

Chai~Lights



December 2011

5 Kislev - 5 Tevet 5772

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Keys Jewish Community Center

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

December 2011

5 Kislev - 5 Tevet

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div>Names denote leaders of Friday services. <i>Italicized names are Oneg sponsors.</i></div>				1	2 Bernie Ginsberg & Jeff Schocket <i>Lauren & Stuart Sax</i>	3
4 Sisterhood Meeting 9:30 lecture on Jerusalem part II—7 pm	5	6	7 Men's Club Game Night at KJCC 7:30	8	9 Sisterhood Service <i>Joan Boruszak</i>	10 Men's Club Movie Night at KJCC 7:00 p.m.
11 KJCC Board Meeting 9 a.m.	12	13	14	15	16 Joyce Peckman <i>Barbara & Richard Knowles</i>	17 Torah Learning w/ Rabbi Aglar 10 a.m.
18 Yardena's lecture on Jerusalem, Part III, 7 p.m. at KJCC	19	20 <i>1st Candle lit in the evening</i>	21 1st Day of Chanukah	22	23 Gloria Avner & Susan Gordon <i>Steve & Barbara Smith, Steve & Amelia Kasinof</i> Hanukkah Shabbat Dairy Dinner 6:15	24 "Chai- Yaking" w/ Dave Mont 1 p.m.
25 Steinbock Christmas Day Open House 1-6 p.m.	26	27 <i>8 Candles lit in the evening</i>	28 8th Day of Chanukah	29	30 Erica Garrett & Family 6:30 Service <i>The Lieberman Family</i>	31 New Year's Eve

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President's Message Stuart Sax



Don't let it ever be said that this house goes unused. It is incredible the number of events that have taken place in the past month and those that are planned for this month.

Within a matter of two weeks our gazebo in the Meditation Garden was used for a prayer service, a Sukkot celebration, and a wedding. We have welcomed several new members into our *mish-pocha* and have seen an increase in those attending our game nights, movie nights, and kayak adventures. The attendance at our Veterans Shabbat dinner and service was amazing and our Sisterhood is to be congratulated for this delicious and patriotic event.

This month we will have more of the same plus a Sisterhood Shabbat service and more of Yardena's presentation on the historic transformation of Jerusalem over the centuries. Rabbi Agler will again lead us in a special Saturday Torah service and informal discussion on December 17th. We will all celebrate Chanukah with a family dinner and a presentation in the sanctuary.

If all of this were not enough, our entry hall now proudly honors our past presidents of both the congregation and Sisterhood. Our sanctuary and front entrance are now protected

with new storm-resistant windows and shutters. Our Meditation Garden has a new perpetual fountain and water access, along with many new bricks added to the walking path. We have a new canopy above our entrance and our parking area is being up-graded. A major leak in the roof over the social hall was found and repaired both outside and inside. And the major force behind all of these improvements is Jim Boruszak, who accomplished all of this in addition to making several trips to Texas for medical treatments. Jim is one of the KJCC's true Unsung Heroes.

There is one area of involvement that needs improvement: Yahrzeits and the Aleinu. Each week at our Shabbat services we read a list of those we remember and honor with the reciting of our first Kaddish prayer. At the end of each service we read the names of those celebrating a birthday or anniversary. Alan Beth and Joyce Peckman spend hours preparing these lists and contacting families with reminders of these occasions. Jerry Oshinsky is relentless at making sure the proper lights are illuminated on our memorial boards. Please make an effort to thank them for their diligence by participating in these special segments of our weekly service. ♦

Nosh

New Members

KJCC is pleased to welcome a wonderfully large group of new members this month: Michael Berman of Key Largo, Jerrold and Roos-Mary Benowitz of Key Largo, Linda Pincus of Islamorada, Joe Gould and Marla Berenson of Islamorada, and (it's okay to be the caboose in a mitzvah list) Mimi Gillespie of Tavernier. Your timing is perfect, as KJCC is heading into its most active period. We hope to see all of you often, at services and also at the many other exciting things going on here.

Yardena's Lectures on Jerusalem Continue

Parts Two and Three of Yardena's lecture series, "Jerusalem: A City and Its Complexities and Conflicts," will take place at KJCC on December 4th and December 18th, both Sunday nights, both from 7 - 8:30. The lectures, derived from a variety of resources, texts, personal accounts and maps, are exploring the four chapters in Jerusalem's history: Biblical, Christian, Muslim and today's Jewish Jerusalem. It is a holy city, of course, but also one of community life and cultural development. There is no charge to attend.

Oneg Sponsors for December 2011

December 2nd — Lauren & Stuart Sax in honor of Stuart's birthday.

December 9th — Joan Boruszak in honor of Jim's birthday.

December 16th — Barbara & Richard Knowles in honor of loved ones past and present.

December 23rd — Linda & Joel Pollack in honor of the Hanukkah dinner; Barbara & Steve Smith in honor of Steve S's birthday; and Amelia & Steve Kasinof in honor of Steve K's birthday.

December 30th — Erica Lieberman-Garrett in honor of her family's visit from Toronto. (They're all cooking and bringing lots of food.)

TREE OF LIFE

Congratulations to Zoe and Joshua

from Linda & Joel Pollack
10/23/2011

Zoe & Joshua Moshe

Wishing You
Lots of Love & Joy Always
Maryon Gould & Mary Lee Singer

We Need Help With Missing Photos

If you haven't noticed, the entrance hallway to KJCC now features, in addition to photos of our past presidents, photos of the past presidents of Sisterhood. But we're missing photos for three previous leaders: Miriam Tirrel, Evelyn Deaton and Jan Faeges. If you have a photo of any of these women, or know someone who would, please contact Carol Steinbock, at 305-393-1205 or cac147@gmail.com.

December Anniversaries

	Years
5th	Ron Levy & Beth Kaminstein.....22
8th	Lawrence & Pearl Jacobs.....58
11th	Arthur Lee & Johanna Willner.....46
11th	Jamie & Laura Goodman.....6
14th	David & Pat VanArtsdalen.....30
17th	Roger & Jessica Hernstadt.....5
17th	Larry & Stephanie Gilderman.....45

Steve and Carol's Christmas Open House

Once again this year, Steve and Carol Steinbock invite all members of KJCC to their annual Christmas for Jews Open House, from 1 till 6 p.m. at their Plantation Key Colony home, 147 Gardenia Street, Tavernier, MM 90 Bayside.

December Birthdays

1st Bob Freundlich
 1st Paul Hudson
 2nd Joseph Burke Grossman
 2nd Marshall A. Field
 3rd Ashley Berk
 3rd Cammie Berk
 3rd Jackie LePree
 4th Jan Hartz
 4th Judith Klein
 5th Joseph Beth
 5th Stuart Sax
 6th Gerald Hirsch
 6th Haley Borisoff
 6th Kevin Gershowitz
 6th Leslie Boruszak
 6th Neal A. Jacobson
 7th Franklin Rose
 8th Alan Stocking
 8th Leslie Dillon
 9th George Swartz
 9th Jim Boruszak
 10th Harvey Robins
 10th Susan Greenbaum
 11th Sara Rose Friedman
 12th Lilian Forbes
 13th Robin Margulies Juenger
 13th Sarah Boruszak
 13th Susan Widrich
 15th Stephan Ban
 16th Diana Lal
 16th Samuel Klimpl
 17th Bruce Forman
 17th Jeffrey Schocket
 18th Emelyn Anne Juenger
 18th Jerome Horowitz
 18th Lily Chen
 19th Aaron Stuart
 19th David Gitin
 19th Lorena Kaufman
 20th Alan Schulberg
 20th Jennifer VanArtsdalen
 20th Teresa Kwalick
 22nd Laura Molly Friedman
 23rd Roger Hernstadt
 25th Lori Kay

26th Steven Smith
 27th Steve Kasinof
 28th Elaine Schulberg
 28th Emily Sherman
 28th Ira Krieger
 28th Michael Klimpl
 29th Joan Stark
 30th Ellen Bloom
 31st Elliot S. Schenker

Coming to the KJCC March 10, 2012

Hilarious Comedy!

