

Chai~Lights



November 2013

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Keys Jewish Community Center

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

November 2013

28 Chesvan - 27 Kislev

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Erica Lieberman-Garrett	2
3 Sisterhood Meeting 9:30 a.m., Chanukah Bazaar 11:00	4	5	6 Men's Club Game Night 7:30	7	8 Gloria Avner, Beth Hayden, Sam Vinicur <i>Linda Kaplan</i>	9
10 KJCC Board Meeting 9 a.m. Bloodmobile 10:30	11 Veteran's Day	12	13	14	15 Steve Steinbock	16 Rabbi Agler Torah Study Service 10:00
17	18	19	20	21	22 Gloria Avner, David Gitin, Westley Silverman <i>David Gitin</i>	23
24	25	26	27 First Night Of Chanukah	28 Thanks-giving	29 Daniel Peckman <i>Jessica and Roger Hernstadt</i> 6:30 Sisterhood Chanuka Dinner, Services 8:00	30

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Newsletter

Lisa Richardson Rutherford

CHAI-LIGHTS is the
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Keys Jewish Community Center

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

President's Message Bernard Ginsberg



We, the Jewish community of the Keys, as well as the community at large, have lost many "pillars" of our community through death in recent weeks. I have just returned from the lovely service for Ron Levy at Founders Park in Islamorada, a park he had so much to do with establishing as a public green space. Not long ago we heard that our dear friend Gerald Hirsch passed away; it seems only yesterday that he and Elaine were hosting KJCC fundraisers at their beautiful oceanside estate. It feels like so many anchors of our community are slipping. We seem to have lost more children, friends, parents, grandparents, husbands and wives in a short time than ever before. As I write this, we have just lost our beloved Michal Kamely.

Not to confuse the loss of a precious human life with a mere physical thing, but even the physical building of our Jewish Center seems to be rebelling, sliding away and getting old. Our esteemed board member Steve Hartz warns us that we must plan now for the replacement of our building and its major systems.

I appointed a new House Committee chairman at the last Board Meeting, since Stu Sax will soon be leaving for Texas. Before Richard Knowles could go home on the day of his appointment he

faced two problems: a broken-down oven in the kitchen and flooding in both our bathrooms.

How do we deal with all these losses? In the words of Bob Dylan, the poet of my generation (with apologies to KJCC's own David Gitin), we "have to keep on keeping on." We have no choice but to continue supporting each other and going on. The physical things can be repaired and the personal losses remain, but eventually the pain becomes less acute. We stumble onward step by step and eventually the KJCC will re-constitute itself.

Friends will comfort and console each other. New members will take up the places of the old, though the memories of the old live on. The religious school students have become young people that can attend and even lead services. Bar Mitzvahs like that of Will Pollack will refill the ranks of the Jewish people. Joy will return as we gather in community at our Sisterhood Shabbat dinners (like the excellent dinner on Oct. 11th and the festive Chanukah/Shabbat dinner scheduled for Friday, Nov. 29th) and holiday celebrations replace funerals and celebrations of life.

Nor auf Simchas. (May we only meet on happy occasions.)

— *B'ahava*, Bernie

Nosh

Rabbi Agler's Upcoming Schedule

For the organized few among us, Rabbi Agler has given us the dates on which he will be conducting the next four months of Saturday morning Torah study services at KJCC, all to begin at 10:00. Those dates are November 16th, December 28th, January 18th and February 22nd. And, yes, we will be reminding you of the dates each month. If you haven't taken advantage of these extraordinary monthly gifts to KJCC, you really should come and unwrap one. So far, all who have come have enthusiastically come back.

The Early Service This Month is a Dinner

Ordinarily, the final service of every month begins at 6:30, not 8:00 like typical services. (The idea has always been to make at least one service especially family-friendly.) But this month will be an exception. There will be a Chanukah/Shabbat dinner beginning at 6:30 on November 29th. Services will follow at the usual time of 8:00.

The Twelve Chairs

If you and your back (or tush) dread the ubiquitous brown folding chairs in KJCC's Ruth Richardson Social Hall and David Kamely Classroom, you and your back are not alone. But relief may be at hand (if such a thing can be said about one's back). Twelve new thickly padded folding chairs are now available to anyone who asks. They were donated by Bernie Ginsberg's office staff to honor the memory of Joe Goldberg, Bernie's late medical practice partner. KJCC, and assorted unnamed backs and tushes, send thanks and gratitude to Bernie's office.

*The KJCC offers its deepest condolences to
the Levy/Kaminstein family
on the death of
Ron Levy*

Shake It All About

In Memory of Ron Levy

two memorials tomorrow
in places Ron made his
and ours
tireless pushy worker to improve the world
make waves
twist arms
cajole
birth schools make pools
a founders park
amphitheater home to feasts and festivals
bard by the bay morada clay
we'll weep and celebrate

a huddle of friends
shoulders touching
wordless body consolation
ears strain to hear
tributes on the wind
eyes pink
puffy over dark blue rings
from former combatants
fragile daughters
missing memories
of the strength that was their dad

six months he was given
seven years he took
ashes sprinkled in a circle round
great grandmother tree
community joins hands
in perfect song and dance
you put your whole self in
you put your whole self out . . .

Gloria Avner 10/13/13

Ed note: Six new poems by Gloria are featured in an online arts magazine called "Empty Mirror." The link is <http://www.emptymirrorbooks.com/features/poems/6-poems-by-Gloria-Avner.html>

November Birthdays

2nd.....	Brian Boruszak
2nd.....	Emma Neidenberg
2nd.....	Hannah Werthamer
2nd.....	Jeremy M. Schur
2nd.....	Madalyn F. Tobias
2nd.....	Matt Temkin
3rd.....	Ivan Bader
3rd.....	Katherine Shabathai
4th.....	Herbert Grossman
4th.....	Zoey Barrett
5th.....	Milton Wohl
7th.....	Joel Stein
7th.....	Michele Lindenbaum
8th.....	Nico Bader
8th.....	Nico Wilbur
11th.....	Allan Harrell
11th.....	Cathy Dutton
13th.....	Marilyn Greenbaum
13th.....	Mark Wasser
13th.....	Tami Antelman
14th.....	Larry Wolfe
14th.....	Rae Wruble
16th.....	Lorelei Alexander
16th.....	Sofy Wasser
17th.....	Jason Orans
18th.....	Ross Alexander
19th.....	Georgia Landau
19th.....	Michael E. Schur
22nd.....	Christopher Gould
22nd.....	Gloria Avner
22nd.....	John Greenbaum
23rd.....	Alec Gilderman
24th.....	Aidan Kahn
24th.....	Arthur Lee Willner
24th.....	Will Travis Pollack
25th.....	Nancy L. Cohn
26th.....	John Greenbaum
26th.....	Ruth Schrader-Grace
28th.....	Nicole Hudson
29th.....	Benjamin Rakov
30th.....	Steven Horowitz

November Anniversaries

		Years
1st	Jeffrey & Patty Schocket.....	10
6th	Thomas & Renee Brodie.....	20
26th	Roger & Danna Levy.....	46
27th	Joni Sages & Robert Dandrea.....	10
27th	Stanley & Jenny Margulies	
28th	Sam & Leslie Janowitz.....	16

Yahrzeit Plaque

In loving memory
Henry W. Isenberg
January 18, 1924 - October 5, 2012

About The Framed Print Donated For The Kamely Classroom

Donated to KJCC
 In Memory of Bradley J. Schocket

Oneg Sponsors for November 2013

November 8th - Linda Kaplan
November 22nd - David Gitin, in honor of
 Gloria Avner's birthday that day.
November 29th - Roger and Jessica Hernstadt
 for Aidan's birthday

BOOK PLATE

In Honor of
Dr. Bernie Ginsberg's
 Fine Leadership 5774
 from
Gloria Avner

Rabbi Agler's Shirt

Rabbi Agler had admired a shirt he saw in the congregation on Rosh Hashanah. So Gloria, as Head of Ritual, gifted him with one after High Holidays. (There's a photo of him wearing the shirt on page 19.) It's a comfortable, heavy cotton shirt. The "aleph" insignia is said to have mystical connotations. If you want a shirt of your very own, go to kabbalahdesigns.com; there you'll see a variety of shirts and caps, with the same "aleph" insignia but also offering the Hebrew letters "mem" and "shin."

