

Chai~Lights



December 2015

19 Kislev - 19 Tevet 5776

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Keys Jewish Community Center

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

Chai-Lights December 2015 |

December 2015

19 Kislev - 19 Tevet

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

<div> Names denote leaders of Friday services. <i>Italicized names are Oneg sponsors.</i> Services every Friday at 7:30 p.m. </div>			2	3	4 Ken Atlas <i>Mahj Girls</i>	5
6 Sisterhood 9 a.m. KJCC Board Mtg. 11 a.m.	7 First Day of Chanukah (First Light Previous Evening)	8	9	10	11 Steve Hartz & Steve Steinbock Chanukah Dinner 6 p.m. <i>Patricia Isenberg Corrigan & Ei- senstein Families</i>	12 Rabbi Agler Torah Service 10 a.m.
13 Eight can- dles lit on Chan- nukiah	14	15	16	17	18 Erica Lieber- man Garrett & Mitch Harvey <i>Gloria Avner</i>	19
20 Gloria Avner Art Class at KJCC 2 p.m.	21 First Day of Winter	22	23	24	25 Steinbock Open House 2-5 p.m. Medina Roy & Gloria Avner <i>Steve & Barbara</i>	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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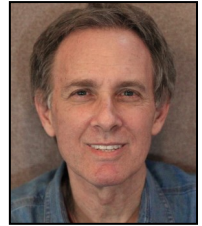
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President's Message Sam Vinicur



When you grow up in a highly secular house, like I did, the only Jewish holidays trotted out at all were Passover and Chanukah. I was six or seven before I realized that Jewish people had their own special Sabbath not observed on Sunday. We never belonged to a synagogue, or went to one, but every Sunday I'd see carloads of neighbors – including the dirtiest and roughest of my kick-the-can and tag and baseball friends, scrubbed and crammed into small versions of adult clothes – driving off to St. Bernadette's to repent of their many sins.

I do remember a couple of misery-inducing seders at my grandfather's house. After endless pages of droning we got to the tasteless boiled chicken and, I think, desiccated potatoes. I also remember something green, which gratefully wasn't the chicken. No one explained any of the story or its context. (Apparently Jews used to be slaves, which struck me as odd, since none of the Jews I knew were respectful and well-behaved like the slaves in old movies on television.)

But Chanukah was different. Each year my mother pulled out our old metal menorah and we'd light the candles. We didn't say prayers because no one knew any. (I knew nothing about yarmul-

kas, either, until at eleven I started once-a-week group Bar Mitzvah lessons with Mr. Platt, known by generations for unrelenting halitosis.) But we did get gifts several days, which made Chanukah memorable. I sometimes wonder now who decided to make Chanukah the Jewish Christmas. But gifts did help make Jewish kids feel less the outsider and more like the rest of American kids, so I suppose it was a pretty sage thing to do.

Jews in medieval Europe used to put their menorahs out for all to see. They stopped when it became clear that advertising one's Jewishness wasn't such a good idea. But we, happily, don't live in medieval Europe. For the past few years we've established a wonderful tradition at KJCC. Everyone at our annual Chanukah dinner is asked to bring a menorah. After the prayers are said, lights are lowered and the menorahs are all set ablaze. There's a warmth and beauty to the moment that affects everyone. (I always think of those Jews who once had to hide – interpret this as you will – their light.)

The KJCC Chanukah dinner and celebration this year takes place on Friday, December 11th. I hope all of you will join us. ♦

Nosh

Saturday Torah Learning with Rabbi Agler

Mark your calendars for 10 a.m. on December 12th, when we will have the pleasure of a Torah service led by Rabbi Richard Agler. Not only will it be the seventh day of Chanukah, but also the first day of the new month of Tevet, and the first Torah service after his and Mindy's trip to Kenya.

While your calendar is in hand, you will also wish to plan ahead for Saturday, January 23, 2016. Torah services begin at 10 a.m. and are notable not only for beginning the minute scheduled, but for filling each of those minutes with inspiration.

Back To Hebrew Class

We will again be offering adult Hebrew classes at the KJCC, beginning the second week of December 2015, in the David Kamely classroom.

On Fridays from 11:30-1:00 we will have Hebrew III - advanced level Ulpan class. The first class will be held on Fri, December 18th.

On Sundays from 12:30-1:30 p.m., beginning December 20th we will have Hebrew Level II (Intermediate) - Hebrew from the Siddur: Readings and Understanding Hebrew from the Siddur. Hebrew Level (I) new students are also welcome to join this class. For further information, contact Yardena at 305-393-1768.

Looking forward to seeing all of our students back in class resuming our studies,

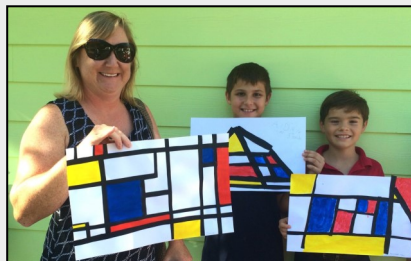
Yardena

Rabbi Zucker Returns

Rabbi Yaakov Zucker of Keys Chabad will again be offering classes at the KJCC, once or twice a month from 7:00-8:30 p.m. The lessons are taken from the Jewish Learning Institute's Torah Studies series, with lots of discussion. There is no charge. The next class will be Dec. 1st. For information, call Mitch Harvey at 303-521-5240.

Paint Like the Masters with Gloria

KJCC Adult Education presents a new opportunity to have fun and share a new experience with your *mishpocha*. You will learn about abstract art, get a new take on negative space, and create your own "masterpiece." Complete your version of a Mondrian painting and take it home to frame or give away - an impressive present. Enjoy coffee and refreshments while you are channeling the great, groundbreaking Dutch painter, Piet Mondrian. All materials and instruction will be provided. No experience necessary. Bring a friend. Bring your playful, enthusiastic self, and let creativity wash away the stresses of winter holidays in the darkest days of the year. Please RSVP: 305-619-0216 .



This photo was taken at a class taught by Gloria last month to 5th and 6th graders. .

Date: Sunday, December 20th, 2015

Time: 2:00 P.M.

Place: KJCC Schoolroom

Donation: \$10

Oneg Sponsors for December 2015

December 4th - Mahj Girls

December 11th - Patricia Isenberg in honor of Lillian Forbes' Birthday. Linda Pollack is the dinner sponsor.

December 18th - Gloria Avner in Memory of David Gitin.

December 25th - Steve & Barbara Smith in honor of Steve's Birthday.

December Birthdays

1st.....	Paul Hudson
1st.....	Rachel Levine
2nd.....	Joseph Burke Grossman
2nd.....	Marshall A. Field
3rd.....	Ashley Berk
3rd.....	Cammie Berk
3rd.....	Jackie LePree
3rd.....	Rick McNew
4th.....	Jan Hartz
4th.....	Jogi Yeager
4th.....	Judith Klein
5th.....	Joseph Beth
5th.....	Stuart Sax
6th.....	Haley Borisoff
6th.....	Leslie Boruszak
7th.....	Franklin Rose
7th.....	Vada Charity (Bella) Greenbaum
9th.....	George Swartz
10th.....	Susan Greenbaum
11th.....	Renee Salant
11th.....	Sara Rose Friedman
13th.....	Robin Margulies Juenger
13th.....	Sarah Boruszak
13th.....	Susan Widrich-Goldberg
16th.....	Diana Lal
16th.....	Samuel Klimpl
17th.....	Ariel Fishman
17th.....	Bruce Forman
17th.....	Jeffrey Schocket
17th.....	Lilian Forbes
18th.....	Emelyn Anne Juenger
18th.....	Jerome Horowitz
19th.....	Aaron Stuart
19th.....	Jonah Gross
19th.....	Lorena Kaufman
20th.....	Alan Schulberg
20th.....	Jennifer VanArtsdalen
21st.....	Micah Silverman
21st.....	Roberta McNew
22nd.....	Laura Molly Friedman
22nd.....	Lisa Miller
25th.....	Lori Kay
26th.....	Steven Smith
27th.....	Steve Kasinof

December Birthdays Continued

28th.....	Elaine Schulberg
28th.....	Emily Sherman
28th.....	Ira Krieger
28th.....	Kayla Silverman
28th.....	Michael Klimpl
29th.....	Joan Stark
30th.....	Ellen Bloom
31st.....	Michele Riley

Yahrzeit Plaque

Edward Deutsch Davis

Arrived 17 March 1946 - Left 17 March 2012

Mi Tesoro, Mi Amore

***"My Beloved is Mine and I am His.
He feeds among the lilies."***

Sydney! Faye-Davis

Oh! The Places We'll Go!

