

Chai~Lights



December 2017

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Keys Jewish Community Center

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

December 2017

13 Kislev - 13 Tevet

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Beth Hayden <i>Rita & Wes Conklin</i> <i>Steve & Jan Hartz</i>	2
3 Sisterhood Meeting 10 a.m. KJCC Board Meeting 11:30 a.m.	4	5	6	7	8 Bernie Ginsberg <i>Geri & Stuart Smith</i> <i>Susan Gordon</i>	9
10	11	12 Chanukah First Night Candles	13 First Day of Chanukah	14	15 Barney Coltman & Gloria Avner <i>Chanukah Dinner</i> <i>6:00 p.m.</i> <i>Linda Pollack</i>	16 Rabbi Agler Torah- Service 10:00 a.m.
17	18 New Moon	19	20	21 Homeless Memorial Service Noon Settler's Park	22 Medina Roy & Gloria Avner <i>Steve Steinbock</i>	23
24 31	25 Open House Chinese food & games 2:00 p.m.- 5:00 p.m.	26	27	28 Asara B'Tevet	29 Steve Hartz & Susan Gordon <i>Beth Hayden</i>	30

**2017 - 2018
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chailights@keysjewishcenter.com

President's Message Beth Hayden



Shalom uvracha,

Thanks to all for Veterans' Day celebration and to Sisterhood for a wonderful Veterans' Dinner. Thanks to Mindy Agler for her post-Irma counseling.

Now KJCC prepares for Hannukah or Chanukah or HOWEVER you spell it. KJCC will celebrate on December 15th. Please join us. See Susan's Sisterhood column and Chai-Lights for more information.

KJCC is also in the process of planning a trip to Israel. Israel is a wonderful place to visit and a tough place to live. Be good guests. I met a lovely British couple in the middle of Jerusalem trying to find a location. In Israel one learns when to admit one speaks English. If the English speakers are really rude, no help or assistance, but, like this charming British couple, of course, they were mine (my TRIBE) I needed to respond; they asked me, why is everyone so RUDE? I replied, well, it's like family you are not on your best behavior. Not sure if that assuaged them but, hopefully, provided some comfort. Then I remember the Christian ladies on the bus who kept screaming louder and louder at the driver where they needed to go. Would I say anything? I finally stepped in because it was so embarrassing for everyone. They thanked me when we

got off the bus. Then said to me, "It is so weird that YOU PEOPLE write right to left." Okey doke. Thanks that WE PEOPLE helped you. You are welcome.

Israel is a country for young people. Gershon was here just last month to visit. He is an Israeli vegan who just finished his doctorate in law, he watched and looked at the damage we sustained here. As a visitor, he kayaked. We went on a catamaran that carried the kayaks – the captain told me, he's out of the boat – he's picking up stuff. Gershon came back with a kayak loaded with storm trash. How proud are we of these wonderful young people we grow?

Then there was enjoying our holidays which make so much sense in Israel with the weather. Every Sukkot, we would have a little *tif tuf* (sprinkle) of rain to let us know the seasons were changing. And the day I stood across from Jerusalem's "Old City" on Abu Tor and the wind swept through my hair and the heat was staggering and I thought, "Once, David stood here." And the wind and the heat blew over me and I knew I was home. You can never go wrong with a trip to Israel.

-B'shalom, Beth

Nosh

Israel Trip has Dates!

Dates have been set for the upcoming KJCC Israel trip (May 2nd to May 14th, 2018), and we also have the details of the full itinerary and a price tag inclusive of everything, even tips. Those lucky enough to go on this trip will have the same wonderful guides the first KJCC group had four years ago. Mike is a treasure trove of significant stories and font of politico/historical context, a perfect pairing with Rabbi Agler's expertise and informal teaching style. Those who go will celebrate two Shabbats in Israel. If you want testimonials on the value of this experience, ask those who went on the previous trip: Georgia Landau, Dave Mont, Natalie Dorf, Barney Colman, Susan Ellner, Joyce Peckman, Medina Roy, and Gloria Avner will be happy to regale you with stories of their adventures and their most moving moments. You might also want to "read all about it" again beginning with the September 2013 issue of Chai-Lights. For details on this trip, contact Scott Pearl, smpearl@gmail.com.

New Art Discussion Group in January

How interesting would it be for you to be part of a discussion group that explores artists' lives and their work in depth? The idea behind this group, the brainchild of Beth Kaminstein, is to bring together interested KJCC members, Rabbi Agler, and an artist/facilitator to discuss specific artists who have both made an impact in the art world and also had a significant Jewish connection.

The first artist we'll explore is Chaim Soutine, a Russian Jew born in 1893 who died in 1943. He lived in Paris and was good friends with Modigliani (another Jew, but from Italy). Soutine's thick impasto technique (using heavy layers of paint so that brush and palette knife strokes are visible) distorted the subject for emotional effect in order to evoke moods and ideas. His very subjective paintings were inspired by Rembrandt and Chardin and gave way to the mid-twentieth cen-

tury abstract expressionists. We will explore the influences of his religious background on his artistic life as well as his work in the context of the artistic world. Plans are afoot for a series of three get-togethers, each time to explore a different artist.

The group will have its first meeting on Wednesday, January 24th, 2018, at 7:00 p.m. at the KJCC. If you are interested, please contact Beth Kaminstein at 305-393-4013 or bethkaminstein@gmail.com. Links to reference materials will be provided, so all can read up on the artist in advance.

Rabbi Agler's Next Torah Service

Mark December 16th on your calendar. Come to KJCC that Saturday morning by 10:00 a.m. because you won't want to miss any of Rabbi Agler's last Torah learning service of 2017. It comes right in the middle of Chanukah and we are sure to be exposed to new insights on the holiday as we gather to explore, discuss, chant and study Torah. Our monthly Shabbat morning experiences with Rabbi Agler are always engaging and stimulating. But in mid-December, when we will also be welcoming back more of our snowbirds, the discussion should be especially lively and rich. (Yes, pun intended.)

Lotsa Latkas December 15th

Don't forget to bring your personal and family *chanukiahs* (and candles) to our Chanukah Celebration Dinner on December 15th at 6:00 p.m. It will be the fourth night of Chanukah, and when we dim the room lights and sing our blessings, the room will glow with that special candlelit brilliance we look forward to seeing each year. We will sing our traditional songs with some special musical accompaniment and eat our traditional foods, a dairy dinner replete with latkas of every description with all the trimmings, balanced out with creative, healthy vegetable dishes. Please call or write Mary Anne Pearl with your RSVP and to co-ordinate your dish to bring: map0728@gmail.com or by telephone at: 1-954-655-4561. Many thanks to Linda Pollack for sponsoring this dinner, as she has done for more years than we can count. There will be no charge for KJCC members. (See the ad on page 8.)

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
4th.....	Jan Hartz
4th.....	Jodi Yeager
4th.....	Judith Klein
5th.....	Geri Smith
5th.....	Joseph Beth
5th.....	Stuart Sax
6th.....	Haley Borisoff
6th.....	Leslie Boruszak
7th.....	Franklin Rose
7th.....	Rhett William Casey
7th.....	Vada Charity (Bella) Greenbaum
9th.....	George Swartz
10th.....	Susan Greenbaum
11th.....	Renee Salant
11th.....	Sara Rose Friedman
12th.....	Laurie Blum
13th.....	Robin Margulies Juenger
13th.....	Sarah Boruszak
16th.....	Diana Lal
16th.....	Samuel Klimpl
17th.....	Ariel Fishman
17th.....	Bruce Forman
17th.....	Jeffrey Schocket
17th.....	Lilian Forbes
18th.....	Emelyn Anne Juenger
19th.....	Jonah Gross
19th.....	Lorena Kaufman
19th.....	Terry Willner-Tainow
20th.....	Alan Schulberg
20th.....	Jennifer VanArtsdalen
21st.....	Micah Silverman
21st.....	Roberta McNew
22nd.....	Laura Molly Friedman
22nd.....	Stuart Smith
23rd.....	Sydney Pomenti
26th.....	Steven Smith
27th.....	Claire Tallent
27th.....	Steve Kasinof

28th.....	Elaine Schulberg
28th.....	Emily Sherman
28th.....	Kayla Silverman
28th.....	Michael Klimpl
29th.....	Joan Stark
31st.....	Bob Pratt
31st.....	Michele Riley

Support Jane and Harry's Garden

You may have noticed increased activity lately in the garden begun two years ago as Harry Friedman's Eagle Scout Project. The project has evolved into a thriving KJCC vegetable and herb garden. Right now, though, it needs some help to keep on growing, providing healthy, organic food both for the Food Bank at Burton Memorial Church (our next-door neighbor) and for our own delicious dishes at post-service onegs and Sisterhood dinners. Contributions of soil and vegetable seedlings would be most welcome, as would be monetary donations made to help repair the damages to the garden wrought by Irma. (Most of the picket fence border will need to be replaced.) Plants and soil can be deposited at the garden site, but please make sure to write us (geetavner@gmail.com) so we can express our gratitude for your help.

