

Chai~Lights



January 2017

3 Tevet - 4 Shevat 5777

Photo Gallery - page 19

Sitting Shiva: Being Alone Together - page 27

Maurice Ravel and his “Jewish” Connection - page 29

Keys Jewish Community Center

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

January 2017

3 Tevet - 4 Shevat

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 New Year's Day Blessing of Fleet 10 a.m.	2	3	4	5	6 Steve Hartz & Steve Steinbock <i>James Brush</i> Sisterhood Meeting 1:30 p.m.	7
8 KJCC Board Meeting 10 a.m.	9	10	11	12	13 Meredith Cline <i>Meredith Cline</i>	14
15	16 M.L.K. Day	17	18	19	20 Gary Margolis & Susan Gordon Advertisers Dinner 6 p.m.	21 Rabbi Agler Torah Service 10 a.m.
22 Movie: The Disputation + disc. with Rabbi Agler 7 p.m.	23	24	25	26	27 Yardena Kamely & Art Itkin <i>Steve Steinbock</i>	28 Rosh Chodesh Shevat
29 Refugees 101 Event 6:30 p.m.	30	31				

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chailights@keysjewishcenter.com

President's Message Sam Vinicur



It's almost exactly two years since I was first elected to occupy this chair. Though I love both words and conversation, I've never been a natural public speaker. I'm much happier to sit and compose my thoughts, discarding the inevitable chaos that invades the mind as I will myself into coherence. I think, at the precise moment Bernie had happily handed me the scepter, I mumbled something into the mic about not having any grand ambitions. I'm aware that the rubble of grandiosity is often strewn mockingly at the feet of the vain or foolish. Racing through my mind was: what, exactly, do I do now?

KJCC wasn't broken. Though I'd never wanted to be, I'd been on the Board for eight years, learning and feeling its rhythms. I'd been publishing Chai-Lights for even a little longer; from that perch I could see very well what its personality was, how it tended to go about its business, how it sang and danced and laughed and sometimes cried.

The way forward soon revealed itself. I'd spent my adult life in the communication business. I'd been able to strengthen the connective matrix of KJCC some by developing and expanding Chai-Lights. I just needed to follow my own model, which I knew worked, slowly and

steadily.

Shared experience is glue. A member told me the other day that she'd joined a while ago but initially felt like an outsider here, typically left to sit alone. She's feeling a different vibe lately, a warmer and more welcoming air. Though I get teased about my weekly e-mails, that's where I began my work. People need to *feel* what's going on, taste it and see themselves in it, not just quickly scan bulleted listings. Activity levels gradually began going up. I know, because I get weekly reports, that twice as many people read the e-mails now compared to when I began.

I knew that our Torah Restoration Project had to be more than just a simple repair. It had to offer an experience. Many members now have their certificates and photos with the *sofer* framed and hanging on their walls.

Activity begets activity: good expands, bad contracts. We now have the largest membership in our history. Our services have more energy and better participation. We do more here than ever, and more often. We're more connected to the Keys community. The whole building pulsates with energy. I like to think, as my term is very near its end, that I've had something to do with all this.

Nosh

Rabbi Agler's Torah Service

Save Saturday morning, January 21st, to experience the first of Rabbi Agler's uplifting spiritual and educational services of the new (secular) year. There are no special holidays to be celebrated in January this year, but it is a truism that Shabbat is the most important of all Jewish holidays. Plan to spend this one with Rabbi Richard Agler, KJCC's Resident Scholar, and gain new insights and enthusiasms for our Torah and traditions. Services start without exception promptly at 10:00 a.m. There will be light refreshment - *kiddush* - afterward. You'll be glad you came.

And if you're the type who's assiduous about planning ahead, here is his Saturday service schedule for the rest of the season: February 11th, March 18th, April 8th and May 6th. (Please note that, with events being beyond the control of even a rabbi, it is possible these dates might need to change. We'll of course let you know.)

Chocolate Festival Coming Soon

Even though we primarily focus on cultural activities in the Upper Keys, we have to make one exception. Knowing we are a congregation of chocolate lovers, if not actual chocoholics, how could we not support a field trip to the most delicious, lovely, and educational event of our South Florida winter: the 11th Annual International Chocolate Festival at Fairchild Gardens. Friday, January 20th, 2017, 9:30 a.m. to Sunday, January 22nd, 2017 at 4:30 p.m. Beautiful surroundings, unusual art, informative lectures and, ummm, samples. Think carpools.

The KJCC offers its deepest condolences to Founding KJCC member Bob Faeges and his family on the death of his wife Janis Faeges.



Social Hall Chair Plate

In Memory of

Claire Lempel/Murray Pincus
by Linda Pincus & Family

New Members

It's been a few months since we formally introduced new members in Chai-Lights. Our ranks continue to grow in both variety and talents plus backgrounds, too. Marcia Kreitman has been a member for some time. But she's now added hubby John Hawver, one of the truly great and nationally known Keys artists, to our roster. Laura Wolf first came to the Keys on a film crew, and has decided to stay, living in Key Largo. Gary Margolis and Laurie Blum decided the cold up north was no longer for them, and they now live in Marathon. They've already become regulars at all our events, and Gary has even led services. Gunther and Shirley Karger live in Homestead. They came for High Holidays and were so taken with KJCC they decided to join. It's a special connection for us, too. Gunther is a Holocaust survivor, one of the *Kindertransport* children whose life was saved by being put on a train and sent off to live with strangers. He and Shirley met just after the war.

The JNF Needs Funds for New Trees

As most of you know, Israeli forests in the north, around Haifa, have been devastated by recent fires. As of late November, over 32,000 acres of forests have been destroyed. Over 70,000 residents in Haifa had to be evacuated. More than 2,500 firefighters have been working on over 630 fires. (Yes, there's evidence of arson, but that's not the point here.)

JNF, the little blue box fundraiser of our youth, needs us again. They're raising money to re-plant the forests. And to buy and refurbish fire-fighting equipment. And to help all the people affected. If you can help, go to JNF.org, call 1-800-JNF0099, or e-mail customerservice@jnf.org.

January Birthdays

1st.....	Justin Wade Gilson
1st.....	Jerry Olsen
1st.....	Laura Goodman
2nd.....	Stanley Rosenberg
2nd.....	Sherrie Willner
4th.....	Randi W. Freundlich
4th.....	Howard Gilson
6th.....	Stanley Margulies
6th.....	Janice Gorson
8th.....	Matthew Barrett
8th.....	Roger Levy
9th.....	Cathy Rakov
9th.....	Deborah Beinfest
9th.....	Sarah Kamely
10th.....	Nancy Yankow
11th.....	Michelle Zinner
12th.....	Alex Dutton
12th.....	Meredith A. Cline
13th.....	Amy Nobil
14th.....	Tovah Fishman
15th.....	Charlie Horowitz
15th.....	Heather Gilson
15th.....	Jamie Goodman
16th.....	Donald Zinner
16th.....	Brieze Levy
17th.....	Neal Rakov
17th.....	Andrea Kluger
17th.....	Suzi-Sarot Feder
18th.....	Barry Alter
19th.....	Sandy Seder
19th.....	Benjamin Friedman
19th.....	Mark Kanarek
22nd.....	Sheila Olsen
24th.....	Stuart Grossman
24th.....	Randy Klein-Gross
26th.....	Marshall Kaplan
27th.....	Beth Hudson
27th.....	Pat VanArtsdalen
28th.....	Yardena Kamely
29th.....	Beth Kaminstein
29th.....	Jeffrey Boruszak
30th.....	Kristen M. Schur

January Anniversaries

	Years
1st	Sanford & Nancy Yankow.....27
4th	Steve & Amelia Kasinof.....36
12th	George & Muriel Swartz.....37
17th	Alan & Elaine Schulberg.....24
23rd	Marvin & Ivy Blumenfeld.....68
26th	David & Pamela Marmar.....32
27th	Michele & Ed Riley.....44

Tikkun Olam – Refugees & Refreshments

On January 29th, from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., Linda Kaplan and the *Tikkun Olam* Committee will present an intriguing program at KJCC titled "Refugees 101." Linda, a practicing immigration attorney with over 30 years' experience, will talk about legal aspects of the current crisis. Short films will be shown. Then Rabbi Richard Agler, KJCC's Resident Scholar, will discuss the issues from a religious perspective, including Judaism's view of "the stranger." The Q & A that follows should be fascinating. The public will be invited, and the evening will conclude with a delicious home-cooked meal of dishes initially brought to this country by our immigrant forebears (on this night prepared by us, their children and grandchildren). There will be no charge for either the presentation or the international feast to follow. Please see the ad on page 22 for further details.