BOOK PLATE

In Memory of
Joseph Goldberg, MD

by Bernard Ginsberg, MD

The KJCC offers its deepest condolences to
the Kamely family
on the death of
Michal Kamely

BOOK PLATE

Mazel Tov to
The Pollack Family
on Will's Bar Mitzvah
from
Joan Boruszak

Ongoing Projects and Mitzvah Programs of KJCC

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

CEMETERY INFORMATION: If you wish to plan for the very distant future, you can reserve space at the Kendall Mt. Nebo Cemetery in the KJCC section. Call Stuart Sax, 305-586-8729.

MEDITATION GARDEN: Have you visited our beautiful garden? Call Steve Steinbock, 305-852-6152, to reserve a bench, brick or tree plaque for posterity.

PICTURE POSTCARDS: We have beautiful picture postcards in the KJCC Gift Shop bearing the Millard Wells representation of the KJCC which was commissioned by Sisterhood. They can be packaged to fit your needs and mailed to you or your gift recipient. The price is \$36 per hundred but we will sell lesser quantities. Contact Susan Gordon, 305-766-3585.

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

KJCC TREE OF LIFE LEAVES and ROCKS, SANCTUARY SEAT PLATES, YARTZEIT 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 Georgia Landau, 305-393-9885.

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. Call Linda Pollack, 305-852-8575, for annual rates.

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

Marcia's Tribute to Ron

(KJCC member Marcia Kreitman posted this loving memory of Ron Levy on her Facebook page.)

Ron Levy, supportive friend, brilliant, forceful, and fearless visionary, your earthly star went out this morning, but your legacy burns bright.

Your only goal, gain and reward was to help and support others, and to enhance the quality of life for your community. The amenities we now take for granted are the result of your tireless efforts. Thank you for creating a community identity and infrastructure. Thank you for our community park, pool, athletic fields, dog park, beach, a place for youth to congregate and a tradition of Fourth of July Celebration. Thank you for our amphitheater and the cultural programs it hosts.

John and I will miss you. We will all miss you. But, if it is at all possible (and knowing you, you'll find a way), please continue to make your influence felt, and continue to enrich our lives.

All my love and gratitude!

Skip Rose Joins the KJCC Board

Rene Rose's passing left a big hole at KJCC, one that we're all still learning to cope with. But she also left a vacancy on the KJCC Board of Directors. Bernie waited until the right time, then asked husband Skip if he'd be willing to take Rene's place at the table. He said yes, and the Board voted unanimously at the October meeting to swear him in before he had a chance to change his mind. Skip brings a lifetime of wisdom and wide experience to the Board, and KJCC is lucky to have him. This issue's masthead reflects the Board's new composition.

Bloodmobile to be at KJCC in November

Sunday, November 10th will be the next KJCC Board Meeting, at 9 a.m. As it does every few months, the local Bloodmobile will pull in around 10:30 and park in the KJCC lot, open for business. All KJCC members are encouraged to join us and donate. Join us at the meeting first (we have coffee), or bypass us entirely and go right to the Bloodmobile. There's always a need.

Tree of Life Leaves

**To all our Wonderful and Dear
Friends in the KJCC Congregation,**
Health and Happiness always,

from the Sanders Family.

In Honor of
Joshua Samuel Bernstein
Bar Mitzvah 11/5/2011
Mazel Tov!

Love, Mom & Dad

In Honor of
Bea Avner,
Tireless worker for Tikkun Olam,
From her loving daughter Gloria

Sumner Berenson
Forever in our hearts.
Marla Berenson & Joe Gould

To Honor
Sally Shabathai
1922 - 1996
The Shabathai Family

In Honor of the Life of
Alvin S. Gross
by David and Patti Gross

Barbara Gould
Forever in Our Hearts.
Joe & Marla
Marla Berenson & Joe Gould

Sisterhood's Count Your Blessings Fundraiser

As we begin the New Year, and in the spirit of thanksgiving, the KJCC Sisterhood wants to recognize and appreciate all the blessings in our lives, both big and small. Please support our "Count Your Blessings" fundraiser by focusing on gratitude and help our Sisterhood projects.



Please check the blessings listed and make a donation for each. You are welcome to compose your own personal blessings by adding them below.

- ☐ Today my family is healthy and well.
- ☐ My life is abundant and prosperous.
- ☐ My friends support and love me.
- ☐ I have a loving and supportive partner.
- ☐ My grandchildren bring me joy and love.
- ☐ Today I have reached out to others in need.
- ☐ I love my job and the rewards it brings.
- ☐ Today I received great news.
- ☐ I am blessed to live in the Florida Keys.
- ☐ Today I took care of my body and exercised.
- ☐ I am not alone.

My own blessings _____

Total number of blessings _____

@ \$2.00 per blessing \$ _____

Additional Contribution \$ _____

Total Contribution \$ _____

Complete and return by

November 28th to:

KJCC Sisterhood

PO Box 116

Tavernier, FL 33070

Please copy this page, or
tear out of Chai-Lights,
and send with your check.

**Finally, a
Fundraiser you do
not have to attend!**

In Memoriam November 2013

In Memory Of

Solomon Wasser

By Mark & Sofy Wasser

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

In Memory Of

Esther Gold Willner

By Arthur Lee & Johanna Willner

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

In Memory Of

Diana Wolfe

By Larry & Dorothy Wolfe

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

In Memory Of

Morris Mazur

By Sanford & Nancy Yankow

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

In Memory Of

Katy Kram

By Sanford & Nancy Yankow

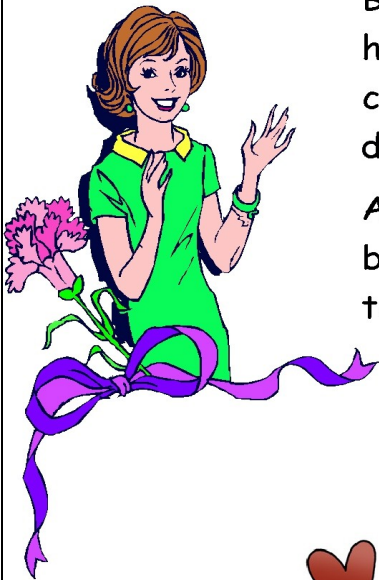
[illegible]

In Memory Of

Eve W. Zinner

By Donald Zinner

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



Much applause to all who helped with our Break Fast. Huge thank you's to those who helped set up, clean up, cook, bake and even cleaned up afterward. We could not have done it without you all!!!

And to those who enjoyed our sumptuous buffet, we hope it was a fulfilling conclusion to your High Holidays.

