Chai~Lights

February 2009 7 Shevat - 4 Adar 5769

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Keys Jewish Community Center

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

February 2009 7 Shevat – 4 Adar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 **KJCC Adult Class**— Living Wills, etc. w/ Carol Steinbock & Teresa Kwalick 7:30 p.m.	5	6 Joyce Peckman *Barbara & Steve Smith* *Joan & Milton Wohl* *Nona & Henry Abrams*	7
8 KJCC Annual Meeting 10:00 a.m. Tu B'Shevat Tree Planting	9 **Tu B'Shevat**	10	11	12	13 Steve Steinbock Yardena Kamely *KJCC Ulpan Classes*	14
15	16 **President's Day**	17	18	19	20 George Swartz *Mah Jongg Club*	21
22	23	24	25	26	27 Ken Atlas 6:30 Service *Anonymous*	28

Names denote leaders of Friday services.
Italicized names are Oneg sponsors.

2007-2008
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CHAI-LIGHTS is the monthly newsletter of the **Keys Jewish Community Center**
P.O. Box 1332
Tavernier, Florida 33070
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President's Message
Steve Steinbock

It's been a great two years as president of the Keys Jewish Community Center. It seems just a few months ago that I accepted the nomination. I have learned a great deal and would not have missed this opportunity.

It was already special to be able to attend the KJCC Saturday morning service on January 3rd led by Rabbi Agler. But then Gloria invited two Tibetan monks, in Key Largo on an international peace tour, to join us. Rabbi Agler welcomed them, and that morning turned into a memory I will treasure always. Please see Gloria's write-up of that incredible day on page 25.

My term in office saw us lose some wonderful people who I will miss, but we have also had new members join our ranks. We formalized the KJCC website and began posting each issue of Chai-Lights there (thank you, Alan) and brought on a new Chai-Lights editor (thank you, Lisa). We upgraded our Membership Directory, adding e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers. I decided to solicit ads for the Directory, and as a result KJCC made a tidy profit. Our *Yizkor* Memorial Service prayer booklet was completely redone. Thanks to the diligence and brilliance of Alan Beth, we are working through the difficult transition to a KJCC database without its originator, Marty Graham.

I am happy to see that my idea for having non-religious classes at KJCC began in January with Gloria Avner's art class, to be followed by a presentation on the importance of wills, powers-of-attorney and living wills by Carol and Teresa Kwalick. I hope we will continue to have classes on other subjects of interest.

I want to thank everyone who helped make my two years as president a wonderful experience, and also our nominating committee, led by past-president Bea Graham, for coming up with a strong group of leaders for the coming year. I would be remiss if I did not thank Linda Pollack for all her help. Most of all, I want to publicly thank my wife, Carol. Without her support, and tireless work behind the scenes, I could never have done this. I now know what every president before me learned, that this is not a one-man (or woman) job.

I wish you all a healthy and prosperous 2009. Please support the new KJCC President and Board in working toward their goals. I will continue to be involved with KJCC and look forward to seeing you all at future Friday services, Shabbat dinners, fundraisers and other temple functions. But for now, my garden beckons. ◊

Nosh

Yardena is now, well, U.S. Kosher

For those of you who don't already know, after years of trying, and lawyers, and delays, and more lawyers, and more delays, Yardena Kamely has finally received her Green Card. She can now leave the country, and return, whenever she likes. She got the good news, ironically, while she was in Chile recently visiting her daughter (and granddaughter) and youngest son. Ask her to tell you the difference in treatment she experienced when she returned home to go through customs, for the first time as a full-fledged, on-her-way-to-citizenship permanent resident of the United States. (As I said, Kosher.)

Chanukah Play DVD available

Those of you who attended the Chanukah Shabbat dinner and stayed for the play were richly rewarded. Gloria performed her usual directorial heroics, once again successfully disdaining the old show business maxim that one should never work with children. But the KJCC Sunday School students also outdid themselves at the actual performance. (If you'd seen the rehearsals. Oy.) There were some memorable moments that none of us who were there will ever forget. You'll all be happy to know that Richard Knowles, who is a professional videographer, filmed the entire thing. An edited version will soon be available to all KJCC members on DVD. Since his (and Barbara's) daughter Moira was in the cast, the cost of the final, edited version will be a mere $20 to any KJCC member. Contact Richard or Barbara Knowles to order your copy. Their ad in the back section of Chai-Lights has phone numbers and e-mails.

Blue Box Time

February is Jewish National Fund Blue Box Month. Please bring your filled blue boxes to the KJCC during the month of February. The children can bring them into Sunday School and have fun counting how much they have collected.

Israeli Charities Need Your Help

Due to the emergency conditions in Israel, the following charities are in desperate need of our help:

Friends of the IDF

Mogen David Adom

Jewish National Fund

Please send any donation you can by making a check payable to one of the above and mail to the KJCC, P.O. Box 1332, Tavernier, FL 33070. We will forward the funds on. Thank you.

-Steve Steinbock

February Anniversaries

		Years
6th	Arnold & Gale Lang	37
9th	Uri & Liliam Kamely	17
11th	Joel & Linda Pollack	47
20th	Bill & Susan Gordon	22
21st	**Murray & Claire Cooper**	**61**
23rd	Eric & Jessica Pollack	7

A Montessori Miracle

During the Chanukah season, President Steve Steinbock received a call from the Montessori School asking if someone could come and give the children a lesson on the meaning of Chanukah. As is so often the case, Gloria Avner took the responsibility. She sat the group of two-to-five year olds in a circle and told them the story, taught them some songs and expanded their worlds a bit. Gloria says that when she left, they could sing the dreidel song, tell you how many days the oil lasted and all had sat still and gave her their attention for a solid 20 minutes. She thinks that may have been the ninth miracle of Chanukah.

KJCC Adult Classes Continue

On Wednesday, February 4th, join Carol Steinbock (an attorney) and Teresa Kwalick (a social worker who often works with living wills) for a presentation and Q & A on the importance of wills, powers-of-attorney and living wills. The class will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Ruth Richardson Social Hall. This will be the second in the adult class series. If you have questions or ideas for future classes, call Steve Steinbock at 305-394-0143.

The KJCC extends deepest condolences to

the Cohn family

on the death of

David Cohn

KJCC Annual Meeting

The KJCC Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 8th, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary. The regular board meeting is scheduled for the same day, at 9:00 a.m. in the Ruth Richardson Hall. All members are invited to attend both meetings.

The primary order of business of the Annual Meeting is the election and installation of Officers and the Board of Directors.

Lunch will be served to all present immediately following the installation of Officers and Board of Directors.

A Note From Joyce

Thank you to everyone who sent their condolences and donated to charity in memory of my mother-in-law, Gertrude Peckman.

-Joyce

Ongoing Projects

General Donations – can be earmarked to our various ongoing funds; e.g. Holocaust Education Fund, Scholarship Fund, Sara Cohen Memorial Tzedukah Fund, or General Fund. Honorarium and memorial cards can also be requested. Call Linda Pollack 852-8575.
Gift Shop - We have many lovely gift and holiday items on hand and can special order for you as well. Contact Joan Boruszak 852-0833.
Jewish Youth Enrichment Program - will assist in involving our children in Jewish activities. Call Neal Rakov 852-9400.
Sunshine Committee - If you know of any member who should receive a get-well, congratulations or condolence card from the Center, call Rene Rose, 852-3959.
Cemetery Information - If you wish to plan for the very distant future, you can reserve space at the Kendall Mt. Nebo Cemetery in the KJCC section. Call Bea Graham, 852-0214.
Picture Postcards - We have beautiful picture postcards bearing the Millard Wells representation of the KJCC, which was commissioned by Sisterhood. Quantities 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 Joan Boruszak, 852-0833.
Oneg Shabbat Sponsor - To schedule your special date with Sisterhood, call Joyce Peckman, 451-0665.
KJCC Tree of Life Leaves and Rocks, ***Sanctuary Seat Plates***, ***Yartzeit Memorial Plaques***, ***Bookplates for Siddurim***. Call Linda Pollack to arrange your donation, 852-8575.
JNF Trees in Israel - A gift of a tree, or two or more, makes a long-remembered way to honor a loved one, a relative, a friend or an occasion. Both Israel and the KJCC benefit. Call Bea Graham, 852-0214.
Chai-Lights Mitzvah - Place a greeting or notice in Chai-Lights. Call Linda Pollack, 852-8575, to make your donation.
Advertisement in Chai-Lights - Your business ad will appear in every issue of Chai-Lights. Call Linda Pollack, 852-8575, for the low annual rates.

Call the names listed above for assistance or send your request and check to the KJCC, P.O. Box 1332, Tavernier, FL 33070. Recipients of your gifts will be notified by card and listings will appear in Chai-Lights as well.

February Birthdays

Roy Pollack.....1st
Linda Rutkin.....2nd
Caeleigh Stuart.....3rd
Dick Bromwich.....3rd
Rebecca Smith.....5th
Robin Kantor.....5th
Martin Field.....6th
Erica Lieberman-Garrett.....7th
Larry Jacobs.....7th
Deborah Kaplan.....9th
Ron Garrett.....9th
Shirley Burnett.....10th
Justin Solomon.....11th
Johnny Knowles.....12th
Paul Roberts.....12th
Steven B. Sanders.....14th
Judith Weber.....15th
Beth Hayden.....18th
Shari Storeygard.....18th
Audrey Wolf.....21st
David J. Marmar.....21st
Marshall Gorson.....21st
Emily Caryn Gershowitz.....24th
Muriel Swartz.....24th
Suzie Greenman.....24th
Jim Williams.....26th
John D. Schur.....26th
Renee Green.....26th
Arlene Line.....28th

Second Seder Reservations

Planning has already begun for the Second Passover Seder, which will be held on Thursday, April 9th, 2009. at 6:30 p.m. It will take place once again at the Islamorada Fishing Club. Reservations will be taken for KJCC members only until March 30th, and then will be opened to the public. Confirm your spot now, because space is always limited. Contact Leslie at 852-3654 for reservations or any questions you may have. Ticket prices are $40 for adults, kids 12 and under are free. This is always a wonderful event and a high spot on the KJCC calendar.