Powerful Vocals!

Piano Virtuosity!

Professional Acting!



It's SARGE! The Entertainer.
Sisterhood's Major Fundraiser of the Season.

Event Chairperson:
 Nancy Kluger — 305-393-2129

A Note of Thanks from Gerri Emkey

The 60-mile Walk For Breast Cancer started October 27th in Tampa and went on for three days. I finished, walking 20 miles each day.

It was a great event. Many of the members made contributions to help find a cure for breast cancer. My twin sister Terri came with me to the event, to offer lots of support. We both had a great time. I would walk forever to find a cure for this disease.

I want to thank all the members who donated to this cause.

Love,
Gerri

Need to Contact Chai-Lights?

The simplest way is through our e-mail, which is chailights@keysjewishcenter.com. But you can also get a message to us when you're writing Stuart, at president@keysjewishcenter.com; He'll happily forward your comments on to us.

Two Invitations from Erica

I'd like to invite all of you to the Holiday Open House Celebration at Garrett Chiropractic and Wellness Center. I like to call it "Holistic Happy Hour." It'll be Thursday, December 1 from 4-7 p.m. We're at MM 90 Bayside. Please call, 853-1003, to let us know you're coming.

In honor of the end of the (secular) year, and the Lieberman family visit to the Keys (twelve people in all), I will be leading services on Friday, December 30th, along with my family.

I am excited to introduce the KJCC to my family, and the Shabbat service will be in their honor. Two rabbinical students will also be visiting the Keys during that weekend, and we will be privileged to have them lead a discussion of that week's parshah. The Lieberman family will also be sponsoring the Oneg and bringing delicious food in celebration of the new year.

We hope that you will all join us.

-Erica Lieberman-Garrett

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.

Sisterhood Lauren Sax



If it's December, it must be season. I would like to welcome our snowbirds back. It has been very quiet without you and we are thrilled you are all returning. Sisterhood has been busy planning for our upcoming season. Judging from our full calendar, there should be something for everyone. The main focus this year is our major fundraiser in March. Please don't be shy when it comes to volunteering. We can use everybody's help; it doesn't matter how much or how little of yourself you can give. (Wouldn't you enjoy that big recliner or satin couch in heaven mentioned in that poem praising volunteers in October's Chai-Lights?)

As usual, Erica Garrett worked her magic, and our first-of-the-season Shabbat Dinner was a great success. It was a chance to welcome our new members into our *mishpocha*. The buffet tables were overflowing, and many thank-yous to all who helped with the set-up, clean-up and cooking. It is no easy task to clean up and reset tables for our oneg sixty minutes later, and I truly appreciate everyone pitching in.

I hope you have all noticed the newly improved picture wall in KJCC's entrance foyer. A huge thank-you to Candy Stanlake, who has been working on this for quite awhile. Poring over our archives to ensure we included all the Sisterhood Past Presidents, with their years of service noted, proved to be no easy task. Candy logged in many miles shopping and schlepping in and out of stores looking for just the right frames and shelving. Carol Steinbock had the plates engraved, and Jim Boruszak coordinated the painting of the wall and the installation. Stuart Sax and Steve Steinbock assisted with the actual installation, and voila!! What a lovely way to honor all those who have given of their time and talents to all of KJCC; and places of honor await

those who will follow in the future.

December 9th is the date of our next Sisterhood Shabbat Service. This time we will be able to involve our snowbirds. Some of you have already contacted me, but for those who haven't and are interested in either participating in the service or baking for the oneg, please contact me ASAP. I would love to be able to involve as many ladies as possible. As they say, "the more the merrier."

Our Hanukkah Dinner is scheduled for Friday, December 23rd and is being sponsored by Linda and Joel Pollack. Erica is taking reservations for this one as well, so make sure you contact her to reserve your seat and to also let her know what you will be bringing. If cooking or baking is not your thing, we can always use help for set-up or clean-up. We are looking forward to a good turnout; there might even be a dreidel-spinning contest this year! All Sisterhood events are listed on the KJCC website, so make sure to check the calendar regularly.

Finally, I am sure you have all received my volunteer letter asking for help on any of Sisterhood's many committees. In order for Sisterhood to move forward and continue its thirty-year legacy, we need people to step up and help those of us who are continually giving of our busy lives. Come to a meeting and see what we are all about. January 22nd we are getting together at the gorgeous home of Nancy and Kurt Kluger, which overlooks the bay and is the perfect setting for a relaxing and purely social afternoon. The plan is to kick back and just relax that day. Why not join us? And you know what they say: "Try it, you might like it." ♦

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.

Chai-Lights

Peckman, Joyce

General Fund

Avner, Gloria Joshua Bernstein's Bar Mitzvah
Avner, Gloria Zoe & Joshua Moshe's wedding
Begam, Delores pray for us
Borzak, Don Jim & Joan Boruszak's 1st great-grand-child and Allan Boruszak's granddaughter
Ginsberg, Bernard Zoe & Joshua Moshe's wedding
Kamely, Yarden Zoe & Joshua Moshe's wedding
Kwalick, Teresa Zoe & Joshua Moshe's wedding
Oshinsky, Gerald
Pollack, Joel & Linda speedy recovery Gloria Avner
Pollack, Joel thanks to Alan Beth for carrying me over the 5K Bridge Walk finish line
Rosenbach, Michael and Arlene
Schocket, Jeffrey & Patty Zoe & Joshua Moshe's wedding
Steinbock, Stephen and Carol Zoe & Joshua Moshe's wedding

General Fund

Pollack, Joel & Linda

In Memory of

Steve Richardson

Holidays/Seats

Anonymous
Coltman, Barney & Ellen
Foster, Michael
Levine, Dorothy
Sonstein, Joseph & Lindsay

Meditation Garden

Denenberg, Nancy/Steven Osder Leonard Roberts
Friel, Patricia Leonard Roberts
Hirschlein, Sharon Leonard Roberts
McMahon, Mike & Maggie Leonard Roberts

Tree of Life

Gould, Maryon to honor Zoe & Joshua Moshe's wedding
Pollack, Joel & Linda to honor Zoe & Joshua Moshe's wedding
Singer, Mary Lee to honor Zoe & Joshua Moshe's wedding

Yartzeit Contributions

Avner, Gloria In Memory of Uncle Perry Gerber
Dorf, Barry and Natalie Jack Dorf
Isenberg, Henry and Patricia Helene Tulskey
Kamely, Michal Rebekah Levy, Leah Kamely
Kamely, Michal David Kamely
Kwalick, Teresa Irene Becker
Kwalick, Teresa B. Kwalick & J. Carryl
Steinberg, Richard and Sheila Saunders Cohen
Steinberg, Richard and Sheila Joel Cohen
VanArtsdalen, David & Patricia Dick Jacob
Wolfe, Larry and Dorothy Diana Wolfe

Yartzeit Memorial Plaques

Coltman, Barney & Ellen

In Memory of

Reserved for
Eve Greenstein

Yiskor Book

Friedman, Stephan and Jane
Ginsberg, Bernard
Steinberg, Richard and Sheila

YEDA VE'TORASHA

Yardena Kamely



A Scholar Looks Anew at Hanukkah

The post-Biblical holidays (those not mandated in The Torah) are festivals and are not sanctified with Sabbath-like atmosphere. However, various religious observances have been instituted to reflect their special historical significance. The most important of those post-Biblical occasions are Hanukkah, Purim and Tisha B'Av.