Lauren Sax & Kathy Shabathai



KJCC Chanukah

5774

Chanukah Shabbat Dinner

Friday, November 29, 2013

Dairy Dinner

6:30 PM

Followed by our Sunday School children's
Chanukah Presentation:

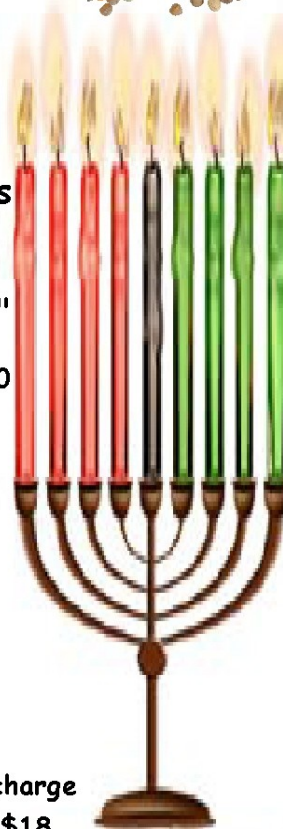
"Thanksgivikkah - A Holiday Celebration"

Don't Miss It: This Won't Happen Again for 70,000
years!

Services at 8 pm

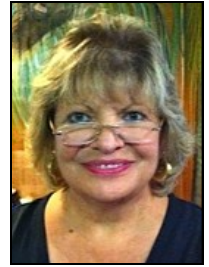
Contact Erica @ (305) 853-1003
hippiejap@hotmail.com to reserve your spot and
coordinate your dish.

Donations - Members: no charge
NonMembers: \$18



Sisterhood

Barbara Knowles



Now that the summer months have flown by and we're already into fall, there's so much happening at KJCC. November 3rd will be a very popular day. As always, Sisterhood's meeting will take place at 9:30 a.m. The meeting, however, will not be in the Ruth Richardson Social Hall as usual but in the Sanctuary instead. The reason for moving our location is so we can accommodate The Chosen Gift Shop's Chanukah Bazaar. We are hosting this exclusive one-day sale in our Social Hall in order to allow them to bring us (and display for all to see and explore) an assortment of wonderful items and gifts for Chanukah. The hours will be 11 a.m. till 2 p.m.

A portion of what they sell will give benefit KJCC Sisterhood. Sisterhood will also be selling refreshments – hot dogs, chips and a soda for \$5.00 to make it a fun and special day for all.

November 3rd is also the night when we turn our clocks back one hour, which blesses us all with an extra hour of sleep. (We'll all be ready for a great November meeting along with a lot of extra energy to "Shop, Shop, Shop" for Chanukah. Right?)

While I am on the subject of Chanukah, we are having our "Thanksgivukkah" Shabbat Dinner on Friday, November 29th, 2013 at 6:30 p.m. We have moved our services to 8:00 p.m. (last Friday of the month is usually at 6:30), so we can have this Holiday Celebration. I hope all will be able to attend this dinner, as this year Chanukah and Thanksgiving will fall on the same day, which won't happen again for another 70,000 years.

Our "Thanksgivukkah" dinner has been graciously sponsored by Joel and Linda Polack, so there's no charge for members; there's an \$18.00 for all non-members, adults and children. This is a Potluck Dairy Dinner featuring everyone's favorite (or for

some a guilty pleasure), potato latkes. Please R.S.V.P. to Erica Garrett @ 305-853-1003 or hippiejap@hotmail.com to reserve your spot and coordinate your dish.

The KJCC Sisterhood is working diligently to have monthly dinners. Bernie is right that it fosters a joyous gathering of friends and family and a great way of keeping the feeling of "mishpocha."

I've mentioned at many Sisterhood meetings that we need more women to join our great group. We're close to getting the rest of our snowbirds back (we've missed you), but we really want new faces and ideas to help keep us moving forward and being even more successful. The meetings are also another great way to spend special time together. So, to those of you who don't typically come to meetings, I hope you will consider joining us for our November meeting.

I have to say that I'm always so happy to see so many people at our services, plus meeting and greeting new members as they walk through our door. October has been a tough time for all of us since we've had to say goodbye to some long-time members. The recent passings are a great loss to all of us here at KJCC.

I'm sure everyone is aware by now that two special people, Stuart and Lauren Sax, will be moving soon to be close to their family in Texas. Stuart contributed so much during his term as KJCC President and Lauren was my predecessor as Sisterhood President. She has been my mentor and great friend. Both of you will be missed but not forgotten. We wish you the very best and hope you'll come back to visit us soon.

Let's all make November a safe and great month. ◇

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.

Bookplates

Avner, Gloria

Boruszak, Joan

In Honor of

Dr. Bernie Ginsberg's
fine leadership 5774

Will Pollack's Bar Mitzvah

Rabbi & Cantor Fund

Davidson, Foster & Carol Laskin

Gould, Joe & Marla Berenson

Shabathai, Joseph & Katherine

General Fund

Barash, Richard & Donna

Covan, Frederick

Nelson, Darling J.

Reamer, Leslie

Sherman, Robert & Adriana

In Honor of

thank you for warm &
welcoming Shabbat services

Scholarship Fund

Pollack, Joel & Linda

In Memory of

Ron Levy

Sisterhood Oneg Fund

Gitin, David

Mah Jongg Girls (2 onegs)

In Honor of

Gloria Avner's birthday

Rene Rose

General Fund

Davidson, Foster & Carol Laskin

Gilson, Michael & Suzanne

Pollack, Joel & Linda

Pollack, Joel & Linda

In Memory of

Bob Freundlich

Gerald Hirsch

Muriel Catanese

Jose Cohen

Tree of Life - Leaves

Sanders, Steven B.

In Honor of

Health & happiness to our

KJCC friends, from the Sanders Family

Shabathai, Joe & Katherine and family

Avner, Gloria

Gould, Joe & Marla Berenson

Gould, Joe & Marla Berenson

To honor

Sally Shabathai, 1922-1996

In honor of Bea Avner,

tireless worker for Tikkun Olam

forever in our hearts -

Sumner Berenson

forever in our hearts -

Barbara Gould

Holidays

Olsen, Gerald & Sheila

Ross, Mildred

In Honor of

Kol Nidre donation

thank you for the holiday services

Meditation Garden

Coltman, Barney

Coltman, Barney

Sax, Stuart & Lauren

Sax, Stuart & Lauren

Steinberg, Richard & Sheila

Steinberg, Richard & Sheila

Steinberg, Richard & Sheila

In Memory of

brick - Robert S. Coltman

brick - Evelyn O. Coltman

Gerald Hirsch

Muriel Catanese

Saunders Cohen

Joel Cohen

James Yakov Nobil

Yahrzeits

Avner, Gloria

Isenberg, Patricia

Yizkor Book

Berman, Sylvia

Kamely, Yardena

Kamely, Michal

Sanders, Steven B.

In Memory of

Perren Gerber

Henry Isenberg

World Jewish Report

Medina Roy



A First for *Yad Vashem*

On September 30th, *Yad Vashem*, Israel's Holocaust memorial, posthumously honored Mohamed Helmy, an Egyptian doctor who risked his life to rescue Jews during World War II. Helmy is the first Arab to be awarded the prestigious recognition of "Righteous Among the Nations." *Yad Vashem* learned of Helmy's actions about a year ago when a German researcher discovered letters in Berlin's city archives written decades ago by Holocaust survivors on behalf of their rescuers. After conducting more research, *Yad Vashem* pieced together Helmy's story. Mohamed Helmy moved to Berlin in 1922 to study medicine, then settled there after completing his studies. He spoke out against Nazi policies, after which he himself suffered discrimination and was forbidden to work. Helmy hid his friend, a young Jewish woman, in his cabin, arranged a hiding place for other members of her family and provided medical care for her relatives during the war. Frieda Szturmann assisted him by hiding members of the woman's family and she, too, was honored posthumously. Helmy died in 1982; Szturmann died in 1962.