Several Reasons To Celebrate

Steven and Barbara Smith are happy to announce the engagement of their daughter Rebecca Elizabeth Smith to Sgt. Erick A. Castano. Rebecca grew up in Marathon, Florida. She attended religious school and was Bat Mitzvahed at the KJCC.

Rebecca currently lives in Orlando, Florida. She was awarded her Masters of Arts Degree in Exceptional Education on December 16, 2008 from the University of Central Florida. Her B.S. in Elementary Education was awarded from U.C.F. in May of 2007. She will be teaching Kindergarten in the English as a Second Language Program for the Orange County school System starting January 5, 2009. Sgt. Castano attended school in Marathon, Florida and has been in the United States Army since 2003. He has completed a tour of duty in Korea as well as two tours of duty in Iraq. He is currently attached to the 3rd infantry division in Ft. Stewart, Georgia. A 2010 wedding is planned. In addition, the Smiths will be celebrating Rebecca's birthday on February 5th. Mazel Tov to all!

The KJCC extends deepest condolences to

Becky Uram and the Uram family

on the death of

Herb's son

Oneg Sponsors for February 2009

February 6th—Barbara and Steven Smith for Rebecca's birthday. Joan and Milton Wohl. Nona and Henry Abrams.

February 13th—The KJCC Ulpan Classes in honor of the Greening of Yardena.

February 20th—The Mah Jongg Club

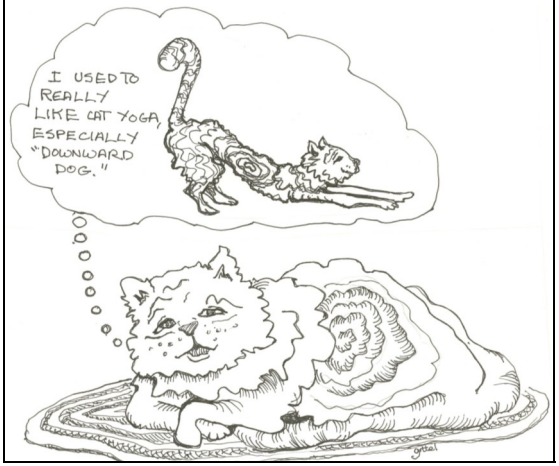
February 27th—Anonymous

Tribute to an Elder: Bully the Mensa Cat

By Gloria Avner

If you saw her from the side, the dark-grey/ rust-black swirl that curls right through her fur would hook you, bullseye,
with its center pointing to her heart, or yours. This girl, who 16 years ago was svelte and quick as lover's sighs, who'd scale straight walls to hide in rafters from the one
whose grit would rescue her, now tolerates the fun some make of her more girthy self, fur volleyball with legs.

Stiff and achy, she foreshadows us. Movement slowed. Perimeters, parameters, increasingly proscribed, she lives within an ever smaller world. Today she showed us the way out.
She ebbed, then fled. Body left behind, she gets to rest and play and grow again, planted by the pond where she and fish and otters romped.
Unbroken is the bond.



Tu B'Shevat Tree Planting

Gloria Avner invites all parents, grandparents, members and friends to join the KJCC Religious School as they celebrate New Year for the Trees by planting a new tree in the KJCC orchard. The tree planting (and singing and dancing, etc.) will be right after the Annual Meeting and luncheon.

Let's Hear It For The Donors

Let's give a "hearty" thank you for the December blood drive success; to the "cheer squad" and the "team," consisting of Sofy Wasser, Tiffany McNew, Cammie Jayne Berk and Susan Gordon. Carol and Steve Steinbock, Nettie Seder, Roberta McNew, Bernie Ginsberg, Sam Vinicur and myself all gave whole blood. We were even joined by DeeDee Ellis, the Area Manager for CBCSF (Community Blood Centers of South Florida, Inc.), who also donated. Cory Wasser decided to give for the first time in a big way! Double red blood cells were collected from Cory via an intravenous needle, then circulated through the Alyx machine (visit www.bloodcenters.org for more details), where the red cells were collected while the platelets and plasma, along with a special saline solution, were reintroduced via the same needle, leaving Cory with the same volume of life juice, just fewer red blood cells for the moment. Because double the amount of red cells was taken during this process, he will need to wait four months before he can donate again. I contacted Cory a few days later and he said he felt fine, no different before or after his donation.

Some of you thought you couldn't donate, because of a brief visit to Europe or a previous illness. But the rules for donation have changed; you might want to check your eligibility again. One pint of blood collected can save up to *three* lives. Giving blood takes little time and gives a lot. Want to donate or get more information? Sign up to volunteer at KJCC or Contact DeeDee Ellis at 305-307-7240 or go to: www.cbcsf.org.

-Zoe Berk

Keys Jewish Community Center

The most celebrated musical of all time and the longest running musical worldwide, Actors' Playhouse proudly produces the first regional production of Cameron Mackintosh's 3-time Tony Award winning musical theatre masterpiece at the Miracle Theatre. Les MisÈrables is an epic saga of social injustice. Full of passion and the triumph of the human spirit, Les MisÈrables recounts the struggle of the French people during the late 1800's. No matter how many times you've seen Les MisÈrables, its heart-wrenching ballads and powerful ensemble will make for an extraordinary experience for the entire family.

Sunday, March 15, 2009 ◆ 2:00 pm

Donation $40

Call Bea Graham for tickets

and information 852-0214

In Memoriam February 2009

In Memory Of

LOU ROAZEN

By Robert & Sylvia Berman

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In Memory Of

SUNNIE BERNSTEIN

By Paul & Barbara Bernstein

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In Memory Of

TED NYMAN

By Alan Beth & Candace Stanlake

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In Memory Of

KITTY NYMAN

By Alan Beth & Candace Stanlake

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In Memory Of

SARAH P. ZALK

By Meredith A. Cline

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In Memory Of

REUBEN L. ZALK

By Meredith A. Cline

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In Memory Of

QUITIAM RESUBERG

By Arthur Feinberg & Patrice Gerard

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In Memory Of

ELSIE GILDERMAN

By Larry & Stephanie Gilderman

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In Memory Of

ROSE GILSON

By Michael & Suzanne Gilson

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In Memory Of

CHARLES GILSON

By Michael & Suzanne Gilson

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In Memory Of

A. JAMES WEISS

By Janice Gorson

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In Memory Of

JOSEPH GORSON

By Janice Gorson

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In Memory Of

NICHOLAS GOLDENBERG

By Bea Graham

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In Memory Of

FRED H. HERMANN

By Robert & Eileen Hermann

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In Memory Of

FANNIE PHILLIPS

By Henry & Patricia Isenberg

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In Memory Of

ISAAC JACOBSON

By Melvin Jacobson

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In Memory Of

PINCHAS KAMELY

By Michal Kamely

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In Memory Of

JOSEPH KRISSEL

By Michael Krissel

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In Memory Of

M. TERESA ASTRAY-CANEDA

By Teresa Kwalick

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In Memory Of

ROSE LANG

By Arnold & Gale Lang

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In Memory Of

SAMUEL MARMAR

By David & Pamela Marmar

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In Memoriam February 2009

In Memory Of

GLORIA F. NASON

By Stanley Nason

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In Memory Of

IRENE NOBIL

By Jim & Lynn Nobil

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In Memory Of

SARA J. COHEN

By Jim & Lynn Nobil

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In Memory Of

WILLIAM POLLACK

By Joel & Linda Pollack

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In Memory Of

MALKA FRANK

By Joel & Linda Pollack

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In Memory Of

IDA O. PRESENT

By Marjorie Present

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In Memory Of

AMOS M. PRESENT

By Marjorie Present

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In Memory Of

SHIRLEY HOROWITZ

By Pauline Roller

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In Memory Of

AL ROLLER

By Pauline Roller

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In Memory Of

SOPHIE SAMUELS

By Sid Samuels

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In Memory Of

IRVING SANDERS

By Steven Sanders

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In Memory Of

JOHN A. SCHUR

By Lee Schur

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In Memory Of

MIRIAM BLINDER

By Steven & Barbara Smith

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In Memory Of

ANN R. KAPULSKY

By George & Muriel Swartz

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In Memory Of

MINNIE BERGER

By Mark & Sofy Wasser

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In Memory Of

ROBERT KINNEY

By Gerri Weisberg

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In Memory Of

SAMUEL WOLFE

By Larry & Dorothy Wolfe

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In Memory Of

MORRIS FEINBERG

By Larry & Dorothy Wolfe

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In Memory Of

PINCHAS KAMELY

By Michal Kamely

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In Memory Of

M. TERESA ASTRAY-CANEDA

By Teresa Kwalick

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In Memory Of

SAMUEL MARMAR

By David & Pamela Marmar

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YEDA - Knowledge

Yardena Kamely

Israel's Operation Cast Lead

What does "Operation Cast Lead" mean? Israel has taken to naming special times of rescue or war with the words: Operation_____. Some examples include:

Operation Magic Carpet (1949-1950): The rescue of Jews from Yemen;

Operation Thunderbolt (1976): The rescue of travelers on an Air France plane (including Israelis and other Jews) taken as hostages to Uganda by terrorists in 1976;

Operation Peace of the Galilee (1982): The original name given to the first Lebanon War;

Operation Moses (1985) and Operation Solomon (1990): The rescue of Beta Yisrael Jews from Ethiopia;

Operation Grapes of Wrath (1996): The action against Hizbollah in Lebanon.