Sam and Joyce were looking for someone to help them co-ordinate group outings of the KJCC members like those you've enjoyed in the past. Thank you, Mitch Harvey for volunteering! . Let's get these camaraderie building field trips going again. Please contact Mitch at harveyaicp@yahoo.com if you have any ideas for field trips and would like to help out.

December Anniversaries

	Years
8th	Lawrence & Pearl Jacobs62
10th	Linda & Bruce Pincus26
11th	Arthur Lee & Johanna Willner50
11th	Jamie & Laura Goodman10
14th	David & Pat VanArtsdalen.....34
18th	Larry & Deborah Weiss.....32
27th	Dave Mont & Georgia Landau.....4

A Prayer For The Traveler

For our returning snowbirds, and for all of us who are so often on the road, visiting family or seeing the world, here is "*Tfilat Haderech*," the traveler's prayer, dating back to the Babylonian Talmud.

May it be Your will, G-d, our G-d and the G-d of our fathers, that You should lead us in peace and direct our steps in peace, and guide us in peace, and support us in peace, and cause us to reach our destination in life, joy, and peace (If one intends to return in a short time, one adds: and return us in peace). Save us from every enemy and ambush, from robbers and wild beasts on the trip, and from all kinds of punishments that rage and come to the world. May You confer blessing upon the work of our hands and grant me grace, kindness, and mercy in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us, and bestow upon us abundant kindness and hearken to the voice of our prayer, for You hear the prayers of all. Blessed are You G-d, who hearkens to prayer.

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, 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 Bernie Ginsberg, 305-852-9300.

MEDITATION GARDEN: Have you visited our beautiful garden? Call Steve Steinbock, 305-394-0143, to reserve a bench, brick or tree plaque for posterity.

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

KJCC TREE OF LIFE LEAVES and ROCKS, SANCTUARY SEAT PLATES, YARTZEIT MEMORIAL PLAQUES: Call Mitch Harvey, 303-521-5240, to arrange your donation.

KJCC BOOKPLATES for siddurim: Call Linda Pollack, 305-852-8575 for information.

CHAI-LIGHTS MITZVAH: Place a greeting or notice in Chai-Lights. Call Linda Pollack, 305-852-8575, 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.

LIVE GREEN – RECYCLE: We are recycling ink cartridges, laser toners, cell phones, laptops, iddevices, tablets and more. Call Steve Steinbock, 305-394-0143, or just bring your items to the KJCC.

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. Contact Susan Gordon, 305-766-3585.

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.

Sisterhood

Erica Lieberman-Garrett



November is always a nice month in the Keys. The weather is finally cooling down and we are seeing our snowbirds return. People are visiting for Thanksgiving. We have recuperated from the happy exhaustion of the High Holidays and the pace is slowly picking back up in preparation for Chanukah.

We enjoyed continuing our tradition of monthly Shabbat dinner get-togethers. This month we had our annual Italian feast. Everyone always likes a change from our traditional Jewish food. The fresh made sauces, vegetarian lasagna and the eggplant Parmesan, prepared by Barb Knowles, Linda Perloff, and myself were scrumptious. The delicious Italian salads prepared by Gloria Avner and Beth Hayden were delightful. The grand finale was dessert: Tiramisu provided by Sylvie Coeurjoly, home made cannoli prepared by Jane Friedman, fruit salad made by Linda Kaplan, and even gelato. Susan Gordon's inner Italian came out in her colorful decorating and musical flare. It was a relaxing, fun, easy-going dinner with our Keys *mishpocha*, drinking Prosecco and giving us a chance to *fress*, *kibbitz*, and just be grateful for all that we do together.

Each Friday night we enjoy a wonderful oneg, thanks to your sponsorship and support. I would like to personally thank Jane Friedman on behalf of all of us for her weekly shopping and the preparation of healthy oneg salads in addition to the sweets that we enjoy. We look forward to more onegs that honor *simchas* and the memories of our loved ones. Please contact Joyce Peckman at 305 451-0665 to arrange your special sponsorship.

At our November Sisterhood meeting, as we planned our December 11th Chanukah party, we all commented on how fast the time is going. Each year this tradition is one of the

highlights of the season.

The delicious latkes are of course the main attraction, but there is so much more that happens that night. We all bring our own menorahs and collectively light our candles, uniting us in song and blessings. This is a potluck dairy dinner, so let me know what you would like to bring, and if you can join us to help decorate for this fun event. (We all love when there is a delicious variety of food, and the "to go" box with the leftovers provides us with a meal the next day.) Linda Pollack once again generously sponsors this Chanukah dinner, so there is no charge. I hope that we will see you all there. Please RSVP to me at hippiejap@hotmail.com.

Susan Gordon has stocked the gift shop in preparation for Chanukah and the holiday season. Take some time before the party to look and see all of the beautiful gifts available, including some hand made jewelry. You will love the great prices on all of the gift shop items.

Please join our monthly Sisterhood meeting in December on the 6th, at 9 am. We always have delicious healthy food, and we will be discussing our annual fundraiser "The Jewish Food Extravaganza" scheduled for Sunday, February 28th, 2016.

We have all become very busy, and I am so glad to see everyone whenever we are together. At times there are only a few of us making the plans, but when we have our events we see many of our members making the effort to come and enjoy the food and the camaraderie. Thank goodness for the technology that connects us and allows us to make great things happen.

I look forward to our upcoming holiday season and seeing all of you at one of our many wonderful events and services. ◇

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.

General Fund

Island Equity Real Estate

General Fund

Pollack, Linda

Pollack, Linda

Pollack, Linda

In Honor of

Our Customers &
Associates

In Memory of

Neal Christensen

Ruth Friedman

Ruth Poster

High Holiday Onegs

Emkey, Gerri

Ginsberg, Bernie

Gross, David & Patti

Harvey, Mitch

Kaufman, Michael & Lorena

Line, Arlene

Rose, Skip

Steinbock, Steve

Tobin, Andy

Sisterhood – Onegs and Contributions

Avner, Gloria

Memory of David Gitin

Isenberg, Patricia

Birthday of Lillian Forbes

Mah Jongg Girls

Pollack, Linda

Chanukah Dinner

Pollack, Roy

Birthday of Madelyn Pollack

Pollack, Roy

Birthday of Will Pollack

Smith, Steve & Barbara Birthday of Barbara Smith

Smith, Steve & Barbara Birthday of Steve Smith

Smith, Steve & Barbara

Anniversary

Bofshever, Joel & Toby

Yahrzeits

Boruszak, Joan

Dorf, Barry & Natalie

Riley, Michele

Wolfe, Larry & Dorothy

Harold Goldstein

Jack Dorf

Abraham Travers

Diana Wolfe

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

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

Tree of Life Leaves: We have three beautiful, six-foot Trees of Life — the world's most enduring spiritual metaphor — adorning the wall at the rear of the KJCC sanctuary. For \$75 an individual, golden leaf can be engraved with your message of memory or love. An example: "To our grandchildren: May they always be in the presence of the Eternal Light."