Leaf on the Tree of Life

To honor
Patty Silver Schocket
 Forever Remembered and Loved

By Linda Pollack, December 2016

KJCC Student Scholarships 2017

We are proud of the youngsters who have gone through our KJCC school and wish to advance their educational goals. To this end, Joel Pollack, many years ago, established a KJCC Scholarship Fund, which still receives gifts from people who share this commitment. If you have a child who will be graduating High School this spring and is applying for fall admission to an institute of higher learning, academic or technical, you can go to the KJCC website (keysjewishcenter.com) and download the Scholarship guidelines, eligibility requirements, and application forms as of January 1st, 2017. If you

have any questions, contact Susan Gordon (susangordon424@yahoo.com) or Gloria Avner (geetavner@gmail.com). Deadline for receipt of completed applications is April 1st, 2017; awards are announced before graduation.

The KJCC Torah Day Video is on YouTube

As the Board knows (and saw), Jan Hartz has taken all the photos Eve Knowles took at our Holocaust Torah Rededication Day last March and edited them into a brilliant and moving 8-minute film. It's now uploaded to YouTube, available for viewing by everyone. Just Google "KJCC Torah Day Video," or write us for the direct link.

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, 305-304-1810.

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

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

ONEG SHABBAT SPONSOR: To schedule your special date with Sisterhood, call Beth Hayden at 305-773-0067 or email her at Hayden.Elizabeth@Comcast.Net.

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

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, idevices, tablets and more. Call Steve Steinbock, 305-394-0143, or just bring your items to the KJCC.

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.

Oneg Sponsors for January 2017

January 6th - James Brush, to celebrate the wedding of William Brush to Tennessee Bell (Tennie) Kapps in 1881, great, great, great grandmother.

January 13th - Meredith Cline to celebrate her birthday.

January 27th - Steve Steinbock, Remembering Carol.

This Year's Advertisers Dinner

As we have every year for the past five or six years, KJCC will once again, on Friday, January 20th at 6 p.m., be offering a special Shabbat dinner to honor and thank all those who support us with their advertising in both Chai-Lights and the KJCC Membership Directory. This includes both members and non-members. It's always a rollicking and happy event, and our non-member friends have begun to look forward to this each January. (Why wouldn't they? The food is great, the atmosphere warm and cordial, and people spend the whole evening telling them how wonderful they are and how grateful we are.)

It's being managed again this year by Medina Roy. Please contact Medina to tell her how many are coming and what yummy (dairy) dish you'll be able to bring. There's no charge for members. This is also the dinner each year where we invite potential members to let them see what they've been missing. Please tell Medina if you have potential-member guests. For more info, please see the ad on page 16 of this issue.

The Most Famous Disputation

In medieval Europe, in case you hadn't heard, Jews and their religion were continually under siege. The first formal ghetto was established in Venice in 1516, but restrictions on Jews had existed for centuries across the continent. Things weren't so perfect during the "Golden Age" in Spain, either, though Jewish culture, religious studies and commerce all thrived there. (Moses Ben Maimon — Maimonides — after all, hailed

from Spain in this period. As did Moses de Leon, the probable author of the Kabbalistic Zohar.)

Another Spanish Moses of the period, Moses Ben Nachman, known to Jewish history as Nachmanides, is still a revered Talmudist and learned commentator on Jewish law and practice. But he's also famous for a Disputation in which he was forced to publicly defend Judaism against calumnies and charges hurled at it by medieval Christianity. Such Disputations were common in the period. But in none other was there a Jew of the stature of Nachmanides.

On Sunday evening, January 22nd, KJCC will be showing a British-made film depicting the famous Disputation, arranged by King James of Aragon, between Nachmanides and a New Christian (read "apostate Jew") named Pablo Christiani. The film is fascinating. To top things off Rabbi Agler has agreed to lead a discussion group afterwards. Please see the ad on page 18. There's no charge.

Sam & Dave in Concert at KJCC

On Wednesday, February 22nd, Dave Feder will once again be in full concert mode at KJCC. But this time he'll be joined by internationally renowned 12-string guitarist and composer Sam Weis, another KJCC member. This will be our big event of the season.

Tickets are currently scheduled to be priced again at \$25.

Sponsors and Angels are being sought. The entire Upper Keys community

will be invited to attend. We'll be sending out lots of info, but for now please contact Linda Kaplan if you have questions. This could become the biggest entertainment event ever at KJCC.





KEYS JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

**SISTERHOOD
SPONSORSHIP
OPPORTUNITIES**

ONEG \$60

SHABBAT DINNER \$300

**YOUR ONEG OR DINNER SPONSORSHIP WILL BE
ACKNOWLEDGED IN CHAI-LIGHTS AND KJCC
EMAILS AND ANNOUNCED FROM THE BEMA.**

Honor a loved one or celebrate a special event such as a birthday, anniversary, new baby, graduation, bar/bat mitzvah, safe return, yahrzeit or any other occasion of your choice. Sisterhood will purchase challah, wine, coffee, tea, soft drinks and baked goods. Sponsors may also bring any special dish(es) of choice to share.

Contact: Beth Hayden

hayden.elizabeth@comcast.net 305-773-0067

Sisterhood

Sam Weis and Renee Salant



As the clock chimes midnight and glasses are raised in a toast to a New Year of the common calendar, a new chapter begins in the life of the KJCC Sisterhood. As Renee Salant and I (Sam Weis) begin our term as co-presidents we are looking forward to building upon the great foundation put forth by the work of all past Sisterhood presidents and members, and most recently by Erica Lieberman-Garrett. She has set the bar high and Renee and I are deeply honored to be given the opportunity to guide the Sisterhood to even greater heights of service to our community.

To be completely candid, at first we were a bit nervous about taking this responsibility. We are new to The Keys and the KJCC. But, as I am sure you have already noticed, this is a Jewish community quite unlike any other. And one of the things that makes this community so special is that none of us is working alone. One really can feel the energy, the love and the support of the entire KJCC family. If you are not already an active part of the Sisterhood, I now invite you to join in our pleasurable work. We welcome all talents and all levels of participation.

Erica will not be too far away. (Every good trapeze artist needs a safety net at first.) She and Susan Gordon will be co-vice presidents. Beth Hayden remains our steadfast Treasurer and Oneg chairperson. Geri Smith will be staying on in her role as Recording Secretary, never missing a word. Additionally, we are pleased to announce that Michele Riley has stepped up to be our new Corresponding Secretary. Thank you to all of our officers for being there to catch Renee and me when we trip over our well-intentioned novice selves. And, let's not forget the efforts of Susan Gordon and Sydney! Faye-Davis, creating an amazing gift shop. Thank you.