On the 25th of Kislev are the days of Hanukkah, which are eight...these were appointed a festival with Hallel [prayers of praise] and thanksgiving.

-Shabbat 21b, Babylonian Talmud.

Hanukkah commemorates the historic victory of the Maccabees following a three-year-long uprising against the ruling Assyrian-Greek regime and their Jewish Hellenist supporters, who had imposed restrictions against Jewish religious practices. The uprising culminated in the recapture of the Temple of Jerusalem and the restoration of its traditional Jewish rituals. The victory also restored – if only for a few generations – Jewish political sovereignty over the land.

In Hebrew schools across the country, the Hanukkah story will usually be told like this: The wicked king Antiochus IV Epiphanes attacked the innocent and pious Jews of Judea, imposed Greek ways, restricted the observance of Jewish practices and profaned the Temple of Jerusalem. Judah the Maccabee and his brothers (known collectively as the Hasmoneans) went to war against Hellenism, against the king and those Jews who supported the king and his policies. They tri-

umphed. In 164 B.C.E. they reconquered Jerusalem, put an end to persecution of Jews, purified the Temple, and instituted the festival of Hanukkah to commemorate their victory. In an existential struggle between Jews and Greeks, between Judaism and Hellenism, the Jews triumphed. But this version of our history is increasingly being challenged.

Shaye J.D. Cohen, professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy at Harvard, says:

“According to this Hebrew school version of the events, which mirrors the popular Jewish understanding, the Hasmoneans saved Judaism from Hellenism.” Professor Cohen then turns to some new critics who have recently “turned this story on its head. Whereas every Hebrew school student knows that King Antiochus was the bad guy, and that the Hasmoneans were the good guys, according to these critics the opposite was the case.” He then quotes from some in the new school: “Antiochus represents Greek enlightenment, the Hasmoneans Jewish particularism and ritualism.” “...the Hasmoneans were simply anti-Hellenist religious fanatics...Hanukkah represents the victory of bloody-minded faith over enlightenment and reason.”

Yes, some of what the Hasmoneans did was not pretty; wars and revolutions are usually not pretty. But the fact is that the Hasmoneans were not implacable opponents of Hellenism. The Hasmoneans did not save Judaism from Hellenism so much as they showed the Jews how to live with it.

The Hasmoneans faced two kinds of opponents within Judean society. First were those who completely supported the Greeks, per-

haps even to the extent of not objecting when the Greeks introduced a pagan cult object into the Temple and prohibited the observance of Jewish laws and customs outside the Temple. These Jews, attracted to the Greeks both politically and morally, are usually called *Hellenizers* in modern scholarship. Professor Cohen then notes the Jews at the other end of the spectrum, who wanted nothing to do with either the Hasmoneans or the Greeks, and who ran off into the desert in order to escape the capital city and its sinful ways. "These Jews, who were anti-Hasmonean and anti-Greek in equal measure, founded the settlement at Qumran near the shores of the Dead Sea, ultimately giving us the Qumran scrolls. The Hasmoneans

searched for a middle course, combining the Hellenism of the Hellenizers and the Jewish orthodoxy of the Qumranites. Their goal was to find a way to live with Hellenism, to combine a secure Jewish identity with Hellenistic culture."

The Hanukkah narrative in the first *Book of Maccabees*, written at the end of the second century B.C.E., illustrates this point. Perhaps most striking is the institution of the Hanukkah festival itself: *Then Judah and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of dedication of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth day of the month of Kislev.*

Cohen asks: how did the Hasmoneans get the idea to institute a yearly festival celebrating their great victory? It wasn't from the Torah; in the Torah God alone gives festivals to the people of Israel; the Israelites do not choose festivals for themselves. Nor could the idea have come from the Biblical histories (Joshua through Kings), which are full of stories of conquest and victory but do not describe a Biblical hero instituting a festival.

Cohen argues that the idea of an assembly of the people having the power to institute an annual festival, and the idea that an annual

festival is an appropriate way to mark a great victory, are both gifts to the Hasmoneans from Greek culture. He notes other examples of Hasmonean Hellenism in the narrative of *First Maccabees*. In 140 B.C.E. the Hasmonean leaders elected Simon, brother of Judah, as High Priest. This is an un-Jewish idea; the popular election of a high priest is rooted not in Judaism but in Hellenism. As long as the Temple and its rituals, the Law and its requirements, were not touched, the Hasmoneans were not afraid to enrich Judaism by incorporating Hellenistic ideas and practices.

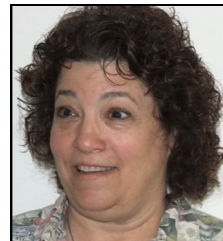
In Israel today, Hanukkah is important in that it is a festival that commemorates a military victory, that over the Greek Assyrians who had conquered Israel. It is understandable that modern Israelis would remember fondly a historic victory over an enemy that greatly outnumbered and should have defeated their ancestors. It's interesting that, unlike other holidays, Hanukkah in Israel is celebrated by religious and secular Jews with equal fondness and respect.

Hanukkah is also called *Chag Ha'Urim* (Festival of Lights). In Jewish spiritualism it says: In the beginning there was light. At the end there will be light. In between there is the history, the evolution of human beings toward the light. On Hanukkah we are looking at one moment in this history of the Jewish path through life. So the value of Hanukkah is not merely historic, remembering and honoring the past. In this festival Jewish heroism – *G'vurah* – of every historical period is honored (including the present time, when the State of Israel was created). But beyond the military successes of the Maccabees, Hanukkah is also a rededication to an enduring faith – *Emunah* – in the idea of human freedom. That freedom was born at Pesach, and an important aspect of Hanukkah is a hope that such freedom will always be protected from elimination by those who periodically gain political power or empire in this world. ♦

*The Hasmoneans
did not get
the idea of a
yearly festival
celebration from
the Torah.*

World Jewish Report

Medina Roy



Do You Recognize Me?

More than 1 million children perished in the Holocaust. Between 1933 and 1945, millions of others were displaced as a result of persecution by the Nazis and their collaborators. After World War II, relief agencies photographed some of the children who survived in order to help locate their families. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has some 1,100 of these photos and now, more than 65 years later, the museum is reaching out around the world in an attempt to identify and discover the fate of these young survivors. This past March, the museum, taking advantage of social media to find these children and collect their stories, launched a project they've called *Remember Me?* As of this writing, 230 child survivors from eleven countries have been identified through the project. Museum officials hope that after identifying a friend, relative or neighbor, visitors to the website will share the narrative of the child's life-story before the Holocaust and what has happened to them in the decades since. Photos can be searched by name or one can view the gallery. The website has already attracted some 61,500 visitors from 150 countries. To view the site, go to www.rememberme.ushmm.org . (www.jta.org, 11-3-11)

A New Hotline

The Israel Law Center (*Shurat HaDin*) is an Israeli-based civil rights organization focused on combating terrorist organizations and the regimes that support them. Their method is lawsuits litigated around the world. Now the Center has launched a hotline to help Jewish college students who are victims of anti-Semitism on their campuses. According to attorney Kenneth A. Leitner, the Law Center's Director of American Affairs, stu-

dents will now be able to call the hotline to report anti-Semitic and anti-Israel incidents on U.S. college campuses. The Law Center will then use the data and take legal action against those colleges suspected of breaching the legal rights of Jewish students. "It is time for us to go on the legal offensive," said Leitner, who noted that campus anti-Semitism is growing. Colleges in the United States will also receive a "report card" from ILC grading them according to their commitment to providing Jewish students with a safe learning environment. Leitner added that radical anti-Israel groups like *Students for Justice in Palestine* already have a stronghold on U.S. Campuses. Students can call the Israel Law Center Campus Hotline at (718) 907-9258. To view the work of the center, visit www.israellawcenter.org. (www.jpost.com, 10-16-11)