Garden Bricks: \$125 buys a single brick and \$200 a double brick in our magnificent Meditation Garden walkway, engraved with your personal message. An example: "You were the best, Aunt Goldie. Well, you and those amazing cheese blintzes." For \$300 we'll plant the native tree of your choice as the ultimate living tribute; an outdoor plaque is included in the price.



Prayer

What does it mean to us? What do we pray for?

How do we understand prayer? If we believe in a God variously described in our liturgy to be the “King Of The World,” the “King of all Kings living in Heaven,” “Our Father, Our King,” it is easy to understand why we would pray to Him and regularly humble ourselves before His awesome powers. This is the traditional view of God, the all-knowing, all-powerful, omnipresent Being who is aware of all things going on in the world at all times for all people and who, in a momentary act of will, once bade the entire universe to burst into existence. Most people who believe in and find themselves drawn to prayer seem to have such a conception of God. (Kabbalists and other learned seekers, of course, refuse to reduce God to a mere authoritative father figure, and do not use the male pronoun in reference. Besides, they often speak of the *Shechinah*, the more approachable, nurturing, female side of God. To these devout believers God is far beyond our antiquated concepts of pagan male and female gods and, not being corporal, cannot be any known gender.)

But what about those of us who don't be-

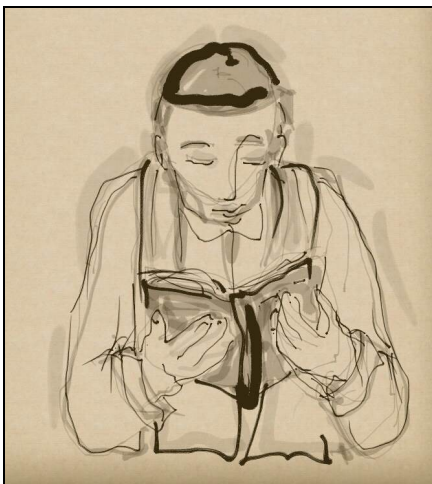
lieve in this Orthodox concept of God? What of those of us who don't necessarily accept that our prayers might influence events that we otherwise can't control? What reasons for prayer does this substantial group find?

In Judaism we distinguish between “prayer” and “worship.” In Hebrew the word for prayer is *tefilah*; the same word is used

for worship or service at the synagogue. “Worship” is any practice through which we are attempting to interact with God. We may worship through study of Torah and Talmud, through deeds of kindness and helpfulness and honoring our parents, through charity and many other ways. We act in ways that God has said produce holiness, and in doing so take small steps toward oneness with God.

“Prayer” is worship through the use of words. In Judaism we distinguish between personal, private

prayer and public, congregational prayer. One of the main purposes of congregational worship is to strengthen the feeling of being part of a congregation, to bring people together who share the same values and to become an active, involved member in our community.



A Yeshiva bucher studying prayers, as imagined by Gloria Avner.

Some prayers, like the *Kaddish*, are considered to be so much a function of community that they require a community setting – the presence of a *minyan* – to be valid.

Praying, any form of praying, is a *mitzvah* – a commandment, a responsibility, a blessing and a way to seek God all at once. The *mitzvah* of home prayer means that we set aside time for daily prayer. This can have a profound influence on the individual and the family; it can give us a clear orientation in the way we live and appreciate life. *Shacharit* – said when rising in the morning, and *Ma'ariv* – said when retiring at night – are private prayers. They represent the individual's intimate connection to God, slightly different from that of the community. Our ritual Jewish prayers, some of them already thousands of years old, are beautiful and profound and deepen our connection to God. Yet the rabbis say that whether we are in Shabbat services or praying at home, we may always add to the prayers in our Siddur, adding or substituting personal prayers that come from our hearts and life circumstances.

For what do people pray? Some ask: "Oh God, please don't let it happen." "God, help me to find a good job." "God, help me to let go of my fears." "God, let me have some happiness, not only problems and distress." Some pray: "I ask for my father's wellbeing." "We pray for our children to stay safe." "We ask for a better economy." "We pray for better health." Essentially, these prayers are wishes for a better life than the one we have. It is easy here to think of Tevye the Milkman, and why we all smile at his particular conversations with God.

A prayer for healing, like "Oh God, please cure her," is not really a request, although it

sounds like one. We can understand it as a cry of pain, an expression of helplessness when confronting a situation like illness and death, when experiencing our seemingly unlimited human limitations. Reconstructionist Rabbis teach us that God "answers" such a prayer not by sending a miraculous recovery, but by giving to the one who prays strength to bear his burden and his pain. The Jewish tradition is to perform the *mitzvah* of saying *Tehillim* for the sick: Psalms 6, 23, 88, 121, and 130. When, during services, we pray the *Mi Sh'berach*, a prayer for another person's health and recovery, we show that the whole

congregation, the community, is concerned about the ill person. Thus we strengthen his spirits, and he will know that we haven't given up hope or asked him to bear his pain alone, that together we seek to infuse him with strength.

Despite the common conception that prayer consists of "asking," Jewish prayer contains much more praise than petition. If our prayer expresses the wish

for a change in our world from outside, we might not get an immediate "answer" for this desire. But when we pray for a change within ourselves, when we pray for understanding and for the strength within us to come forth and help us deal with our lives, our prayer might influence the "answer" we get.

Each Shabbat during services, in my native language of Hebrew, I pray for peace for Israel and the world, for our congregation and our country. I pray for my family and friends to stay safe and healthy. I pray to have the strength and wisdom to help with *tikkun olam*. Our coming holiday is Chanukah; what will I pray for on those days? I will pray to not lose the belief that miracles will continue to happen. ♦

*Praying, any
form of praying,
is a mitzvah...a
responsibility
and blessing and
a way to seek
God all at once.*

World Jewish Report

Medina Roy



A Mandate by Israel's Knesset

At the end of October, despite growing tension between Israel and the Palestinians, Israeli lawmakers voted unanimously to make Arabic language classes mandatory for students from the age of six. It was hoped that the legislation would help improve ties between Israeli Jews and Arabs. Arabic and Hebrew are both official languages of Israel. While the vast majority of Israeli Arabs speak Hebrew, Arabic is not widely spoken among the Jewish population. "Language is a door to culture," lawmaker Oren Hazan said. "I am looking reality in the eyes and I understand there is no possibility to walk to peace without understanding each other." Arab Israelis, most of whom are descendants of Arabs who remained in Israel after the creation of the state in 1948, are citizens of the Jewish state. They make up about eighteen percent of Israel's population.

(www.israelnationalnews.com, 10-29-15)

It's Just a Part of One Page

A fragment of a page from a 1,000-year-old Yom Kippur prayer book from the Cairo Genizah will soon be uploaded to the website of Israel's National Library. The document was originally discovered in a synagogue in Postat, the Old City of Cairo. Dr. Yoel Finkelman, curator of the Judaica collection at the library, said that this fragment is from the oldest Yom Kippur prayer book in the library's collection and was written by a scribe named Hillel Ben Ali. Ben Ali was a Baghdad cantor who moved to Cairo and worked there as the official court scribe.