As I write this column we are looking forward to many celebrations together. And

now, as you are reading this, we have enjoyed a busy month. Can anyone imagine anything more festive than viewing the beauty of a room full of tiny dancing flames from our Chanukah candles while sipping Champagne? Linda Pollack, you are a gem; thank you for sponsoring the Dec. 30th Chanukah Champagne Shabbat Potluck Dinner. And thank you to all who brought the always delicious food items. Sharing these experiences with our Keys Jewish community is certainly one of the highlights of my life in the Keys. If you feel the same way, please consider sponsoring an event. Dinners are great, of course, but think about celebrating a special event by sponsoring an Oneg. It's pretty simple, just e-mail Beth Hayden at hayden.elizabeth@comcast.net. We would all love to celebrate your *simchas* with you; your spouse's birthday, your anniversary, your niece's Bat Mitzvah, your dog had puppies, or your dog will now never have puppies. The KJCC Sisterhood does, of course, depend upon your donations to help fund these wonderful events. I admit that when I first joined KJCC I absolutely took it for granted that after Friday night services there would be an oneg. The food and beverages would simply be there, apparently delivered by elves while we were praying. Imagine my surprise when I once arrived early and I saw women (and a couple of men – fellows, you can participate, too) scurrying around the kitchen and social hall “magically” setting out plates of cookies, cakes, salads, and fruit. Even a wee dram of Scotch on occasion. You, too, can be part of this excellent Sisterhood. Thank you to all of our members.

Renee and I are honored to be of service. Good health, good work, remember to enjoy the beauty of this amazing place we live in. Shalom. ◇

Keys Jewish Community Center Tikkun Olam Project



How many prescription and vitamin bottles do you discard almost on a daily basis? We have the opportunity to contribute to an ongoing project at Burton Memorial. They are collecting empty medicine bottles and sending them to Haiti. The hospitals and clinics there are in need of these bottles in order to provide prescriptions to their patients.

Simply bring your empty bottles to the KJCC and place in the collection box. Remove all personal information and medication information first.



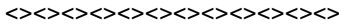
Note that this is a request for bottles, not for medications.

In Memoriam January 2017

In Memory Of

Talia Agler

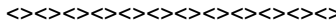
By Richard & Mindy Agler



In Memory Of

Bernice Bernstein

By Paul & Barbara Bernstein



In Memory Of

Laurie Beth

By Alan Beth & Candace Stanlake



In Memory Of

Annette Bitton

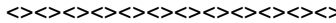
By Michel Bitton & Sylvie Coeurjoly



In Memory Of

David Pearlman

By William & Donna Bolton



In Memory Of

Emma Kohlenbrener

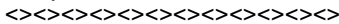
By Joan Boruszak



In Memory Of

Irving Kulick

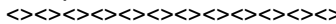
By Thomas & Renée Brodie



In Memory Of

Betty Weinstein

By Dick & Rita Bromwich



In Memory Of

Rita Zalk Cline

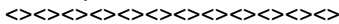
By Meredith A. Cline



In Memory Of

Carolynne H. Cline

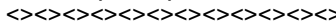
By Meredith A. Cline



In Memory Of

David Cohn

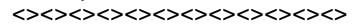
By Nancy L. Cohn



In Memory Of

Yetta Hitzig

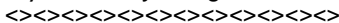
By Wes & Rita Conklin



In Memory Of

Lola Rosenberg

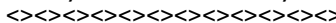
By Robert & Joni Sages Dandrea



In Memory Of

Nathan Weisberg

By Gerri & Frank Emkey



In Memory Of

Marcus Weiss

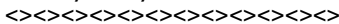
By Janice Gorson



In Memory Of

Marvin Greenbaum

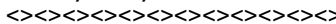
By Marilyn Greenbaum



In Memory Of

Judy Lombardi

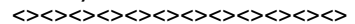
By Marilyn Greenbaum



In Memory Of

Alvin S. Gross

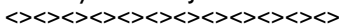
By David & Patti Gross



In Memory Of

Louis Hartz

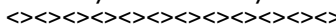
By Steven & Jan Hartz



In Memory Of

Daniel Harvey

By Mitchell Harvey



In Memory Of

Ernest Isenberg

By Patricia Isenberg

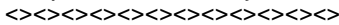


In Memoriam January 2017

In Memory Of

Sylvia Emsig

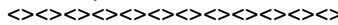
By Lawrence & Pearl Jacobs



In Memory Of

Bernard Kaminstein

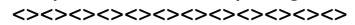
By Beth Kaminstein



In Memory Of

Aaron Rosenzweig

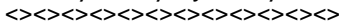
By Gunther & Shirley Karger



In Memory Of

Irving Rosen

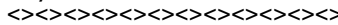
By Harvey & Joan Kay



In Memory Of

Walter Hankin

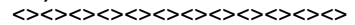
By Richard & Barbara Knowles



In Memory Of

Goldie Schweitzer

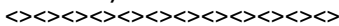
By Richard & Barbara Knowles



In Memory Of

Henry H. Rubin

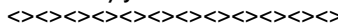
By Carol Laskin



In Memory Of

Samuel Neubauer

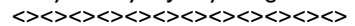
By Jackie LePree



In Memory Of

John Evans

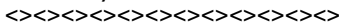
By Stanley & Jenny Margulies



In Memory Of

Ann Netzman

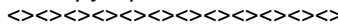
By Alan Netzman



In Memory Of

Betty Weinstein

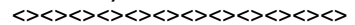
By Jerry & Sheila Olsen



In Memory Of

Eta Brownstein

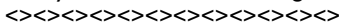
By Pauline Roller



In Memory Of

Nat Gulkis

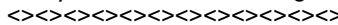
By Alan & Elaine Schulberg



In Memory Of

Bea Gulkis

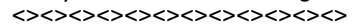
By Alan & Elaine Schulberg



In Memory Of

Paul Kaminsky

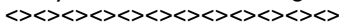
By Alan & Elaine Schulberg



In Memory Of

Joan Kaminsky

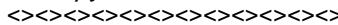
By Alan & Elaine Schulberg



In Memory Of

Joseph Cohen

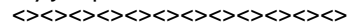
By Jules & Nettie Seder



In Memory Of

Jacob Menahem Shabathai

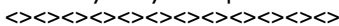
By Joseph & Katherine Shabathai



In Memory Of

Joseph Shapiro

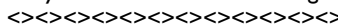
By Libby P. Shapiro



In Memory Of

Sally Sussman

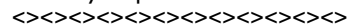
By Richard & Sheila Steinberg



In Memory Of

Karen Hayhurst

By Stephen Steinbock



World Jewish Report

Medina Roy



Do You Still Pass “GO” and Collect \$200?

Forget about *Park Place*, *Boardwalk* and *Marvin Gardens* and becoming a tycoon by swallowing up the prime properties of Atlantic City. Now you can own a piece of the *Kotel* (Western Wall)! An Israeli company has teamed up with Hasbro, the world’s largest toy maker, to market the latest version of the rainy-day-favorite board game, *Monopoly*. The new version, *Jerusalem Monopoly*, features 28 tourist destinations, identified in both Hebrew and English. The “stops” along the way include the *Israel Museum*, the *Western Wall*, the *Knesset* and the *Machane Yehuda* market. This new version is expected to be marketed not only in Israel but in many other countries as well. *Monopoly* originated in 1903. The current version was first released in 1935 by *Parker Brothers*. (Imagine how exciting it was to pass Go and receive \$200 in the worst years of the Great Depression.) (www.haaretz.com, 12-8-16)

An \$850,000 Slab of White Marble

A 1,500-year-old white marble slab containing the earliest known chiseled inscription of the *Ten Commandments* (it’s the Samaritan version, not either of the versions of the Decalogue written in the Hebrew Bible) was sold in mid-November at an auction in Beverly Hills, California for \$850,000. (The opening bid was \$300,000.) It was most likely chiseled during the late Roman or Byzantine Era, between 300 and 500 C.E. The slab is thought to have marked the entrance of an ancient synagogue that was probably destroyed by the Romans. Discovered in 1913 during an excavation for a railroad line near the city of *Yavneh* in Western Israel, someone – perhaps a construction worker – found it and set it in a courtyard, where it remained until 1943. At that point an archaeologist acquired it and owned it until his death in

2000. Rabbi Shaul Deutsch, founder of the *Living Torah Museum* in Brooklyn, New York, came into possession of the tablet for temporary display through an agreement with the *Israel Antiquities Authority* (IAA) and later bought it outright. Rabbi Deutsch then put the tablet up for sale with the stipulation that it be placed on public display.