Welcome To Three New Members

Already their faces are becoming familiar. This month we officially welcome Chana David, who comes to us from Israel and now lives in Key Largo; Jan Price (who used to come with her husband Chanoach, of blessed memory) along with her handsome service dog, Luigi; and Beth Horowitz, who

December Anniversaries

	Years
5th	Gunther & Shirley Karger.....63
7th	Gary Margolis & Laurie Blum.....7
8th	Lawrence & Pearl Jacobs.....64
10th	Linda & Bruce Pincus.....28
11th	Arthur Lee & Johanna Willner....52
11th	Jamie & Laura Goodman.....12
14th	David & Pat VanArtsdalen.....36
18th	Larry & Deborah Weiss.....34
27th	Dave Mont & Georgia Landau.....6

lives in Homestead. We look forward to celebrating many happy occasions with all three (and often four) of you.

Once More with Chinese Food

In the great time-honored tradition of “What do Jews do for Food on Christmas Day,” KJCC will host its Second Annual Holiday Open House/Chinese Buffet and Board Game Extravaganza on December 25th, the day on which, in days of yore, most restaurants were closed. Drop a \$10 bill (or more) in the donation jar and we will order in. Enjoy a variety of delectable selections, including vegetable dishes and all the things we loved that disappeared quickly last year. There will be adult beverages, a poker table or two, Scrabble, Boggle, and a host of games running the gamut from intellectually challenging to downright silly. We’ll be here from 2:00 until 5:00 or until people want to go home. Last year, the turnout was terrific. Of course we’ll be thinking of Carol Steinbock and the many years she and Steve opened their home to all on Christmas Day. And can easily imagine her enjoying a hearty cackle at the morphing of the hospitality she put in motion. RSVP please to Donna Bolton, at lton9993@bellsouth.net or 305-393-1351. The ad with details is on page 32.

Patty Silver’s Unveiling

On Sunday, December 10th at 10:00 a.m., Patty Silver, of blessed memory, will have her unveiling ceremony performed at Mt. Nebo Cemetery in Miami. Jeffrey Schocket has extended an open invitation to any of us who knew Patty and would like to attend. Contact Jeffrey for details, directions, and possible carpooling arrangements at 305-407-7260.

This Year’s Memorial for the Homeless

In what has become an annual event for our congregation and community, we will gather on December 21st at noon in Settler’s Park, Tavernier to memorialize the homeless people who have died in the Keys between this winter solstice and the last. It is a solemn and moving

event with participants from many different faiths. Everyone will have opportunities to light a candle in a person’s memory as we read names and ages. A prayer is said for each. We will be blessing men, women and children. There will be babies without names, veterans, and, if previous years’ experience holds true, 80-year-old women who lived and died on the streets. We give them what we can: honor and remembrance.

This year, courtesy of Hurricane Irma, many more people, folks who used to have homes, have joined the ranks of the homeless we’ll be praying for on this Winter Solstice, the shortest, darkest day of the year. In a tradition started years ago by Carol Steinbock, we will say Kaddish for those who have no one to remember them. Rev. Pam Feeser will preside.

A Musical Shabbat Treat on December 8th

Beth Hayden has had the FLKCA piano tuned. On Friday, December 8th, before Bernie’s service, she will play one “moment” from Rachmaninov’s “Six Moments Musicaux,” composed in 1896. From Beth: “The piece I am playing is from Moments Musicaux, Opus 16, No. 3 in B minor. There are 6 pieces in the opus. The more I play this piece the more impressed I am with how well it is written and constructed.”

Oneg Sponsors for December 2017

December 1st - Rita & Wes Conklin, in honor of Wes’ recovery. Steve & Jan Hartz, in honor of Jan’s birthday.

December 8th - Geri & Stuart Smith, in honor of their birthdays. Susan Gordon, in celebration of Rhett’s 2nd birthday.

December 15th - Patricia Isenberg, in honor of Lilian Forbes’ birthday. Linda Pollack, 4th night of Chanukah dinner.

December 22nd - Steve Steinbock, remembering Carol’s Christmas.

December 29th - Beth Hayden, in celebration of Zap’s 14th birthday.

BOOK PLATE

**In Memory of
Ann Plutzer**

by Linda Pollack

BOOK PLATE

***In Grateful Recognition of
Donna Bolton***

for her months of hard work
preparing for a Rosh Hashanah dinner
cancelled by Hurricane Irma

by Gloria Avner & Sam Vinicur

Ongoing Projects and Mitzvah Programs of KJCC

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

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 Beth Hayden, 305-773-0067.

CHAI-LIGHTS or DIRECTORY ADVERTISEMENT: Your business ad will appear in every issue of Chai-Lights. Call Steve Steinbock, 305-394-0143, for annual rates.

CHAI-LIGHTS MITZVAH: Place a greeting or notice in Chai-Lights. Call Gloria Avner, 305-619-0216, to make your donation.

GIFT SHOP: We have lovely items for all holidays and for every day enjoyment. If you have a special request, call Sydney! Faye-Davis, 305-613-3010, or Susan Gordon, 305-766-3585.

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

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

ONEG SHABBAT/DINNER SPONSOR: To schedule your special date with Sisterhood, call Joyce Peckman, 732-447-5225, or email her at joycepeckman@gmail.com.

PICTURE POSTCARDS: We have beautiful picture postcards in the KJCC Gift Shop bearing the Millard Wells representation of the KJCC, 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 Sydney! Faye-Davis, 305-613-3010, or Susan Gordon, 305-766-3585.

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.

TIKKUN OLAM PROJECT: Bring your empty prescription and vitamin bottles to the KJCC and place in the collection box. We are assisting Burton Memorial with a project to provide empty medicine bottles to Haiti where they are needed.

TREE OF LIFE LEAVES and ROCKS, SANCTUARY SEAT PLATES, SOCIAL HALL CHAIR PLATES,

YAHREZIT MEMORIAL PLAQUES: Call Sydney! Faye-Davis, 305-613-3010 to arrange your donation.

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. Rabbi & Cantor Fund, Holocaust Education Fund, Meditation Garden, Scholarship Fund, Sara Cohen Memorial Tzedukah Fund, Sunshine Fund or General Fund.

KJCC Chanukah

5778

Chanukah Shabbat Dinner

Friday
December 15, 2017
6:00 PM

Dairy Dinner

Services at 7:30 pm

Contact Mary Anne Pearl
map0728@gmail.com, 954-655-4561,

to reserve your spot and coordinate your dish.

Bring Your Own Menorah to Light!

Sponsored Dinner

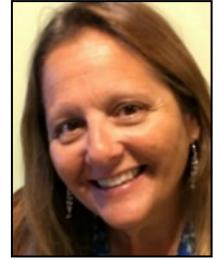
No charge for Members

\$18 for Non-Members



Sisterhood

Susan Gordon



Sisterhood is shifting into full swing now that we have entered what we refer to as “the season.” I am so happy to see more of our members returning to their winter homes here in the sunny South!

We began the month of November with our monthly Sisterhood meeting on Sunday, November 5th. We finalized plans for two major events that were coming up within the next few days: the now Annual Challah Bake, and a special Veterans Day celebration and Shabbat dinner. A dozen women, plus our good friend, Count, enjoyed one another’s company during the baking event, creating magnificent braided challahs while sipping wine and nibbling on delicious snacks! It was an evening enjoyed by all who participated. We took our creations home to finish in our ovens and, on the following night, we were happy to share our freshly baked challah with our fellow KJCC members who attended the Veterans’ Day Celebration and Shabbat Dinner. We honored ten KJCC members, veterans who served in each of the many branches of the U.S. Military. The evening had a musical beginning, with a couple of patriotic melodies played on the harmonica by member and Air Force veteran Gunther Karger. All thirty-five attendees had a great time at the meat dinner, complete with mouth-watering, slow-cooked brisket! Many thanks to everyone who helped to plan, set up, and cook for our Veterans Day dinner.

We have a big Chanukah celebration coming up in just a couple of weeks from now! On Friday, December 15th at 6:00 p.m., please plan to attend the KJCC Chanukah Shabbat dinner, which is being sponsored by Linda Pollack. There will be no charge – just a big *mishpocha* gathering for a delicious feast, celebrating a great miracle and the act of rededication. There will be Chanukah *gelt* for the children and even the grownups will be encouraged to play *dreidel*. We ask that you RSVP to Mary Anne Pearl by e-mail at: map0728@gmail.com or by telephone at:

1-954-655-4561. That will be the 4th night of Chanukah, so please remember to bring a menorah (a *chanukiah*) to join together with other members in our group as we sing blessings and perform candle lighting. This will be a dairy potluck dinner, so when you contact Mary Anne, please ask what is needed so you can co-ordinate a dish with her. We look forward to a delicious and festive evening. Setting up and decorating the Cathy Kaplan Social Hall for one of our monthly Shabbat dinners (but especially for a holiday) is an especially rewarding activity. It’s creative, it’s fun, and with a small group, it is one of the best ways we have to get to know each other better and deepen our friendships. If you would like to be part of this Chanukah set-up, please call me (305-766-3585) or volunteer at the next Sisterhood meeting.