(www.israelhayom.com, 9-21-15)

Members of the Tribe Excel at Poker

The 2015 World Series of Poker, held at the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, saw Joe McKeehen, 24, (and not Jewish) as the winner. He walked away with \$7,683,346.

But the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th runner-ups were all members of the tribe. Josh Beckley, 24, was the 1st runner-up. He earned \$4,470,896. Neil Blumenfeld, 61, (\$3,398,298), Max Steinberg, 27, (\$2,615,361) and Ofer Zvi Stern, 36 - and an Israeli (\$1,911,423) - took 2nd, 3rd and 4th place, respectively. (www.jta.org, 11-10-15)

A New Program at Harvard Law

Harvard Law School recently announced a new initiative, thanks to a generous gift from Mitchell R. Julis, one of America's most successful hedge fund managers. The gift launches the *Julis-Rabinowitz Program in Jewish and Israeli Law*. The program will fund visiting scholars, offer classes in traditional Jewish legal texts and host an annual conference. The program's director is Noah Feldman, the Harvard law professor best known for helping to write the Iraqi constitution in the aftermath of the Iraq war. "Jewish law and Israeli law are distinct and different," Feldman said. "Yet they also interact and make claims on each other. It makes sense to study them both in the same program, even as we study them independently." Feldman, along with other Harvard faculty members and visiting scholars, has been teaching courses on Jewish legal topics. "Throughout history, Jewish law has made profound contributions to legal thought and practice, and it remains vibrant and relevant around the world," said Martha Minow, the law school's dean.

(www.tabletmag.com, 11-3-15)

An Ancient Mystery Answered?

Just a month before Chanukah, and after a century of searching, Israeli archaeologists claim they have found what remains of an ancient Greek fortress - known as the Greek *Acra* - that was once used to control Jerusa-

lem and from where the Greeks monitored activity on the Temple Mount during the time of the Maccabees. The remains, discovered in the *Givati* parking lot excavations in Jerusalem's City of David, are believed to have been built during the reign of the Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes (215 – 164 BCE). Along with a section of a massive wall, the base of a tower and a man-made defensive embankment, the findings include sling stones and bronze arrowheads – stamped with a symbol from Antiochus' reign – that are said to be from the Greeks' attempts to defend the fortress against the Maccabees. Until now, archaeologists did not know the exact location of the fortress. The *Book of Maccabees* and the writings of the ancient historian Josephus both tell of a rebellion and indicate that the Acra was inside the City of David, a section of Jerusalem's Old City. According to the *Israel Antiquities Authority*, soldiers for hire and Hellenized Jews lived in the *Acra*. "This sensational discovery allows us for the first time to reconstruct the layout of the settlement in the city, on the eve of the Maccabean uprising in 167 BCE," directors of the excavations said. Historians tell how the rebels, led by Judas Maccabeus and his brothers, took back Jerusalem from the Syrian Greeks, a victory we celebrate on Chanukah. (The *Acra* did not fall until 141 BCE, when the Hasmoneans lay siege and forced its surrender.) (www.jpost.com, 11-3-15)

An Agreement That's Bigger and Better

At the recent 66th *International Astronautical Conference* held in Jerusalem, the Israel Space Agency (ISA) announced that it had signed a wide-ranging cooperative agreement with NASA, a partnership "in the exploration and research of space for the betterment of mankind and for peaceful use." More than 2,000 people from 58 countries attended the five-day conference. Under the agreement, NASA and the ISA will participate in joint missions – including a journey to Mars – exchange scientists and scientific data, and share training facilities. NASA and Israel signed their first cooperative agreement in 1996, which led to the training in the United

States of Ilan Ramon, Israel's first astronaut. Ramon flew on the space shuttle Columbia in 2003, and died in that disaster. (www.tabletmag.com, 10-14-15)

In Memoriam

-Yitzhak Navon, who served from 1978 to 1983 as Israel's fifth president, died in early November. He was 94. Navon was born into a prominent Sephardic family who had lived in Jerusalem for over 300 years. His father's family descended from Spanish Jews who settled in Turkey following the 1492 expulsion from Spain. His mother was born in Morocco, immigrating to Israel at the end of the 19th century. When he was twelve, Navon joined the pre-state *Betar* movement, a Zionist youth movement founded in 1923 in Latvia by Vladimir "Ze'ev" Jabotinsky. (Jabotinsky was also a soldier, and had founded the famed Jewish Legion during World War I.) *Betar* played an important role in Zionist education, teaching the Hebrew language and culture plus methods of self-defense. It also instilled the ideals of *aliyah* to the Land of Israel by any means, legal and illegal, and of personal dedication to the creation of a Jewish state. Navon later enlisted in the *Irgun*, which he left over ideological differences when he was eighteen. In his youth, he studied Islamic culture and Arabic language and literature. Navon fought in Israel's War of Independence and served in the Haganah's Arab intelligence unit. Later, he served as Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion's political secretary and bureau chief, witnessing and participating in the period's most important decisions about the new Jewish state's security, economy and welfare. Over the years, Navon held a number of ministerial positions, among them heading the Education and Culture Ministry, where he led a campaign against adult illiteracy. (Some 200,000 – twelve percent of Israel's Jewish population at the time – was illiterate.) Navon was a popular president who worked to preserve the culture and heritage of the Sephardic Jewish community. He was also a gifted writer and playwright.

(www.worldjewishcongress.org, 11-8-15)

-Adam Zertal, an expert in ancient Near

East studies and a prominent Israeli archaeologist, died recently at the age of 79. Zertal spent 30 years studying the vast area of land in the West Bank. A professor at the University of Haifa in the 1980s, Zertal believed that the books of the Hebrew Bible “could and should inform the work of contemporary archaeologists.” Zertel was born on Kibbutz Ein Shemer. His father was a journalist from Warsaw and a leader of *Hashomer Hatzair*, the Socialist-Zionist youth movement. In 1973, the younger Zertel was severely wounded in the Yom Kippur War, an injury that would have him spend the rest of his life on crutches. When he was released from the hospital he began studying archaeology at Tel Aviv University. As a result of the Yom Kippur War, Israel gained control over rich archaeological territory in the West Bank (it includes the areas of ancient Judea and Samaria), allowing Zertal to work along with the *Israel Antiquities Authority*, which identified hundreds of sites from the Biblical period that had, up to that point, never been studied. Zertal is credited with discovering *Harosheth Hagoyyim* while leading an excavation at el-Ahwat between 1993 and 2000. The site is mentioned in Judges chapter 4. Zertal spent 30 years covering the area from Hadera in the north down to the city of Jericho; in 1980, he was certain that a collection of stones at Mount Ebal was the altar built by Joshua (mentioned by Moses in Deuteronomy 27:4) near the holy site which mark’s Joseph’s tomb. Zertal spent nine years excavating at Mount Ebal. “If this corroborates exactly what is written in that very old part of the Bible,” Zertal said in an interview with Smithsonian Magazine in 2006, “it means that probably other parts are historically correct. The impact is tremendous.” Many people accepted Zertal’s findings as confirmation of the Biblical narrative, validating Jewish ties to the land. But this view was not widely accepted by the archaeological community. (www.tabletmag.com, 10-21-15)

-David Cesarani, British historian who focused on Jewish history and the Holocaust, died recently. He was 58. Cesarani was a research professor at Royal Holloway, Universi-

ty of London. He wrote and edited over 15 books, including “Eichmann: His Life and Crimes,” which he wrote in 2004. This book was awarded the *U.S. National Jewish Book Award* for history. He was recently awarded an *Order of the British Empire* (OBE) for “services to Holocaust education and his work advising Britain’s interior ministry on establishing Holocaust Memorial Day.” Cesarani also contributed to many historical documentaries for television and radio for the BBC and other stations. (www.israelnationalnews.com, 10-26-15)

Did You Know...