In like fashion, "Operation Cast Lead" is the name given to the Israel Defense Force's (IDF) current (as I write) offensive in Gaza. For those not steeped in Israeli culture, the name seems quite odd, but it actually has great significance.

Hayim Nahman Bialik, Israel's national poet, wrote a *Hanukkah* poem called "For *Hanukkah*." The words are:

My father lit candles for me;
Like a torch the Shamash shone.
In whose honor, for whose glory?
For *Hanukkah* alone.

My teacher bought a big dreidel for me,
Cast of solid lead, the finest known.
In whose honor, sr
My mother made a pancake for me,
Hot and sweet and sugar-strewn.
In whose honor, for whose glory?
For *Hanukkah* alone.

My uncle had a present for me,
An old penny for my own.
In whose honor, for whose glory?
For *Hanukkah* alone.

So what's the connection? Hanukkah, as we know, is a holiday celebrating the Jewish triumph over Antiochus IV and his army. As a result of this triumph, The Temple in Jerusalem was cleaned and rededicated on the 25th of the Hebrew month of Kislev. Jewish life returned to normal… at least for a while. So what are the connections that Bialik's poem helps us make? Over 2,000 years later, Israel's offensive against Hamas began on the sixth day of *Hanukkah*. The name, "Operation Cast Lead," takes us to Bialik's poem and the dreidel he talks of that was "cast of solid (cast) lead." Consider, though, the words on every dreidel made in Israel: *Nes gadol hayah poh* – A great miracle happened HERE. Operation Cast Lead represents an attempt to free southern Israel from Hamas' rocket attacks on its citizens. Success would be another example of a great miracle happening here (or in our case, "there")…in Israel, one for our day to add to the dreidel legend. ◊

KJCC GIFT SHOP

NEED CARDS? NEED GIFTS?

COME TO THE KJCC GIFT SHOP FOR ALL YOUR NEEDS!

WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING:

HOUSE GIFTS

BAR AND BAT MITZVAH GIFTS AND CARDS

WEDDING GIFTS AND CARDS

YARZEIT CANDLES-ELECTRIC AND NATURAL

plus JEWELRY, MEZUZAHS, SEDER PLATES, MATZOH SWEEPERS,

CHALLAH PLATES, CHALLAH KNIVES AND MORE

If you do not see what you want, we can order it for you.

Call Joan Boruszak 852-0833.

Sisterhood

Joyce Peckman

This is my first report to you as Sisterhood president. I feel both honored and a little apprehensive to be walking in the footsteps of some truly wonderful predecessors. But we have an exceptional board and energetic members, so I'm sure we'll have a great season.

Outback Steakhouse was filled to the maximum when 127 people attended the KJCC Fashion Show Luncheon on January 14th. The food was good, and the show was better. Stuart and Lauren Sax always make an engaging presentation. They find beautiful and distinctive fashions that suit the styles of each of our brave, gorgeous models. Rene Rose was the epitome of casual chic. Nettie Seder, who did a terrific job chairing the event, looked elegant in black satin and nylon evening wear. Candy Stanlake was absolutely adorable in tie-dyed leggings and a baby-doll blouse by 180 Degrees. Zoe Berk managed to perfect several different looks, from preppie to gypsy chic to glamour girl. Patti Silver showed off two of my favorite outfits – a rust-colored, layered dress by Magdalena, and a magnificent Sue Wong halter dress. And of course everyone waits for Mary Lee Singer to model a bathing suit. This year she had two – and the brightly patterned Gottex (made in Israel) was a knockout!

Angelika's accessories are also always a lot of fun. This year the focus was on multifunctional bags that went from dress (as in formal) to backpack, and belts with changeable sizes and buckles.

The 50/50 was won by Marlene Caldes, who was visiting Joan Stark, and acted as an official photographer. Thank you to everyone who made it a success.

Thanks also to our members who helped to cater the Membership Drive dinner, and to Freda and Bill Ferns of Gyros King.

HOLD THE DATE: Saturday night, March 14th for our annual FUNd-raising event. The theme will be "The Old Country." We've booked the Club House at Coral Harbor, MM 88. There will be music, dancing, and a meat dinner catered by our members. We were discussing stuffed cabbage, brisket, etc., when Sofy, Zoe and Susan reminded me that not everyone's grandmother came from Poland or Russia. So be prepared for an exciting international smorgasbord! More information, including costs, will follow, but for now, start to think about your gastronomic roots, and look up some old recipes.

Pre-Passover pottery making at the home of Beth Kaminstein (and Ron Levy) will be early this year. We will make the item for a February firing (stay tuned to e-mail for the exact date), and return to glaze it in March. The goal for this year will be to create ceremonial washing cups (*Netilat Yadaim*). Then we can use them at the Women's Seder, scheduled for Wednesday, April 1st.

By now we will have enjoyed seeing "Bombshells, the Musical." Our next theatre event will be the celebrated "Les Miserables," an Actors' Playhouse production, at the Miracle Theatre. We have a limited number of seats for the Sunday, March 15th 2 p.m. matinee. The cost is $40. Call Bea Graham at 852-0214 for information and tickets.

Remember our Sisterhood gift shop, located in the KJCC lobby. Joan Boruszak works hard to find lovely items, and is always happy to accept orders and suggestions. We stock most of the usual list of Judaica items, candles to menorahs to mezuzahs to books to Kiddush cups. ◊

KJCC Annual Second Passover Seder

Reservations will be taken for members only until March 30th at which time they will be opened for others. Send your check early to confirm your place. Call Leslie at 852-3654 for information and reservations.

Thursday, April 9, 2009

6:30 pm

Islamorada Fishing Club

Adults $40

Children 12 and under are our guests.

Eye On The Arts
Gloria Avner

One of the benefits of snowbird return is the plethora of events that spring up like cultural mushrooms in "high season." The calendar is filling with great variety. Let's not miss anything good. Here is a select list of February events with some late January and early March offerings as well in and about the Upper Keys and a wee bit north of the rock. Make up a group. Have an outing.

***Now Until FEB.1st*: A JEW GROWS IN BROOKLYN**; a touching and hilarious new smash musical comedy about a family and a young boy's quest for the American Dream. The show has been playing to sold out *standing ovations*. At Dave and Mary Alper JCC, 11155 SW 112th Avenue, Miami; Tickets in $40 range. Info: Tickets by Phone: 888-875-2955

FEB. Fridays: DAVE FEDER at the Green Turtle, MM 82; A wonderful mix of old favorites, original material, requests, and Dave repartee as only he can present it, live and wild and very entertaining. 8 p.m. -11 p.m.

***NOW through FEB 15*: LOOPED, A play about Tallulah Bankhead and the nature of celebrity,** with terrific reviews. Yes, it's probably too big a schlep—downtown W. Palm Beach, but the performances are supposed to be terrific. If anyone is interested here is a web site with more information: www.cuillocentre.com or call 561-835-9226.

***Now through FEB. 8*: Avi Hoffman's *STILL JEWISH AFTER ALL THESE YEARS! A Life in the Theatre*.** Join PBS Star Avi Hoffman, who's entertained millions through his award-winning TV specials, "Too Jewish?" and "Too Jewish, Too!" for this brand new musical celebration. In his new show, Avi invites you along on an exhilarating array of engaging songs and comedic stories. *SPECIAL REDUCED TICKET PRICES:* $22-$30; Visit www.newvistatheatre.com or call 888-284-4633; Performance Schedule: Thursday and Friday – 8 p.m.; Saturday – 2 p.m. & 8 p.m.; Sunday – 2 p.m. & 7 p.m., all at West Boca Performing Arts Center, 12811 Glades Road (3 miles West of US 441).

***JAN. 22 -25*,** Thursday – Sunday 12 -8, **The Original Miami Beach Antiques Show.** One of the most prestigious antiques events in the country, with exhibitors and buyers from all over the world. You have never seen more art glass, antique jewelry, fine furniture, stained glass, *orientalia*, or folk art in your life. Make sure to wear comfy shoes and bring a bottle of water. $15/all 5 days.

JAN. 25, Sunday: **JOLLYSHIP PIRATE ROCK OPERA.** Founders Park, MM 87, Islamorada. I.C.E. presents Brooklyn's nautical rock Wunderkind. **Jollyship the Whiz-Bang** is an adults-only puppet troupe, rock band and theater company, incorporating music, puppetry, video and comedy in elaborate spectacle. Time to be announced. For more info: www.keysice.com

***JAN. 31*, Saturday: "POPS IN THE PARK: HOOKED ON CLASSICS," Keys Community Concert Band.** At T.I.B. Amphitheater at Islamorada's Founders Park, Bayside, Plantation Key, Free. MM 87; Bring your own chairs or blankets.
www.keyscommunityconcertband.org

***JAN. 30 & 31*: CLEVELAND SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** in residence in Miami, 8:00 p.m. at *Adrienne Arsht Center*, 1300 Biscayne Blvd., Miami; detailed info: at www.arshtcenter.org; I know a number of KJCC people who attended these concerts last year and were glowing in their praise. Maybe a few more of us could attend this year. *Shostakovich and Wagner* are on the program. Let's try for the Saturday night offering so we don't have to miss services. Call Gloria at 619-0216 if you want to make up a group.