Coming up next month, on Friday, January 12th at 6 p.m., KJCC Sisterhood will prepare a dairy Shabbat Dinner to mark the beginning of an all-day Saturday *Shabbaton* learning experience with Kabbalah expert and gifted teacher, Rabbi Ed Rosenthal. The dinner is being sponsored by Joyce Peckman. Erica Lieberman-Garrett will co-ordinate the menu and will accept all RSVPs. There will be no charge to members.

The response for oneg sponsorships has been outstanding, and is greatly appreciated. We do have a couple of open dates during the month of January. We are also happy to have multiple sponsors on any given date. Please contact Joyce Peckman, Oneg chairperson, at joycepeckman@gmail.com.

To all female members of the KJCC; If you are reading this message before Sunday, December 3rd, please plan to join us for the Sisterhood meeting at 10:00 a.m. Being an active member of Sisterhood is both rewarding and fun! ♦

Photo Gallery

The entire Shabathai/Ruzycki family was on hand on October 20th, as Joe not only led services but he and Kathy also sponsored the oneg in honor of Joe's birthday. Brad and Julie are at top; at top right Cooper helps Joe with the HaMotzi. Kathy and Minnie are just below.



Joe cuts the cake, at bottom left, and at bottom right the cake that Joe cut. Oh, wait, there were two cakes. And balloons. And probably the largest freshly made fruit salad our oneg had yet seen. It was a festive and special evening at KJCC.



In the two photos at top, our own Lee Schur is shown being presented with a lifetime award from the Sisterhood of her “other” shul, Temple Beth Israel in Chicago. The presenters are the current co-presidents of Sisterhood.



In the photo below, Beth Hayden is shown leading Kiddush after leading services on October 27th. In the center photo, Israel and Nissan Mayk (with Bernie) were briefly in town



to tend to mom Bea Graham's home in Silver Shores, damaged by Hurricane Irma.



In the photo above, Art Itkin is shown during his recovery at the Plantation Key rehab center, being visited by one of Beth Hayden's Chinese Cresteds. At bottom right, KJCC president Beth Hayden and Linda Kaplan, chair of KJCC's Tikkun Olam committee, present a donation check to the Key Largo Montessori Academy director, Bridget Dangel, to purchase new sunshades for the school's playground, replacing those damaged during Hurricane Irma.

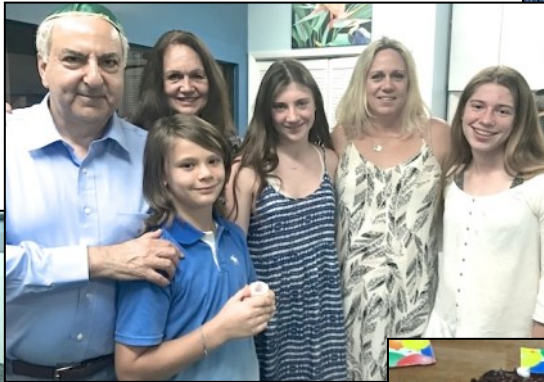


On Sunday October 29th several KJCC members were in attendance as Father Tom Graf performed his last service as priest at St. James the Fisherman Episcopal Church in Islamorada. We honor Father Tom, a very good friend of KJCC and major force for interfaith peace in the Keys, and wish him god-speed. (Tom grew up in the Bronx, next door to a shul where his father was the shamus.)



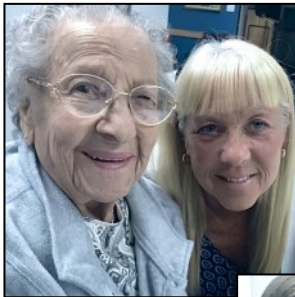
The photos on this page are from the November 3rd service and oneg. Joyce had led services, and the Shabbathai clan was back, this time sponsoring the oneg in honor of Kathy's birthday.

(The photo at bottom doesn't show it, but grandson Cooper helped with the candles. In case you're wondering, candle extinguishing assistants are always welcome at KJCC onegs without points being deducted.)





On this page, more photos from the November 3 oneg, also sponsored by Mary Lee Singer in memory of her brother. Mary Lee and Joyce are shown at top during the HaMotzi. Unlike some shuls, where the onegs often consist of stale Danish and tepid coffee, KJCC onegs always feature big smiles and coffee by bagelmon Marc Bloom or his able proteges.



Congratulations to Susan Gordon's daughter, Rose Marie on her beautiful rustic wedding held in Tennessee. Their son Rhett, below, just about to turn two, was the ring bearer.



The photos at left and far left are from the Bat Mitzvah of Beth Lindenbaum, the granddaughter of Jules and Nettie Seder. Nettie, one of the great knitters of modern times, hand-made the tallit Beth is wearing. Nettie proudly tells us that Beth led the entire service herself and also chanted (flawlessly, of course) from the Torah.



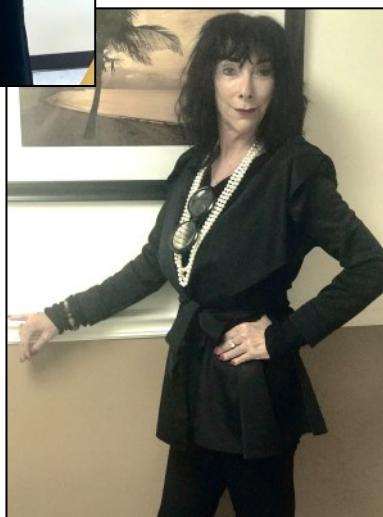
Gunther and Shirley Karger, participating, as they do every year, in the Homestead Veteran's Day Parade. In case you have any questions, that Gunther driving and Shirley smiling at the crowd from the back seat. (They've been a team for over 60 years, in the beginning Gunther being a

Holocaust survivor and Shirley a teen-aged U.S.O. hostess from the Garden District of New Orleans.)



Four KJCC Dulcimer players — Susan Gordon, Gloria

Avner, Dave Mont and Georgia Landau — regaled toddlers at Key Largo Library recently with stirring renditions of "Mary Had a Little Lamb," "The Alphabet Song" and "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." (You know, the classics.) At right is a rare photo of Sidney! Faye-Davis, captured by the ever-vigilant Gloria Avner.



World Jewish Report

Medina Roy



Touchdown in Israel”

This past July, Robert Kraft, Jewish philanthropist and owner of the New England Patriots, led a group of 18 National Football League (NFL) Hall-of-Famers and their wives on a weeklong spiritual trip to Israel. A one-hour film, “Touchdown in Israel,” followed the football stars (Joe Montana, Jim Brown, Roger Staubach, Joe Greene, Eric Dickerson, Marshall Faulk and a dozen others) as they traversed the country. The film screened on the NFL Network in late October as part of the NFL Films Presents series. Their first stop was to coach a mix of Jewish and Arab high school students playing football in Tel Aviv. The group visited the typical tourist sites – Tel Aviv, Masada and the Dead Sea plus both Jewish and Christian holy sites. Several players chose to be baptized in the Jordan River. (Former Patriot Andre Tippett was not among them. He had converted to Judaism in 1993.) The final evening saw each player reflect on the week-long trip. The trip concluded with the dedication of the Kraft Family Sports Complex, a \$6 million, 25-acre project in Jerusalem that includes the first full-size (American) football field in Israel. Kraft and his late wife honeymooned in Israel in 1963. They had deep ties to the State of Israel, often bringing people from different backgrounds to share the experience. (www.nfl.com, 10-18-17)

Museum Has Architect, Needs Funding

There’s a plan to build a museum and visitor center honoring Albert Einstein at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The university, along with the Peres Center for Peace, has been trying to get the construction of the Einstein Museum going for a long time. The project began to fade away around the time that Peres’ term as Israel’s president ended because of a lack of funds. But the Hebrew University’s desire to build a museum for Einstein and a place to house his archives per-

sisted. American Jewish architects Frank Gehry (born Frank Owen Goldberg), designer of New World Center in Miami Beach and Daniel Libeskind, master planner for the redesign of the World Trade Center, were considered. They even met with President Shimon Peres, the guiding spirit behind the initiative. In the end, the university held a competition for the design of the museum and the Jerusalem architectural firm of Arad Simon’s design was selected. The museum will be situated in Jerusalem’s Museum Row. The cost of the building is expected to be \$5 million. The search for donors will begin soon. (www.haaretz.com, 10-15-17)