Oprah and Brooklyn's Chasidim

Oprah Winfrey recently visited an Orthodox Jewish congregation in Brooklyn to check out the shul's state-of-the-art *mikvah* (the ritual bath drawn from natural water sources where Orthodox women go to "purify" after their menstrual cycles before resuming sexual relations with their husbands). Filming a segment of her new TV show, "Oprah's Next Chapter," which will premiere on her OWN Network in January 2012, Oprah visited the Chasidic neighborhood. Her new TV show will feature interviews with spiritual leaders all around the world. (Two interesting asides: first, many in these Orthodox communities know virtually nothing about Oprah or the work that she's done. And in case you were wondering, no, she did not immerse herself in the *mikvah*). (*The Forward*, 10-27-11)

An “Electric Nose”

Scientists at the Technion Institute in Haifa report progress, including successful testing on humans, of an “electric nose,” a device with a series of sensors that can pick up evidence of multiple sclerosis from exhaled breath. In the latest edition of *ACS Chemical Neuroscience*, the scientists describe the device as a possible breakthrough in the search for a fast, non-invasive and inexpensive test for the disease. Currently, detecting and treating the disease is far less precise yet more cumbersome, and includes expensive MRI exams and invasive lumbar punctures. In their research, the Technion scientists identified “volatile organic compounds in exhaled breath that are linked to multiple sclerosis,” and designed the computerized “nose” to detect those compounds. (www.israelnationalnews.com, 10-14-11)

Montel is Impressed

Emmy Award-winning TV personality-turned-patient-activist Montel Williams, 55, was in Israel recently on a fact-finding mission to learn about the Jewish state's medical marijuana practices. After meeting with legislators, scientists and physicians, Williams came away impressed with Israel's liberal attitude toward the use of medical marijuana and believes the United States could learn much from the Jewish state. Williams was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1999; he has since been an outspoken advocate of medical marijuana to relieve the pain caused by the disease. Itay Goor-Aryeh, head of the pain management unit at the Sheba Medical Center in central Israel, said that while marijuana use is strictly regulated, many doctors prefer prescribing it to patients who qualify because “it is the lesser of evils,” referring to a variety of harmful drugs, one of which is opium-derived morphine. Sixteen states in the U.S. have decriminalized the use of medical marijuana to some extent. Williams said he uses marijuana on a daily basis to ease his pain and he hopes that one day it will become a regular prescription drug. (*Associated Press*, 10-30-11)

In Memoriam

- Carl Lindner, Jr., one of the largest non-Jewish donors to the organized Jewish community in the United States, has died. He was 92. Lindner once said that an early loan from Sir Isaac Wolfson (1897-1991), British business leader and philanthropist and a major benefactor of Israel, inspired him to never forget the Jewish people for helping him get his start in the world of finance, through which he became a billionaire. A successful corporate financier and devout Christian, Lindner quietly began donating large sums of money to the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) in the 1960s. In 1978, in recognition of his generosity, the UJA named him Man of the Year. He was also named a recipient of the Tree of Life Award for the Jewish National Fund and was recognized as the largest non-Jewish purchaser of Israel Bonds. In 1991 the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati honored him at a fundraising dinner for Naharia, a poor town in Israel, which at the time was the sister city of Cincinnati's Jewish community.

Lindner was founder and board chairman of the American Financial Group, a major financial services company. At one time, he was a minority owner of the Cincinnati Reds baseball team and its chief executive officer. He dropped out of school at age 15, during the Depression, to deliver milk door-to-door while attending high school classes at night. He later transformed his milk delivery business into what is now United Dairy Farmers. (www.jta.org, 11-2-11)

- Franklin Kameny, a Harvard PhD in astronomy and one of the leading figures of the gay rights movement, has died at the age of 86. Kameny was discharged from the U.S. Army more than 50 years ago (he was a government astronomer working for the Army Map Service) because of his homosexuality. This incident led to his career of activism for gay rights. Kameny protested his firing all the way to the Supreme Court, marking the first civil rights claim based on sexual orientation. (He lost the case.) Soon after that, he co-founded the Mattachine Society, a pioneering gay civil rights group that organized the first gay demonstration at the White House.

Born into a New York middle-class Jewish family, Kameny taught himself to read by the age of four. He entered Queens College when he was 15 to study physics. He enlisted in the Army at the height of World War II, just a few days before he turned 18. "I have resented for 67 years that I had to lie in order to serve in a war effort that I strongly supported," he once said. Mr. Kameny devoted his life to increasing acceptance of the gay community in mainstream American society and to gain recognition of their equality under the law. He is credited with playing an important role in several milestone events for all gays, such as when in late 1973 the American Psychiatric Association stopped classifying homosexuality as a mental disorder. He was also instrumental in the executive order issued by President Clinton permitting gays to be given security clearances. The Federal government issued a formal apology to Kameny in 2009 for letting him go. His civil rights struggle is chronicled in 77,000 pages of papers and memorabilia housed in the Library of Congress. Ironically, Kameny died on October 11th, "National Coming-Out Day," and in the same year when homosexuals were formally allowed to serve openly in the military. (*The Forward*, 10-12-11)

- Jerzy Bielecki, a Catholic Pole who escaped with his Jewish girlfriend Cyla Cybulska from Auschwitz in 1944 when he was 23, has died at the age of 90. Bielecki, suspected of being a member of the Polish resistance, was arrested by the Nazis and sent to Auschwitz. Three years later, he met and fell in love with a young girl who had recently been transported with her family to the camp. Bielecki used his relatively privileged position as a German-speaking Catholic-Polish inmate to orchestrate the escape. He secretly acquired a complete SS uniform, a stolen pass and a forged document. He pretended to take a Jewish inmate out of the camp for interrogation. For more than a week the couple hid in fields during the day; then walked during the night until they reached the house of Bielecki's uncle.

Soon after, the two were separated when Catholic Bielecki went back to Krakow and

Jewish Cybulska hid with a farming family. Through a variety of misunderstandings, they failed to meet after the war, each believing the other had died. Cybulska immigrated to the United States and married another Holocaust survivor. Bielecki remained in Poland and started a family of his own. By sheer chance they were reunited when, one day, Cybulska's Polish cleaning woman heard her story and said she had heard Bielecki on Polish TV telling the same story. She helped Cybulska find Bielecki and, in the summer of 1982, the two were reunited at Krakow airport; Bielecki brought Cybulska 39 roses – 1 for each year they had spent apart. They saw each other periodically and remained good friends. In 1985 *Yad Vashem* awarded Bielecki the title Righteous Among Nations for saving one Jewish woman. (Which, the rabbis say, is the same as saving the world.) (www.haaretz.com, 10-23-11)

Update

In the October 2011 issue of Chai-Lights, *World Jewish Report* reported on a story about Coney Island Bialys & Bagels, closing after 91 years. Turns out the store, which was owned by Steven Ross and is the oldest bialy store in the country, has been saved by two Muslim businessmen who leased the space. Peerzada Shah and Zafaryab Ali (Ali worked with Ross at the shop for ten years) re-opened the store and plan to build on Ross's kosher wholesale business, which supplies bialys to Staten Island, Brooklyn and New Jersey. Both Ali and Shah grew up in Pakistan and moved to New York, where they became taxi drivers. The two say they intend to keep the kosher shop's offerings the same, thereby preserving its history, and that the store will remain kosher. (And the key to peace in the Middle East is...food?) (*The Forward*, 11-2-11)

Did You Know...

Vice President Joe Biden's future son-in-law, Howard Krein, is a Jewish doctor (no, that isn't redundant) at Jefferson Hospital in Philadelphia. Krein is an ear, nose and throat specialist. Ashley Biden, 30, is a social worker. (www.jta.org, 11-2-11) ♦

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-This Month in Jewish History-

December

519 B.C.E. – Supported by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the foundations for the Second Temple are laid during the second year of the reign of Persian ruler Darius The Great. It will take four years to complete the project.