Rabbi Deutsch said his plans were to sell the tablet and other artifacts from his collection, which chronicles Jewish life and history back to antiquity, in order to raise money for a makeover of his museum. He hopes to transform the museum with more hands-on exhibits in order to attract younger visitors. (www.reuters.com, 11-17-16)

Mitzvah Day 2016

Some 25,000 people participated in British Jewry’s *Mitzvah Day*, held on November 27th, 2016. Organizers said that the number of volunteers for the faith-based day of social action was the largest number to participate since *Mitzvah Day* was first inaugurated in the United Kingdom in 2005. The event brings together Jews, Muslims, Christians, Hindus and others involving a variety of activities. This year’s event focused on building bridges in British society following the polarizing effect of the referendum held in May leading to the British exit (or Brexit) from the *European Union*. Following the vote, British watchdog groups reported a spike in xenophobic-related hate crimes. Sadiq Khan, London’s first Muslim mayor, participated in this year’s *Mitzvah Day*. Some of the activities included making teddy bears, cooking meals and collecting goods for immigrants and the poor. In addition to the 25,000 volunteers in Great Britain, some 15,000 people participated in *Mitzvah Day* projects in 25 countries,

giving a total of 150,000 hours of their time to help hundreds of charities and causes. (www.jpost.com, 12-2-16)

\$2 for an Incredible Story

Last year, Jillian Eisman was rummaging through a closet at a garage sale on Long Island, New York, when she immediately recognized a blue and gray striped jacket, complete with numbers on the chest of the jacket. Eisman paid two dollars for it and promptly donated it to the *Kupferberg Holocaust Center* in New York City. Curators at the center put the jacket on display and also traced the serial number, connecting it to one Ben Zion Peresecki (who later changed his name to Ben Peres). Peresecki had been taken by the Nazis from his home in Lithuania and forced to make munitions for the German war effort because he was fifteen. (According to the curator, all Jews, sixteen and older, which would have included his father and seventeen-year-old brother, were executed.) He spent four years in a displaced persons camp where he was reunited with his mother. The two later came to America. He married, raised a family on Long Island and worked as a mechanical engineer. Peresecki didn't share much with his family about his Holocaust experience in Dachau, but he did keep detailed records which were discovered by his daughter, Lorrie Zullo, long after he died of a stroke in 1978. According to Holocaust historians, jackets such as the one kept by Peres are rare, since most of the clothing worn by concentration camp prisoners was burned because of lice and other possible diseases. Also, most freed prisoners didn't want to keep reminders of their ordeal. Jillian Eisman, whose 24-year-old brother was killed in the terror attacks on 9-11, said: "There is a reason why I was...in that house...There is a reason why I was friends with someone who worked at the Holocaust museum. What are the chances of that?" (www.ap.org, 11-23-16)

Move Over, Rodin!

A team of Israeli archaeologists has discovered a 3,800-year-old pottery jug depicting a statuette of a person who appears to be

lost in thought. The figure is sitting with knees bent and with his head resting on his hand, reminiscent of Auguste Rodin's iconic 19th century sculpture, *The Thinker*. The *Israeli Antiquities Authority* (IAA) said the jug - which stands about seven inches tall - dates back to what archaeologists call the *Middle Bronze Age*. The artifact was found during an excavation in the Tel Aviv suburb of *Yehud*. "It seems that at first the jug, which is typical of the period, was prepared and afterwards the unique sculpture was added, the likes of which have never before been discovered in previous research," said Gilad Itach, director of the excavation. The IAA conducts excavations at all major building sites across the country to make sure that no relics are destroyed. (www.reuters.com, 11-23-16)

Girl-to-Girl Advice Goes for \$150K

Towards the end of November, a poem handwritten by Anne Frank sold for \$150,000 at an auction, more than four times the minimum bid of \$32,000. It was sold to an unnamed online bidder after two minutes of bidding that was described as "tense." The eight-line poem is written in Dutch and is dedicated to "Cri-cri," the sister of Anne Frank's primary school friend Jacqueline van Maarsen. The subject of the poem is girl-to-girl advice. The poem is dated March 28, 1942, three months before the Frank family went into hiding in an Amsterdam attic. Anne was twelve years old at the time. Christiane, or "Cri-cri" died ten years ago. In 1988, letters written by Anne and her sister Margot to American pen pals sold for \$165,000. (www.jta.org, 11-23-16)

Shoah Foundation at 54,000 Testimonies

Some 700 guests at the *Ambassadors for Humanity* gala in early December contributed approximately \$3.5 million for the global outreach work of the *University of Southern California Shoah Foundation*. The celebration, which featured actor Harrison Ford and composer John Williams, honored filmmaker and entrepreneur George Lucas and his wife Melody Hobson with a *Humanitarian Award*. Following the success of his film "Schindler's

List,” director Steven Spielberg established the *Shoah Foundation: The Institute for Visual History and Education* in 1994, an organization that has, to date, compiled over 54,000 testimonies of survivors of and witnesses to the Holocaust. The project has grown and now includes those who have witnessed genocides in Armenia, Nanking, Rwanda and Guatemala. Hobson, a Chicago businesswoman, praised the foundation for “giving a face to the faceless.”

(www.forward.com, 12-11-16)

The Global Shabbat Project

The 2016 global *Shabbat Project*, which took place on November 11th and 12th, broke all records and brought together over one million Jews - including some 40 members of the KJCC - in 1160 cities spread over 94 countries. (Last year’s event saw participants in 919 cities in 84 countries.) In Israel alone, 163 cities and towns took part in the project. The project included pre-Shabbat *challah*-baking activities as well as post-Shabbat *havdalah* and musical ceremonies. This latest project came away with all sorts of interesting stories. To name just a few: some 8,000 women participated in a *challah*-baking event in Buenos Aires; a lone Jew in Karachi, Pakistan decided to keep Shabbat with the rest of the Jewish world; one thousand Israelis from all different backgrounds ate a Shabbat meal together in Tel Aviv at the *Hangar 11*, one of Israel’s largest event venues (with another 29 Shabbat Project locations throughout the city). “It’s incredibly fulfilling and inspiring to see how...Jews from all over the world, from different backgrounds, worked together to turn this uplifting moment into a special moment of Jewish unity,” said Rabbi Warren Goldstein, Chief Rabbi of South Africa and founder of the project, which he spearheaded in 2013.

(www.israelnationalnews.com, 11-14-16)

In Memoriam

★ Ben Zion Shenker, a gifted composer of hundreds of modern Chasidic prayer melodies, died recently. He was 92. Shenker was known for preserving the *Modzitzer* musical

tradition, a tradition based on a Polish-rooted Chasidic sect. (*Modzitz* is a famous Chasidic Rabbinic dynasty that is known for its music, or *Nigunim*, as well as for learning and Torah. The *Modzitzer* dynasty traces back to students of the *Baal-Shem-Tov*, founder of the Chasidic movement in the 18th century. Interestingly, the proliferation of music in Chasidic life had been one of the changes that annoyed the Talmudic rabbis.) Shenker composed hundreds of songs and melodies for prayers, many of which are sung to this very day every Shabbat, such as *Aishes Chayil* (A Woman of Valor) and *Mizmor L'David* (A Song of David), both to words from the Bible.

Shenker introduced famous modern Jewish composer Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach to the *Modzitzer* tradition. Born in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn to immigrant parents from Poland, Shenker annotated the music which the *Modzitzer* rebbes had composed. He graduated from the *New York Conservatory of Music* and produced some of the earliest recordings of authentic Chasidic music. Shenker began preserving the *Modzitzer* musical tradition in 1941.

(www.israelnationalnews.com, 11-20-16)

★ Jacob Neusner, scholar and prolific author and one of the most influential voices in American Jewish intellectual life, died in early October. He was 84. Neusner achieved national and international recognition in a career that covered more than fifty years, writing or editing over 950 books. (Did he sleep?) Neusner was raised in West Hartford, Connecticut with no formal Jewish education. He graduated from Harvard University and spent a year at Oxford before making the life-changing decision to enroll in Rabbinical School at the Jewish Theological Seminary. His area of expertise was Rabbinic Judaism and rabbinical Jewish writings.