FEB. 3,* Tuesday**, 8:00 p.m.: ***FLAMENCO PURO DANCE CO. This is one of the most riveting dance performances you are likely to see. The breathtaking *Clarita Filguieras* and her dancers and musicians will keep you spellbound. This is the second concert in the ***Upper Keys Concert Series***. Don't Miss it. At the comfortable, state-of-the-art, Coral Shores Performing Arts Center, MM 89, Tavernier. www.keysice.com

***FEB. 11*:DAVE FEDER SHOW** (not what you have seen at bars and restaurants, but *his actual internationally honed solo evening acoustic guitar concert, with all original material*). Time T.B.A., but think sunset-ish and come to the Amphitheater at Founders Park, MM 89. This marks the beginning of the "Breakfree" Series. See Dave (or this space next month) for more information.

***FEB. 11*: Dagny Johnson Botanical State Park, Lecture Series: "Women Conserving the Florida Keys."** Women who have worked for the preservation of the Florida Keys, including Dagny Johnson, the park's namesake. To be held at John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park Visitor Center, MM 102.5 Oceanside In Key Largo, at 7:30 p.m. Free admission but limited seating; gates open 7 p.m. Contact Visitor Center 305-451-9570.

***FEB 14 -16*: COCONUT GROVE ART SHOW,** Florida's premier fine art festival. Meet and talk with the artists, eat fun food, enjoy lots of entertainment and opportunities for children to create their own art. Make a day of it: $7/day or $17 for all 3 days. Children under 12 are admitted free.

***FEB. 21 & 22*: UPPER KEYS GIGANTIC NAUTICAL FLEA MARKET,**
Hundreds of marine-and water sports-related vendors offer wares to thousands of buyers seeking deals on new and used boats, marine equipment, electronics, fishing tackle, dive gear, nautical arts and crafts, and more. Located at Founders Park, MM 87 bayside, on Plantation Key. **Contact:** (305) 453-3802

***FEB. 21*, Saturday:** 8:00 p.m. **LEO KOTTKE and PIERRE BENSUSAN: Two of the highest regarded finger-style guitarists on the planet perform for the first time on the same evening in the same venue.** An event so rare and important that Public Television may be taping this concert for future broadcast. Come see and hear this live event in person in our very own Florida Keys! ICE presents this South Florida Center for the Arts Upper Keys Concert Series at the very comfortable Coral Shores Performing Arts Center (mile marker 89). **Contact:** Upper Keys Concert Series (305) 304-9059; www.keysice.com

FEB. 19, 20, 21 and 26, 27, 28: 8:00 p.m. **MESHUGINUNS**, THE ECUMENICAL NUNSENSE, Presented by The Keys Players, $20, San Pedro Church. MM 89 (305) 453-0997

***FEB. 28*, Saturday:** 4 p.m., **POPS IN THE PARK - From Bach to Beatles**, Florida Keys Community Concert Band at T.I.B. Amphitheater at Islamorada Founders Park, Bayside, MM 87, Plantation Key. Performances are outdoors; no chairs provided. Admission is free for all concerts. **Contact:** (305) 853-7294. ◊

World Jewish Report

Medina Roy

Mapping Memory

A team of Israeli researchers at UCLA has, for the first time, identified individual brain cells that are known to call up memory. In what could revolutionize the treatment of dementia, the researchers, experimenting with epilepsy patients, have "pinpointed specific parts of the brain where neurons were recorded 'firing up' as specific memories were being recalled." Led by Professor Itzhak Fried, a neurosurgery expert at Tel Aviv University, this "foundational" research and its results, were recently published in the journal *Science.* (*Dateline: World Jewry, December 2008 – January 2009*)

Dr. King and the Talmud

A special edition of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech has been prepared in the tradition of the Talmud by Rabbi Avi Weinstein, Director of Hillel's Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Learning. This special edition shows Biblical references and Jewish parallels in Dr. King's speech as well as an accompanying study guide. It is laid out as a *sugya,* which is a series of responsive questions. Hillel is the largest of the Jewish college campus organizations and is a part of more than 500 colleges and universities whose mission is "to enrich the lives of Jewish undergraduate and graduate students so that they may enrich the Jewish people and the world." (*www.hillel.org, 1-13-09*)

Happy Birthday, Sholom Aleichem

An exhibition of the works of Ukrainian-born Yiddish writer Sholom Aleichem opened in early December at the Kiev Museum of Books, to honor the 150th anniversary of his birth. The exhibit includes the writer's works in different languages, manuscripts, photos, portraits and documents. This coming March, as part of the celebration, the Sholom Aleichem Museum will be opened in Kiev where he wrote his most famous works, *"Tevye the Milkman," "Menachem- Mendl,"* and *"Railway Stories."* The museum is located near the birthplace of former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir and will be dedicated not just to the famous writer but also to Yiddish culture, architecture and folklore. Sholom Aleichem, born Sholem Naumovich Rabinovich to a poor family in imperial Russia, died in New York in 1916 at the age of 57. (*www.jta.org, 12-16-08)*

"Warrior Jews"

"Defiance," a movie which opened in theaters in January starring Daniel Craig (the most recent James bond) and Liev Schreiber, is based on Nechama Tec's nonfiction book of the same name. It tells the story of Zus Bielski and two of his surviving brothers, Tuvia and Asael, who together managed to rescue over 1,200 fellow Jews. The three Polish-Jewish Bielski brothers led a band of Jewish resistance fighters; theirs proved to be the largest armed Jewish group rescuing Jews in World War II. They created a safe haven for Jewish refugees by building a secret village in the forest of what is now Belarus, living there throughout the war, and fighting back against the Nazis and their collaborators. An interesting fact not a part of this movie is that this is really a three-generational saga – the grandfather fought the Nazis, the son fought in the Yom Kippur War, and the American-born grandson just recently moved to Israel and joined the Israeli Defense Forces. *(www.haaretz.com, 12-26-08).*

A Posthumous Pardon

Before leaving office, President Bush granted a posthumous pardon to Charles Winters, a Protestant Boston native who provided planes and weapons to Israel's armed forces during the 1948 War for Independence. Winters was in the airplane business after World War II and helped his Jewish friends who were shipping arms to aid in the struggle for the founding of the Jewish state. Winters served eighteen months in prison for violating the Neutrality Act, which forbids U.S. citizens from offering financial assistance and arms to parties in foreign conflicts in which the U.S. has not taken sides. He was also fined $5,000. Reginald Brown, an attorney who worked on the Winters pardon, said the pardon "rights a historical wrong and honors Charlie's belief that the creation of the Jewish state was a moral imperative of his time. … Charlie Winters helped shape human history for the better." In a letter written to President Bush appealing for a pardon for Winters, Steven Spielberg wrote, "While a pardon cannot make Charlie Winters whole, and regrettably he did not live to see it, it would be a fitting tribute to his memory and a great blessing to his family if this pardon is granted." Winters, who is considered a hero in Israel, died in 1984 and is buried in Israel. *(Associated Press, 12-23-08)*

A Murder in Yemen

The recent murder of 35-year-old Moshe Nahari, the leader of Yemen's tiny Jewish community and brother of its chief rabbi, has thrown the fate of Yemen's Jewish population into turmoil. Nahari, a teacher and religious leader of Raida, a city 50 miles from the capital Sa'ana, was killed on December 11, 2008 by a Muslim who demanded that Nahari convert to Islam or leave Yemen. The murder, along with recent incidents of harassment of the Jewish community, has stirred up old fears that the community may be open to further attacks. The majority of Yemen's Jews – once numbering around 60,000 - were evacuated to Israel in 1949 and 1950. An estimated 250 to 400 Jews, however, have chosen to stay in Yemen despite urgings for them to leave. Amnesty International has written to a government official urging the country to protect its Jews. The president of Yemen is offering to resettle the Jews of Raida to Sa'ana, where it is reported that they will be offered plots of land and money to move to a government-protected area. *(The Forward, 12-31-08)*

A Milestone in U.N.-Israeli Cooperation

In mid-December, Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations, Gabriela Shalev, signed a partnership agreement with the U.N. Development Program to provide technological aid to African developing countries in the area of agriculture, water, food, health and education. In Senegal and Benin, watering technologies developed by Israeli companies will be implemented to fight hunger. "Israel views sharing the expertise and knowledge we have accumulated with countries in need of the highest moral and diplomatic importance," said Shalev. *(www.ynetnews.com, 12-18-08*)

Allen Weinstein

The son of Russian-Jewish immigrants, historian Allen Weinstein has resigned his position as the ninth archivist of the United States due to health reasons. Weinstein suffers from Parkinson's disease. Born in New York in 1937, Weinstein's parents were deli owners in the Bronx. He taught at Smith College, Georgetown University, and Boston University before being confirmed in 2005 by the U.S. Senate to begin his service as leader of the National Archives and Records Administration. In 1986, he received the United Nations Peace Medal for "efforts to promote peace, dialogue and free elections in several critical parts of the world." *(American Libraries, December, 2008)*

Einstein Award

Bill Gates, co-founder and chairman of Microsoft Corporation, has become the first recipient of the Einstein Award given by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The award was presented at an American Friends of the Hebrew University dinner in New York on De-

cember 2, 2008. In accepting the award, Gates cited specific breakthroughs by the Hebrew University that have drastically improved the human condition, such as drip irrigation and water treatment to get the maximum use of this often scarce resource. He cited Hebrew University's "innovative research protocols," saying Israel is an agricultural laboratory to the world, and noted that three-quarters of the water used in Israel is recycled. Proceeds from the dinner, in excess of $1.5 million, will go to help fund cutting-edge plant and animal science research at the Hebrew University's Robert H. Smith Faculty of Agriculture, Food & Environment. *(The Forward, 1-8-09)*

Unseen Chagalls

The Leo Baeck College in London, "Europe's premier centre for Progressive Jewish Learning," will be auctioning some 50 previously unseen drawings and paintings by Marc Chagall on January 29th. The works were donated by Alfred and Imgard Neuman, who received them from Chagall himself over the course of their 25-year friendship. The Neumans were neighbors with Chagall in St. Paul-de-Vence in the south of France. What makes these works so unique is that they are of a personal nature. The friends would go to lunch or dinner together and each time they did, Chagall would give the Neumans a book and heavily illustrate it for them just as a little gift. These drawings have never before come up for auction. The Neumans donated their collection back in 1993 where, for the most part, it sat idle in the rare books room of the college library. The entire collection is valued somewhere between $370,000 to $520,000. *(www.jta.org, 1-7-09)*

Did you know…..