220 C.E. – Rabbi Judah Hanasi (Judah the Patriarch) dies. Born in Eretz Israel in 138 (three years after the last rebellion against Rome, the one led by Bar Kochba), Judah's greatest claim to fame is as the compiler of the Mishna, the compilation of Oral Law, which will serve as the basis for both the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds. It served, and still serves, as a code for regulation of all Jewish life. Some of his more famous sayings include: "Be as punctilious in observing a light as a weighty commandment, for you do not know their relative reward." And the favorite of all who teach: "I have learned much from teachers, more from my colleagues, but most from pupils."

321 C.E. – A letter from Emperor Constantine the Great regarding special taxes provides the first evidence of Jews living along the Rhine in central Europe.

771 – Charlemagne becomes sole Frankish king upon the death of his brother, King Carloman. Contrary to typical historical patterns, the consolidation of political power in the hands of one monarch actually helps the kingdom's Jews. Charlemagne is favorably disposed to his Jewish subjects, even to the point of defying edicts of powerful prelates.

1254 – Pope Innocent IV dies. During his papacy, Innocent denounces Blood Libels against the Jews as "unfounded." In 1247, Innocent issues a declaration on behalf of Jews stating that the Talmud is an absolute necessity for the Jews, if Judaism is to continue to exist as a separate religion; and that

burnings of the Talmud are to cease. This is not a position taken by many medieval Popes.

1655 – Oliver Cromwell convenes a gathering of English notables at Whitehall to decide if the Jews should be readmitted to England. Cromwell is a strong proponent of readmission, as are most of Cromwell's military and government leaders. Opposition comes from merchants and the mainline Christian clergy. The council is stalemated, and eventually disbanded. But conferees do agree that there is no legal reason not to re-admit the Jews since they had been expelled by royal decree and not by an act of Parliament.

1787 – Delaware becomes the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution. It abolishes all religious tests for public office in 1792.

1847 – Solomon Schechter is born in Rumania to a Chabad Chassidic family. His Chassidic upbringing does not satisfy him, and in 1879 he goes to study at the *Hochschule fur die Wissenschaft des Judentums* at the University of Berlin. He quickly rises to prominence as a rabbinic scholar and spokesman for Jewish traditionalism, gaining international fame as a scholar when he discovers and brings back to London more than 100,000 pages of rare manuscripts from the Cairo Geniza. In 1913 he is instrumental in founding the United Synagogue of America, the umbrella organization of all Conservative congregations. Though a staunch traditionalist, Schechter admits that there can be change in modern Judaism. He is supposedly quoted as saying, "Gentlemen, in order to be a success in the American rabbinate, you must be able to talk baseball."

1861 – An edition of the *Louisville-Nashville Courier* gives the following details concerning the burning of a bridge at Whippoorwill on the Memphis Branch Railroad: "A detachment

of fifty or sixty federal soldiers under the command of a Dutch Jew peddler named Netter fired a volley of over one hundred rounds from Sharp's revolving rifles" at the Confederates guarding the bridge. "Netter" is probably Gabriel Netter, a French-born Jew (not Dutch) living in Kentucky, who within a year would rise to the rank of Lt. Colonel before being killed in fighting near Owensboro.

1864 – A meeting is held in Philadelphia, which results in the establishment of the first Jewish theological seminary in America. The seminary is established under the joint auspices of the Hebrew Education Society and the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, and is named Maimonides College. The school begins operations in 1867. It ceases operations in 1873 due to lack of support and funds.

1864 – William Tecumseh Sherman's Union Army reaches Savannah, Georgia in what history will call "Sherman's March to the Sea." Fighting alongside Sherman is Major General Frederick Knefler, a native of Hungary who is the highest-ranking Jewish officer in the Union Army during the Civil War.

1875 – Father Bernhard Lichtenberg, anti-fascist German priest and outspoken defender of the Jews of Germany, is born. After *Kristallnacht*, Lichtenberg is the only prominent Church figure to raise his voice publicly and fearlessly against Nazi brutality. "We know what happened yesterday, we do not know what lies in store for us tomorrow. But we have experienced what has happened today: Outside burns the temple. This is also a place of worship." He is arrested in 1941, but continues to speak out. In 1943, Lichtenberg asks to accompany the Jews being sent to the Ghetto at Lodz, Poland. The Church refuses, but the Gestapo orders him sent to Dachau. Not yet seventy, Lichtenberg dies while awaiting shipment to the concentration camp.

1889 – Poet Robert Browning dies. Browning's poem "Rabbi ben Ezra" is based on the life Abraham ibn Ezra, a leading figure in the

Golden Age in Spain and second only in fame to Rashi as a Torah commentator. The poem begins with the famous line "Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be..."

1891 – Rachel Sasoon Beer, granddaughter of David Sasoon and daughter of Sasoon David Sasoon, is named editor of *The Observer* in London, making her the first female editor of a national newspaper. During her tenure *The Observer* achieves one of its greatest exclusives: the admission by Count Esterhazy that he had forged the letters used to condemn innocent Jewish Captain Alfred Dreyfus to Devil's Island. The ensuing international outcry leads to the release and pardon of Dreyfus and court-martial of Esterhazy.

1915 – Albert Einstein publishes the general theory of relativity, from his seat as Director of Theoretical Physics at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin. He is 36.

1917 – British troops under General Allenby fight their way into Jerusalem, defeating the Ottoman Turks and freeing the ancient Jewish homeland from hundreds of years of Ottoman rule. The whole city turns out to greet the General, as do the Chief Sephardic and Ashkenazi Rabbis. The Jaffa Gate is opened after years of disuse to enable Allenby to enter on foot, but also to enable him to enter the city without having to use a gap in the wall created for Kaiser William in 1898.

1917 – Corporal Louis Isaac Salek, a Gallipoli veteran from New Zealand entering Jerusalem with General Allenby, hoists and flies the first Jewish flag to fly over Jerusalem since the city's fall to the Romans almost two thousand years ago. The flag is made by an Egyptian-Jewish department store owner named Moreno Cicurel with the assistance of a tailor from Alexandria named Eliezer Slutzkin. Salek's flag design is blue and white – the top half blue, the bottom half white – with a Magen David in the center. Salek plants Moreno's flag atop the Tower of David – the Citadel – where it flies for twenty minutes before being removed by the British. ♦

Photo Gallery

The three night photos at top were taken on Friday, October 14th, as our beautiful Garden gazebo, already decorated as the KJCC sukkah, served as the site of our Oneg after services. (What other shul in the country was having outdoor evening Onegs in October?) Thanks to Mary Lee for the photos.

All the photos below were taken on Sunday, October 16th by Richard and Barbara Knowles, As the KJCC Sunday School celebrated Sukkot. Everyone got to handle and inhale the aroma of the lulav and etrog.





We cordially invite you to
Sisterhood Shabbat

Friday, December 9, 2011

8:00 p.m.

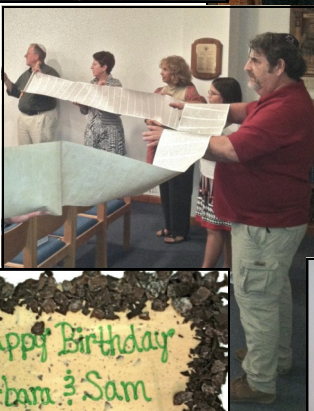
Service conducted by

Women of the KJCC

Sisterhood

Extended Oneg to follow

All the photos on this page are from the Simchat Torah celebration on Friday, October 21st. Bernie and Gloria led us through the religious rituals, and then everyone took turns carrying one of our three Torahs around the sanctuary. As you can see, a spirited good time was had by all.