Neusner had taught theology at Bard College since 1994. He also served on the faculties of Columbia University, Brandeis University, Dartmouth College, Brown University, the University of South Florida and the University of Frankfurt, among others. He was a true giant of contemporary Jewish thought. (www.forward.com, www.jta.org, 10-9-16) ◇

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

Chester, Nelson & Bobbie
Pincus, Linda
Pollack, Linda
Steamer, Donald & Ellen Eiss

In Honor of

Michael Pincus – College Graduate
Cole Silverman – bar mitzvah

Sisterhood Onegs

Brush, James
Cline, Meredith
Corrigan & Eisenstein Families
Ginsberg, Bernard
Knowles, Richard & Barbara
Solas, Elaine
Steinbock, Steve

In Honor of

Jack's 11th birthday

General Fund

Hartz, Steve & Jan
Schneider, Mollie D.

In Memory of

Patty Silver
Ronald Horn

Holocaust Ed Center

Pincus, Linda

Social Hall Chair Plates

Pincus, Linda

In Memory of

Claire Lempel/Murray Pincus

Meditation Garden

Steve Steinbock

In Memory of

Patty Silver

Scholarship Fund

Pincus, Linda

In Honor of

Melissa & Danielle Pincus
– High School Graduates

Tree of Life

Pollack, Linda

In Memory of

Patty Silver

Yahrzeits

Boruszak, Joan
Krissel, Michael
Pincus, Linda
Riley, Michele

Julius Kohlenbrener, Burton Boruszak
Deborah Cannon
Murray Pincus, Claire Lempel
Abraham Travers

Sisterhood General Fund

Kaufman, Michael & Lorena	
Pincus, Linda	Jennifer Pincus, College Graduate
Pollack, Linda	Hannukah Dinner
Wenyah Chan & Alice Chuang	Patty Silver shiva
Bernard Ginsberg	Patty Silver shiva
Oreofeoluwatomi Adesina	Patty Silver shiva
Nan Wang	Patty Silver shiva
Helen Mintz-Hittner	Patty Silver shiva
Nick Bell	Patty Silver shiva
John O'Brien	Patty Silver shiva
Christophe Ribelayga	Patty Silver shiva
Fredi Bleeker Franks	Patty Silver shiva
Richard and Mindy Agler	Patty Silver shiva

YEDA VE'TORASHA

Yardena Kamely



Student Awareness Day

In the first week of December 2016, a group of teachers and educators attended an educational program organized by the Holocaust Documentation & Education Center at the Broward County Convention Center. More than a thousand students from Broward High Schools met Holocaust survivors and participated in "Student Awareness Day." They came to listen to the survivors' stories and to ask them questions about their experience in World War II, living the Holocaust and its aftermath.

This day, December 7th, was the 75th anniversary of Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. There were several war veterans present in the program who told us about their experiences during the war, all expressing gratitude to live in this country of freedom. One of the speakers, a Liberator, Kenneth Hunt, described how as a young soldier he saw the concentration camps and the survivors barely alive; that had taught him to stand up against hate, prejudice, bigotry and injustice.

At our table the survivor was Dora Shvartsman. We heard another story of immense strength, faith and courage. Dora was born in Bershate, Rumania. She was five when the war came to Rumania. They were living comfortably, a happy family of six children. Her father was the town's rabbi. And then one day everything changed. The people of the town turned against their Jewish neighbors with hate. Dora, her family and all the rest of Bershate's Jews lost everything. The Nazis drove them out of their houses. The whole Jewish population of Bershate was forced on a death march. "We were like animals, driven from one village to another," Dora said. One of her sisters died on the way. Her father was not

allowed to look back to see his child; the soldiers would have killed him. Sometimes, when they stayed in a house, there were ten people in one room. The children would go out into the streets to beg for food. One day Dora's other sister came back to the house and found their mother dead. The dead were taken away in a cart. Dora remembered: "Every day they would come knocking at the doors asking: 'are there any dead here?'"

"We were always hungry," Dora said. "There was no food. I survived because I was small and so thin. My sister went from house to house, begging for food." They survived, the father and three children. "The people in the villages helped us, giving us a little food and hot water."

When the war ended, they returned to their town. After some difficult time trying to survive in a "broken world," Dora's father got a position as Rabbi in Chernovitz (Russia). He was a respected man, dedicated to raising his children and serving his community. And then tragedy struck again. He was arrested because of his activities as a rabbi, prohibited in Stalin's Soviet regime. He was sentenced to ten years without any trial. Dora had to leave school and work to take care of her little brother and sister. Tears still come to her eyes when she remembers. Her father came out of detention after five years, but no longer the same man. He died in 1963. Dora decided to leave Chernovitz and go to America, where her married sister was living.

Dora was suddenly smiling as she continued to tell us her story, the good part, the story of resilience, forming a family with her husband, a Holocaust survivor himself. Her message to the students: never give up hope, have courage and faith, speak up when you see injustice, prejudice, bullying... "Be your brother's keeper." ♦



**KEYS JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER
SHABBAT DINNER**

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 2017

6:00 PM

SERVICES TO FOLLOW AT 7:30

~DAIRY~

Once again, we are inviting our Chai-Lights and Directory advertisers to join us for dinner to thank them for their support. We are also extending a special invitation to our newest Members. And we are encouraging you, our Members, to encourage prospective members to join with us also.



Contact:

Medina - hiitsmedee@gmail.com - 305-852-3872 -
to reserve your spot and coordinate your covered dish.
Please reserve by Sunday, January 8th.

No charge for members in good standing
Non-advertiser guests: \$10

EYE ON THE ARTS **January 2017**

January marks a new year and a new excuse to enjoy the creativity flowing from our unique Keys environment. Here are some suggestions for ways support our local artists, and enrich your mind and soul this month. The focus is on the Upper Keys.

Friday, January 13th thru Sunday, January 15th: Baygrass Bluegrass Festival.

The main event is located at the ICE Amphitheater, MM 87 bayside at Founders Park, but there are related musical activities elsewhere. Tickets are available in advance online (keysice.com) and at the gate. Bring lawn chairs, but not coolers. Monies raised help fund music, dance and art scholarships for local students. See the ICE web site — keysice.com — for further information. ICE, of course, was founded by KJCC's own Dave Feder and Ron Levy, and is currently run by Dave.

Saturday, January 14th, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.: Art Under the Oaks.

Outdoors at San Pedro Church Gardens, Mile Marker 89.5 bayside. The show (ongoing for many years) features fine art & crafts, raffles of the artwork, and specialty food booths. Free parking is available at Coral Shores High School, with shuttle service to the event.

Saturday, January 14th, Blues Brothers dinner and show:

Tavernier Elks Lodge, MM 92 bayside. Cocktails 6 p.m., Dinner, Dancing & Show 7 p.m. \$20 per ticket. Call 305-852-1872 for reservations after 4 p.m.

Monday, January 16th and Tuesday, January 17th, 7:30 p.m. — Canadian Brass.

Florida Keys Concert Association begins its six-concert series, with the famous brass quintet that plays Baroque to Dixieland. The performance on Monday will be at Marathon High School, and Tuesday at Island Community Church, MM 83.3 bayside. Tickets are \$40, or \$110

for the series. Speak to Joyce Peckman, Marcia Kreitman or Gloria Avner, all of whom work hard to make the series happen.

www.floridakeysconcerts.com.

Thursday, January 19th, 6-9 p.m. Morada Way Art Walk.

There is a small (and burgeoning) local arts district, MM. 81.6 Oceanside in Islamorada. On the third Thursday, the street is closed off, and national and local artisans set up booths. There is live music and “culinary art.” It is a lovely evening stroll. (Many of the KJCC artists are represented in the participating galleries.)

Monday, January 23rd and Tuesday, January 24th, 7:30 p.m. — Intersection

Monday at San Pablo Church, MM 53 and Tuesday at Island Community Church, MM 83.3. \$25 tickets for this young and playful piano trio that blends Broadway, Classical, Latin and Jazz. Tickets (and subscriptions) are available at the gate or at www.floridakeysconcerts.com.