- A town in northern Spain officially changed its name recently from Castrillo Matajudios (Kill Jews Town) to its original name, Castrillo Mota de Judios (Castrillo Jews’ Hill). The town’s original name apparently was changed during the Spanish Inquisition in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. It’s believed that a massacre of Jews had taken place near the town in 1035, and another massacre happened in 1109. (www.jta.org, 10-25-15)

- The *Hummus Bar*, an Israeli restaurant in Kfar Vitkin near the coastal town of Netanya, is offering fifty percent discounts on hummus when Jews and Arabs sit together at the same table. The move was motivated by the growing unrest across Israel in the aftermath of weeks of violent attacks by Palestinian and Jewish extremists. (*The Forward*, 10-19-15)

- Over a million Jews – including those of the KJCC – participated in the “Shabbos Project” that took place on October 23rd and 24th. The event was celebrated in 924 cities located in 75 countries around the world. The now world-wide event was started two years ago by Warren Goldstein, South Africa’s Chief Rabbi. (See Gloria’s entry in the October issue of *Chai-Lights* to get the full story of the Shabbos Project). Some of the events this year included a 3,000-person Friday night Shabbat dinner in Los Angeles and a Great Big Challah Bake in Brooklyn, where a 20-foot challah made it into the Guinness Book of World Records. (www.israelnationalnews.com, 10-29-15) ◇

KJCC Chanukah 5776

Chanukah Shabbat Dinner

Friday
December 11, 2015
Dairy Dinner
6:00 PM

Services at 7:30 pm

Contact Erica Lieberman-Garrett,
hippiejap@hotmail.com, 305-393-1162, to reserve your
spot and coordinate your dish.

Dinner Sponsored by Linda Pollack
No charge for Members
\$18 for NonMembers



Photo Gallery

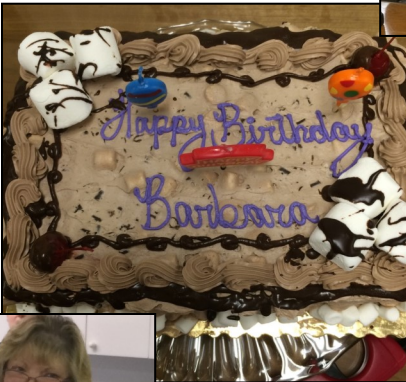


Above, Nissan Mayk, who flew in from NJ for a few days, is surrounded by her surprised and delighted friends.

On October 16, Shabbat services were led by the delightful Jane and Harry Friedman mother-and-son-team.



Above and left, Harry and Mom Jane join Bernie making motzie and kiddush.



The photo at right was sent by Suzi Feder, thanking KJCC for the flowers and get well wishes. "What a nice thing to come home to."



At left, Joyce Peckman and Gloria Avner pose before leading Shabbat Services on October 30th.



Above, Barbara (and Richard) Knowles celebrate her birthday by sponsoring the oneg.



RELIGIOUS SCHOOL NEWS

What's in a Name?

If you ask the students of our KJCC Religious School, they may shout out “shin” and “mem sofeet.” Those are the Hebrew letters in the word *Shem*, or “name.”

November 1st, the day our students spelled out their Hebrew names in cookie dough, may well become one of their favorite Sunday school memories. Just look at these engaged faces as Max and J. B. Fink, Cole Silverman and Oshi Gross create, decorate, and “digest” what they have learned. From baking with super “Savta” (Grandma) Nettie Seder to practicing *erev Shabbat* prayers with “Grandpa” Jules Seder at the keyboard, a good time was had by all.



Above, Gloria Avner and Susan Gordon found a pomegranate on the tree the Religious School children planted several years ago.





Rabbi Agler dedicated his November 7th Torah service to the memory of his father, Ephraim. The words on the plaque below reflect his father's philosophy of life.



Above, Steve Hartz and Steve Harris have returned from afar to join Joel Bofshever, another long-distance traveler, as they assist Rabbi Agler in reading the story of Rebecca at the well from the Torah.

A new project of the Tikkun Olam Committee of the KJCC is well underway. Steve Steinbock and I constructed a raised self-watering bed to grow vegetables for the food bank at our neighbor, Burton Memorial Methodist Church. After a few days of hot, sweaty and fun work (there was a lot of laughter involved), the plants were in! Eggplants, tomatoes, and peppers are growing, and we hope to have a good harvest for the food bank. The bed is on the south side of the KJCC by the back door if you want to check out the progress.

Mindy Agler





Concert Presented by

**The Keys Jewish
 Community Center**

Sunday, January 10, 2016

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: KJCC, MM 93.5 Oceanside

For tickets and information contact

Sam at

(305) 852-8741

@sev165bellsouth.net

Apres Theater Refreshments



General Admission \$18

**Special Sponsorships Available
 w/Preferred Seating**



At left, Sisterhood President Erica Lieberman-Garrett *kvels* at the *abondanza* of good food and drink, and Steve Steinbock demonstrates to Beth Hayden his skill with a corkscrew, at KJCC's Italian Night on November 13th. Marcia Harris, at right, is glad to be back from Ohio. Luz and daughter Rachel Levine mug for the camera, below left.

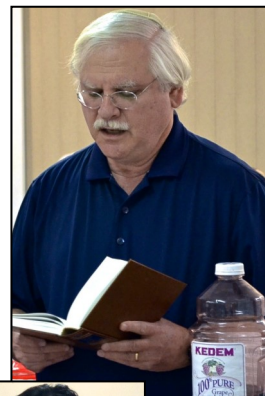


Above, Rich and Mindy Agler were glad to find food and friends here. They had planned to be above the ocean on their way to Kenya, but the flight was postponed. Look for the story of their trip in a later issue.

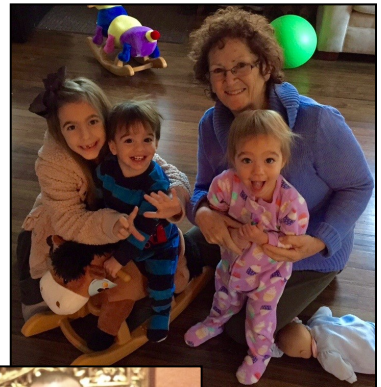


The November 13th Shabbat service was led by the dynamic Steve duo: Hartz and Steinbock. Sydney! Faye-Davis, shown below lighting the candles with Susan Gordon, Gloria Avner and Steve Hartz, sponsored the oneg in memory of her husband Edward Deutsch Davis.

Since he is often the youngest member at services, Harry Friedman is usually asked to perform the ritual slicing of the challah at Kiddush, as he does so ably below.



Rich and Mindy Agler and Bernie Ginsberg went to Nairobi, Kenya, bearing gifts and medical supplies for the Talia Agler Girls' Shelter.



(Right)

On Sunday, Nov 15th a community rally commemorating the 77th anniversary of Kristallnacht was held at the Holocaust Memorial in Miami Beach good will to stand strong with holocaust survivors solidarity against anti-Semitism and in support of Israel."



It was sponsored by many organizations, including the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, Jewish Community Relations Council, Consul General of Israel to Florida and Puerto Rico, and the Rabbinical Association of Greater Miami. Representing KJCC at the rally were Joel and Toby Bofshever, Yardena Kamely, and Jane and Harry Friedman.