\$1.6M for Einstein’s Theory of Happiness

A scribbled note written by Albert Einstein in 1922 on stationery from the Imperial Hotel Tokyo contained the physicist’s theory on happiness. The note reads (in German) “A quiet and modest life brings more joy than a pursuit of success bound with constant unrest.” It sold for a record \$1.6 million dollars at an auction in late October in Jerusalem. It was the highest amount ever paid for a document at an auction in Israel. A second note written by Einstein at the same time – it reads “where there’s a will there’s a way” – sold for \$240,000. The buyer was a European who wished to remain anonymous. Original estimates for the value of the document were between \$5,000 and \$8,000. The note was given to a Japanese courier in lieu of a tip. (It’s not known whether the courier refused to accept a monetary tip – in line with local practice – or if Einstein had no change available to give the courier. Not wanting the messenger to leave empty-handed, he wrote two notes by hand in German.) Einstein was on a lecture tour in Japan when he wrote the note. He had just been informed that he was to receive the Nobel Prize for Physics. Reportedly,

Einstein told the courier, "Maybe if you're lucky those notes will become much more valuable than just a regular tip." (www.forward.com and www.theguardian.com, 10-25-17)

Coming Soon to a Trader Joe's Near You

Trader Joe's announced on its website that it will soon be selling Bamba, the popular Israel peanut butter puffed corn snack – it's 50 percent peanuts – made from just four simple ingredients – corn grits, peanut paste, palm oil and salt. Trader Joe's confirmed that its Bamba will be made in Israel. According to Osem, the Israeli manufacturer of Bamba, 90 percent of Israelis buy the snack on a regular basis. (It's been said that Israeli babies' first spoken word is Bamba, before Ima or Aba.) The most interesting part of this: Scientists are coming to believe that Israeli babies being given the nutty treat so early might explain why so few Israelis have peanut allergies. A report had come out in 2008 with that tentative conclusion. Now, almost ten years later, the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases has reversed a recommendation to parents of allergy-prone children that they have their children avoid peanut products. The recommendation now is that (not a subtle change) parents feed peanut powders and butters to infants at age six months or even earlier if the child shows signs of allergies. Another factor for scientists? Allergy rates of Israeli Jewish children were compared with those of Jewish children in Britain. The British children were ten times as likely to have peanut allergies as their counterparts in Israel. (www.forward.com, 10-16-17 and www.nytimes.com, 1-5-17)

A Moment of Dignified Defiance

Israel's Tal Flicker, 25, won the gold medal in judo at the *Grand Slam* competition in Abu Dhabi at the end of October. The martial artist, who entered the event ranked number two in the world, achieved the *Ippon*, Judo's version of a knockout and the highest score a fighter can achieve, with 25 seconds remaining. But standing on the winner's podium, no Israeli flag was flown for Flicker because the

United Arab Emirates (UAE), the host country of the event, did not allow for any representation of the Israeli team's nationality. (They claimed that this was done for the security and safety of the athletes. UAE and Israel do not have diplomatic relations.) Israel sent twelve athletes in all to the event; that policy meant no Israeli flag or symbol on their judo uniforms or ISR (Israel) by their names on the scoreboard.

The organizers also refused to play *Hatikvah*, the Israeli national anthem, substituting instead both the flag and the anthem of the International Judo Federation (IJF). Ascending the podium, Flicker, in defiance, quietly sang *Hatikvah* himself. The moment went viral over social media. "Israel is my country, and I'm proud to be Israeli," Flicker said after the event. "The anthem that they played of the world federation was just background noise. I was singing *Hatikvah* from my heart...I'm proud of my country. The whole world knows that we're from Israel, knows who we represent." World Jewish Congress CEO and Executive Vice President Robert Singer had sent a letter to the IJF president prior to the competition requesting that he intervene, urging a reversal of the Abu Dhabi Organizing Committee to "protect the rights of the Israeli national judo team and keep the spirit of sport free of political discrimination. The Israeli team, as all other teams, should have every right to display its national flag and emblem, and sound its national anthem if victorious...the Israeli team has faced similar instances of official discrimination in a string of sporting events on the international playing field, including at this very same competition two years ago. These prohibitions subvert the very nature of camaraderie that sports federations such as yours strive to uphold...world sport federations have an obligation to safeguard the fair and equal treatment of all national teams..." (www.tabletmag.com, 10-26-17)

A Hero is Finally Honored

A Hungarian who helped Jews flee the Holocaust was honored recently with the installation of a memorial plaque in Budapest, the capital city. Emil Wiesmeyer's printing company produced fake passports for legendary Swedish

diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, helping save thousands of Hungarian Jews from the Nazi death camps. Wiesmeyer's company initially made some 4,000 of the basic passports. He followed that with an additional 20,000 more on his own to help Jews make it out of Hungary. In the 1950s, during Hungary's communist era, Wiesmeyer was persecuted and jailed. He died in 1967. Some 550,000 Hungarian Jews were killed in the Holocaust. (www.timesofisrael.com, 10-19-17)

A New, Precious Trove of YidLit

YIVO, the New York-based *Institute for Jewish Research*, recently announced the discovery of 170,000 Jewish documents that were thought to have been destroyed by the Nazis. Among the documents are unpublished manuscripts by famous Yiddish writers, letters written by Sholem Aleichem, a postcard by Marc Chagall and poems and manuscripts by Chaim Grade (1910-1982), poet and novelist, one of the important Yiddish writers of the post-Holocaust period. Founded in Vilnius – now Lithuania – YIVO hid the documents in 1940 after the German invasion. A Lithuanian librarian was the hero here, keeping and preserving the documents in the basement of the church where he worked. (YIVO moved to New York during World War II.) Most of the documents are still in Lithuania, but ten items are on display at YIVO, which is working with the Lithuanian government to archive and digitize the collection. Dani Dayan, Israel's consul general in New York said, "The most valuable treasures of the Jewish people are the traditions, experiences and culture that have shaped our history. So to us, the documents uncovered...are nothing less than priceless family heirlooms, concealed like precious gems from Nazi storm troopers and Soviet grave robbers." (www.forward.com, 10-24-17)

Add Four More to the List

Four Jewish men were awarded Nobel prizes for 2017. They are:

★ Michael Rosbash, 74, of Brandeis University, one of three American scientists to win the prize for medicine for the discovery

of genetic mechanisms that govern the circadian rhythm, the day-long cycle that governs metabolism, hormones, brain activity and many other processes in animals. Rosbash's parents fled Nazi Germany in 1938. His father was a cantor at Temple Chabei Shalom Reform Synagogue in Brookline, Massachusetts.

★ Rainer Weiss, 85, professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Barry Barish, 81, of the California Institute of Technology, for the discovery of gravitational waves (ripples in space and time that help scientists explore objects in space, predicted by Albert Einstein a century ago). Weiss was born in Berlin to a non-Jewish mother and a Jewish father. The family fled Berlin for Prague when Weiss was a baby because his father was Jewish and a member of the Communist party. After the Munich agreement in 1938, the family left Prague for the United States. American-born Barish grew up in Los Angeles, the grandson of Polish immigrants to the United States.

★ Richard Thaler, 72, professor at the University of Chicago, for Economic Science for his pioneering work in the field of behavioral economics. His research helps predict human economic decisions and helped lead to changes in public policy. (www.jta.org, 10-3-17 and www.forward.com, 10-2-17)

In Memoriam

★ Zuzana Ruzickova, Czech harpsichordist who survived three concentration camps and was liberated in April of 1945, died in mid-September. She was 90. Ruzickova was the world's first soloist to record Johann Sebastian Bach's complete works for keyboard instruments. She recorded them on 35 records between 1965 and 1975. In 2003, Ruzickova – a Czech Philharmonic soloist from 1979 to 1990 – received the *Order of Arts and Letters*, one of France's top cultural honors. Born in Plzen, Czechoslovakia, Ruzickova was deported to Theresienstadt and then to Auschwitz-Birkenau and Bergen-Belsen during World War II. After the war, she studied harpsichord in Prague and Paris. In 1956, she won a competition in Munich which started her career. (www.israelnationalnews.com, 9-17-17 and www.washingtonpost.com, 9-28-17) ◇

Contributions to KJCC

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

Book Plate

Gloria Avner & Sam Vinicur

In honor of

Donna Bolton

Ginsberg, Bernard

Smith, Steven & Barbara

Silk, Robert

In Memory of

Ann Plutzer

Linda Pollack

Scholarship Fund

Kaminstein, Beth

Pincus, Linda

Chai-Lights

Pincus, Linda

Rose, Skip

Smith, Steve & Barbara

Tikkun Olam

Blum, Laurie

Bolton, Donna

Boruszak, Joan

Coltman, Barnet

Peckman, Joyce

Pincus, Linda

General Fund

Brush, James

Cohen, James

Ginsberg, Bernard

Rose, Skip

Streamer, Donald & Eiss, Elynn

Vollmer, Robert S.