-According to statistics from Israel's Tourism Ministry, 14,000 Chinese tourists visited Israel in 2008, an increase of 40 percent over 2007. *(www.xinhuanet.com, 12-11-08)*

-Michael Ross, 37, son of a Holocaust survivor who was liberated from Dachau in 1945, became the first Jewish president of the Boston City council on January 5, 2008. (Boston Globe, 1-6-09)

-According to a new study published this past November by researchers at Yeshiva University and its Albert Einstein College of Medicine, regular attendance at religious services reduces the risk of death for women by 20 percent. (Uh oh…I'd better start showing up for services more often!) *(www.jta.org, 11-25-08)*

-A 23-year-old mechanical engineering student from Lake Grove, New York, won a latke-eating contest in Long Island, New York by downing 46 of them in only eight minutes. Pete Czerwinski said he had never eaten a latke before but that he's "just a 'power eater' whose brain never signals that he's full." Czerwinski broke the contest's previous record of 31 latkes, set in 2006. *(www.haaretz.com, 12-22-08)*

-RustyBrick, an internet company that builds, designs and develops websites, has created a new digital *siddur*, available for Apple's popular iPhone, for $9.99. In addition to prayer texts in several versions, the new product offers a feature to determine appropriate prayer times based on location plus a built-in database to help users locate the nearest *minyan*. The *siddur* is downloaded through iTunes. *(www.jta.org, 12-16-08)*

-Ukraine's oldest known man, who also was Jewish, died at the age of 111 on December 26, 2008. Mikhail Krichevsky was born in 1897 and was known as "the man of three centuries." (He was born in the 19th century, lived through the 20th and died in the 21st.) He graduated from a military engineering college and was an employee of the Scientific and Research Institute of Mines. Krichevsky was a WW I veteran. *(www.jta.org, 1-5-09)*

-The Israeli film *"Waltz with Bashir"* (reported on in *World Jewish Report's* December issue) was named best foreign language film at the Golden Globes awards in January. The film is Ari Folman's animated memoir of his experiences as a young Israeli soldier during the 1982 war with Lebanon. It's very possible that it may become the first Israeli film to win an Oscar. *(www.abcnews.com, 1-12-09)* ◊

The Longest Night of the Year

Remembering the Homeless

On Sunday, December 21, 2008, Steve and I represented the Keys Jewish Community Center at the National Homeless Person's Memorial Day service at Old Settler's Park in Tavernier. Each year since 1990 there has been a commemorative ceremony in the Keys to remember those who died homeless during the year. (And last year also in 100 cities around the nation, sponsored by NCH, the National Coalition for the Homeless.) The service is symbolically held on the day of the longest night of the year, night being when it is most obvious that a person has no home.

In 2008, there were 53 people, including two infants, who were remembered. This was almost double the number of homeless who had died during 2007 in Monroe County.

The service was led by Reverend Pam Feeser. As the name of each individual who had died was read, someone came up and lit a candle for that person. Rev. John Peloso of San Pedro Catholic Church read a prayer for each person and KJCC's own Dave Feder played background guitar music. After all the names were read, I read the *Yizkor Remembrance* from our Yizkor Prayer Booklet and Steve led Dave and I in the *Mourners Kaddish* in Hebrew and English.

This may sound very dry and boring, but the event was inspirational. It was the second year that I participated in this service and I was just as moved and humbled as I had been the year before. We think of our Keys community in terms of vacation, fun and pleasure. But the statistics about homeless in the Keys should give us pause. Two years ago, the number of homeless was estimated to be 1,100 individuals. It is believed that the number has increased by more than 50 percent since then.

To think that 53 adults and two infants died in the Keys last year from causes associated with being homeless is shocking to me. Steve and I come from New York City. When I heard about a homeless person dying there, I assumed it was from being exposed to the cold or as a victim of violence.

When we moved to the Keys, I thought of the homeless as guys who live under the bridges because they just want to live outdoors. I soon learned differently. The homeless are men, women and children of all ages. Yes, some live under bridges. They also live in the hammocks, sit outside Winn Dixie, and ride bicycles up and down U.S. 1 with no apparent purpose. Some suffer from addictions, some have psychiatric illnesses and some are homeless because they just do not have the physical and mental resources to be otherwise. As was pointed out by one of the speakers, in this economic climate there are many people in danger of losing their homes to foreclosure. Others are a paycheck away from finding themselves homeless. There are battered women and children who leave a dangerous situation, have no family or friends to turn to and, for whatever reason, are unwilling to go to a shelter.

I am reminded that it is only through the grace of the Almighty that Steve and I are strong enough of mind and body and have the resources not to be in a situation that could lead to us being homeless.

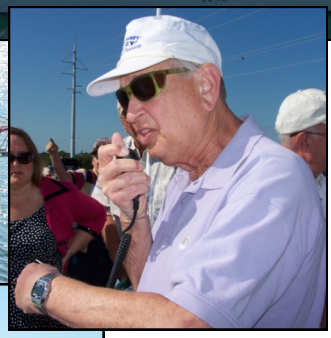
As we continue into an uncertain 2009, I ask you to remember in your prayers and deeds those less fortunate. There are many ways we can help. Donate food that we collect at KJCC and regularly send over to Burton Memorial Church), or directly to the First Baptist Church of Islamorada at MM 81.2. The NCH web site is www.nationalhomeless.org. Or you can contact the Southernmost Homeless Assistance League (Tom Wantuck, chair, at 852-3540) to find out how else you can help, whether it be a donation of money or something tangible that is needed, or in giving some of your time and energy and spirit.

So, not just one day a year, but every day, let us remember them.

-Carol Ann Steinbock

Photo Gallery

Scenes from the New Year's Day Blessing of the Fleet. As usual, Reb George Swartz represented KJCC. Above right, Joan and Big Jim Boruszak in "Thanks, Kids."



Many of the boats were festively decorated, and for early New Year's Day had lots of revelers. The Tibetan monks added their blessings to those of various local clergy.

Left and far left, Yardena and friends at the January 11th Solidarity with Israel rally on Miami Beach. Over 500 people showed up to hear a variety of speakers including famed law professor Alan Dershowitz. In photo at left, Norman Braman, Israel Solidarity Rally chair and Eli Doron, an Israeli teacher. In photo at right Yardena is flanked by two young Israelis also at the rally.

Photo Gallery

The Annual KJCC Fashion Show drew 127 guests to Outback Steak House on Wednesday, January 14th. Lauren and Stuart Sax once again dressed the brave KJCC models with their beautiful Angelika fashions, Lauren in the dressing room and Stuart suavely on the mike. Bravo to the models—Mary Lee, Candy, Zoe, Nettie, Rene and Patti, who all looked stunning. Thanks to Sunny Andracchio, Marlene Caldes and Lyn Penn for the photos.

Photo Gallery

Christmas Day saw the annual all-day party for KJCC at the Steinbock's, with everyone given a special plant grown by Steve upon departing. By the time you read this, it will just about be time for Steve to spend more time tending to and smelling his orchids, like in the lovely photo (taken by Zoe) on the lower right.

Photo Gallery

Everyone who attended Bombshells enjoyed the lively music and vignettes based upon the real life stories of a group of Miami women - several of whom we actually met at the close of the show. Immediately thereafter, some us of decided that it was time for Pauline to finally learn the right way to eat Chinese food. Here you have Meredith teaching her how to properly handle chopsticks.

-Joyce Peckman

Just before the Saturday, January 17th Mac Frampton Trio concert, Brownie Ballard (with flowers at left), founding director of SFCA, was presented with gifts of appreciation on her retirement after 25 years of leadership. With Brownie in the photo are the current members of the ICE/SFCA Concert Committee—Susan Gordon, Linda Lloyd and Gloria Avner.

Far left corner photo: KJCC was asked by the Hilton to conduct a Chanukah service for their guests. Steve Steinbock and many friends turned out to help.

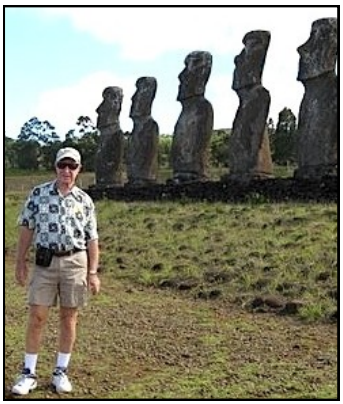
The right-hand photo is of a sand channukiah that was discovered on a Sanibel Island beach over the holidays. (It's 15-20 feet wide and carefully adorned with shells. The artist was anonymous.)