KJCC Meditation Garden

Our extended brick walkway is in place. Come and spend some time walking around our peaceful and beautiful Meditation Garden. Bricks and benches can be purchased as honorariums or memorials and as gifts. Trees line the walkway and are available for dedication to our loved ones or to memorialize a happy occasion.

Also newly dedicated is our Orchid Pergola. We invite you to become a part of this fresh undertaking. Make your donation toward a new and beautiful orchid. The orchid will be tagged with the name of the donor and the name of the person being honored or remembered.

Information regarding pricing for orchids, bricks and benches can be obtained by visiting our website, keysjewishcenter.com.



KJCC and the Worldwide Shabbos Project 5776

by Gloria Avner

We rose to the occasion – all 15 of us. (The challah, too). The “Project” began, not with *Shabbos* itself, but with a creative act of communal preparation, KJCC’s version of an ancient and vital Jewish ritual that was also taking place simultaneously at thousands of other Jewish venues all over the



world. Sisterhood provided the ingredients and recipe. Ritual added the context, with sidebars on blessings, the meaning of sacrifice, and helpful hints. It was *challah*-making time.

Our bowls of yeast and sugar water were creamy and ready for the messy part, the eggs and salt – and oh yes the flour – when a miscalculation on the supply side led to the need for rescue. (Bless Steve Steinbock, who dashed out to bring us more flour.) Our hands and arms went deep to the elbows as we mixed, kneaded, laughed, encouraged, commiserated, and came to know each other better. Look at the photos: creativity was the watchword of the night. Braids led to grapes, to ribbons and stars, from tiny to epic. We’d go home to bake, to breathe in

tribal scents, and to *qvell*.

We kneaded and were needed – setting the stage and our *ka-vanah* (a complex Hebrew

word connoting the deepest meanings of the English word *intent*) to provide participants with a true 25-hour *Shabbat* experience.

The project would continue on Friday night with a delicious “family/*mishpocha*” dinner for 40 followed by a tuneful service led by Erica Lieberman-Garrett, with lots of





This happy KJCC group was among the thousands of people who were creating challah at the very same time in hundreds of cities around the world. At left, Gloria and Susan also taught us the correct melody for the Shabbos candle blessing (not the Chanukah tune so many of us use).



guest participation. Mitch Harvey provided the *d'var* (Torah talk). We thank Stan and Jenny Margulies for their generous sponsorship of the dinner, and we thank Steve Steinbock for honoring Carol's yahrzeit with a chocolate-cake-laden *oneg* she would have loved, and we thank the women who cooked, prepared, and decorated.



In case you were wondering, no one was injured during the course of this challah-making.

As always, Shabbat begins with candle-lighting. All the women who participated in KJCC's part of the Shabbos Project came together to light their own candles. This was particularly meaningful for Erica, who was able to light the candlesticks her mother had brought back from Israel many years ago.

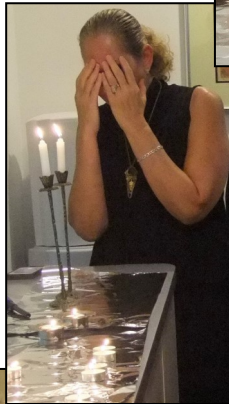
On Saturday morning we met again to take part in an engaging Torah/teaching service led by the incomparable Rabbi Agler; we talked about Abraham, who had just entered the story.

We talked about him not as a Biblical icon, but as a man; his quick acceptance of a mission no man had ever before been offered, and hospitality, and confidence, and willingness to wage war for family, yet frequent passivity, such as not protesting a peep when seemingly instructed to perform a fam-

iliar ancient Middle East ritual and sacrifice his own son. (Rabbi Agler often explores the spaces *between* the words for meaning, like a jazz aficionado.) Afterward, we all

shared a luncheon that featured our first ever *cholent* (the stew-like dish made by observant women on Friday so they don't have to cook on Shabbos but still provide a hot, hearty mid-day meal). Learning. It was all about learning, about deepening skills and practices enhancing *Shabbat Shalom*.

Our *Shabbos* Project weekend – we use the



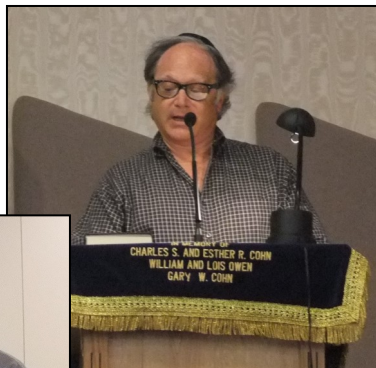
Ashkenazi spelling because that's what its South African founders use – concluded with a short, sweet *Havdalah*

service at Joyce's house. New house-mate, the charming Charlie Brown (four-legged version), greeted his visitors warmly. And yes, there was another meal before the evening was over. Then,





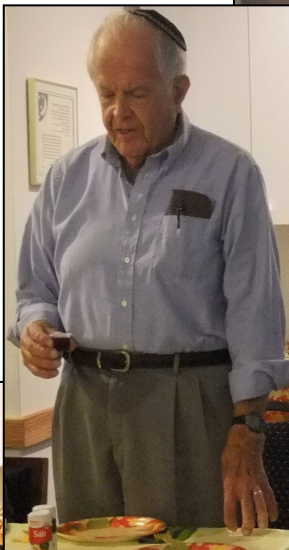
After dinner, Shabbat services were led by Erica Lieberman-Garrett and Mitch Harvey. At right, Mitch shares his thoughts about the week's *parasha*.



with the
hiss of
candle
flame
doused in

wine, we said goodbye to sacred Shabbat time, highly aware that we were doing so along with hundreds of thousands of fellow Jews worldwide.

Sydney, Australia; Toronto, Canada; Miami, Florida: you may have had thousands more people at your challah events, but could you have had a better, deeper, fuller, or more meaningful *Shabbos* than our participating *mishpocha* at KJCC? **NO!!** ♦



In the photos above, from top: Art Itkin, Jim Williams, Roy and Linda Pollack, Meredith Cline and Barbara Knowles, and new members Scott and Mary Anne Pearl. As you can see, everyone enjoyed the dinner.

Our 25- hour Shabbos experience ended at Joyce's home, with the sweet smell of incense and the hissing of the Havdalah flame extinguished in wine. The sudden darkness takes us from the holiness of Shabbat back to the secular week, reminding us of our return to the everyday world.



Hanukkah – the History and the Heroes

by Joyce Peckman and Sam Vinicur

The year 168 B.C.E. was not an easy time to be a Jew in the Promised Land. Four hundred years earlier King Cyrus of Persia had given them permission to return from exile in Babylonia and rebuild the holy Temple. Then, in 332 B.C.E., Alexander the Great's brilliant, undermanned campaign had conquered the Persian Empire. Judea was part of that. Alexander had the idea to spread Greek culture throughout the territories he conquered, including the Middle East. After Alexander's sudden death (in his early 30s), his vast kingdom was divided into three mini-empires by his generals. Ptolemy took Egypt and Seleucus took Syria. Judea was in the middle. Initially it was controlled by Egypt, but then it was wrested away by the Seleucids. Around 175 B.C.E. Antiochus IV, who gave himself the name *Epiphanes* – "God made manifest," rose to power as ruler of the Seleucids.

The Jews had accepted their Greek masters, and the Greeks were content to collect taxes and leave the Jews to their strange religious practices. Yet there was constant interaction, and Greek culture was seductive. Many Jews began to become "Hellenized," adopting Greek social practices and listening to their philosophers. But for some reason, perhaps to strengthen his hold on Judea due to a resurgent Egypt and the beginnings of new threats from the area of the former Babylonia, Antiochus suddenly began to strictly enforce Hellenistic culture and attempt to suppress the Judean religion

and way of life. In the year 168 B.C.E., he sent his soldiers to Jerusalem. He installed Jason, a Hellenistic Jew, as high priest and had a gymnasium built next to the Holy Temple. (The literal translation of *gymnasium* is "school for naked exercise.")