Weihl, Alfred & Sue Ann

Williams, Jim & Rita

Tzeddakah

Pincus, Linda

Meditation Garden

Shaw, Jonathan & Jill

Yahrzeit

Boruszak, Joan

Grant, Andrew & Randi

Isenberg, Patricia

Isenberg, Patricia

Kaplan, Marshall & Myra

Riley, Michele

Tallent, Lillian

Temkin, Robert

Wolfe, Larry & Dorothy

In Memory of

Harold Goldstein

Leonard Weiser

Henry Isenberg

Helene Tulskey

Len Roberts

Abraham Travers

Samuel Tallent

Kenny Temkin

Diana Wolfe

Oneg Sponsorship

Laurie Blum & Gary Margolis

Mitch Harvey & Linda Perloff

Joseph & Katherine Shabathai

Wes & Rita Conklin

Rosemary Barefoot

Gloria Avner

In Honor of

Mitch's birthday

Joe's birthday

Wes' recovery

Beth Hayden

Gloria's birthday

Oneg Sponsorship

Stephen Steinbock

Jeffrey Schocket

In Memory of

Carol Steinbock

Patty Silver's birthday

Yizkor Book

Calev, Barbara

Davidson, Foster

Horn, Susan

Kaminstein, Beth

Pincus, Linda

Rose, Skip

Smith, Steven & Barbara

Rabbi & Cantor Fund

Davidson, Foster

Eye on the Arts

Joyce Peckman



The arts can help heal the soul. We have local groups that regularly play at restaurants, but this column looks for other events, special goings-on that might entertain or enrich. Many of these events are not publicized before our deadline, so if you know of something in the works, please let me know for this column. You can contact me at Joycepeckman@gmail.com or 732-447-5225

Start strumming – If you have ever wanted to take on an easy instrument, consider the dulcimer – a folk string instrument that has been popular for centuries. There is a wonderful teacher in the Upper Keys who enjoys taking on beginners. Classes will be once or twice a month at the Key Largo library on Wednesday evenings. Contact Georgia Landau at 305-393-9885 for further information.

Art Guild of the Purple Isles is open to beginners as well as experienced artists. Come to the Key Largo library at 1 p.m. on Tuesdays. Different teachers will share their skills, and you can interact with the artists, who are happy to facilitate. Check Art Guild of the Purple Isles' Facebook page or text Gloria at 305-619-0216 to find out what materials you will need to bring. You don't need to be a member to go, but for membership information or to download an application, you can visit www.artguildofthepurpleisles.com.

Saturday, December 9, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.: Keys Community Concert Band. "Not So Frozen" Holiday music with sing-alongs, student ballerina troupe, and a storyteller. Bring a blanket or lawn chair to the Murray Nelson Government Center, MM 102.5 bayside. We will be listening in the lovely outdoor park area behind the building with a panoramic view of the Bay. This will be the opening concert of the once-a-month winter series (and the only one in Key Largo; the others will all

be at Founders' Park, Islamorada). Our own Dr. Steve Smith plays lead trumpet. All Concerts are free.

6th Annual Baygrass Bluegrass Festival on January 12-14, at Founders' Park in Islamorada, features bands and performers from around the country. The hottest young musician this year is the amazing Billy Strings, and you won't want to miss Grammy Award winner Mike Compton. ICE uses festival proceeds to provide art, music, and dance scholarships to local students pursuing higher education in the arts. Stage lighting this year will be solar. Water filling stations will be provided by FKAA in the interest of working towards a plastic-free environment. Go to www.keysice.com for details.

Florida Keys Concert Association - Begins January 15th – A six-week series with concerts on Monday nights in Marathon and Tuesday nights in Islamorada that includes a barber-shop quartet, a little jazz, lots of classic and a night at the opera. Trio Solisti, who brought the house down three years ago, is coming back and, new to the Keys, Fandango, featuring musicians from around the world, brings their unique blend of Latin, Balkan and Spanish music. Individual concert tickets are \$30 or you can purchase the season for \$110. www.flkca.com

Mangrove Swamp Band open jam: Thursday evening, January 25, at Key Largo Library conference room. Contact Susan Gordon for more information, susangordon424@yahoo.com or 305-766-3585. With instruments ranging from fiddles to banjos, guitars, walking bass, hammered dulcimer, Irish pennywhistle (yes, that's our Susan) and squeezebox, the music is as varied as bluegrass, traditional folk and country. No charge. ♦

KJCC Gift Shop

Remember us for Chanukah



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



Sydney! Faye-Davis (305) 613-3010
Susan Gordon (305) 766-3585



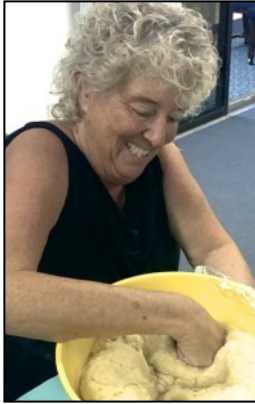
One of the best things about being a member of a lay-led synagogue with virtually no paid employees is that you get to create your own programs and develop your own traditions. From idea to execution, from total novelty to second,

Tradition!

Our (Now) Annual Challah Bake

third, and fourth annual events, we keep what we like and keep on tweaking until we make each event better, more fun, more inclusive and ever more our own. This year Count Zischka joined in the activity. We've had male observers, kibitzers and photographers before, but Count was our first male participant in actual challah-making. (It was actually, in truth, the first year in which male members of KJCC were actively encouraged to participate. As I said, we evolve and tweak.) Long live the Sisterhood sponsored Annual Challah Bake. It may be messy – how could it not be, when each of the twelve participants has eight cups of flour





to wrestle with, not to mention lots of eggs, yeast, sugar, water and salt, which then have to be mixed with a combination of elbow grease and closed fists – but the



Challah! Mixing & Kneading

camaraderie, the learning, the mutual helpfulness, raucous humor, artistic creativity, and delicious results make it more than worthwhile. (And we were smart enough to safely place our good social hall chairs out of the way.)

We started our Challah Bake tradition years ago as part of a worldwide Shabbat event, with thousands of groups in hundreds of countries across all continents hosting simultaneous events. Some of the programs in big cities included thousands of participants. But none of them could have had more heart than we had with our not-quite-baker's-dozen group. This year we chose to hold our event on a night with special meaning to us, a prelude to a Shabbat dinner at which we would honor those members of our congregation who had





served in our country's military.

Special thanks to Sisterhood Vice-President Jane Friedman for her tireless assistance to all who needed physical help kneading, assurance that their yeast was bubbling the way it should, or a reminder that it was indeed time to give that big old punch to the risen dough so that it could rise again and be shaped into lovely large braids, spirals, and mini buns to be taken home and baked. Some would be shared with family and friends at home and some would be brought back the next day for our Veteran's Day

Challah! Braiding & Baking

Shabbat Dinner (The report on that dinner immediately follows this one.) Maybe this coupling with Veterans Day will become a new tradition. By all reports, the challahs have gotten better and better. *Ha-motzi lechem min haaretz.* ♦



—Gloria Avner





Should auld acquaintance be forgot
and never brought to mind...



"Should Auld Acquaintance"

Whether our old friends and dear ones have moved away or passed away, we think of them often and miss them. Of course they should not be forgotten. We had good times, we did good things, and how grateful we are that they came into our lives to share their gifts and strengths with us. They repaired things (we remember Al Roller and Marty Graham, wearing tool belts, standing on ladders). They acted as our presidents, of Sisterhood and the KJCC (we are grateful to Bea Graham, who was president of both, and to Joel Pollack, Alan Beth and Jim Boruszak). They cooked, they sang, they created spirit, led services, raised funds,



Be Forgot?" ...Never, We Say!

studied Hebrew, brought sunshine into our lives (thank you, Rene Rose, in both ways) and created schools, a Community Park and performance space (you were a game-changer, Ron Levy). And, oh how they danced. Our loves and friends knew how to create and share meaningful lives while we also laughed a lot. (And even allowed four bikers once to become, temporarily, protective and peaceful members of KJCC Sisterhood at the Big Chill one fine spring day, for the best KJCC Sisterhood photo ever.) Let "auld acquaintance" be brought to mind *l'olam va'ed* (forever and ever). Enjoy the photos and the warm memories.

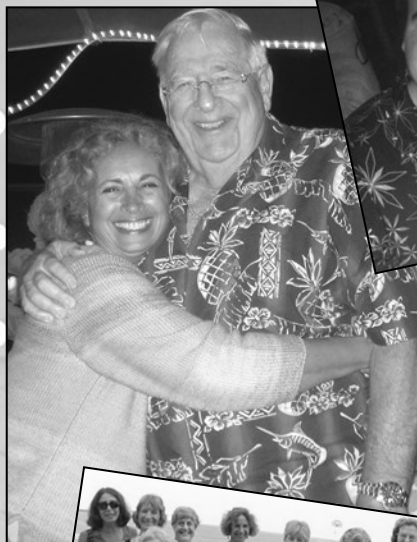
—Gloria Avner

Should auld acquaintance be forgot
and days of auld lang syne...





And there's a hand, my trusty friend
and gie's a hand to thine...





We'll take a cup of kindness yet
for auld lang syne...



The Keys Jewish Community Center Invites you to a Kabbalah Shabbaton*

January 12th & 13th, 2018

Friday evening and Saturday

Experience an Introduction to Kabbalah with Rabbi Ed Rosenthal in three sessions. Come prepared to be amazed at all the things you never learned in Hebrew School.