(www.bostonglobe.com, 10-1-13)

And KJCC Helped...

According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, tourism to Israel hit a record high for the period January to June in 2013, reaching 1.7 million visitors. The figure was one percent higher than in the same six-month period in 2012. In June, tourism rose three percent to 295,000 – 15 of whom were the KJCC Israel trip participants! In the last 25 years, the number of travelers arriving in Israel has grown by 110 percent. (www.reuters.com, 7-12-13)

Israel's Ambassador: "It's About Time"

According to Ron Prosor, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, the Jewish state will, for the first time ever, vie for a rotating seat on the fifteen-member panel of the U.N. Security Council, the United Nations' most powerful and prestigious body. In order to win one of the ten two-year rotations on the Security Council, Israel would have to secure two-thirds of the votes in the General Assembly, which is made up of 193 member states. U.N. diplomats believe it will not be easy for the Jewish state to win. Most members of the non-aligned bloc of developing nations are either cool or openly hostile towards Israel. The Security Council has five permanent members (The United States., Britain, France, Russia and China), any one of which has veto power over any resolution. It has the ability to pass binding resolutions, impose sanctions or authorize the use of military force. Prosor said Israel would compete against Germany and Belgium for two seats for 2019-2020. On occasion, Israel has held posts as vice president of the General Assembly, but it has never been a member of the Security Council. (www.reuters.com, 10-3-13)

Screening for Ashkenazi Genetic Diseases

Emory University's School of Medicine's Department of Human Genetics recently introduced a genetic screening initiative for hereditary diseases in the Ashkenazi Jewish community. *JScreen* is a multi-state initiative that will provide screening through a saliva test taken at home. In addition, the program will also offer private counseling to Jewish couples and individuals to determine their risk for passing on genetic diseases to their

children. *JScreen* is a collaboration of clinical geneticists, the business community and non-profits. Markers for nineteen genetic diseases that are more common in the Jewish community have been identified. *JScreen* also offers an expanded panel for interfaith couples and couples of mixed descent which screens for a total of 80 diseases. (www.jta.org, 10-2-13)

Janet Yellen and The Fed

In early October, President Obama nominated Janet Yellen to chair the Federal Reserve, positioning her as the first woman to hold the position in its 100-year history. She currently serves as vice-chairwoman of the agency. If confirmed by the Senate, Yellen would become “the world’s most powerful economic policy maker.” She would also be the third consecutive Jewish economist to serve as Fed chairperson. She would succeed Ben Bernanke, who is expected to step down in January after serving since February 2006. Bernanke succeeded Alan Greenspan. Yellen was born in Brooklyn, New York and graduated summa cum laude in 1967 from Brown University with a degree in economics. In 1971, she received her PhD in economics from Yale University. Yellen served as a Federal Reserve Board governor from 1994-1997, a position she left to head President Bill Clinton’s Council of Economic Advisers. She is married to George Akerlof, a 2001 Nobel economics laureate; the two were active in the Bay Area Jewish community when Akerlof taught at the University of California, Berkeley. (www.worldjewishcongress.org, 10-9-13)

Buried in Bury

A rare, handwritten Jewish manuscript dating back to 1726 was recently discovered in Bury, England, stored in a cardboard box in a garage at a house being cleared out after the passing of the Jewish couple who lived there. The estimated value of the manuscript is somewhere between \$161,000 and \$242,000, but could be sold for more when it goes up for auction at the end of November. The manuscript is a 20-page *Haggadah* hand-painted on goat skin. It is believed to have been smuggled out of Belgium during World

War II by a family escaping the Nazis. (www.bbc.co.uk, 10-8-13)

Apple v. Google

Cue, a personal assistant app co-founded by 21-year-old Israeli entrepreneur Daniel Gross, was recently purchased by Apple for an estimated \$40 million. Gross founded *Cue* (formerly *Greplin*) together with Robbie Walker, another young entrepreneur. A native of Jerusalem, Gross graduated from the prestigious Eli pre-military academy. He was preparing to enlist in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) but first took a trip to San Francisco and got caught up in Silicon Valley’s start-up fever. Apple apparently decided to buy *Cue* in order to “bolster the iPhone’s personal assistant features,” as Apple competes with Google. Gross has not been back to Israel since emigrating to the United States. He would be subject to arrest by military police for avoiding his IDF service. (www.timesofisrael.com, 10-8-13)

Israel’s Technion Makes the Cut

After analyzing the educational backgrounds of 250 CEOs of tech companies in the United States with a market value of more than \$1 billion, *Bloomberg* found the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology tied for seventh place with MIT, Rice University and the University of Texas, Austin. According to *Bloomberg Rankings*, Israel is home to one of the world’s top tech hubs and Technion is where many of the brightest go to train. One of those brightest is *Stratasys* CEO David Reis, whose 3-D printer maker acquired New York-based *MakerBot Industries* for at least \$403 million earlier this year. The listing also cited the Technion’s collaboration with Cornell University to build a \$2 billion tech campus and startup incubator on New York City’s Roosevelt Island. (www.bloomberg.com, 8-29-13)

Gone Forever

Sometime earlier this year, *Beith Shalom*, Indonesia’s last synagogue, was destroyed. Situated in Surabaya on the island of Java, the synagogue had seen a number of anti-Israel protests staged in front of it. In 2009, it was sealed by Islamic hardliners. Dutch Jews had

built the small synagogue in the 19th century when Indonesia was still a Dutch colony. (Jews had first arrived in Indonesia in the 17th century with the Dutch East India Company.) The community grew in the 1930s and 40s with Jews fleeing persecution in Europe. According to *Beit Hatfutsot*, the Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv (and one of the sites visited by the KJCC Israel trip participants), there are now only about 20 Jews believed to be living in Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim nation. (www.jta.org, 10-4-13)

In Memoriam

- Muriel Siebert, the first woman to buy a seat on the New York Stock Exchange (as well as many other “firsts”), has died at the age of 80. She was also the first woman to head a member firm of the exchange, *Muriel Siebert and Company*, which she founded in 1968. In 1977, she was the first woman appointed superintendent of banking for New York State. In joining the exchange, Siebert had to ask ten men (a minyan?) before she could find one willing to sponsor her application. She remained the only woman on the exchange for the next decade. In 1983, she lost a bid for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate. Siebert donated millions of dollars to help other women get started in business and finance. (www.jta.org, 8-26-13)

- Yehuda Lev, journalist and veteran of both World War II and Israel’s War of Independence, who established an underground route to smuggle Holocaust survivors to Palestine, has died. He was 86. Born John Lewis Low in New York City, he was the son of a successful businessman and a mother who was one of the first women labor lawyers. He dropped out of Cornell University and enlisted in the U.S. Army during the latter part of World War II. At the time of his discharge, he was in Germany. Seeing Holocaust survivors languishing in Displaced Persons camps, Lev established a route, mostly by foot, to bring them to Mediterranean ports, where they were smuggled onto “illegal” ships, past the British naval blockade, into Palestine. He changed his name to Yehuda Lev and joined the Israeli army when the sur-

rounding Arab states invaded in May 1948. Lev remained in Israel and established himself as a highly popular radio host of “Jerusalem Calling,” a daily variety and discussion program in English on *Kol Israel*, the country’s national network. Years later, as the only native English speaker on *Kol Israel*, Lev reported the trial of Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann to the outside world. From 1986 until 1993, he was associate editor of the *Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles* and was best known for his column “A Majority of One.” (*The Forward*, 8-6-13)

- Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, spiritual leader of Israel’s Sephardic Jews, has died at 93. Yosef headed the ultra-Orthodox *Shas* party, founded in the early 1980s. Under his leadership, *Shas* (a Hebrew acronym for Sephardic Torah Guardians) became a major political player in Israeli’s parliamentary government. By the end of the 1990s, *Shas* had become the third largest political party, and it has participated in most of the country’s governing coalitions for almost 30 years. A Torah scholar, Yosef was often described by followers as “the greatest of the generation” when dealing with *halacha* (Jewish law). Rabbi Yosef was born in Baghdad. He was four when his family moved to Jerusalem. He was ordained at 20 and began working as a judge in a religious court. At the age of 24, Yosef married the daughter of a respected rabbi of Syrian descent (she died in 1994). They had eleven children. Yosef moved to Cairo in 1947, ran a religious court there and headed a yeshiva before returning to Israel in 1950. He wrote Talmudic commentaries and volumes of *responsa*, answers to questions on religious law. In 1970, he was awarded the prestigious Israel Prize for rabbinical literature. Yosef was often bold in issuing his own, sometimes lenient rulings on delicate issues that other rabbis would not dare touch. In one landmark ruling, the rabbi permitted hundreds of women whose husbands were missing after the 1973 war to remarry, even though remarriage is traditionally allowed only after there is incontrovertible proof that a woman’s husband has died. In 1973, he was elected Sephardic chief rabbi of Israel, serving for a decade alongside Shlomo Goren, the Ashkenazi chief rabbi. (www.nytimes.com, 10-7-13) ♦

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On Friday, September 27th, Simchat Torah was the finale at KJCC as a special celebratory add-on to our regular service. Under Bernie's leadership, past presidents Jeff Schocket, Steve Steinbock and Stuart Sax carried our three Torahs around the sanctuary to clapping and singing. Since there are to be seven joyous circuits, the Torahs were then handed to other congregants to carry. We re-wound the

Torahs to the beginning, as the next week we would start over with B'raisheet. To show just how long a full Torah scroll is, we all participated in the re-winding of our (non-Kosher) student Torah. Once the scroll was fully unrolled, Rabbi Agler strolled along it, reading the entire Torah in just over seven minutes. (Not exactly every word, but from beginning to end.) Everyone went to the Oneg smiling.





October 11th saw the monthly Shabbat Dinner at KJCC. Since George Swartz was leading services that night, he led the Kid-dush and HaMotzi. Pictured at bottom, Muriel Swartz, Pauline Roller and Linda Kaplan sat for-midably at the front door collect-ing the money.





Saturday, October 12th saw Rabbi Agler's monthly Torah Study service. At top, the night

before, Gloria and Bernie presented him with his "aleph" shirt in gratitude for his wonderful work during the High Holidays. (He then took some time to explain to a rapt Oneg how the Jewish mystics regard the aleph, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. You



know, the word the Greeks created by borrowing and combining the names of the first two Hebrew letters — aleph bet. They also borrowed our letter names and simply Hellenized them.)



Mazel Tov to (all) the Pollacks

It was one of the most anticipated events in recent KJCC memory. Linda and Joel expected about fifty people. Almost double that showed up, to honor KJCC's unofficial royal couple and share in the day.

by Gloria Avner

Our whole congregation had been looking forward to Will Pollack's Bar Mitzvah for months. In honor of Will's grandparents Joel and Linda and parents Roy and Vippi,

the *ganssa* KJCC *mishpocha* (whole family) came out in force to support, celebrate, and *qvell*. Our family and theirs were alive with anticipation.

Rabbi Agler, with his customary ease, directness, and gentle teaching style, guided the morning's service in a way that gave every aspect meaning beyond the ritual, from the first moment when he asked us to pause and think about what we were thankful for, from body to soul to breath. My supportive role was to lead the congregation in enthusiastic singing.

An especially moving moment came as Roy and Vippi gave alternating heartfelt blessings to their son as they gifted him with his *Tallit*, a symbol of



Our great thanks to Barbara and Richard Knowles for the beautiful photographs, and also for getting them to us so quickly.



his new full membership in the Jewish tribe. They expressed their pride in him and his efforts, encouraging him to lead a good Jewish life, and to continue throughout his life the humane and enriching discipline that he had made his *mitzvah* project: performing acts of kindness to strangers.



clearly, gave a well-thought-out "*dvar*" Torah and chanted his *haftarah*

portion with ease. In another special moment, Will and his tutor, Baruch Garcia, who had traveled from Texas to be part of this rite of passage, came to the *bi-mah* together to chant the *v'Ahavta*. It was lovely to see and hear Will give all credit to Baruch for his learning and preparation.



Our members and Will's

family could not have been more eager to wish a hearty *mazel tov* as Will, Joel, Linda,



Roy, Vippi, and Will's beautiful sister Maddie paraded down the aisles with the Torah. Passing the Torah as well as the *tallit* down through the generations gives us all hope for the future. As Bernie often says, that one act – one generation teaching and guiding the next – is the main reason we have a synagogue.

Look at the whole Pollack clan standing joyous on the steps of the *bimah*. What a proud and happy assortment of grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins and friends. The photos (thanks to Richard and Barbara Knowles) tell the story.

The luncheon was enjoyed by all, as was the well written, well delivered, sometimes humorous, always heartwarming candle-lighting ceremony after the lunch. We are all proud and grateful to have been a part of this joyous *simcha*. ♦



Angels in Judaism

by Joyce Peckman

We have just celebrated Simchat Torah and are again reading from *Breshit*, delving once again into the stories of Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah and the generations following. In these chapters we keep coming across angels, beginning with those stationed at the entrance to the Garden of Eden. Just this week we read of angels who told a fleeing Hagar to return, because G-d has heard her prayers, and she would have a son, and that she should name him Ishmael.

Growing up in a conservative shul, I never really thought about angels. They weren't any part of my religious education.

As Elin Schoen Brockman pointed out in her Tablet magazine article entitled "Angels in Judaica," angels seemed more of a Christian concept. The invisible personal guardians who step out of a painting by Raphael or the little baroque cherubs who sit on your shoulder have nothing to do with Judaism. Nor does the comforting belief of your dear departed turning into an angel. As it turns out, the tradition of angels has never been as widely accepted among Jews (or Muslims, for that matter) as it has among Christians. So, even though according to a 2007 Gallup poll 75 percent of Americans say they believe in angels, most modern American Jews believe that winged imagery does not belong to their religious tradition. That may be because from the time of the Talmud, many rabbis discouraged belief in angels, fearing that they would become objects of worship, competing with G-d.

Yet angels have long been a part of Jewish culture. In *Breshit*, when people like Abraham or Jacob asked angels to disclose their names, they refused. The angel – *malach* in Hebrew – who blocked Balaam's donkey in the book of *Bamidbar* (Numbers) was similarly nameless. The Jerusalem Talmud comments that reference to angels by name only became common in the period following the return of the Jewish people to Israel in 348 BCE. Harold Bloom

traces the literary introduction of angels to our encounter with the civilization of ancient Persia. The first angels mentioned by name in the Bible are Gabriel and Michael, in the Book of Daniel. Also in this book, Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar relates a dream about a "watcher" who descends from heaven to foretell his downfall. Daniel is found in the Writings section of the Bible, and has been historically classified as prophetic, but the style of its Aramaic and Hebrew writing is apocalyptic, and anachronisms place it somewhere between 200 BCE and 100 CE. Apocalyptic writing, which deals with the end of days, is filled with the doings of angels. Although these texts did not become central in the Jewish tradition (though they did in the Christian), they reflect what ancient Jews were teaching and learning.