Antiochus issued decrees forbidding Sabbath observance, Torah study, circumcision, and *Rosh Chodesh* - the proclamation of the new lunar month. These acts restricted the

observances that shape the Jewish concept of time (Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh), mind (Torah study), and body (circumcision). Altars and idols were set up for the worship of Greek gods. In the Temple itself an altar to Zeus was erected, with an idol in the image of Antiochus, to which sacrifices were ordered. Soldiers were told to rigorously enforce these laws and offer Jews two options: abandonment of Judaism or death.

These harsh proclamations are recorded in Maccabees I and II, books that are part of the Apocrypha or *Sefarim HaChitzoniyim*, literally "outer books" or accounts that later rabbis chose not to include in the *Tanach* (biblical

canon). Maccabees I and II were included in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible originally prepared for the Jewish community of Alexandria (who had become thoroughly Hellenized and had forgotten Hebrew). However, when the Septuagint later became the official version of the Bible for the nascent Christian Church, the Jewish community rejected its authoritative nature.



In the drawing above, Gloria Avner, KJCC's repository of every possible kind of talent, imagines a Maccabee warrior.

Ironically, the books survived because they became part of the Christian canon; otherwise they probably would have been lost over the centuries.

According to Maccabees I, Jewish heroes emerged, the first being Hannah. After she and her seven sons were arrested, soldiers tried to force them to eat pork (or bow to idols). When they refused, the king ordered them tortured, killing the sons one by one in front of their mother, as she encouraged them to remain true to their faith.

The narrator in Maccabees mentions that the anonymous mother "was the most remarkable of all, and deserves to be remembered with special honor. She watched her seven sons die in the space of a single day, yet she bore it bravely because she put her trust in the Lord." The narrator ends only by saying that the mother died. (There are several versions of this story, because she is also mentioned in the Talmud, Tractate Gittin.) Some say she threw herself in the fire, others that she jumped from a roof. In the Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Syriac Churches, her name is given as Shamone or Maryam, and they are all celebrated as "Holy Maccabean Martyrs." Much later she became associated with Hannah in Samuel 2:5, and the name stuck.

The Second Hero of the story, Mattathias the Hasmonean priest, made his stand in Mod'in, a village about 40 km from Jerusalem, where the Greeks had erected an altar for idol worship in the middle of town and demanded that local Jews sacrifice a pig. Rather than betray his faith by participating, the aged Mattathias drew his sword and killed the nearest soldier. Knowing his deed would be avenged, Mattathias fled to the hills,

joined by his five sons and a number of others. Sheltered by the mountainous terrain, they plotted their uprising. The name *Maccabees* was attached to the father-and-sons group, according to some versions of the story, as a result of Mattathias' declaration of "*Mi Camocha B'Alim Adoshem* - Who is like You, God?" The phrase's acronym spells out the word "Maccabee." (The more conventional explanation is that "maccabee" is the Hebrew word for "hammer.") With a rallying cry

of "*Mi l'Hashem aylai* - Whoever is for God, come with me!" Mattathias gathered a following ready to fight for religious freedom.

In 166 B.C.E., a ragtag bunch of 4,000 Jewish warriors, mostly farmers, headed by Mattathias' sons Judah, Simon, Eleazar, Yochanon, and Jonathan, bat-

tled 47,000 troops under Syrian-Greek General Apollonius and won. Since they had been unable to celebrate the holiday of Sukkot at its proper time in early autumn, the victorious Maccabees decided that Sukkot should be celebrated once they rededicated the Temple.

The story shifts to 164 B.C.E., on the 25th day of Kislev. Since the Biblically mandated festival of Sukkot lasts eight days, this became the time frame adopted for Hanukkah. About 250 years after these events, the first-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus wrote his account of the origins of the holiday, calling it "the Festival of Lights."

Some 600 years later, the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat, contains the surviving version of the famous story of the miraculous jar of oil that burned for eight days. In the context of a discussion about the fact that fasting and grieving are not allowed on



An engraving of Hannah and her seven sons.

Hanukkah, the Rabbis, seeking to explain why the observance of Hanukkah is so important, recount the old oral legend of the miraculous jar of oil.

Okay, that's the way the story is typically told. The real history is a little different, and more interesting, if not perfectly consistent with Jewish religious legend.

As to the veracity of the books of Maccabees I and II, keep in mind that they were commissioned after victory by the Hasmoneans, the family name of the Maccabees, who turned out to be highly imperfect and, ironically, Hellenized kings. Yes, they greatly expanded the Jewish kingdom to about the same areas that King David controlled nine hundred years before, and were clever diplomats and skilled warriors in a volatile world. But of all the Hasmonean kings, only two – John Hyrcanus (the son of Simeon, the only original Maccabee to survive the 25-year war against the Seleucids) and his son Alexander Yannai – were effective, though they were never loved. It was John Hyrcanus (note that they both adopted partially Greek names, one of the things that never sat too well with their subjects) who captured Samaria and razed the rival Temple at Mt. Gerizim. He also conquered Galilee and the southern kingdom of Idumea, forcibly converting *en masse* the inhabitants of both to Judaism, the only time in Jewish history that has ever happened. One of those forcibly converted was Herod the Great's father Antipater – it's hard to imagine that history could possibly provide such a deliciously ironic name – which eventually led to Herod being appointed king of Judea by the Romans. (The forcible conversion of the Galileans also meant that the family of Jesus of Nazareth had likely been Jewish for less than 100 years. But it's also true that the Galileans later provided some of the bravest



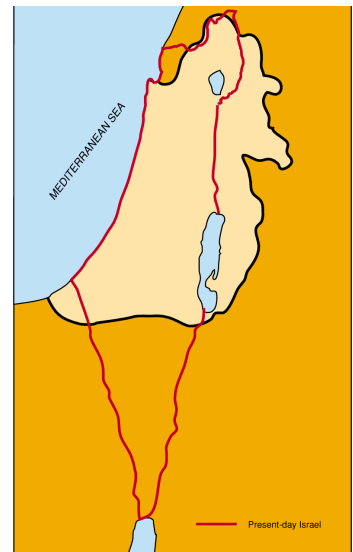
Coins of the Hasmonean Dynasty have been found in a number of archaeological digs.

and most loyal soldiers in the three great wars against Rome.) The two latter Hasmonean kings, however – Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II – were both hated by the Jews and were ineffective rulers. In a major “oops” of history, they had actually invited the Romans in to settle a civil war between them. As we know, the Romans never left. It's entirely possible

that the rabbis of Yavneh who made the decision to exclude Maccabees I and II from the finished Jewish Bible

just did not have great regard for stories commissioned and told by the Hasmoneans.

The Maccabees had actually been preceded in rebellion against the Seleucids by a group called the Hasidim. (There is no connection between them and the group that arose in 18th century Poland under the Baal Shem Tov.) But the practices of the Hasidim contained a fatal flaw. They wouldn't fight on the Sabbath. So Greek forces would hide in Jerusalem until Saturday, then go Hasidim-hunting and slaughter them by the thousands. One of the reasons for the Maccabees' success was a new interpretation of the To-



The map above shows the borders of the Hasmonean Dynasty c.100 B.C.E. Borders were expanded to those Judea had enjoyed under King David.

rah. They deemed it allowable to fight on the Sabbath if it was for defensive purposes. That was ruled to not be “labor,” and was probably the beginning of the rule that allowed the breaking of Sabbath ritual law to save a life, later codified in great detail in the Talmud. According to Rabbi Stephen Wylen, this might well be our first sighting of the “legal traditions of the Pharisees,” the idea that the Torah must be flexible to account for changes in life and a prime example of what became the adaptive “oral law” of the rabbis.