Rabbi Ed Rosenthal is the Executive Director and Campus Rabbi of the Suncoast Hillels of Florida's west coast. Rabbi Ed brings a life-long passion for Jewish life and spirituality, Israel, the Jewish People and a special focus on God's unique relationship with the seas.

Kabbalah is the most misunderstood part of the Jewish tradition. Usually referred to as Jewish "mysticism," Kabbalah was under an ancient prohibition which restricted those who could learn it to only men over the age of forty who were married, fully observant and experts in every other aspect of Judaism and Jewish law. In the year 1540, the prohibition was lifted for the basic principles of Kabbalah. The 20th century has seen an awakening of interest about Kabbalah, not as mysticism but as the spiritual teachings of Judaism.

"The Torah tells us how to practice Judaism...the Kabbalah tells us why," says Rabbi Rosenthal. All members of the KJCC are welcome to attend the Shabbaton. You are also welcome to invite interested friends.

**What is a Shabbaton? A Program of Education and Celebration that usually takes place on Shabbat and sometimes over a whole weekend.*

*Here's how Rabbi Ed describes the course he's prepared
for our KJCC Shabbaton:*

"Life, the Universe, and the Nature of Everything"

The weekend schedule and syllabus:

Friday, January 12th -

- 6:00 p.m. Delicious Dairy Dinner
- 7:30 p.m. Erev Shabbat Services led by Rabbi Ed
- Approx. 9:00 - Introduction and overview of the weekend's program
beginning after the oneg, led by Rabbi Ed

Saturday, January 13th -

- Morning Session - *"Nothing is as it seems"* : 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
 - 12:30 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Luncheon
 - Afternoon Session - *"Turn on the Lights"* : 2:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 - 5:00 p.m. Closing / Havdalah Ceremony
- (Rabbi Ed has also said that Sunday sessions will be available
for those interested in further study.)

RSVP to Medina Roy: hiitsmedee@gmail.com or 305-394-1702

Full program: KJCC Members: \$36.00, Non-Members: \$50.00



KJCC 2nd Annual Holiday Open House, Chinese Buffet and Board Game Extravaganza



December 25th
2 pm - 5 pm



*Enjoy adult beverages,
Poker, Scrabble, Boggle, & more...
\$10 donation*

Please RSVP to
Donna Bolton
at:

lton9993@bellsouth.net
or 305-393-1351

WE HONOR OUR VETERANS

Homemade Challah, Brisket, Music and Prayers

by Gloria Avner

We love hearing our veterans' stories, seeing aspects of them we never knew – learning about the challenges they faced as young men (and women) and marveling at the humor and steadiness with which they met those challenges. And we are discovering more veterans among us than those we wrote about last month. Stanley Margulies has a good Navy story that I am saving up for next year. And at the service when we asked our veterans to stand and tell us their branch of service, we found out that our old friend Humberto was a medic who served with the Marines in Vietnam, and that Bear, Rosemary Barefoot's husband, was also a Marine, and that Steve Levine had also served our country.

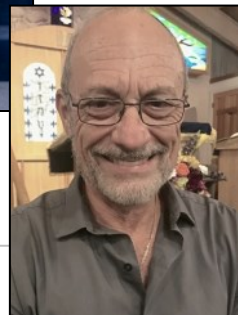


All the branches of the U.S. armed forces were represented by our KJCC veterans. Gunther Karger, after escaping the Nazis via the Kindertransport, served in the Air Force, as did Jim Williams. Jeff Schocket was in the Army. Bernie Ginsberg was in the Public Health Medical Corps. Stan Margulies was a Navy surgeon, and Skip Rose served in the Army.





On this particular evening, the service ended not with *Adon Olam* but with Gunther playing taps in honor of the fallen.



So how do we, who did not fight for our country or way of life, repay these men and women? Of course at a minimum we say “thank you for your service” and mean it from our hearts, but it still seems so little in comparison with their sacrifice. So, in addition to saying thank you, we do what we do best. We break out the crockpots, sharpen our knives and start cooking. A festive meal is prepared and served on a field of patriotic red, white and blue décor. Many thanks to Donna Bolton, Susan Gordon and Erica Lieberman-Garrett for coming in early Friday afternoon and transforming our Social Hall into a great modern-day version of an elegant USO canteen (minus the dance music).



It was lovely starting the night with lighting Shabat candles in our new handmade-



by-Beth-Kaminstein candlesticks, and then listening to a medley of Armed Forces theme songs played by Air Force veteran and Holocaust survivor Gunther Karger on his harmonica. Our special dinner was enjoyed by all. Many thanks to the generous and talented cooks and bakers of Sisterhood.

Thanks, too, to the Gross family. We enjoy seeing a whole family of active members on our *bimah*, especially when one of





All the previous evening's challah-makers gathered at the dinner's beginning to offer the fresh-baked, homemade fruits of their labors to all. Is there anything more irresistible to the nose and palate than fresh-baked challah?



them, the Dad, is a veteran himself. Seeing two of our *B'nei Mitzvah* playing the Star-Spangled Banner on their instruments gives us a good dollop of hope for our congregation's future longevity, two young active participants in a Shabbat service. The prayer for veterans, read by Tomar, Jonah and Oceana's dad, was strong and meaningful. Gunther's soulful rendition of Taps at the end of the service (traditionally played at the end of a funeral for the fallen), touched us all and made for a fitting



conclusion to our evening. (Which of course was, in classic KJCC style, was not quite over yet. There were still more delicious home-made treats to be consumed. Thank you, Luz Levine, and all who brought sweet things to the Oneg in honor of Michael Kaufman's brother Jonny's birthday.) ♦



Illuminating the Festival of Lights

Chanukah is a time of gift-giving, yes, but it's also full of symbolism, history, wonderful snippets of information and memories. And that's all before we even start on the latkas...

As an avocational ethnologist, I studied

world religions for years. As a practicing, enthusiastic Jew I look for answers to life's big questions in my own heritage. Every early religion found powerful teachings and created ceremonies of hope, appeasement, and gratitude in the time of shortest, darkest days. How could life go on if the sun did not return to warm the earth? I have read words from contemporary rabbis linking Chanukah to winter solstice, saying that, in our earliest days, sacrifices were made for eight days both before and after the shortest day of the year. Whether we are talking about bonfires or candles, it is all about light (and not just the oil or the *latkas*).

"Light" is a big concept. As an artist I am in love with light and the act of creation. Light against dark is what makes a painting come alive. My father, whose personal light went out 20 years ago on the eighth day of Chanukah, gifted me with light through his name. "Av" is the Hebrew word for father and "ner" means both candle and light. Every synagogue in the world has its *ner tamid*, or everlasting light.

The light of "*yiddishkeit*" (yes, I know that

Hidden in the Candles of Chanukah: *Long Days' Journey into Light*

by Gloria Avner

Yiddish itself had not then yet been invented) nearly went out when our Temple was desecrated by the Syrian Greeks of Antiochus IV's time, over 2100 years ago. The

primary goal was to assimilate (to Hellenize) if not annihilate us. Laws were passed making Torah study illegal. Disobedience was punishable by death. When the unlikely band of student warriors, the Maccabees, recaptured the Temple after fierce guerilla warfare against the powerful Greeks, they cleansed and

restored it. But to complete the dedication, (the meaning of the word Chanukah), they needed an additional seven days in which to replace the consecrated oil that had been defiled by the Greeks. With only one "kosher" vial left (indicated

by its priestly seal), holding enough oil for just one day, they needed a miracle (that,

interestingly, would last the exact length of time of the Creation as told in Genesis).

We are all familiar with the historical events behind the "Great Miracle that Happened There" (*Nes Gadol Hayah Sham*). But where is the deeper meaning of the miracle? This is Judaism. There is always more.

Anyone who has ever prepared a Friday night parshah knows how many stories lie within each Torah portion and that within each story there are as many layers as we have time



Pen-and-ink artwork created
by Gloria Avner



and energy to discover. It does not surprise me as I look for hidden meanings in the light of Chanukah, that I am thrown back to “*B’reishit*,” the beginning, the creation of primordial light.

When Adam and Eve came into being in the Garden on the sixth day of creation, light stepped beyond its bounds. There were thirty-six hours of intense, limitless light, says the teaching, (This teaching comes from the *Zohar* and Kabbalist understandings.) Adam could see from one end of the world to the other. Adam and Eve failed to do their *mitzvot* and were punished. The brilliant light that was visible for such a long uninterrupted time and distance was withdrawn, hidden away, saved for the righteous in the world to come. (“... light is sown for the righteous . . .” Psalm 97). The 36 hours of special light covered the (literal) day and a half time period from Adam and Eve’s creation until they ate the forbidden fruit. We apparently were not ready for such brilliance.