On Cruising the Pacific for 27 Days and Seeing Moai and Buying Real Panama Hats.

by Gene Silverman and Linda Pollack

Our exciting trip started with departure from Miami International Airport via American Airlines to Los Angeles. We left an hour late but somehow arrived exactly on time in Papeete, Tahiti, at 3:45 in the morning local time. That was the start of our adventure. We boarded the Tahitian Princess cruise ship, along with approximately 630 other passengers and 370 crew members, the same morning. Our itinerary took us from Tahiti, Moorea, and Bora Bora in French Polynesia to Pitcairn Island, Easter Island (which is part of Chile), San Martin and Callao in Peru, Manta, Ecuador, Panama Canal, Cristobal and San Blas Islands in Panama, Limon in Costa Rica, to our final destination of Port Everglades. In the course of our journey, we crossed the equator and went through the Panama Canal from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean.

We celebrated eight nights of Chanukah with people from New York, Illinois, France, Israel, Florida, Las Vegas, and other places. Princess supplied a meeting room replete with prayer books, yarmulkes, kosher wine, an electric menorah and, on the last night, potato latkes with apple sauce. Each week we had Friday night Shabbat services with wine and wonderful challah. Gene and Linda lit the candles and did the blessings. Joel did the *ch'motzei*. It was much like being at home at the KJCC.



Joel with the Moai on Easter Island.

Each port had something to offer, from the magnificent black pearls of Tahiti to the fascinating giastone Moai statues on Easter Island to meeting the descendants of the Bounty survivors on Pitcairn Island. We were never bored.

Joel, Linda, Mort, Gene on Bora Bora.

While at Manta, Ecuador, we learned that the Panama hat has always been produced in the village of Montecristi. Linda, Joel and Gene, of course, each had to have one. We bought coffee in Costa Rica and statues on Easter Island. Gene and Mort left Linda and Joel for supposedly three days at the port of San Martin for a trip to Cuzco and on to Machu Picchu in Peru. That little side trip turned into *five* days and was an adventure completely unplanned and at the mercy of the weather at an altitude of 12,000 feet. Linda and Joel's trip to the rain forest in Costa Rica was interesting and lots of fun.

The cruise was enjoyable, educational, and relaxing. All in all, it was a wonderful experience for each of us. We covered 8,000 nautical miles, and except for one day of light chop, most of the cruise was exceptionally smooth.

As Captain Stefano Ravera told us each day in his walk-around and from the bridge, the beautiful white lady was our home away from home. After a total of 27 days, the ship put in to Port Everglades and we returned to our non-floating homes here in the Keys. ◊

Chai-Lights Advertising Form/Order sheet

As the only official monthly publication of KJCC, Chai-Lights reaches an exclusive Keys audience. Every effort is made to offer KJCC members a stimulating and informative read. Please consider placing an ad for your business or professional service. If you know of any other business that could benefit from advertising in Chai-Lights, please give them a copy of this form.

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Chai-Lights is published ten times a year. Thank you for your support.

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Tallises, Torahs, Tibetans, and Peace (Or, Diaspora-R-Us)

Years ago, the Dalai Lama asked a convocation of Jewish spiritual leaders to meet with him in Dharamsala, India, the seat of his people's Tibetan government-in-exile. He wanted to know from these rabbis how a minority successfully retains its culture and keeps its heritage intact when they are expelled, surrounded by enemies who wish them ill or dead. (Read "Jew in the Lotus" by Mark Kamenetz). Jews and Tibetans have much in common. A few weeks ago, on a bright unlikely Shabbat morning, Tibetans came to "shul" in Tavernier, Florida.

by Gloria Avner

When I mentioned to Jewish friends at year's end that six Tibetan Buddhist monks were coming to the Keys to create a sand *mandala* for peace, puzzled looks told me this was not a universally understood event.

How does one explain the arrival of a group sent halfway around the world by their spiritual leader to create a symbol-laden picture in the round, fashioned over a five-day period, constructed one brilliantly dyed grain of sand at a time? Though the monks had been touring for six years, this would be the first peace *mandala*, designed to include ten of the world's religions' most significant symbols and the words that went with them. What is the greatest obstacle to peace, after all, but conflict between neighbors, at least one of whom thinks his religion and way of life is not merely superior to the other's, but the only true way.

The phase that boggles the mind is the final ceremony. The *mandala* has been completed, witnessed by hundreds of people while being constructed, and is finally blessed with deep chanting, cymbals, and the blowing of long copper trumpets. The very next moment, it is destroyed.

The head monk takes a brass ritual instrument called a *dorje* and cuts through the jewel-toned, four-foot-diameter circle as if it were a pizza knife. Then, he and all the other monks, using paint brushes like mini brooms, sweep the sand into a fine grey heap, transforming the bright symbols and words for peace into its common denominator, simple earth, and slips some into small baggies for distribution. Not only are we taught tolerance, but those of us who become attached to the beauty and meaning of the *mandala* over the five days of construction, learn the lesson of impermanence.

But here is the part I wish you all could have witnessed. It did not take place in or around the Burton Memorial Church Social Hall where the *mandala* was being constructed. It happened up the road and round the bend a bit, in our own Keys Jewish Com-

munity Center, on a Shabbat morning. KJCC was having a morning Torah service, an extremely rare event for us. Encouraged by our powers that be, having written Alan and Steve about this unique opportunity for two dispersed peoples to come together and having received permission, I asked the monks to join us at services.

Imagine the scene. Rabbi Agler, whose visit was the reason we were having that rare Saturday service, and our morning minyan are celebrating the service and we get to the part where we open the Torah. We are sitting in the first two rows of chairs, just beginning to study the *Parshah* in which Joseph's brothers come begging for famine relief from their as-yet-unrecognized brother whom, oops, they had sold into slavery. We hear sounds at the door. Two monks, their translator, and the Christian woman hosting the event walk down the aisle.

Within minutes the rabbi has us all standing on the *bimah*, looking very much like the *Alenu* part of the Friday night service with lots of birthday and anniversary celebrants present. The difference is that this is Saturday morning and we are gathered around the open Torah. The ark is open and the Holocaust Torah is visible.

Gloria, Erica and the head monk.

I will never forget the sight or feel of what happened when the monks heard the story of our Susice Torah rescued from the Nazis. As soon as the translator finished speaking, the head monk spontaneously bent in prostration and kissed the hem of the Torah's cover.

We stood among our Torahs, Jewish men in *yarmulkas* and *tallises* standing alongside two bare-armed, maroon-robe-clad monks chanting their blessing, all of us mesmerized by that deep throaty vibration rising ever higher in volume and pitch until it dramatically nose-dived into a powerful near-silent climax. It was a blessing on our "house," the sacred site, the building, the grounds, and all within, objects, people and projects, that they be successful in all endeavors as they/we go forward in compassion and loving kindness. Rabbi Agler blessed us all as well, with the blessing of the *Kohanim*. "May God cause his Countenance to shine upon you, be gracious unto you, and grant you peace."

When I offered the invitation, I had no idea how it would all play out, or even if the monks would be able to come. It turned out that no idea was needed. All unfolded better than a written script. Nearly everyone who was at services went afterwards to visit the monks and their *mandala* at Burton Memorial Church, along with a gaggle of other Jews already there or just arriving. Diaspora R Us -- and them. In these times of intense fear and anger, any vibration of peace and interfaith co-operation is a blessing to the world. The whole event, but particularly the KJCC segment, happening as it did at the confluence of two equally rare events no more than a few football fields apart, seemed both moving and miraculous. *Bashert*, in fact.◊

Personal Memories of a Famed Rabbi From Far Rockaway, Queens, New York

By Medina Roy

On December 3rd, I was saddened to read that the rabbi of my childhood shul, Rabbi Emanuel Rackman, had passed away at the age of 98. I grew up in Far Rockaway, New York, a beach-side community on the western end of Long Island and a part of the New York borough of Queens. Far Rockaway, back in the early 1950s, was very much like the Keys (except, of course, for the climate), in that the narrow island is surrounded by Jamaica Bay on the north and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. It was a summer resort area, complete with bungalows and cabanas on the beach. Sitting outside on the porch during the long summer evenings, one had to stop one's conversation about every 45 seconds as the airplanes were either taking off or coming in for a landing at Idlewild (now JFK) International Airport.

My family attended *Congregation Shaaray Tefila* (translated, it means the gates of prayer), a modern Orthodox shul. Shabbat mornings would begin with my dad standing in the doorway to my bedroom trying to wake me up to get ready to go to shul by making obnoxious chirping sounds. (I've come to learn that, indeed, the best way to wake someone up is to do something so irritating that it's better to get out of bed as quickly as possible than to continue to subject oneself to such annoyance!) We lived about a mile away from the shul and, since my family was Orthodox, we walked there on Saturday mornings. Our Rabbi, Emanuel Rackman, and his family were very much loved, admired and respected by the congregation.

I looked forward to Shabbat morning services not for the religious experience, but for an opportunity to see my friends outside of school. Since the rabbi was a stickler for decorum in the shul, we especially couldn't wait for his sermon, a sort of recess time, a time when the children made a quick exit from the sanctuary to play outside so as not to disturb the adults by squirming in our seats waiting for the endless sermon to come to a close. Little did I know (or care at the time) that the rabbi's sermons were, for the adults, the highlight of Shabbat morning services. Rabbi Rackman was meticulous in his preparation for his weekly sermons, which he delivered without notes.

It was only in reading his obituary a couple of weeks ago that I realized what an important figure in modern Jewish history he was. At his funeral, his son, Rabbi Bennet Rackman, eulogized his father as a "rabbi with guts," and indeed he was. He took on the cause first championed by his late daughter-in-law, the plight of *agunot,* religious women trapped in dead marriages and denied a *get,* a religious divorce, by their husbands. He was an outspoken advocate of a more inclusive and intellectually open form of Orthodox Judaism. He also brought to the attention of American Jews the struggle of Jewish refuseniks in the Soviet Union, who were unable to live as free Jews. He expected us not to forget them because they were our responsibility.

