teaches the Pilarims to Fish, a Purimspiel featuring the Three Wise Men of Bethlehem, Morty Chai and Vashti Stewart (Martha's ancestor)"

"Squanto Teaches the Pilgrims to Fish" will offend (slightly) all of the following:

- Reform lews:
- Conservative Jews:
- Orthodox lews:
- Native Americans:
- Goyim and their friends, the Gentiles:
- Gays (metrosexuals might be offended, or might not):
- Abbott and Costello;
- The Catskill Mountains:
- Mrs. Haman. &

# **Our Amazing Vacation Cruise to Antarctica**

# Mort and Gene and Joe and Susan Visit the Bottom of the World

by Gene Silverman

We arrived in Buenos Aires, Argentina on Monday, January 2nd. After checking

into our hotel we had a private guide take us to see the Libertad (which is the oldest, and still used) and Yesod Hadat synagogues, which are mostly traditional, somewhere between Conservative and Orthodox, All Jewish buildings in Buenos Aires have very large cement barriers in front with many

Just before boarding ship, there was time to explore Ushuaia, Argentina, the world's southernmost city.

cameras. We visited the Jewish neighborhood of Once (pronounced *on-say*), the Israeli Memorial Embassy Square and AMIA, the Israeli Mutual Association of Argentina. The Israeli Embassy was bombed in April 1992, killing 32 people. In 1994 AMIA, the Jewish community headquarters, was also bombed, killing 87 people and wounding more than 100 others. Its original building was destroyed in the bombing.

Argentina is the second-largest nation in Latin America and has the largest Jewish community. Jewish people here have enjoyed periods of peaceful coexistence and also periods 34 Chai-Lights March 2012 of intense anti-Semitism. We weren't allowed to take photos outside any synagogue because of the terrorist attacks that have occurred there. Inside the Metropolitan Church

there is a special memorial. It consists of two glass plates surrounding prayer book pages rescued from the ruins of Treblinka, Auschwitz and the Warsaw Ghetto. There is also a Kaddish score and two book covers, one a book of tales in Yiddish found under the rubble of AMIA's building, and the other the Book of Samuel, found during the tense search for survivors after the Israeli diplomatic building exploded. The Israeli Embassy has been relocated, but on its former site there is now a quiet square planted with trees in memory of all who

perished there.

After our tour we managed to be dropped off on Florida Street for a bite of lunch. then off to do some leather shopping. We were quite surprised when we

realized that the days of "cheap leather" were over. Prices were nowhere near cheap, but one has to keep up the foreign economies, so we did manage to spread around some Argentinean pesos.

At right, Mort and loe in the seedy but colorful La Boca district of **Buenos** Aires.

with hikes to see the sea lion colony, the elephant seal colony and the bird life. Then came Bleaker Island with the rockhopper penguins (one



The following day, our second in Buenos Aires, Susan and loe Sachs arrived, so our foursome was now complete. The following day we would all travel about 1,200 miles

south to Ushuaia, Argentina. the southernmost city in the world, where we would board Le Boreal. the ship that would take us all to Antarctica.

We departed Ushuaia on January 4th. Our first stop two days later was to





or the shallow water off Antarctica itself.

the Falklands (actually Sea Lion Island).

of the family of crested penguins) and over 9,000 pairs of king cormorants.

We sailed eastward upon the Scotia Sea. en route to the island of South Georgia, the easternmost island of the Falklands. On this

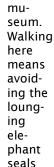
passage we endured 30-foot seas for two days, but thankfully none of us suffered mal de mer. It was amazing to watch the liquid

Above, A Magellanic penquin poses. The device at right was for cleaning our shoes.

saw many fur seals and blackbrowed and grey-headed albatross in their nests. By the way, we did these viewings aboard Zodiacs – large, sturdy, motorized rubber dinghies – traversing the very cold waters for sometimes more than one hour.

On January 10th we arrived at Grytviken Island and St. Andrews Bay. We walked around the remains of the old whaling station and the

Susan's smiling, but she wasn't too comfortable about the steady approach of that elephant seal.



and king penguins. In the afternoon, back aboard ship, we sailed into St. Andrews Bay, where the Heaney and Cook Glaciers tumble down from rugged 10,000-foot mountains to the bay.

On January 11th we entered Gold Harbour, South Georgia, situated near the southern end of the island. This is home for a large king

in our glasses not move from side to side as the seas were roiling over the windows.

On January 9th we first went onshore at Salisbury Plain (yes, the same name as the area around Stonehenge, but it is a British island, after all) to see the largest king penguin colonies in the world. In the afternoon we went to Elsehul Bay, where we



penguin colony and Gentoo penguins. elephant and fur seals and light mantled sooty albatrosses. Later we sailed into Drygalski Fjord, which has breathtaking scenery.

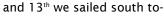
On January 12th

white craggy place, with spectacular scenery of sea ice and tabular icebergs. We traversed this in our Zodiacs, taking deep breaths every time the Zodiac brushed



King penguins, as far as the eye could see, above.





wards the Weddell Sea and Paulet Island. This sea is a great



Our ship as shot from the Zodiac, above.

against these floating "ice-chips!" Paulet Island is a small, circular volcanic cone with more than 100,000 pairs of Adelie penguins; it's awash with quano, too, which can be smelled from miles away. Wilson's storm petrels, snow petrels, sheathbills and blue-eyed

shags are also seen here.

On January 16th, after an outdoors barbeque lunch, we ventured into Paradise Bay. Here we set foot on the Antarctic Continent at the Argentine Station of Brown. We had



The Scotia Sea, above.





were thrilled to see three very large humpback whales swimming happily along with us. That was immediately after we spotted a very large leopard seal lounging on a floating iceberg.

All in all we saw all eight families of penguins, all the birds on this continent, pilot and

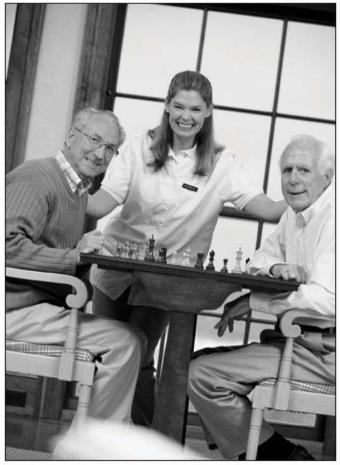
humpback whales, seals of all kinds and the most majestic scenery our welltraveled eyes have ever seen. It truly was the trip of a lifetime and one that none of us will never forget. ◊



finally set foot on our seventh continent. (Note to self: check item off bucket list.) Paradise Bay is often filled with ice. which started to fill in around the ship (it was summer in the southern hemisphere, remember), so our Captain had

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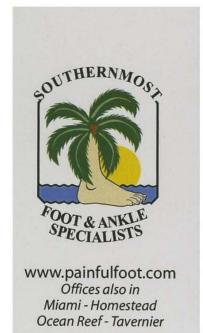
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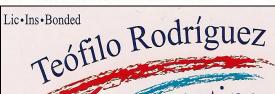
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