Angels are discussed in detail in the Talmud, Kabbalistic texts and in *midrash*, folktales, legends, prayers, and song. *Shalom Aleichem*, a kabbalistic poem from 17th-century Tzfat, comes immediately to mind. According to Jewish tradition, an angel is a spiritual being and does not have any physical characteristics. The angelic descriptions provided by the prophets – such as wings, arms etc. – are anthropomorphic, and metaphorical, referring to their spiritual abilities and tasks.

Maimonides, in his *Mishneh Torah* written in 1180, described ten different levels of angels in a detailed hierarchy. (The Kabbalah discusses them in even greater detail.) Maimonides ranked the angels from highest to lowest: here a few examples: The first and highest type of angels is called *Chayot Ha Kodesh*. They are responsible for holding up God's throne, and also for holding Earth in its proper position in space. The *Chayot Ha Kodesh* emanate such powerful light that they often appear fiery. According to Kabbalah, they are led by the archangel Metatron.

The *Hashmallim* are known for their love, kindness, and grace. The archangel Zadkiel leads this angelic rank, according to Kabbalah. Zadkiel is thought to be the "angel of the Lord" who shows up mercifully in Genesis when Abraham is preparing to sacrifice his son Isaac.

Seraphim work for justice. The Torah records a vision that the prophet Isaiah had of angels near God in heaven: "Above him were *seraphim*, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'" (Isaiah 6:2-3.)

Malakhim angels are known for their beauty and mercy. In Kabbalah, the archangel Uriel leads them.

The *Bene Elohim* focus their work on giving glory to God. Kabbalah says that the archangel Michael leads them. Michael is mentioned in major religious texts more than any other named angel, and he is often shown as a warrior. The Book of Daniel describes Michael as "the great prince" who will protect God's people even during the struggle between good and evil at the end of the world.

Cherubim help people deal with sin so they can draw closer to God. The famous archangel Gabriel leads the *Cherubim*, according to Kabbalah. *Cherubim* angels appear in the very first Parasha of Bereshit, during the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden: "After [God] drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden *cherubim* and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life."

God can presumably accomplish anything, so what is the function of an angel? The Hebrew word for angel, "*mal'ach*," means messenger. Angels are functionaries who carry out God's will. Angels are used to distance God from the action. Some medieval Jewish commentators propose that angels are necessary

because they perform tasks that are beneath the dignity of God's "personal involvement." Since it is too anthropomorphic to have God wrestle with Jacob, an angel serves the purpose. Some angels are created for one specific task, and upon the task's completion cease to exist. According to the Kabbalah's *Zohar*, one of the angels' tasks is to transport our words of prayer and Torah-study before G-d's throne.

Angels are God's entourage. A famous example is in the scene from Isaiah 6, where God is described as seated on a throne with the angelic host arrayed on both sides.

Throughout Jewish history, even during the Talmudic period, there were always rabbis, scholars, craftspeople, and artists who portrayed angels. They are found in the third-century frescoes of the Jewish catacombs in Rome; and around the world on Torah valances and ark curtains; illuminating ancient *Haggadahs*, and *megillahs*; on *ketubot*, Hanukkah menorahs, mezuzahs, kiddush cups, Seder plates, dreidels, challah covers, tombstones and kabbalistic amulets. Jewish depictions include what might be called the *halakhically*

correct school, in which angels are faceless or symbolized by birds, often eagles, or wings (sometimes a single wing). But figural representations are surprisingly frequent. Angels are everywhere in Italian Jewish art. Angels also have been a consistent theme for 19th- and 20th-century Jewish artists such as Marc Chagall, Ben Shahn, and Mark Podwal. The 1946 Frank Capra classic film *It's a Wonderful Life*, which is as indispensable to Christmas as Irving Berlin's ballad, and which features a klutzy but deeply wise angel (whose name, you'll surely recall, is Clarence) was based on "The Greatest Gift," a short story by Philip Stern, son of a Bavarian Jewish peddler who settled in Pennsylvania.

It is hard to resist the allure of angels as the colorful and humanly compelling representative of God. Judaism is rich and multi-layered. There is always more to learn. ◇

*The Hebrew
word for
angel,
"mal'ach,"
means
messenger.*

Dreamers and Doers

Kislev – The Month of Dreams

by Gloria Avner

In all of Genesis, there are ten dreams. Nine of them occur now, during Kislev, when the days are short and nights are long. In tribal times, nomadic and agricultural people like us knew that this dark time of the year was ripe for sleep, dreaming, and going within. Like the ladder in Jacob's first vision, with angels passing up and down from earth to sky, the dream links earth, the material everyday world, to the divine.

Dreaming on his rock pillow, Jacob sees a stairway to heaven and is told by God that the land on which he lies is to belong to him and his descendants. "Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." What a huge promise.

Jacob wakes the next morning, fearful and awestruck. He names the place Beth-El, the house of God, and sets up the stone that was under his head as a pillar consecrated with oil.

Sometimes the dreamer understands immediately. Sometimes not. It took Jacob twenty years after dreaming about scores of speckled sheep, the flocks that his father-in-law Laban had promised him, to realize that it was time to stop focusing on accumulation of personal wealth and go back to Canaan, the promised land, as he had vowed.

Our ancestors Jacob and Joseph act out their personal destinies and established our roots by paying attention to dreams. Jacob had three dreams: the ladder and God's promise, the wrestling match with the angel, and the multitudes of speckled sheep and exhortation to return. Joseph had six. Though the first two of Joseph's dreams win him the

jealousy of his brothers and upset of his father (his brothers' eleven sheaves of wheat bowing down before Joseph's sheaf in one dream; and eleven stars, moon and sun bowing down before Joseph in the other), later rabbinic commentary says it is possible these dreams had been misunderstood and that what was really happening was the working out of a grand cosmic plan to keep a giant area of the ancient world from starvation. Joseph needed to be in place in Egypt to interpret Pharaoh's two dreams.

Joseph, sold into slavery by his jealous brothers, takes every opportunity that comes his way to do the right thing, no matter how difficult his circumstances. He refuses to be tempted by the advances of Potiphar's wife and because of it ends up in jail. There he is consistently helpful to those around him. Interpreting correctly the dreams of Pharaoh's butcher and his baker leads to the call to decipher Pharaoh himself's dreams. Hearing one dream of seven fat ears of corn eating seven skinny ones and another of seven skinny cows eating seven fat ones, Joseph understands and reveals that seven years of plenty will be followed by seven years of drought; he recommends the creation of storehouses during the seven good years for distribution in the seven lean ones and is immediately lifted to the position of Pharaoh's right-hand man.

Absolute famine is averted, Joseph reconnects with his family when his brothers come asking for food, and he forgives what had seemed an unforgivable act: being sold into slavery by those brothers.

It is not the dreams themselves but the connection between dreaming and doing that makes a difference, betters our world and drives our destiny. The Hasmoneans, two thousand years ago, dare to dream they can recapture the sacred Temple from Antiochus'

Syrian/Greek troops. They become warriors and achieve what seems outwardly impossible. Cleansing and re-dedication are the order of the day. A miracle happens and the eternal light stays lit.



Theodor Herzl had a dream. No one could have worked harder. He sacrificed his health and the happiness of his family to bring the dream to fruition. Circle back to Jacob and his third dream: Jacob wrestles with an angel. He receives a new name: Israel – he who struggles with God. Herzl struggles with huge political and economic forces opposed to his dream, but as a result of his protean efforts, a new country is born: Israel.