Rabbi Rackman

One of my childhood neighborhood playmates and also a member of *Shaaray Tefila* was Deborah Lipstadt, Debby to me, now Dr. Lipstadt, the director of the Institute for Jewish Studies and Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish and Holocaust Studies at Emory University and who is famous now in her own right. She delivered

one of the eulogies at Rabbi Rackman's funeral. She mentioned how, when she was in the first grade, her parents decided to move from Manhattan to Far Rockaway because they admired the local rabbi (Rackman) and decided that this was the man that they wanted as a spiritual leader and role model for their children. Dr. Lipstadt spoke in her eulogy that she has become the woman she is today to a large extent as a result of growing up in Rabbi Rackman's shul. Dr. Lipstadt is the author of several books and is a champion herself, aggressively exposing Holocaust deniers. She represented President George W. Bush as a member of the official American delegation to the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. She is an historical consultant to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and she helped design the section of the Museum dedicated to the American Response to the Holocaust. President Bill Clinton appointed Dr. Lipstadt to two consecutive terms on the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council. She is frequently called upon by the media to comment on Jewish matters. The Forward named her #2 on its list of the "Forward Fifty," the fifty top Jewish newsmakers for the year 2000. Deborah Lipstadt's eulogy of Rabbi Rackman can be read at her blog, http://lipstadt.blogspot.com, written on Tuesday, December 2, 2008. My old childhood friend Debby has become quite the accomplished and eminent scholar, and I'm very proud of her.

Bernie Ginsberg (I like to call him KJCC's "Rav-in-Residence") also grew up in Far Rockaway, and his family also were members of *Shaaray Tefila*. He told me that he always looked forward to the rabbi's Open House, usually around the time of the High Holy Days. Bernie's uncle had a business, The American Almond Company, which manufactured a variety of candies and nuts. Bernie's dad would provide the rabbi's wife with all the nuts she needed for her baked goods. She would bake for days in preparation for the Open House.

I spoke with my uncle Norman Rosenman (actually he's my cousin a few times removed, but he felt more like an uncle than a cousin). Normie was Bernie Ginsberg's Bar Mitzvah teacher and also served as one of the *Chazanim* (cantors) for many years. He said *Shaaray Tefila* was known for being a "liberal" Orthodox shul. He told me about services during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The sanctuary could not hold all of the congregants and so a separate hall would be used for the overflow. It would not be a good idea for the two Yom Kippur services to end at different times, since everyone would be hungry and eager to break the fast. Rabbi Rackman came to the pulpit just before the *ne'iyla* closing prayer and simply laid down his watch without saying a word so that Normie would keep track of time and know when to bring the service to an end.

Uncle Normie, Debby Lipstadt and the obituary written in The Jewish Star, the newspaper of the Orthodox communities of Long Island, all mentioned that Rabbi Rackman was never ashamed to say, "I don't know the answer to that," when asked a question that he truly either did not know the answer to or, if there was no answer, as when a congregant asked "How could G-d allow the Holocaust to happen?" He wouldn't look for excuses or hide behind questions. He would simply say, "I don't know."

During World War II Rabbi Rackman served as military chaplain in the Army Air Corps and retired as a colonel. Rabbi Rackman left *Shaaray Tefila* in 1967 and moved on to become spiritual leader of New York's prestigious Fifth Avenue Synagogue. He was also president of both the New York Board of Rabbis and the Rabbinical Council of America. In 1970, he became provost of Yeshiva University. Toward the end of his life he became president and later Chancellor of Bar Ilan University in Ramat Gan, Israel.

Shaaray Tefila burned to the ground in 1970. The neighborhood had changed dramatically, so it was rebuilt about a half a mile away in Lawrence in Nassau County. According to Uncle Normie, it is not as "liberal" as it was back in the day. I wonder if the children there are as lucky as Bernie and I were to have had a childhood rabbi the likes of Emanuel Rackman. ◊

-This Month in Jewish History-

It Happened One February

by Gloria Avner

For centuries, the global Jewish community was not even aware of the existence of a Jewish community isolated in the northern province of Gondar, in Ethiopia, just off the horn of Africa and near the southern end of the Red Sea as it empties into the Indian Ocean. Once these people had been kings, half a million strong. They called themselves "Beta Israel—the House of Israel." In 1984 they were a people in exile, the victims of famine, on the brink of starvation.

Their neighbors called them "Falashas," the outsiders, the aliens. Living in their thatched huts, they had ruled the mountain highlands around Lake Tana centuries ago. They were a people who studied the Torah, who were strictly observant in pre-Talmudic traditions and who remembered the time when Jerusalem was mighty.

There was joy, finally, in the Sudanese camps as the exodus began.

Because their traditions were passed orally, we have only theories about their origins. One is that they may be the lost Israelite tribe of Dan. Another is that they may be the direct descendants of Menelik I, the son of King Solomon and Queen Sheba. There are others, some not as romantic. The two important points are these: up until very recently (1972) there were "halakhic" questions as to the genuine Jewishness of the *Falashas*; and in February, 1985, the government finally began to rescue and repatriate them. That first operation was called "Mitzvah Moshe."

I am writing about "Operation Moses" primarily because we like to look to important events in our history. We explore these events, and in the process we educate ourselves. This time I am doing something else as well--writing to honor my uncle, Perry Gerber.

Uncle Perry was ahead of "Operation Moses" by nearly 30 years. He was ready to liberate the Ethiopian Jews in the late 1950s.

He had his passport. He had a ticket to Israel. He had joined a group of young people in Chicago, led by an organizer from infant Israel. Fired with zeal, eager to right the wrongs of the Holocaust, they were preparing to join the "Haganah" and give up their lives if necessary. (If Uncle Perry's parents, my Russian-born, Yiddish-speaking Bubbe and Zadie, or my mother, his sister, had known his plans, they would have had heart attacks.).

Israel was suffering birth pangs. Uncle Perry, an artist by trade and compassionate atheist by belief, wanted to help. He'd read of the *Falashas*. Their plight pulled on the superficially cynical young man's heartstrings. He asked their leader when the group would be able to start bringing *Falashas* as well as European survivors and displaced persons to Israel. In the words of that leader, Israel was

intended to be a country for the East European Jews; he said to my uncle it would not be appropriate to take the *Falashas* out of Africa.

Uncle Perry was astonished, heartbroken, disillusioned, and angry. He tore into bits both his ticket and passport and left the group and his dream behind. The hearts of his immediate family were safe—they never knew word one about his plans—but it would take nearly thirty more years before the *Falashas* would be equally safe.

It was not until 1972 that Rabbi Ovadia Yossef, Israel's Chief Sephardic Rabbi, made the following statement: "I have come to the conclusion that the *Falashas* are Jews who must be saved from absorption and assimilation. We are obliged to speed up their immigration to Israel and educate them in the spirit of the holy Torah, making them partners in the building of the Holy Land."

A young Falasha rescuee seeing, probably, his first doctor and nurse.

Three years later, in 1975, Rabbi Shlomo Goren, Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi, was quoted as saying "You are our brothers, you are our blood and our flesh. You are the true Jews." Later that year the Beta Israel were officially recognized under Israel's Law of Return.

The story of the return of the Beta Israel to the Jewish State is a story of planning and hopes complicated by political problems, military obstacles, family separations and illness. Prime Minister Menachem Begin, eager to facilitate the rescue of the Jews of Ethiopia, moved to warm diplomatic relations with Ethiopia. Operation Moses was the first large-scale rescue operation of the Beta Israel. Because of the tenuous diplomatic situation between the nations, as well as the risk of flying over Arab airspace en route, the operation was performed with utmost secrecy.

In the months leading up to and during Operation Moses, thousands of men, women and children made the long journey from their villages in northern Ethiopia to staging camps in neighboring Sudan. Once in Sudan, they waited for transport to Israel via various routes.

Under complete secrecy, Operation Moses ended six weeks after it had begun. When it was over, 8,000 Ethiopian Jews had arrived in Israel. Israel ended with an exclamation point through action, once and for all, the longstanding "halakhic" debate over whether the "Falashas" of Ethiopia were indeed part of our "mishpocha."

Later, Operation Joshua, and finally, Operation Solomon, in 1991, would complete the rescue in even more dramatic manner. The mission began on Friday, May 24 and continued non-stop for 36 straight hours. A total of 36 El Al jumbo jets and Hercules C-130 transport planes, with all the seats removed to accommodate the maximum number of passengers, brought the last of the Beta Israel to their new home in Israel.

Operation Solomon, named after the king from whom the Beta Israel claim their lineage, ended almost as quickly as it began. A total of 14,324 Ethiopian Jews were rescued, reunited with their families, and resettled in Israel in a modern exodus of the grandest design.