The final part of the celebration was to re-wind the Torahs back to the beginning. The yearly cycle of reading had ended, and the next week we would begin anew with B'rei-shit. Our thanks to Richard and Barbara Knowles and Marc Bloom for the photos. The Knowleses also celebrated two family birthdays by sponsoring the Oneg.

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November 11th was the kind of evening at KJCC we all remember for years. First there was the fabulous dinner provided by Sisterhood. Stuart then led a service he dedicated to all

veterans, inviting his friend Dave Magidson — past National Commander of Jewish War Veterans of the USA and also Past President of the National Museum of American Jewish Military History — to speak. The photo at top is all the veterans who were here that night (plus Bea). Widows of veterans are pictured just below and left.





On Friday, November 4th, Joshua Bernstein led services along with Gloria. Many of his family were there, in town for his Bar Mitzvah the next morning. (Please see next month's Chai-Lights for photos from the Bar Mitzvah celebration itself.)

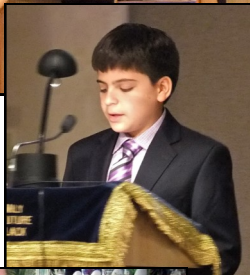
Pauline was tempted to leave Alan in the lurch and take his motorcycle to the Bar Mitzvah herself, but then felt *rachmones* and decided to travel conventionally. (Anyone know if there's a Bubbe Biker Babe calendar?)

Linda and Maryon stopped into Angelika's recently, at left, to see what's new and wonderful in Lauren and Stu's world of fashion. Gerri Emkey poses, below center, just after finishing

the 60-mile Walk for Breast Cancer in Tampa October 29th. (Please see her note to the congregation that appears in Nosh on

page 4). Yardena and Muriel stand before this year's Kristallnacht display they created for

the KJCC lobby. Above is the new display of past Sisterhood presidents now gracing the KJCC entryway. Libby Peckman, Joyce's granddaughter, dances with 11-month-old Matanel Hai, Bea's great-grandson, at a Klezmer brunch in New York City.



Chanukah Tidbits, Part II

Each year we try to bring you a slightly different take on Chanukah, perhaps the holiday whose rituals and story are more familiar to more of us than any other, and whose arrival we welcome more than any save Passover. We've featured stories, and reminiscences, the different practices of different cultures in different eras, and history. (Yardena does a wonderful job in YEDA this month describing a prominent Judaic scholar's new take on the relationship between the Hasmoneans and Hellenism.) This year we thought we'd fill in some things we'd missed. This is Judaism, after all. There's always something.

The word "Chanukah" itself has its etymology in the Hebrew verb *chanooch* – meaning "to dedicate" – with both the initial and final "ch" being the uvula-rattling sounds made in the back of the throat, not the English "ch" as in "cheese." As is so often the case, the exact origin of the word is obscure; but that has not at all stopped those who would find deeper or richly complex or even poetic possibilities from offering learned guesses. One version says the name can be broken down into a Hebrew phrase for "they rested on the twenty-fifth," a reference to the 25th of Kislev, the date when the Maccabee/Greek fighting stopped and the day on which the holiday begins. Another version – our winner for the combined category of creativity plus pious adoration of the great teachers – claims the word is an acronym for a Hebrew phrase meaning "eight candles, and the halakha is like the House of Hillel." This refers to the learned dispute at the beginning of the Common Era between the Houses of Hillel and Shammai as to whether one should begin the lighting with eight candles and go down to one (Shammai) or one candle and build up to

eight (Hillel). Hillel won the argument, of course, hence the phrase and acronym.

The Roman-Jewish historian Flavius Josephus describes the origin of the holiday in his book *Jewish Antiquities* XII, though he calls the celebration the "Festival of Lights" and does not mention the name Chanukah: "Now Judah celebrated the festival of the restoration of the sacrifices of the Temple for eight days, and omitted no sort of pleasures thereon; but he feasted them upon very rich and splendid sacrifices, and he honored God, and delighted them by hymns and psalms... And from that time to this [*a passage of about 250 years from the actual events to the time Josephus would have been writing*] we celebrate this festival, and call it Lights."

The Talmud mentions the familiar story of the single container of sealed, ritual olive oil found when it was time to re-dedicate the Temple and re-light the menorah. But the Book of 1 Maccabees, in its telling of the story, does not mention the oil at all. (Possibly one reason the Books of 1 and 2 Maccabees do not appear in the Hebrew Bible?) The story of Chanukah is entirely missing from the Mishna. One scholar posits that, since the Mishna was edited just after the Bar Kochba revolt – the third and final Jewish rebellion against Rome – that its editors might have feared describing another, and relatively recent, description of a Jewish revolt against a foreign ruler.

Each night after the candles are lit, tradition calls for the singing of the hymn *Ma'oz Tzur*, the Rock of Ages. The song is comprised of six stanzas. The first and last deal with large themes of salvation, but the middle four deal specifically with four episodes of persecution in Jewish history: the Exodus from Egypt, the Babylonian captivity, the miracle of survival in Persia told at Purim, and the Hasmonean victory over the Assyrian

Greeks celebrated at Chanukah.

There is ongoing discussion and dispute about just the right way to transliterate the name of the holiday into English. (Possibly exceeded only by the number of ways American media spelled “Ghaddafi.” But he’s dead now, so that controversy will certainly wither away; ours won’t.) We thought you’d enjoy the discussion by one linguist: “The word Hanukkah is commonly transliterated to English as Chanukah or Hanukkah, the former because the sound represented by ‘ch’ (similar to the Scottish pronunciation of *loch*) does not exist in the English language. Furthermore, the letter ‘chet,’ which is the first letter in the Hebrew spelling, is pronounced differently in modern Hebrew (voiceless uvular fricative) than in classical Hebrew (voiceless pharyngeal fricative), and neither of those sounds is unambiguously representable in English spelling. Moreover, the ‘kaf’ consonant is geminate in classical (but not modern) Hebrew. Adapting the classical Hebrew pronunciation with the geminate and pharyngeal ‘heth’ can lead to the spelling *Hanukkah*, while adapting the modern Hebrew pronunciation with no gemination and uvular ‘heth’ leads to the spelling *Chanukah*.” Much clearer now, right?

Acknowledgement and public celebration of Chanukah is a fairly recent thing in the United States. In 1951 Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion presented President Harry Truman with a Chanukiah. But it wasn’t until 1979 when a sitting president, Jimmy Carter (yes, *that* Jimmy Carter...it’s a world of ironies) participated in a public Chanukah candle-lighting on Washington’s Mall. The first Chanukah candle-lighting ceremony in the White House itself took place in the presidency of Bill Clinton. In 1996 a Chanukah postage stamp was jointly issued with Israel.

For those of you who need reminding, there are three prayers said while lighting Chanukah candles. The Shehecheyanu is said only on the first night: *Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha’olam, shehecheyanu, v’ki-*

yamanu, v’higi’anu, laz’man hazeh. (Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the Universe, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season.)

The other two blessings are said each night: *Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha’olam, asher kidishanu b’mitz’votav, v’tzivanu l’had’lik neir, shel Chanukah.* (Blessed are You, Lord, our God, sovereign of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us to light the lights of Chanukah.) And then *Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha’olam, she’asah nisim la’avoteinu, bayamim ha’heim baz’man hazeh.* (Blessed are You, Lord our God, sovereign of the Universe, Who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days at this time.)

A shortened timeline version of how history makes the case that Chanukah led to the Roman conquest of Judea:

167 BCE: Seleucid king Antiochus IV orders Judaism outlawed and an altar to Zeus erected in the Temple. Mattathias, a priest, and his five sons – John, Simon, Eleazar, Jonathan and Judah – lead a rebellion against Antiochus.