Our congregation has had months of loss, including three long-time members, espe-

cially gifted dreamers, who held visions of *tikkun olam* close to their hearts all their lives. Hospitals, schools, the arts, music, sports, religious life – every aspect of community that makes a place worth calling home – have been enriched by the contributions of Gerald Hirsch,

Ron Levy, and Michal Kamely. They were indomitable spirits and generous human beings. We miss them terribly and know that their memories will be a blessing forever.

Soon we will emerge from this dark time. Continuing to dream (and do) will make the absence of our loved ones easier to bear. Let the lights on our Chanukah menorahs this year be emblems of commitment to acts of loving kindness and *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) that will brighten the world as our friends have done. ♦

A Tribute to My Treasured Friend

By Muriel Swartz

It was an honor and a pleasure to call Michal Kamely my friend. About twenty years ago, Michal began adult education classes at the KJCC (along with Bar and Bat Mitzvah preparation for our religious school students approaching that milestone). I enrolled in the classes Michal offered — what a knowledgeable, patient, and engaging professor she was! Driving Michal to and from the sessions provided us the opportunity to get to know each other better. Michal suggested that we get together for lunch, which naturally evolved into weekly visits for long conversations about family relationships, American culture, Israeli history and politics, Jews and Judaism, and U.S. politics. There was always lots to laugh about and plenty to learn from each other.

At the time of the second annual Women's Seder in 2005, Beth Kaminstein asked me if there was someone I'd suggest as our special honoree. I had the perfect candidate: Michal Kamely. After Beth ran my suggestion by her committee, she asked if Michal would accept. The answer was "yes," making me truly happy that a totally deserving, talented *mensch* would be the second honoree for our blossoming new tradition, the Cathy Kaplan Sisterhood's Women's Seder. I was glad that Michal would be sharing her amazing life's journey with our Seder participants, including the fact that the Israeli government had selected Michal to be instrumental in reintroducing Jewish education into Germany in the early 1960s for returning German-Jewish families.

As my favorite NYU professor would say: I have in me a part of all that I have met. How satisfying for me to have absorbed and benefited greatly from my treasured friendship with dear Michal. Her memory will be a blessing to all who were fortunate to know her. She will always be in my heart. Michal, I will miss your warm and welcoming smile...rest in peace.

Blessing over Candles

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ

asher kidishanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu

Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us

לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה: (אָמֵן)

I'had'lik neir shel Chanukah. (Amein)

to light the lights of Chanukkah. (Amen)

Blessing for Chanukkah

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe

שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמַן הַזֶּה: (אָמֵן)

she'asah nisim la'avoteinu bayamim haheim baziman hazeh. (Amein)

Who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days at this time

Shehecheyanu (first night only)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe

שֶׁהַחַיָּינוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְמַן הַזֶּה: (אָמֵן)

shehecheyanu v'kiyimanu v'higi'anu laz'man hazeh. (Amein)

who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season (Amen)

A Trip Home to Jerusalem

*When I travel to Israel,
the feeling is that I'm
going home.*

-Michal Kamely



Michal (standing, far right) with her family in Jerusalem. The man in the center is her father. Her mother is seated between them holding a purse. This photo could not have been taken too long before her father died.

Some time in the late 1920s, near the city of Mashhad in far northeast Iran, close by the borders of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan (the latter then part of the new Soviet Union), a Muslim family named Chabibolayov began preparing itself for the arduous journey that is the sometime duty of all practicing Muslims – a pilgrimage to Mecca, the holiest city of Islam located in Saudi Arabia.

Only the family didn't really intend to travel to Mecca. Its name wasn't really Chabibolayov. Most importantly, they were not, in fact, Muslims.

The family's real name was Levi, though that had been a closely guarded secret for generations. To reveal that they were in fact a large, extended family of Jews would have been dangerous. So they all lived as Muslims, conducted business and social relations as Muslims, and went to school as Muslims. The secret, and how to keep it in order to protect the family, was taught sternly to every child. They learned this vital family secret just as they learned to walk and talk and play and identify the trees and animals that surrounded them and the foods that were available for them to eat.

The ruse was so elaborate that one of

Michal's uncles – her mother's sister's husband, in his true and secret life an extremely pious Jew – had actually himself made the pilgrimage to Mecca. He wore the yellow turban around Mashhad he'd received in Mecca to prove he'd been there, and daily acted the dutiful Muslim. He was thus accorded respect and honor and was a trusted man. Michal herself remembers that her father, also a prominent man locally, often would be invited to people's homes and public events. At each place, to be properly hospitable, he would have to eat. So he did, of course, and then would come home later, put his



A teenaged Michal inside the courtyard of The Fortress in Jerusalem.

finger down his throat and force himself to throw up all the un-Kosher food he had just swallowed.

We've all read books and seen movies about people living double lives. Those doing it endure constant, unrelenting tension; for some there's also danger. How many of us would have the wit and cool self-control to pull it off, not for a week or year but for generations? The simpler course for Michal's large family would have been to just shrug and quietly renounce the family Judaism. They already knew precisely how to live as Muslims. Why stay with a culture and tradition that, with the smallest slip-up in one careless, unguarded moment, could cost you your life? Conversion was easy and the path to full acceptance. (This is one of the enduring questions of Jewish history. The British historian Toynbee is said to have hated the Jews precisely because they are the sole group whose path through history defied his formula for the emergence and then inevitable demise of a culture.)

Michal's family had once been in the fur business. Through it they became



wealthy enough to be able to buy land around Mashhad. They eventually accumulated enough to encompass several villages. This land provided them an income. Somehow, amidst the strains of maintaining a family and the elaborate everyday deceptions and rigors of his livelihood, Michal's father had become a Zionist. The father Michal had always heard called by his Persian name of Chabib Chabibolayov and his brother, whose Muslim name was Abdelrachman Chabibolayov, hatched a plan whereby they would leave Mashhad and emigrate to Jerusalem. For some 400 years, until a mere five or six

The photo at top, though undated, has to be from the early to mid 1930s. The photo below is with fellow female members of the secret Hagganah. Michal is seated lower left in the white dress.

years before, Jerusalem had been a dusty and fetid provincial outpost of the Ottoman Turks. No one really cared about it, including virtually all Muslims. It was a mostly ignored former place of glory and an ancient dream, sung about



daily in European synagogues but having only the faintest pulse of actual Jewish life. It had only recently, since 1918, come under British rule, at the end of World War I. It was not at all a modern city. There was virtually no electricity, or plumbing; sewage typically ran not through sanitary pipes but down the streets.

Still, the determined work of Herzl and Weizmann had led to the Balfour Declaration. The Jewish soul was stirring and seeking its wholeness, like a ball of sacred mercury that has for centuries been continuously smashed into pieces by a relentless hammer yet somehow, as if by some invisible force of nature, is finding its way back together. So Jerusalem it was. They would be pioneers, and life would be difficult, but at least they could live there openly as Jews.

The uncle left Mashhad first, went to Jerusalem and built the large stone house that would become the center of the family's life for many years, and the place where all the

Lacking papers, or permission, or any legal premise whatsoever, they crossed illegally into Palestine.

family came for shelter upon arriving. The house was large, and sturdy, and secure, so much so that it became known as "The Fortress." The house was planned well. Muslims still controlled Jerusalem, de-

spite the British Mandate, and there was a large family to be protected, most of whom would eventually make aliyah.