Thursday evenings 9 p.m. - midnight, Weekly Jam Night at OO-Tray.

In Islamorada, MM 80.9 oceanside. A jam night with an ever-changing roster of local and visiting musicians, playing in a casual, open-air restaurant. There is no cover, but try the food. ◇

Keys Jewish Community Center

Date: Sunday, January 22, 2017

Program: Adult Education

MOVIE: 7:00 pm - 65 minutes

Followed by discussion led by Rabbi Agler about the profound historical and religious issues raised by both the event and the film.



In 1263, King James I of Aragon organizes a debate between representatives of Judaism and Christianity regarding whether or not Jesus was the Messiah.

Produced in England, this remarkable, tense drama is based on the Barcelona Disputation that took place in the court of King James of Aragon in 1263. During the Middle Ages, there were numerous disputations between Jews and Christians, but the Barcelona Disputation was unique. The other notorious debates were not authentic, but attempts by Christians to force conversion on Jews. The Barcelona Disputation, on the other hand, was the only occasion on which the Jewish spokesman was allowed to speak freely. This led to a genuine, eye-opening confrontation between Judaism and Christianity in which the basic differences between the two religions were brought to light.

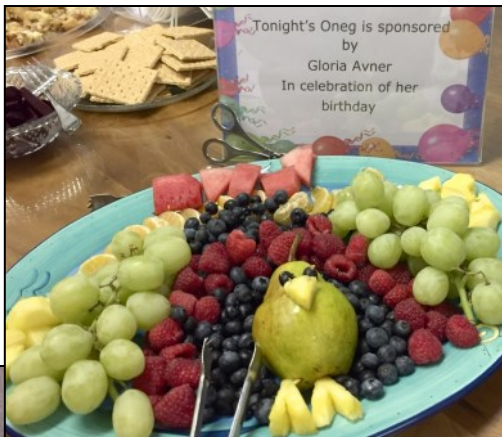
The Jewish side was represented by Rabbi Moses ben Nachman (Nachmanides), the leading Talmudic scholar of his time. The apostate Pablo Christiani aggressively led the Christian side.

Finely acted by an extraordinary, distinguished cast, the story examines the disputation between the Christians and the Jews where Nachmanides used his unparalleled knowledge of sacred literature and the power of his oration to defend his faith. In the end, King James of Aragon rewarded the "Rabbi of Gerona" 300 dinarim for his courage and success in the disputation. It is a fascinating and empowering film for all to enjoy.

No Charge - Guests are welcome.

Photo Gallery

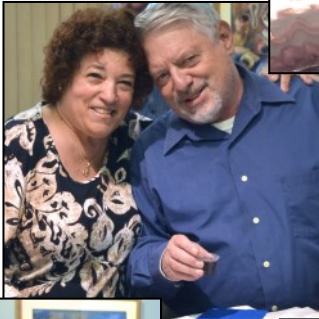
On Friday, November 18th, Gloria Avner sponsored the oneg to celebrate her birthday. She's turned over a new dietary leaf, so instead of a cake she brought fruit. Her artistic impulses always bubble out, however, so note (at right) the little fruit birdie gargoyle she made to guard the treasure. All the other photos on this page were taken at Rabbi Richard Agler's Torah service the following morning.



As often happens with Rabbi Agler's services, we had a number of guests that Saturday morning, November 19th. Old friends of his and Mindy's from Boca came to enjoy, center inset. At bottom, as Steve Hartz reads from the Torah, are Rabbi Agler's friend Rev. Marlin Simon, left, and at right KJCC friends Bert and Carolyn Jimenez.



Just in case, from the previous page, you thought Gloria was the only one to celebrate her birthday, oh, no. The three photos at top were taken at a lunch her many close friends arranged. As you can see, above, they disdained the healthy for the sinfully yummy.



The three photos at bottom were all taken during the service and oneg on Friday, November 25th. Medina led the service, and then sat to enjoy Art Itkin's presentation of that week's D'var Torah. At left, she and Bernie, the two Far Rockaway kids with the same birthday, led the kiddush afterward. Anyone who's ever been there knows that at a certain part of the chant Bernie always feels the passions of his ancestors and channels his inner Yossele Rosenblatt. That moment is captured here.





Most of the photos on this page were taken at the oneq partially sponsored in honor of Jan Hartz's birthday after the December 2nd service. The two Steves at left, Steinbock and Hartz, had led the service.



Some special guests joined us that evening. Bob and Barbara Epstein, on the short list of KJCC's surviving founders, are shown below with another founder, Pauline Roller.



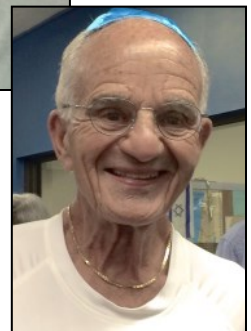
As is so often the case, we had multiple oneq sponsors that evening.



Gary Margolis and Laurie Blum, left, also sponsored in celebration of their anniversary.



The two photos at left were taken during KJCC's Sunday School class on December 4th. Stephanie Fink is shown at far left with Ruby and the boys. They're joined, center, by teacher Randy Klein-Gross and daughter Oceana.



PLEASE JOIN US
FOR AN ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM PRESENTED BY
THE KEYS JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

REFUGEES 101 WITH A RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE

The Tikkun Olam (Social Justice) Committee has prepared this program for the members of the KJCC and the Keys Community based on materials from HIAS (The oldest resettlement organization in the world.)

The event is free and open to all those who come in peace



**JANUARY 29th, 2017
6:30-8PM**

Short Films, Discussion and Q&A
in the KJCC Sanctuary,
will be followed by a light meal
in the Social Hall, featuring food
representing the diversity
of our immigrant experience.
We are located at

Mile Marker 93.1, Oceanside

Topics will include:

Definitions: Refugee, Asylum Seeker, Internally Displaced Person, Migrant
Myths and Facts of Refugee Resettlement
U.S. Screening Process for Refugee entry
Scope of the Refugee Crisis
What you can do about the Crisis

Linda Kaplan, Esq. (an immigration attorney with more than 30 years experience)
will present the legal aspects of the refugee crisis and lead the program

Rabbi Richard Agler will discuss the religious aspects of
"What is our obligation to the Stranger"

For additional information please contact Linda Kaplan
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On December 8th, Beth Kaminstein hosted a pottery show and display for her students at her home studio in Islamorada. It's always fun to wander around a working artist's studio.



Much of KJCC turned out to be supportive, of course. The smiles are because lots of holiday shopping got done that day.



New Sisterhood officers were chosen at their meeting in early December. At far left, new co-presidents Sam Weis and Renee Salant surround new VPs Erica Lieberman-Garrett and Susan Gordon. Just above are, from left, Recording Secretary Geri Smith, Corresponding Secretary Michele Riley, and Treasurer Beth Hayden.



All the photos on this page were taken during the December 9th oneg. One of the sponsors that evening was the combined Eisenstein/Corrigan family, who visit the Keys (and us) each year and always

sponsor an oneg in honor of son (and grandson) Jack's birthday. Jack is shown below left, with sister Siena just below. (Yes, she's named after the city in Italy.)





The top two photos on this page were taken during Rabbi Richard Agler's Torah Learning service on Saturday morning, December 10th. That's Stan Margulies concentrating diligently on the prayers, near left.



The photo at left depicts our Medina Roy at her summer shul in Boone, NC, along with students from the Hillel at nearby Appalachian State University. (They even have a Judaic Studies program there.) In the small world department, the student in the

white kippah next to Medina is Mike Greenstein, who happens to be the grandson of KJCC's own Barney Coltman.



It isn't often we get to run photos taken in Rwanda. At right (with dark hair) is Elizabeth Giddens, a close friend of KJCC's Roy Pollack. Elizabeth visited KJCC on her way to Africa to raise funds for a children's hospital being constructed in Rwanda, before which she stands. One way she and others will be raising those funds? By a sponsored climb of fabled Mt. Kilimanjaro.