165 BCE: the Jewish revolt succeeds. The Temple is cleansed and re-dedicated.

142 BCE: the Seleucids recognize Jewish autonomy, maintain a formal, technical overlordship. The Hasmoneans, the ruling house established by the Maccabees, agree, and establish the Second Jewish Commonwealth. This stability inaugurates a period of great geographical expansion, population growth, and national development.

131 BCE: Seleucid king Antiochus VII dies, and the Hasmoneans formally and finally throw off Syrian rule.

96 BCE: An eight-year civil war erupts in Hasmonean Judea.

63 BCE: Warring brothers Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II both appeal to Rome, the world and region’s new great power, to intervene and settle the Judean power struggle on their behalf. Sensing an opportunity, Rome dispatches its great general Pompey to Judea. Twelve thousand Jews are killed as Pompey enters Jerusalem. Rome annexes Judea. The Hasmonean Jewish kingdom ends. ♦

Hannukah

5772

KJCC Hannukah Shabbat Dinner

Friday, December 23, 2011

Dairy Dinner

6:15 PM

Followed by Hannukah program by children
and Services at 8 pm

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



No Charge

The Connecting Power of Gratitude

And the Simple, Complete Prayer That Expresses it Perfectly.

by Gloria Avner

I wanted to shout, "WAIT," to stop Rabbi Agler in mid-sentence. "Say that again, please!"

He was talking about prayer, blessings, and thankfulness, the themes of gratitude that run through the early part of Shabbat morning service, an experience quite rare for most of us. The list of things to be grateful for was long. Then, shifting from the *siddur*, he spoke about how we could use these thank-you blessings in our daily lives, with examples. I wanted the Hebrew words, all of them.

It turned out to be unnecessary. I was glad. The answer I'd been looking for was both simple and profound. I love the Hebrew words and will continue to study and learn the blessings, but if I find myself without the Hebrew words and in a state of happy awe or appreciation, I now have "a way."

Just over a week ago, one of our members, someone very active and knowledgeable about ritual, called to ask me a question about prayer. I've been thinking about it ever since.

The question was this: Why is it that many Christians feel comfortable walking into a church any time of day and sitting down to pray? As a Jew, even one with a decent Jewish education, my caller had never done that. He'd prayed only at specific times – in synagogue, in community, and in words of well-established liturgy. "Why wasn't I taught," he asked, "to pray directly, to connect with God and feel that connection?" He wanted my opinion on whether this kind of "connecting" or direct experience could even be taught.

Many thoughts, as well as more questions, raced through my head. When do I really feel connected to God, I asked myself? Where am I when I feel tuned in to Spirit, at one with, or at least in communion with, the Creator of all that is?

Sometimes it happens in the synagogue. There are special *Yizkor* prayers that move me to a deeper place, as well as some meaningful responsive readings in the *siddur* and enthusiastic songs sung by lots of our children. I almost always get that uplifted feeling while singing that last "V'ne'emar" verse at the end of *Aleinu*, when the musical harmony soars beyond the words.

More often though, it happens for me in Nature, when I am surrounded by beauty having little or nothing to do with the hand of man: paddling through mangrove trails, mesmerized by rippling reflections of sky, leafy boughs and curving roots, the unexpected sight of a ray gliding by, baby snapper flitting in and out of their many-branched nurseries, white herons sudden and majestic taking flight as my yellow "otter" rounds a bend. My mind's eye conjures the brilliant red-orange flowering of Poinciana trees, tropical skies at sunset, a double rainbow.

My thoughts go on: not by Nature alone, they say. There are other "moving" sights that take me to an inner, higher place: the face of a friend appearing after long absence; the sight of a toddler mastering a tiny act of independence; surprising colors in a beautiful painting; evocative images in a poem that leap beyond words; the transporting silence of meditative sitting or the focused concen-

tration of *tai chi*; the ability to do a favor for someone in need, to alleviate another's pain. I want to ask, "What is it about these moments that get us beyond our little selves,

*The answer
I'd been
looking for
was both
simple and
profound.*

that plunk us into the present moment without a thought to spare for past or future, regret, worry, or anticipation, all the emotions that cause us stress?"

The question brings me back to that *Shabbat* morning service with Rabbi Agler, and the progres-

sion of "thank you's." As Jews, upon arising, we say, "Thank you for returning me to life." Reading from our *siddurs*, we thank God for our bodies, for the ability to see, to walk, to help others, to be free. The list of prayers and blessings goes on and on. And if we are not in *shul* with a *siddur* in hand, we are still encouraged to say "thank you." This is the heart of Judaism. There is a specific prayer and blessing for everything, whether it is the sight of lightning, witnessing a rainbow, recovering from an illness, escaping a disaster, wishing healing for the sick, or observing anything marvelous and worthy of gratitude.

Here is the best part. You don't *have* to know all the Hebrew words. Rabbi Agler gave us the short form: "Baruch atah Adonai." *Blessed are you, our God.* Thank you for this beautiful tree, this loving community, these hands which work so well, the rain that brings fruit and flowers to our gardens, for health. "*Baruch Atah Adonai*" and then a naming of what we are thankful for.

What? Can it be so simple to talk to God? Can "thank you's" really be enough? It's so basic. Look at the bottom of page 11 in our *siddur*. "To offer our gratitude" is one of my favorite readings for beginning an Erev Shabbat service. "We come together with thankful hearts" is the first line; we then proceed to

say how grateful we are not just for the *impulse* to worship, but for the *opportunity*, the *freedom*, and the *ability* to worship. Beyond worshipping, we remember to be grateful for all that is important – our lives, our health, our strength, our search for meaning, and our hopes for the future. Look at the first line of the Sabbath Psalm on page 43: "It is good to thank You, O Lord." Praise and gratitude, as I look through our *siddur*, loom large as the two pillars of our worship service. It is certainly true in the *Amidah*, the central prayer of any service, especially in the section on page 73, "Thanksgiving for daily Miracles."

We rarely worship on a Shabbat morning, but when we do with Rabbi Agler, we begin with the traditional "Morning Blessings of Thanksgiving" (page 147). What an amazing list, from the ability to distinguish between day and night to freedom to sustaining the universe and guiding us on life's path. What we are giving thanks for is profound. And what makes it profoundly *Jewish* are the words which appear at the beginning of every line, "*Baruch Atah Adonai.*" "We offer praise to you, O Lord our God..." Thank goodness our ancestors understood the importance of gratitude and laid it out for us in liturgy, in guidance for daily life, hundreds (thousands?) of years ago.

The New Age movement and scientific re-

searchers have been catching up in the last decade or two. Dr. Robert Emmons, author and professor at University of California at Davis, says, after eight years of intensive research, that he has discovered what gives life meaning, reduces stress, and adds to personal happiness. You guessed it: The New Science of Gratitude. Emmons found that people who view life as a gift and consciously acquire an "attitude of

*Here is the
best part.
You don't
have to know
all the
Hebrew
words.*

gratitude” experience multiple advantages. Gratitude improves emotional and physical health, can strengthen relationships and communities, can eliminate loneliness and depression, and do away with feelings of impoverishment. “Gratitude enriches human life. It elevates, energizes, inspires and transforms. People are moved, opened and humbled through expressions of gratitude.”

Let’s go back to the original question. Some of us do not feel we have been taught how to talk to or connect with God. The seeds of powerful suggestions have been lying in wait for us in our own *siddurs*, in all those readings filled with praise and gratitude. We can be talking to God in shul, reading responsively and singing on a Friday night. “Amidah” would be a perfect time to get quiet and formulate our own grateful thoughts. But we are not limited by time and place, and certainly not limited to when we are together in shul.