Once the house was built, and could offer security, it was time for Michal's family and her uncle's family to leave. Under normal circumstances any journey to Jerusalem would have been difficult. But this large group couldn't travel a sensibly direct route, because they couldn't travel as or yet reveal themselves to be Jews. The only way for the group to be allowed to leave Iran would be as Muslims making a family pilgrimage to Mecca. And that ruse probably allowed so many to leave together only because Michal's father and uncle were prominent and respected and wealthy, and because the authorities saw that two other brothers were staying behind. (Someone had to stay to man-

age the family's properties and source of income; a generation later the properties were lost anyway when expropriated by the Shah.)

The first leg of the journey was about 800 miles to Karachi on the Arabian Gulf, a city now in Pakistan but then controlled by India. They stayed there some three months. From there they took a ship to Basra on the southern coast of Iraq, then overland up to Baghdad, and from there in a convoy across to Damascus in neighboring Syria. They had to hire an armed escort for the convoy from Baghdad to Damascus, because no travelers on that road could pass safely, even supposed Muslims. From Damascus they made their way to Transjordan (newly created by the British in 1922), and from there to the famous bridge at Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee. Lacking papers, or permission, or any legal premise whatsoever, they crossed illegally into Palestine.

Landing in Israel with my son Uri, the first place I wanted to go, as always, was to the Kotel, the Wailing Wall. Now I'm standing in front of it and just looking at it for hours. So many memories come back to me. It's just something you feel. The stones say something.

The plan had worked. They were all safely in Jerusalem, living within the thick stone walls of The Fortress. Soon Michal's father began to build his own house, in *G'oolah*, one of first neighborhoods outside Jerusalem's walls, just to the west, and abutting the ultra-orthodox neighborhood of *Meahsherim*, which is still there today. It was in that house, in *G'oolah*, that Michal grew up and lived until she met and married a fellow member of the then-secret Hagganah, David Kamely.

As a small child, Michal's parents would take her to the *Kotel*. She remembers that each time it felt like a festive day – an outing with her parents! – but as she got

older also one of sadness. It was a holy site that had, in essence, been denied the Jews, and though there was always a stream of Jewish visitors and pilgrims (until the area was closed off by the Jordanians after the War of Independence), they were never made to feel welcome there.

The only available route to the *Kotel* was a walk through the narrow streets of the Arab quarter, then through the Jaffa Gate. British troops always lined the streets, and Jews could only go during daylight hours. There was always a fear, earned by painful experience, of being attacked by the Arabs. Unlike today, where a fairly large plaza in front of it welcomes busloads of visitors, at that time the *Kotel* stood on one side of what, in essence, was but an alley, perhaps fifteen feet wide. On the other side, directly across, were the walls of Arab homes. There were no vendors and no welcomes. But there was always at least a trickle of visitors coming to open their hearts and pray. Michal remembers even then the notes being left in crevices along the wall, the pious in the belief and the desperate in the hope that the God of Israel would be there and listening.

Every year at *Tisha B'av*, until 1948, Michal and her friends would mount the walls of Jerusalem and walk completely around the city. During her childhood there were no barriers or neighborhood divisions in *G'oolah*, so Jewish children played with and alongside Arab children, as Michal well remembers doing. But Arab resistance to the influx of Jews into Palestine began in the 1930s to express itself with more organization and more vio-

lence, and after the massacre of the synagogue in Hebron, Michal's neighborhood was separated into Jewish and Arab sections and she never played with Arab children again.

Michal's mother never learned to speak Hebrew, and her father – he of the strength to uproot his family from a financially secure life and take them on an arduous and circui-

tous journey to the Holy Land, facing a future of no guarantees, and who each evening would happily gather his family in the courtyard of The Fortress to study – died three years after arriving. But Michal did grow up speaking Hebrew, a language that had only recently been resurrected to full life. Among the first and most important things the Zionists had done was to establish their own schools, which were taught only in Hebrew. Her childhood school, in the *Buchara* quarter, had once been the Governor's house. Michal attended that school until going to university, the teacher's seminary, which was the first of its kind in Israel.

Most of the teachers came from eastern Europe. Michal remembers that, while in seminary during World War II,

world-renowned scholars, refugees from Hitler's Europe, were among her teachers. One teacher, a woman named Leibowitz, was her favorite, and gave Michal a life-long love of Rashi. Anyone who has ever attempted Rashi will understand immediately what a wonderful, literate, and inspiring woman this teacher must have been. A sad memory of Michal's seminary days was when a group of professors, all European refugees who had escaped



The formal wedding photograph, in 1942, of David and Michal Kamely.

the Nazi death machine, was headed by bus to the university on Mt. Scopus. The bus was attacked by Arabs and all aboard were killed.

At 16, Michal joined the Hagganah because, well, everyone joined the Hagganah. Everyone knew everyone else was in, but because the organization was banned by the British (functioning right under its nose), no one knew anything about anyone else's role or who, other than their immediate contacts, the leaders were. Everyone learned first aid and how to handle a rifle. Once, when standing guard outside a meeting, a man asked entry but didn't

know the password. So Michal brandished her rifle and would not let him in. He asked her to consult the man she knew to be the highest officer in the meeting, who quickly ushered him in and later told Michal he was in the high command of Hagganah. (No, she wasn't punished.) But Michal's main job was as an observer. She was trained in Morse code, and would

sit up at night at assigned posts, to read and relay flashing lights as to whether anything was going on militarily. Hagganah training was, no exceptions, three times a week. Everyone was on permanent call, every day, no off days. If you were called, no matter what time of the day or night, you went. Her last experience in Hagganah was during the 1948 war. Her house in Haifa stood directly across the street from the Arab sector. So the Hagganah used it as a guard post. There was occasional shooting, at Arabs trying to infiltrate and from Arabs across the way. When one

bullet came very near her baby daughter Dafna, that was the end of that, and from then on Michal left any Hagganah work to her husband.

Michal Kamely has now lived in the United States for 25 years. Before that she lived in Europe. She has raised three children and has six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. (*Six years after the original publication of this article, there are now six great-grandchildren.*) Before coming to the Keys, she and David lived in the northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., just down

the road from Hickory Hill, Robert Kennedy's estate. All her children live in the United States now, and she knows she will never reside in Israel again. But ask her where *home* is and the answer will come quickly and firmly: Jerusalem. Each time she travels to Israel, she insists – no one can deny her this – on going immediately to the *Kotel*. It is, symbolically, the essence of Jerusalem:

the place her parents sacrificed so much to get to, the focal point of her childhood memories, the place she bore a rifle to defend, the place she saw so many of her young colleagues die defending, the place where she married. Is there any place that has that much meaning and quite so passionately defines *home* to the rest of us? ♦



Michal with son Uri in the Swiss Alps in the late 1980s.

(This article first ran in the October 2007 issue of Chai-Lights. We re-run it here in loving memory of Michal — Ed.)

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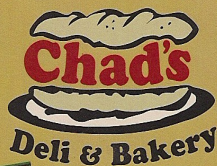


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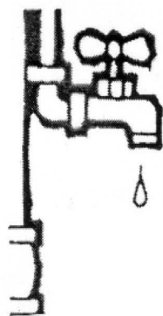
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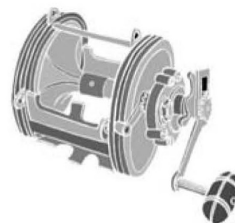
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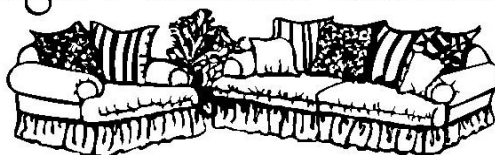


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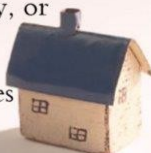
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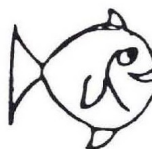
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