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Sitting Shiva: Being Alone Together

The Jewish Way of Bereavement

by Gloria Avner

If Methusaleh had lived another month or two (969 years probably felt sufficient), he might have been a passenger on Noah's ark – one more good man, a *zaydeh*, among the species worth saving. Methuselah was Noah's grandfather, and had he not died when he did, we might never have known that the Jewish custom of supporting the bereaved for seven days after burial predates the Flood. "Sitting *shiva*," as the custom has always been called, is simply and effectively named after the prescribed number of days (seven, or "*sheva*" in Hebrew) for initial mourning. The one who is sitting is the mourner, and traditionally it is done on low stools, symbolically reflecting the closeness to the earth where the departed lies and the depressed emotional state of the person suffering from loss.

We know this bit of history because the Torah tells us, in Genesis 7:10, "*And it came to pass after the seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.*" The rabbis say that seven days "had to pass before the waters of the flood could come," so that Methusaleh's family could sit *shiva* for him. How supremely righteous he must have been for God to delay a world-destroying flood so that his family could mourn him for the entire period.

How does it happen that a religion's customs for caring for the bereaved remain nearly unchanged for millennia? (Only recently have some stopped sitting on low chairs or covering mirrors, or begun sitting for one or three days instead of seven, even while the core of observance is intact.) The answer is both simple and profound. We follow precedent both because it is a commandment (a *mitzvah* – the same Hebrew word as "blessing") and because, since time immemorial, it works. Our ancestors and our ancient laws have brilliant psychological underpin-

nings. (Remember, it is not just a *mitzvah* to comfort the bereaved, but one of the duties whose "worth cannot be measured" – as we read in the Siddur every Shabbat morning service with Rabbi Agler.) Judaism is expertly attuned to the psychology of loss and the role of friends, family and community at life's most critical moment – the death of our closest loved ones.

Many years ago a book by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, "On Death and Dying," made a huge impact in psychology circles. It dealt with the stages one goes through before dying: denial, anger, bargaining, despair, and finally, acceptance. Jews were the earliest pathfinders and way-setters in the most practical, heartfelt and psychologically effective means of dealing with the after-effects of death and the needs of the loved ones left behind. Judaism also recognized stages of grief, and how needs and practices have to be different in each phase of mourning. Burial at the cemetery is stage one. Sitting *shiva*, stage two, starts when the family returns home. A pitcher and water for ritual hand washing is sometimes available at the cemetery or outside the door of the *shiva* house. A *shiva* candle, in a custom that may go as far back as the 13th century, is lit that will burn for seven days, symbolizing the soul of the deceased and the *Shechinah*, the feminine aspect of God, "the light of God's presence."

Father or mother, sister or brother, son or daughter, and spouse – these are the seven relatives for whom a Jew is required to observe *shiva*. According to Jewish law, there is a specific etiquette for paying a *shiva* visit. Visitors enter quietly, take a seat near the mourner, and say nothing until the mourner speaks. According to Rabbi Agler, one need say nothing at all. The only thing required is presence. There are no words sufficient to take away the aloneness. We honor that. The person we care for and have come to comfort needs to experi-

ence their aloneness but will know that we are with them. Surrounded by community, by friends and relatives, the bereaved is alone but, at the same time, "together."

Doors are left unlocked so there is no doorbell noise and people can enter and depart quietly. Traditionally, mirrors were covered to reinforce the idea of inward reflection and the lack of focus on outward appearance. The mourner does not go to work or shave or take luxurious baths or do laundry. This is a time out of time and rules of ordinary life do not apply. And yet, although the phases all have different practices, supports, and limits – the first night, the three days, the seven, then the first month (*Shloshim*), the eleven months of saying *Kaddish*, and finally the unveiling – who could not be struck by how each phase of supportive caring points to the primal Jewish goal, returning the mourner to community and productive life within it?

From the very first meal, steps are taken toward return to wholeness. The meal of condolence or comfort, *seudat havraah*, is provided for the family by friends. Otherwise they might not eat at all. It typically consists of peeled hard-boiled eggs and some variation of the lentil stew that, according to the Talmud, Jacob was preparing for his father, Isaac, who was sitting *shiva* for his own father, Abraham. These foods – especially the round hard-boiled eggs – symbolize not just the promise of new life but life's unbroken cycle.

It is a kindness to bring food to the family, to help with chairs and tables, to later put things away, to make sure that there are enough people present to say *Kaddish* each night, a *minyan* of ten, that there are *kippot and siddurs* and a person to lead the service. A good *shiva* guest would offer to help organize meals being sent, help clean up and pack away food, offer to prepare the house, be a good listener, think about how other ways to help the mourner (little things like offering to take care of a pet), perhaps make a donation in memory of the deceased to a charity they cherished. Respect set hours for visiting, don't stay overly long, and check in with the person after *shiva* is over. Remain

supportive and do not judge anyone's grieving process. Mourning can be painful and lengthy.

At KJCC, we are an eclectic community of Jews, embracing all degrees of practice and observance. We have a *Shiva* Committee, made up of Gloria Avner, Joyce Peckman, and Bernard Ginsberg, who can be contacted and counted on to provide all ritual *Shiva* support required. We have a Sisterhood, headed by copresidents Renee Salant and Sam Weis, which will assist in coordinating food and be ready to help if other needs are expressed by the family. Above all, we get and are committed to the big picture, the primal psychological connection between life and death, celebration and mourning. Though things will never be the same as before the loss, we are and will continue to be that extended family we call *mishpocha*, committed to be together with the person who is terribly alone as they begin to make their way back, in their own sweet time, to life and our community. ♦

When All That's Left is Love

by Rabbi Allen S. Maller

When I die

If you need to weep

Cry for someone

Walking the street beside you.

You can love me most by letting

Hands touch hands, and Souls touch souls.

You can love me most by

Sharing your *Simchas* (goodness) and

Multiplying your *Mitzvot* (acts of kindness).

You can love me most by

Letting me live in your eyes

And not on your mind.

And when you say *Kaddish* for me

Remember what our Torah teaches,

Love doesn't die People do.

So when all that's left of me is love

Give me away.

Maurice Ravel and his “Jewish” Connection

A Fond Look at One of the Favorite Composers of Musicians

by Beth Hayden

Maurice Ravel was born in 1875 in the small village of Ciboure, located in the Basque region of France. His mother was Basque and his father was a Swiss engineer. The family moved to Paris while Ravel was very young and, after an early start in piano and theory lessons, it was at

the prestigious Paris Conservatory that Ravel, at the age of 14, began his formal study of music. His composition studies began with Jules Massenet, with whom Ravel had a less-than-cordial relationship. Ravel was a lackluster student, teachable only on his own terms, and was expelled from the Paris Conservatory after failing to win the *Prix de Rome* in 1895. His failure to win the prize and his expulsion from the Conservatory led to an upheaval and scandal that resulted in drastic changes in the conservative leadership of the Conservatory. The most important of these changes for Ravel was the appointment of Gabriel Fauré in the late 1890s as Professor of Composition.

Fauré, considered one of the most modern and advanced among contemporary French composers, mentored and encouraged Ravel following Ravel's readmission to the Conservatory in 1897. Nevertheless, Ravel, because of his “modern” ways, was a constant thorn for Conservatory conservatives; he was expelled for a second time in 1900.