As part of his campaign to Hellenize the Jews, Antiochus had, in 175 B.C.E., ousted Onias as High Priest. Onias fled to Egypt, and expected to return when the Hasmoneans won. But they didn’t allow him to return. Thus ended the Zadokite hereditary priesthood line, the family that had passed the position down from father to son since the time of King David. The Hasmoneans took the role of High Priest – in addition to being king – for themselves. After the Zadokites, no High Priest ever enjoyed full legitimacy in the eyes of the people. The Romans actually auctioned the position off to the highest bidder. When king, Herod abased both the office and officeholder even further, keeping the priestly vestments in his palace. The High Priest had to come and request vestments each morning as a sign of his submission to higher authority.

It was during the period of Hasmonean rule that sects first appear in Jewish history. The most dominant sects were the Sadducees and Pharisees. There were also Essenes and Zealots, and possibly dozens of other sects. (A later sect, of course, was the Christians.) Each fought for their particular interpretation of the law. The Pharisees, who later morphed into the rabbis, were the more tolerant and flexible ones, those who sought to adapt the law to life and its changes. (Hillel was a Pharisee.) The Sadducees were the priestly and aristocratic class, who were more strict and literal in their interpretation of the

law. Alexander Yannai’s widow Salome actually served as Hasmonean ruler for a while – a pious and good one – until her two idiot sons were old enough to compete for power. During Salome’s reign her brother Simon bar Shetah was the leading court Pharisee. According to the Talmud, Simon was responsible for two important Jewish innovations. First was the *ketubah*, the Jewish marriage contract that was history’s first known protection for wives. (Biblical law allowed men to divorce their wives at will, which inevitably hurled women into dire poverty.) Now men had to guarantee women payment upon divorce, effectively shielding them from destitution. Simon also established universal education for all Jewish males so they would be literate in the Scriptures. The Pharisees were attempting to fulfill the Biblical promise that Jews were to become “a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.” To accomplish this, all men needed to become literate like priests.

A number of historians believe that an over-romanticization and misinterpretation of the Maccabees’ success led directly to the three disastrous wars against the Romans. After all, God had been with the Maccabees and they succeeded against overwhelming odds. But the wars against the Roman failed disastrously. Judeans expected that their numerous brethren in Babylon would come to their aid when they rebelled, but no help came. Still, the period of the sects under the Hasmoneans was arguably one of the most creative (although tempestuous) in Jewish history. It led to a proliferation of ancient

literature, a great deal of which survives. It also led to the full development of the Pharisee ideas, which in the form of the rabbis enabled Jews to adapt to the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. and, completely thwarting the patterns and predictions of history, survive as a people and a religion. ♦





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2. Palace Training & Education Center

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3. Local Ownership –

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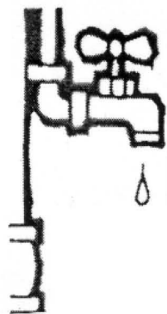
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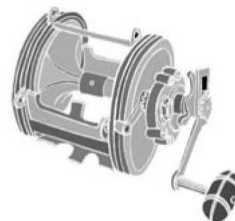
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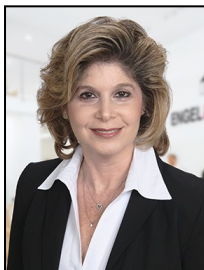


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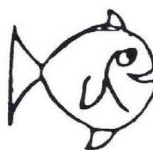
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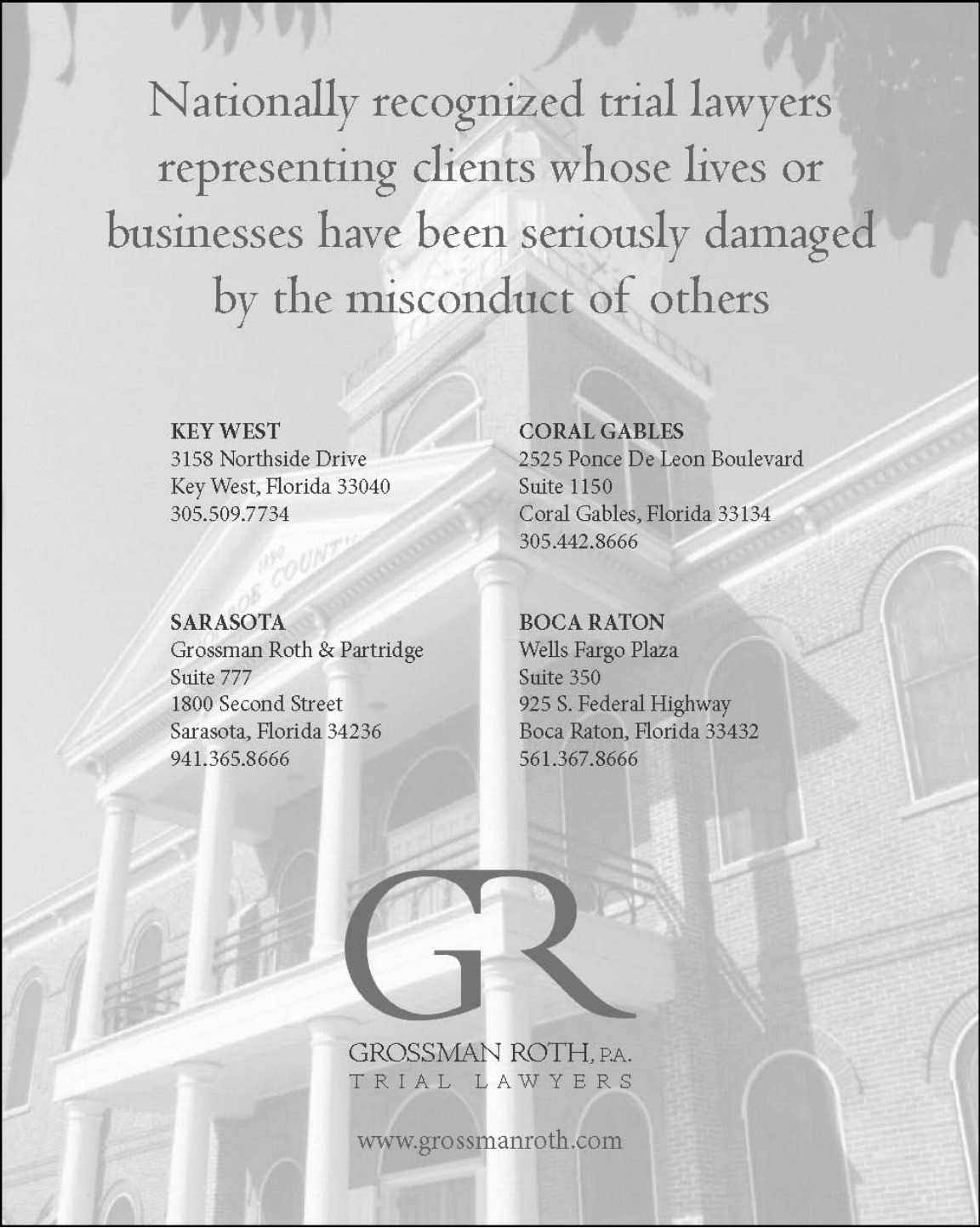
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