How does this primordial light relate to Chanukah? Let’s count the candles. Not the helper candles, or *shamashim*, with which we light the candles, but the Chanukah candles themselves. One plus two plus three plus four plus five plus six plus seven plus eight makes thirty-six. The twelfth-century Kabbalist, Rabbi Eliezer of Worms (an important medieval German city of Jewish learning), wrote: “the 36 candles on the menorah correspond to the 36 hours when Adam and Eve were bathed in The Primordial Light of creation.” Today, as we kindle our lights in our own homes, he suggests we are calling forth a remembrance, if not a revelation, of that intense, now hidden light. The light was ours before the *mitzvot* were disobeyed.

The mysterious expansion of light came to the Jews rededicating themselves and their Temple to the practice of Judaism. They did not succumb to a culture that did not want

them to worship their one God in their own way. What was really won with the Maccabee’s guerilla warfare was religious freedom. The myriad meanings of the number 36 could fill reams, and range from double “chai” (the Hebrew word for life) to equivalence of the names of God to the amount of years it took Jacob to transform himself on his journey to the number of righteous souls in every generation who keep alive that spark of primordial light. We talk about Chanukah as a minor holiday, and yet there is an understanding that when the Messiah comes the only holidays that will still be celebrated will be Chanukah and Purim. The Sanhedrin declared Chanukah a holiday one year after the event took place and it has been observed with candle-lighting ever since – though Hillel and Shammai did have one of their many disagreements over whether to start with one and go up to eight or start with eight and go down to one. Hillel’s school won.

The Kabbalists put it in terms of “Earth school.” We are on this plane to learn to reach towards higher levels of consciousness. Chanukah lights act as antennae, a means of drawing forth holiness, the energy of the 36. As every day of Chanukah passes, the light increases. We place lit candles in our windows as a beacon to passersby, reminding the world that darkness can be illuminated. Divine Light will prevail. We are publicly unafraid to be different, to be a minority.

In the darkest period of winter, we are encouraged to look within, reconnect with the light of Creation by correcting behavior, observing *mitzvot*, rededicating our inner sanctuaries, and shining our light all around us. It is not surprising that Chanukah is the favorite holiday of children and mystics. As we enjoy our traditional foods, chant the blessings, sing our songs, and spin our *dreidls*, may we happily give and receive both presents and Presence. ◇



On the Origin of Some Sephardic Hanukkah Customs

by Yardena Kamely

Most of the laws of Hanukkah are related to the lighting of the *menorah* or *chanukiya* (candelabrum). The main difference between laws and customs is that laws stem from rabbinic interpretations of the Torah and the Talmud, which then filter down to the Jewish people, while customs usually start with the people and filter up to the rabbis. Through customs, the Jewish people have shown their love for God and tradition and immeasurably enriched all aspects of Jewish observance.

Israel

Hanukkah is celebrated in Israel just like everywhere in the Diaspora. The *chanukiya* is lit, prayers are recited and everybody eats *sufganiot* (jelly doughnuts) and *levivot* (potato pancakes), lots of them! Hanukkah is celebrated by attending a lot of parties. The children's kindergarten, schools, the local synagogue, the community center, your neighbors, friends and family all host parties. Most Israelis attend two or more parties during Hanukkah. The children sing Hanukkah songs and have a

little "light show." Since Hanukkah is in the middle of the winter, hot drinks like mint tea are served with doughnuts. The doughnuts in

to play with the *sevivon* (in Yiddish called a *dreidel*).

The only religious observance related to Hanukkah is the lighting of candles. Most

households, even the secular ones, follow the Jewish custom to place the *chanukiya* in the window where it can be seen by passersby.

Israelis like to walk through the streets of Ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods like Bnei Brak in Tel-Aviv and Meah Shearim in Jerusalem during Hanukkah. The sight of the lighted *chanukiot* in all the homes is beautiful.

Kurdistan

While Jews no longer live in Kurdistan, many Kurdish Jews still observe two unusual Hanukkah customs.

One is about the giving of Hanukkah *gelt*. A week before the holiday, children lock the door to their room. Parents are allowed entry only after offering coins. The second custom was developed by Jews who were too poor to afford a *chanukiya*. They used eggshells as cups for wicks and oil, and children collected donations of flour and oil to make pancakes. Children would also prepare an effigy of Antiochus. While singing Hanukkah songs, they



would carry the effigy from place to place. On the last day of Hanukkah the effigy was thrown into a bonfire.

Syria

In Damascus, the children would collect food or money during the week and on the last day of Hanukkah they would prepare three meals – one for their teachers, one for the poor, and one for themselves. After Hanukkah is over, a *ta'anit dibur* is observed; one “fasts” for a full day from conversation. This custom was observed to curb one’s tendency to *lashon hara* (malicious gossip), especially during social occasions such as on holidays.



An antique, hand-cut brass Tunisian chanukiah, circa 1880, traditionally hung on the doorpost opposite the mezuzah.

Bukhara

Parents baked cakes for their children’s teachers with gold and silver coins wrapped in the dough, while children collected their Hanukkah *gelt* in a decorative box, and used the money to buy study texts. Since Antiochus had ordered that Jewish books be destroyed, the reinforcement of Jewish learning was felt to be a particularly appropriate activity for Hanukkah.

Persian Jews

Today, there are many Persian Jews in New York – in Great Neck, Queens and Brooklyn. Persian Jews share many traditions with Afghani, Bukharian and Iraqi Jews. Iranian Jews give gifts on Purim, not Hanukkah. While giving gifts on all the eight nights of Hanukkah has become one of the most common and popular norms for American Jews, the tradition is fairly new for local Iranian Jews. Not having to compete with Christmas like most Ashkenazim, Jews who had been living in Iran did not give gifts for Hanukkah. In Iran they used to light candles, and maybe every family would have a special meal for

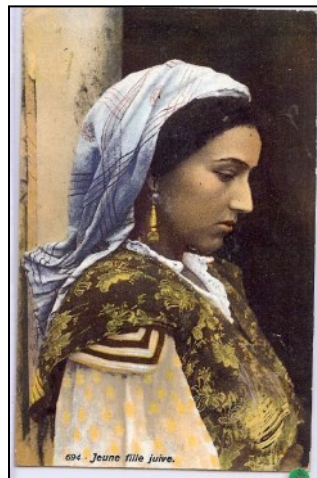
only one night. The tradition of gift-giving among Jews living in Iran has always been popular during Purim. For *Norooz* (the Persian New Year), the Iranians have the tradition of receiving gifts from the elders. Since this holiday normally coincides with Purim, the Jews in Iran also followed the same tradition and gave gifts to the children on this occasion.

Tunisia

When there were still 1,500 Jews living in Tunisia, each family would hang its *chanukiya* on the doorpost opposite the mezuzah. The oil and wicks are homemade. Women do not do any work during the time that the lights burn. The *chanukiya* remains on the doorpost until Purim.

In Tunisia, the remaining Jews celebrate the sixth night of Hanukkah as the Girls’ Festival, in memory of the Jewish her-

oines Esther and Judith. In French the festival is called *La Fete des Filles*. Esther saved the Jews of Persia from destruction around 470 B.C.E. as told in the Scroll of Esther and as celebrated on Purim. Judith saved Jerusalem from capture by the Babylonians around 600 B.C.E. by walking into the enemy camp, tricking the Babylonian general, Holofernes, then killing him. (Judith’s story is found in the Apocrypha.) Both women performed their heroic deeds during the month of Tevet, so the festival was established on the first night of that month, which coincides with the sixth night of Hanukkah.



A young Tunisian Jewish woman, circa 1900.

On the night of the Girls' Festival, Tunisian girls would receive gifts of special pastries. Isabelle, a French woman of Tunisian



ancestry, explains the many traditional Hanukkah pastries of Tunisia: "*Yoyos* are round donuts. *Makrouds* are semolina pastries filled with dates and fried and dipped in a light orange-flavored syrup. *Debla* are made of fluffy dough, fried and dipped in light orange-flavored syrup. They look like ribbons and are very delicate. *Baklava* is a many-layered pastry baked with nuts, dates and cinnamon in between phyllo dough sheets. The pastries are moistened with honey syrup. It is not a typical Tunisian recipe but a recipe brought by Jews from Turkey."



Morocco

Though there are fewer Jews in Arabic countries than ever before, all over the world, Jews celebrate Hanukkah with lighted candles and deep-fried foods. In Morocco, the fundamentals are no different, though the details are. In Fez, where the Jewish presence dates back almost a thousand years, Moroccan Sephardim, like Jews around the world, commemorate the event by lighting the *chanukiya* on eight consecutive evenings. Originally, the *chanukiya* was an oil lamp with eight small receptacles, each holding a wick made of hemp.

Hanukkah celebrations in Morocco center around children. Each night, as soon as the first stars are visible in the night sky, family and friends gather around the *chanukiya* for the lighting of the candles. Children are often entrusted with reciting the special Hanukkah prayers. In some families, the custom for Hanukkah also entails offering small gifts or coins to the youngest members of the family. In keeping with the spirit of the celebration, a

number of fried foods grace Sephardic tables. The most special are the Hanukkah doughnuts – in French, *beignets de hanoukah* – traditionally eaten on the third night.