In the early 1900s Ravel and other forward-looking young artists, including painters, composers, and writers founded “Les Apach-

es.” While the name, of course, refers to the Apaches native to North America, it had the additional connotation in French of “hooligan.” (A label evocative of the name given a contemporary group of modern French painters: Les Fauves, or “The Wild Beasts.”) Members of “Les Apaches” included musicians such as Manuel de Falla, Ricardo Viñes, Erik Satie and Igor Stravinsky, as well as Jean Cocteau, André Gide, Paul Valéry, Vaslav Nijinsky and Sergei Diaghilev. Les Apaches sought to support “modern” artistic expression and encourage the expression of new ideas. These were the heady days when Paris was called home by ever-growing numbers of young, innovative artists in all fields. Sergei Diaghilev and the *Ballet Russe* were in the process of conquering Paris with ballet productions such as Stravinsky's “L'Oiseau de feu” (The Firebird) in 1910, “Petrouchka” in 1911 and “Le Sacre du Printemps” (The Rites of Spring) in 1913. Choreographed by Nijinsky, the

radical music and dancing at the premiere performance of the latter ballet culminated in a riot. Years later Stravinsky remarked that the only one who immediately understood the music was Maurice Ravel.

In 1914 World War I broke out. Ravel, who by now was an established and respected composer, could have remained uninvolved in the conflict, nevertheless, he attempted to enroll in the French Air Force. He was refused as being too old (39) and too short (5'3”). He



Many scholars tagged their music with the term “impressionism,” borrowed from the painters of the day. But both Debussy and Ravel despised the term as applied to their music.

subsequently volunteered to drive a lorry on the Verdun front. “Le Tombeau de Couperin” (The Tomb of Couperin – Couperin was a French Baroque composer) has six movements, each of which commemorates a

friend of Ravel’s lost in the Great War.

Ravel was a younger contemporary of Claude Debussy. While Debussy and Ravel began their relationship on a cordial footing, over the course of time, amidst critics and supporters of both men arguing as to who influenced whom, and who was the better composer, their relationship deteriorated. Ravel only became France’s premiere composer following Debussy’s death in 1918. Many commentators and scholars tagged both composers’ music with the term *impressionist*, borrowed from the painters of the day. Both Debussy and Ravel despised the term as applied to their music. Ravel’s influences included the French composers Emmanuel Chabrier and Gabriel Fauré, and – per Ravel himself – Mozart and Couperin. While Ravel’s musical language reflects a new use of sound and harmony, his harmonies remain functional and he relied on classical structure and form in his compositions. Nevertheless, his use of sound ravishes, from the early *Jeux d’eau* (1901, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_36x1_LKgg) through *Gaspard de la nuit* *Ondine* (1908, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rj8cBmWZhP0>) and *Scarbo* (one of the most technically demanding pieces in the piano literature, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjH4mnK7prw>.) His orchestration was sec-

ond to none, as evidenced by *La Valse* (composed over a 14-year period and premiered in 1920, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbeiXUJfy4>) and the superb orchestration of Moussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition* (which premiered in 1929, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spU8HnYOMW>). In addition to French influences, Ravel took inspiration from Asia, Russia, Spain, folk music, dance and jazz. He knew and was friendly with George Gershwin, although when Gershwin requested to study with Ravel, Ravel refused to teach him. The influence of American jazz is very evident in the “G Major Piano Concerto,” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=am73Didoin8>, composed in 1929-1931 following Ravel’s successful 1928 concert tour of America.)

Ravel’s musical output is not large compared to that of many composers; it is, however, of an exceptionally high quality. He wrote slowly, with deliberation and great attention to detail. His musical works include ballets, operas, chamber music, orchestral works, songs and a significant body of works for the piano.

Bolero, perhaps his best-known composition, was commissioned by the Russian dancer Ida Rubenstein. Ravel, always fascinated by repetitive rhythms and motifs, had often considered composing a monothematic work without development except for changes in harmony and orchestration. On vacation in Saint-Jean-de-Luz, the story is told of Ravel calling a friend over to the piano and asking if this theme did not have an insistent quality as he played with one finger the melody that one day would be world-famous. *Bolero* premiered in 1928; it is essentially a composition with 18 variations



played over one of Ravel's favorite devices, a repeated rhythmic pattern played by the snare drum while each variation presents a different orchestration.

At the premiere of *Bolero* one woman repeatedly shouted "Au feu! Au feu!" (Madman! Madman!). When this was told to Ravel he reportedly said, "That lady – she understood." Years later, he is reported to have said about *Bolero*: "I have written a masterpiece; unfortunately, there is no music in it."

Bolero was one of Ravel's last compositions. Some symptoms of aphasia – deterioration in his speech and motor skills – had begun to set in.

These were greatly exacerbated by a severe blow to the head suffered in an automobile accident in 1932. His condition continued to deteriorate until Ravel, painstaking master of the smallest detail, was increasingly unable to write or speak. He died December 28, 1937 following unsuccessful brain surgery. The following is an excerpted version of Ravel's obituary wired to the New York Times on the day of his death and published the following day:



December 29, 1937

Maurice Ravel, 62, Composer, Is Dead

PARIS, Dec. 28 – Maurice Ravel, one of the best-known French composers, died in a clinic here today at the age of 62. He had been operated upon on Dec. 17 for a brain ailment from which he had been suffering for some years.

Mr. Ravel deliberately fashioned his musical style and followed his self-appointed path. When he was asked about the need for a composer to write with sincerity, he replied: "I

don't particularly care about this 'sincerity.' I try to make art."

He illustrated his point by saying that he had worked on a violin and piano sonata for four years, three of which were spent in taking out the notes that were not necessary.

His own tastes led him to study the music of Satie, Liszt, Chabrier and many of the Russians, principally Rimsky-Korsakoff, all of whom exerted some influence upon his work.

But from the first, as is revealed in his earliest known compositions, his style was a personal one.

Assiduously avoiding public attention, Ravel rarely accepted prominent posts or honors. Twice he was proposed for the Legion of Honor, but he declined. Three years ago he accepted the position of director of the American Conservatory of Music at Fontainebleau, but ill health prevented him from continuing his responsibilities.

A subsequent article next month will discuss Ravel's settings of three Hebrew texts. Despite the fact that Ravel was listed in two Nazi publications as a Jew because he set "Hebrew" texts to music, he was, in fact, not Jewish. The *Chanson Hébraïque* (1910) and *Deux Mélodies Hébraïques* (none of which are actually Hebrew) are not among his major works but should be of interest to us as part of our cultural heritage. And why, then, would Ravel have set Hebrew text to music when he was not Jewish and, growing up in far southwest France just north of the Pyrenees, had minimal exposure to European Jewish culture? For the same and sensible reason that composers have written music from the beginning of time: the pieces were written on commission. ◊



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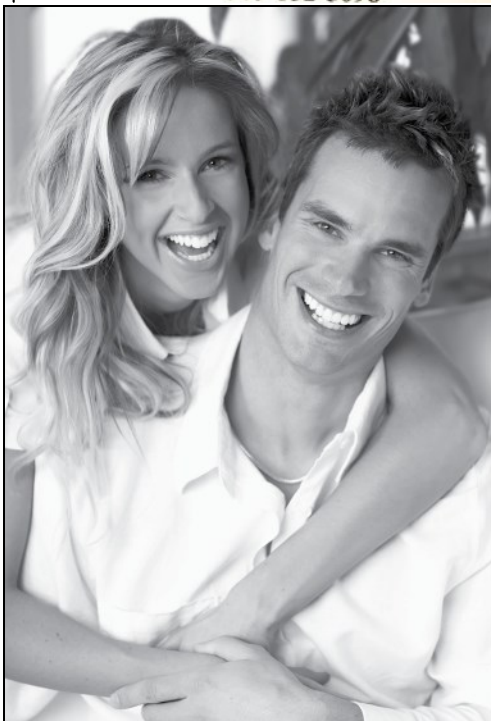
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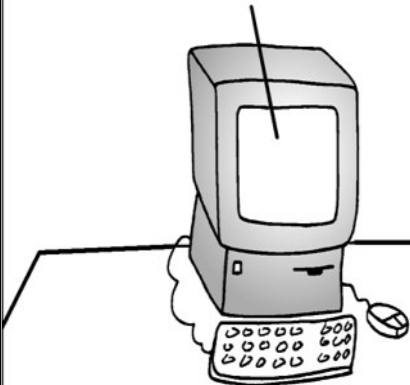
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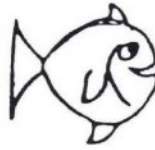
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