We can start saying “thank you” every time we notice something positive in our lives and surroundings. Dr. Emmons suggests (several of my friends have been doing this for years) that we start the day by writing down in a journal five things we are grateful for. Sitting on a dock at the bay might be another good place to start talking with God. Sitting at a suffering friend’s bedside would be a good place, too. With strength of heart, you put out a positive vibration; prayers of praise and adoration reinforce what you love about the person. Even when grieving or distraught, we can be thankful for having had the presence of the person in our lives and for the opportunity to bring them, even at this point, some comfort.

Is it necessary to be in desperate straits to pray? Of course not, but when things fall apart, we are more vulnerable and open to help from a Source larger and more mysterious than ourselves. Dark times all have seeds of possibility, growth, and life enrichment within them. The challenge is to see beneath the surface and be grateful for what has been given. There’s a famous Kabbalistic injunction to be “grateful for your difficulties.”

There are other questions. What does

someone do if they don’t feel prayerful? How does one begin? Can you simply summon the feeling of gratitude? Does just saying the words begin a healthy, healing process? If it feels mechanical at first, can it still bring satisfaction, and – most of all – connection?

There is a long line of wisdom teachings from ancient “land-based” cultures, including our own Jewish *chochemim*, the wise ones. Prayer is direct and experiential. Energy flows where attention goes. Noticing good begets more noticing, which begets more good, which begets gratitude. The spirit is lifted. Gratitude and praise are *refuah shleimah* in action.

We live in a rich and wonderful universe. There is much to praise, and we Jews can always start with the phrase, “*Baruch Atah Adonai*.” A better immune system and increased levels of health may be a side benefit. Just knowing how to connect with God directly could be benefit enough. I am grateful for the ancestors who paved the way for us to “get it” by writing down the list of morning blessings for us. May they nourish us throughout the day, whether we say their exact words or our own.

A special thank-you to Rabbi Agler for his inspiration. ◇

The Morning Blessings of Thanksgiving

From the KJCC *Siddur Chadash*, pg. 147

*We offer praise to You, O Lord our God,
Ruler of the Universe:*

*For creating us in Your image;
For giving us freedom;
For making us Jews;
For giving us the capacity to see;
For clothing the naked;
For releasing the oppressed;
For raising up those who are bowed down;
For sustaining the universe;
For providing for our daily needs;
For giving us guidance for life’s path;
For endowing our people with courage;
For crowning our people with glory;
For giving strength to those who are weary.*

My Beautiful Wedding at KJCC

by Zoe Moshe

It all began with a phone call from Sari Halpern. "I have someone I want you to meet." Joshua was waiting at their house when I pulled up. He had made salmon nicoise. He cooked for them often. This was the beginning of a delicious relationship. Many of you already know this. We ate, and then walked it off in a light drizzle for the next five hours. Intense topics: Agreements, question marks, cultural differences, melding of seven grown children, settings for a future life, on the other side of young. But there was electricity in the air.

Perseverance. Intense negotiation. Where to live? How to explain? And so, he gifted me a wedding feast for my family.

I called Angelika's to talk to Lauren, and Stuart answered. I asked, "Can you keep a secret?" He asked, "Who's pregnant?" I said, "Not me...I'm getting married!" Lauren agreed to come in on her day off. She had the dresses and accessories ready for me when we got there. The very first dress was perfect. In 45 minutes we were out the door. But it took five hours of visual and sensory overload at Dadeland Mall until we



gave up on getting a wedding suit for Joshua and found the collarless shirt similar to one he had seen at Angelika's.

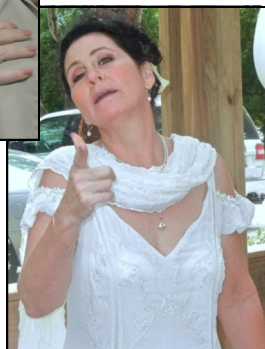
Stuart took on the added responsibility of sending out the e-invitations and accepting the responses, so Joshua had a number to cook for. I ordered flowers, and sat with Lauren to hammer out the



Jim announced, during the ceremony, that this was the most photographed wedding he'd ever seen.



bought loads of aluminum pans and containers. I never saw so many purple vegetables in one place. There were boxes of *Hatzilim*, onions, tomatoes by the bushel, cans of pickles, huge bushes of dill and parsley. I said I liked baklava and two trays ap-



Before conducting the ceremony, Jim took care of all the paperwork, got in some fatherly advice, and managed to be the first to kiss the bride.

Mark Halpern had two roles — as cantor, of course, but also as proud friend and matchmaker.



details of holding the wedding celebration at the KJCC. Meanwhile, Stuart and Joshua were speaking guy talk.

Five days before the wedding, Joshua took over Joyce's kitchen. Aware of kosher kitchen etiquette, he



peared. Do you have any idea what a 25-pound field bag of chickpeas looks like sitting in the middle of someone's residential kitchen?

Shelly and Fernando



were friends hired to help, and they did a great job. Flowers, mulch, making sure the shul was clean, setting up napkins, "real silver"-looking plastic cutlery, scat-



tering seashells across the tables. People began to arrive, and I was still in shorts!

I got dressed quickly – late as usual – and we all trooped down, like a family rambling along a country road, to the Meditation Garden. EVERYONE was game. It was a good day! The



weatherman had guaranteed rain for the entire weekend, but God smiled on us.



Cantor Mark started chanting beautifully, and Jim looked straight at me and asked, "Is there a groom?" Deep in conversation, he was grabbed and pushed forward by my KJCC family.

In the ceremony, mixed with the prayers and the hopes of eve-





ryone,
were kind,
gentle,
nudging
jokes,
along with
fatherly
advice.
Jim tried
really
hard to

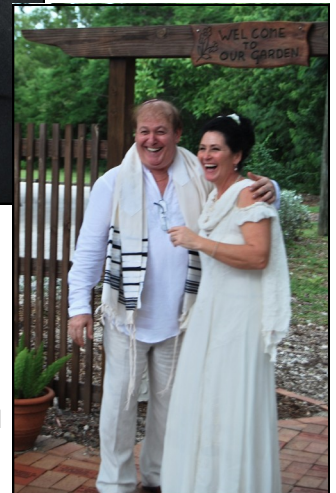


make me cry. It
worked several
times.

After the ceremony, our men carried back the chairs that had been set out for our seniors. In the social hall, Kathy Shabathai, in the true spirit of Sisterhood, worked with Shelly to make sure that everything ran smoothly. Ariela Halpern was hired to play classical music during the feast. I never saw so many smiles. The food was devoured. Bea loved every variety of eggplant and the chocolate cake was delicious.



I was acutely
aware and appreciative that the
people I care
about were there
to witness this
lovely and magical
day in my life. ◇









And so a life begins...



Our great thanks to those who took the beautiful photos you see here of Zoe and Joshua's day: Kathy Shabathai, Mary Lee Singer, Alan Beth and Steve Steinbock.

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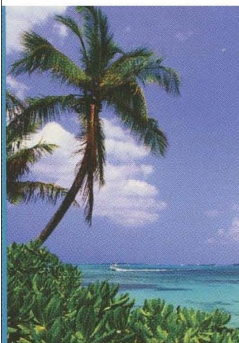
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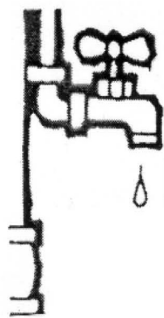
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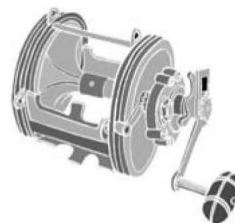
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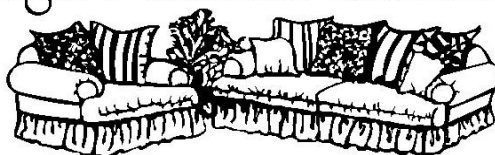


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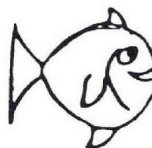
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