Formerly, families who lived in the *mellah* (Jewish quarter) of Fez went from house to

house to savor beignets with a steaming glass of mint tea, the Moroccan national drink. Many hosts seized the happy occasion to open a bottle of homemade *mahiya*, a Kosher liqueur distilled from dried figs, dates or raisins.



Couscous, a staple of the Moroccan diet, also holds a prominent place on local menus. In Fez, Morocco's culinary and cultural capital, Sephardic cooks on the first night of Hanukkah prepare a couscous moistened with a rich, fragrant broth delicately scented with orange blossom water. They elaborately decorate the mound of steamed semolina with a dusting of powdered sugar and cinnamon, sprinkle its peak with fried almonds, and surround the base with a glistening ring of tender, caramelized onions.

In Morocco, each family gathers all the remaining wicks and oil at the end of the holiday and makes a bonfire. No matter what we eat and how we celebrate, the ultimate meaning of Hanukkah revolves around light. ♦



The Aben Danan synagogue, built in the late seventeenth century, is one of the jewels of the Moroccan Jewish culture and one of the largest synagogues in North Africa.

Blessings over Chanukah Candles

Light the shammus candle first; then recite the blessings while holding the candle. Do not light the other candles until the blessings are done! Light candles from left to right, per Hillel.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam
Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ

asher kidishanu b'mitz'votav v'tzivanu
Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us

לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה: (אָמֵן)

I'had'lik neir shel Chanukah. (Amein)
to light the lights of Chanukah. (Amen)

Blessing for the Chanukah Miracle

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam
Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe

שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמָּן תְּהִי: (אָמֵן)

she'asah nisim la'avoteinu bayamim haheim baziman hazeh. (Amein)
Who performed miracles for our ancestors in those days at this time. (Amen)

Shehecheyanu (Who Has Kept Us Alive)

This blessing is recited only on the first night of Chanukah.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam
Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe

שֶׁהִתְּיָנוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמָּן תְּהִי: (אָמֵן)

shehecheyanu v'kiyimanu v'higi'anu laz'man hazeh. (Amein)
who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this season. (Amen)

The Legend of the *Lamed Vavniks*, world-sustaining *Tzaddikim* and the Hidden Light of Chanukah

There is more to Chanukah than meets the eye. It is, of course, all about light, the *Ohr HaGanuz* (the hidden light) that goes all the way back to Day Four of Creation when the Sun and Moon appear. It is connected to a legend that explains why the world has not, as yet, self-destructed. The answer lies in the 36 candles we light over eight days of Chanukah. *(For a deeper discussion of the Kabbalistic concept of the significance of 36 candles, please see Gloria's Chanukah article in this issue beginning, appropriately, on page 36.)* Since early Talmudic times (2nd century C.E.), rabbinic tradition has held that the world can be sustained only if there are thirty-six righteous people, or *tzaddikim*, living in it – men and women who always do the right thing. Their compassion is huge and they help shoulder the burdens of those who suffer. When one dies, another must fill that *tzaddik's* place. We don't know who they are. They don't know who they are. The reason that the legend is so closely tied to Chanukah is because the holiday takes place in the month of Kislev. Within this word, we have *Kis*, whose root letters mean conceal. The two remaining letters are *lamed* and *vav*. *Lamed* stands for the number 30. *Vav* is the equivalent of the number six. Together they stand for the 36 *tzaddikim*, the *lamed vavniks*. They hold the weight of the world on their shoulders. Long live the special light of the *Lamed Vavniks*.

—Gloria

Rosh HaNikrah Grottoes, Cliffs, and Self-defense

With a new KJCC Israel trip being actively planned, we thought you'd like to re-visit an entry of Gloria's for the Israel Diary that ran in the September 2013 issue of Chai-Lights. Her excitement at being there still leaps off the page after four years.

by Gloria Avner

I'm glad I was still in the middle of reading Michener's "The Source" when the Israel trip was already over. My mind could light up like an old adventure movie map when something I read connected to something I had seen but whose significance I had not yet understood.

Take flint, the substance that people have used to spark fires from ancient times. Picture sheer white limestone cliffs falling away to jutting outcrops of rock. The Mediterranean is crashing/splashing hard against the rocks, apparently hard enough for so many years that crevices have turned to caves and under world grottoes are now complete with interconnecting winding walkways and a pleasantly deafening continuous boom of thunderous sound. The effect is surreal with the damp darkish surroundings, clear beautiful ever changing in/out whoosh of the water and almost blinding glimpses of sun and sky at the entrances of the caves. Joyce and I are moved to sing Naomi Shemer's song, "Eli, Eli" as we lean out over the water. The Israeli poet/composer lived not far from here, close to Caesaria. I too "pray that these things never end: the sand and the sea, the rush of the waters . . ."

We are walking back along the cliffs, mak-





ing our way to the cable car. We see, embedded in the white limestone, black nodules several inches long. This is puzzling even after our guide explains that these are flints, harder than the limestone, easily exposed. Flints. I think fire making and let it go. Not until I'm thousands of miles away again, reading Michener's richly documented and imagined tale of how civilization developed here, one culture at a time, do I get how significant this find must have been, especially

during that transition from cave-dwelling hunter/gatherer to conscious agriculturalist. It is all about tools. Rocks and flint. Held the right way, hit with the right angle of pressure and pointed shards could be flaked away and attached to shaped wood. Voila, the arrowhead, spear point, knife, and scythe. Pretty exciting stuff.

Everything must have seemed so much easier, but better weapons also made life more complex and increased the need for better self and community protection, starting a never-ending cycle of escalation. Which brings us to the top of Rosh HaNikra. We've had our second cable car ride and are looking out over the lush curving coastline and brilliant blue sea below. After a break for Is-



Yes, the water really is that blue and the cliffs that imposing. Gloria and Dave Mont, above, walk the hewn path at Rosh HaNikra.

raeli ice cream bars, we walk around the corner to stretch our legs and there we suddenly see a stretch of barbed wire and a sign that says "Closed Military Area! Photography Forbidden!" Oops! There in front of us is the Lebanese border. Right there! On our left, a sign painted on the wall tells how many miles to Jerusalem and how many to Beirut. Perpendic-

ular to the fence, across the street, is a perfect example of pre-independence British architecture (bare bones early ugly) and an accompanying high tower. "It's a security tower," says Mike Rogoff, our guide. "I've been inside it. Their surveillance equipment is so advanced they can monitor the whole seacoast, see a father and son fishing in a rowboat and tell what kind of bait they're using."

This highly evolved security system is the 21st century manifestation of flint. Tomorrow we'll be back to the days of hurling rockets and use of human intelligence (another story, involving spies, infiltration, and strategic planting of sycamore trees as bombing targets) when we make our next stop and stand looking out from an abandoned Syrian outpost high above what is now the Syrian border. Age-old truths: Borders change. People fight to protect their territory. Soldiers die. We walk into the below-ground bunkers where the Syrian soldiers sought shelter from Israeli bombs when not in deadly hand-to-hand combat with Israeli soldiers. We can barely see the sky at the end of the tunnel. Once more we are back to caves. ♦



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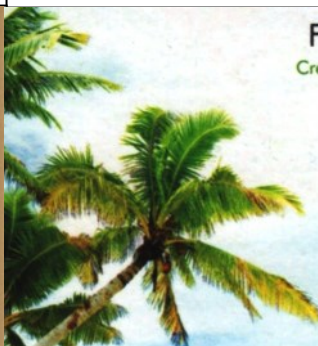
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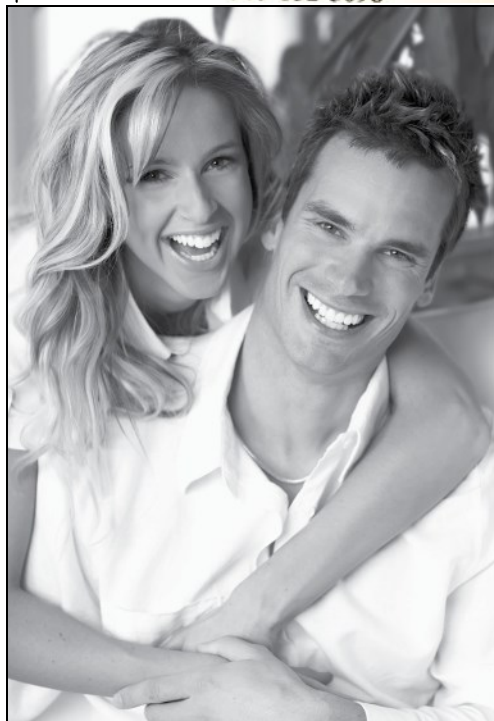
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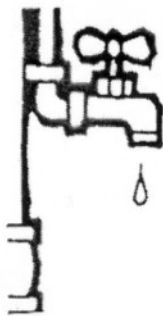
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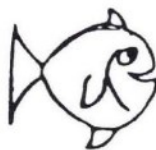
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