The *Falashas* have had difficulties adjusting to life in a very different world, but their prophecy of return has been fulfilled and they continue to practice Judaism. My uncle Perry wishes only that it had happened sooner. And that he had been able to be part of that rescue. After all, he believed it the right thing to do long before the rabbis came around and agreed. ◊

Tu B'Shevat: Jewish Appreciation of the Natural World

Tu B'Shevat, the New Year for Trees, falls on February 9th this year. Last year's Chai-Lights included an original essay by Gloria Avner about the mystical teachings connected to this particular New Year celebration. This year we thought to bring you another perspective, that of the emergence of Tu B'Shevat as a kind of Jewish celebration of the environment. More and more Jewish schools, such as our own KJCC Sunday School, hold a special Tu B'Shevat seder that teaches appreciation for nature in the embodiment of the noble tree, provider of food and shade and beauty and so often, in many other cultures as well as our own, the symbol for life itself and all its meandering connections. As with so many things, traditional Jewish teachings are being applied, through new eyes, to challenges offered by the modern world. This article is adapted from an internet article by Richard H. Schwartz, Ph.D that appeared on the web site all-creatures.org. His point was to promote vegetarianism. Ours is not. Ours is to explore the holiday and its teachings more broadly. We thank Dr. Schwartz for his scholarship. Anyone who wishes to pursue the vegetarian angle is encouraged to visit the web site.

The *Tu B'Shevat* seder, in which fruits and nuts are eaten, along with the singing of songs and the recitation of biblical verses related to trees and fruits, is the only sacred meal where only vegetarian--actually fruitarian--foods are eaten by all who participate. This is consistent with the diet in the Garden of Eden, as indicated by God's first (completely vegetarian, by the way) dietary law:

And God said: "Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree that has seed-yielding fruit; to you it shall be for food." (Gen.1:29)

The Talmud refers to *Tu B'Shevat* as the New Year for Trees. It is considered to be the date on which the fate of trees is decided for the coming year. In recent years, one of the prime ways of celebrating *Tu B'Shevat*, especially in Israel, is through the planting of trees.

Many contemporary Jews look on Tu *B'Shevat* as a Jewish Earth Day, and use *Tu B'Shevat* seders as a chance to discuss how Jewish values can be applied to reduce many of today's ecological threats. Our Jewish sages, as did the founders of most cultures, understood the importance of trees. But they could not have understood the pace of the modern world, and how we are denuding our planet of its trees. We are destroying forest areas in countries such as Brazil and Costa Rica, where at least half the world's species of plants and animals live.

When God created the world, He was able to say, "It is very good" (*Genesis 1:31*). Everything was in harmony as God had planned. The waters were clean, the air was pure. But what must God think about the world today?

An ancient *midrash* has become all too relevant today: In the hour when the Holy one, blessed be He, created the first person,

He showed him the trees in the Garden of Eden, and said to him: "See My works, how fine they are; Now all that I have created, I created for your benefit. Think upon this and do not corrupt and destroy My world. For if you destroy it, there is no one to restore it after you." (*Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:28*)

The Talmudic sages assert that people's role is to enhance the world as "co-partners of God in the work of creation." (*Shabbat 10a*) They indicated great concern about preserving the environment and preventing pollution. They state: "It is forbidden to live in a town which has no garden or greenery" *(Kiddushin 4:12; 66d)*. Threshing (for the non-rural among us, the process of mechanically separating seeds from harvested plants) floors had to be placed far enough away so a town would not be dirtied by chaff carried by winds (*Baba Batra 2:8*). Tanneries had to be kept well outside a town and could be placed only on the eastern side of a town, so that odors carried by the prevailing western winds would not overwhelm the town (*Baba Batra 2:8,9*).

Tu B'Shevat embodies the important teaching that "The earth is the Lord's" (Psalm 24:1) and that people are to be stewards of the earth. Property is a sacred trust given by God; it must be used to fulfill God's purposes. No person has absolute or exclusive control over his or her possessions. The concept that people have custodial care of the earth, as opposed to ownership, is illustrated by this ancient story:

Two men were fighting over a piece of land. Each claimed ownership and bolstered his claim with apparent proof. To resolve their differences, they agreed to put the case before the rabbi. The rabbi listened but could come to no decision because both seemed to be right. Finally he said, "Since I cannot decide to whom this land belongs, let us ask the land." He put his ear to the ground and, after a moment, straightened up. "Gentlemen, the land says it belongs to neither of you but that you belong to it."

Tu B'Shvat reflects the Torah mandate that we are not to be wasteful or destroy unnecessarily anything of value. It is interesting that this prohibition, called *bal tashchit* ("Thou shalt not destroy") is based on concern for fruit-bearing trees, as indicated in the following Torah statement:

*When Thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, Thou shall not destroy (*lo tashchit*) the trees thereof by wielding an ax against them; for Thou mayest eat of them but Thou shalt not cut them down; for is the tree of the field man, that it should be besieged of thee? Only the trees of which Thou knoweth that they are not trees for food, them Thou mayest destroy and cut down, that Thou mayest build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it fall.* (Deut. 20:19-20)

Choni (the rainmaker) was walking along a road when he saw an old man planting a carob tree. Choni asked him: "How many years will it take for this tree to yield fruit?" The man answered that it would take seventy years. Choni then asked: "Are you so healthy a man that you expect to live that length of time and eat of its fruit?" The man answered: "I found a fruitful world because my ancestors planned for me. So I will do the same for my children."

It is customary, on *Tu B'Shevat*, to recite Psalm 104, which indicates how God's concern and care extends to all creatures, and illustrates that God created the entire earth as a unity, in ecological balance:

...Thou [God] art the One Who sends forth springs into brooks, that they may run between mountains, to give drink to every beast of the fields; the creatures of the forest quench their thirst. Beside them dwell the fowl of the heavens; Thou art He Who waters the mountains from His upper chambers; Thou art He Who causes the grass to spring up for the cattle, and herb for the service of man, to bring forth bread from the earth. How manifold art Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy property.

It sounds simple, as profound things often are: enjoy the fruits from the trees. But remember the trees they came from. And care for them and preserve them and all their gifts for your children. ◊

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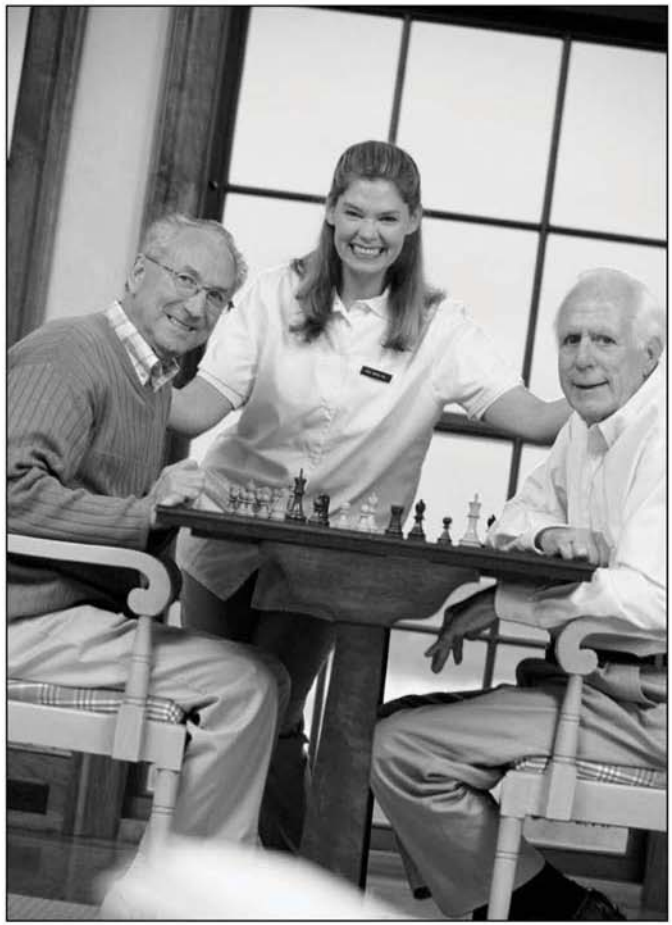

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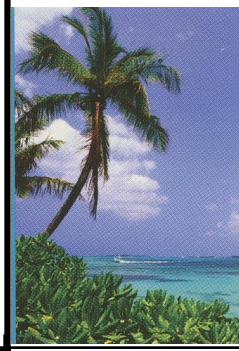

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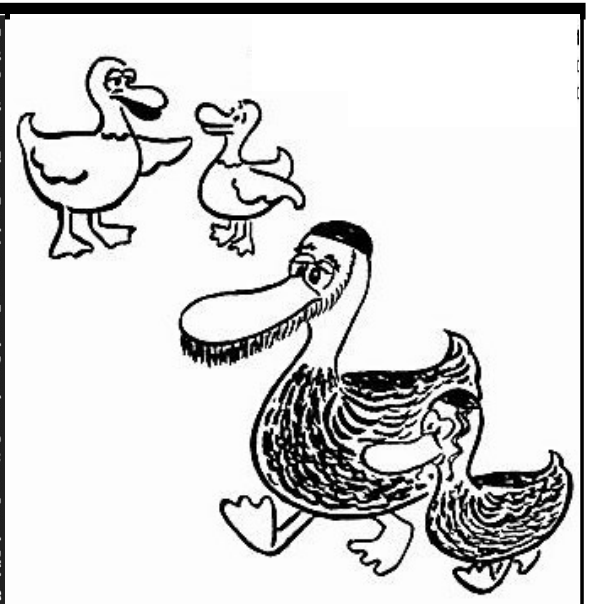

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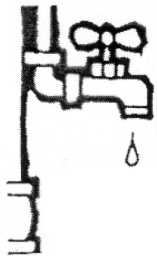

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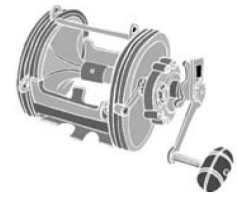

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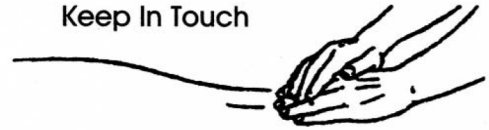

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