

Chai~Lights



October 2013

27 Tishrei - 27 Cheshvan 5774

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Keys Jewish Community Center

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

October 2013

27 Tishrei - 27 Cheshvan

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4 Steve Steinbock <i>Arlene & John Line</i>	5 Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan
6 Sisterhood Meeting 9:30 a.m.	7	8	9	10	11 George Swartz <i>Barbara & Richard Knowles</i> 6:30 Sisterhood Dinner, Services 8:00	12 Torah Learning Service w/ Rabbi Agler 10 a.m.
13 KJCC Board Meeting 9 a.m.	14 Columbus Day	15	16	17	18 Bernie Ginsberg & Will Pollack <i>Linda & Joel Pollack</i>	19 Will Pollack's Bar Mitzvah 10 a.m.
20	21	22	23	24	25 Joyce Peckman 6:30 Service	26
27	28	29	30	31	<div>Names denote leaders of Friday services. <i>Italicized</i> names are Oneg sponsors. Services every Friday at 8:00 p.m. except where noted.</div>	

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CHAI-LIGHTS is the
monthly publication of the
Keys Jewish Community Center
P.O. Box 1332
Tavernier, Florida 33070
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President's Message Bernard Ginsberg



Yom Kippur is barely past, yet we are already strong into our regular cycle of Jewish events. This morning I watched as our children decorated the Sukkah. It was a beautiful thing to see—the children scampering over the trellises of the gazebo while decorating, then standing inside practicing the blessings for Sukkoth. I recruited Kathy and Joe Shabathai, along with Joel Bofshever and Steve Hartz, who had all come to support the children, to deliver the bags of food we collected over the Holidays for the food bank at Burton Memorial Church. (We filled every square inch of a large SUV with food. Thank you, Gloria, for the wonderful idea.) It was a very satisfying end to the High Holidays.

The rabbi's Holiday messages are already having some resonance in my life. As I was leaving the synagogue on Sunday, there was a steady drizzle. I thought of one of Rabbi Agler's Yom Kippur "fast talk" sessions where he used newly written poetic *bruchahs* to thank G-d for the little pleasures in our lives, and composed my own special *bruchah* for this rainy day: "Blessed art thou O Lord our G-d, who has created drizzly, gloomy Sundays so we may nap without guilt."

I must say that High Holiday services this year were outstanding. I have received

the highest compliments for Rabbi Agler's leadership and his inspiring sermons from (it seems) everyone who attended. Yes, it was Rabbi Agler's first year here, but he worked with Cantor Halpern to produce a seamless service.

Sisterhood prepared two wonderful dinners, before Rosh Hashanah and after Yom Kippur. Our Ritual Chair, Gloria Avner, worked hard and long and organized everything wonderfully. We had beautiful, fresh white flowers on the Bima due to Sisterhood and Lauren Sax and Jane Friedman. Notice the highly polished Torah crowns? Thank Joel Pollack, Steve Steinbock and Stuart Sax.

Don Zinner and Bobby Temkin volunteered to chant the traditional priestly blessing in place of our beloved Jim Boruszak, may he rest in peace, who performed the Kohanic blessing for years. (I even practiced blowing the shofar, though at times you couldn't tell.)

It all came together perfectly. Everything went off without a hitch. I can't thank everyone enough for the loving efforts that they made.

On October 19th all of KJCC is invited to the Bar Mitzvah of Will Pollack, grandson of treasured members Linda and Joel Pollack. We all look forward to being a part of this wonderful Pollack family *simcha*.

Shanah Tova, Bernie

Nosh

Rabbi Agler Torah Service, October 12th

Having apparently recovered from High Holidays (please see the recap section beginning on page 22), Rabbi Rich Agler has volunteered to lead a Shabbat morning service/Torah Learning on October 12th. Based upon the rave reviews she and Bernie heard about his teachings and gentle guidance during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Gloria gleefully doubts that we'll have trouble securing a minion.

A Special Thank You to Mort and Gene

Steve Steinbock reports that, thanks to the generosity of Mort and Gene Silverman, a new orchard is taking place on the front lawn of KJCC. They have donated eight trees — four avocados and four mangoes — with a few more to be planted. There are three species of each type of fruit. The plan is that they'll fruit early, mid- and late in the season, from June through September. Mort and Gene's hope is to have provided a lasting gift for many future generations of KJCC mishpocha. All of KJCC sends its warmest thanks.

KJCC's Tashlich is posted on YouTube

Gloria sent along a YouTube link of a video of KJCC at this year's Tashlich. She describes it as "overflowing with joyful noise" as sins were cast into the ocean. The link is <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAx2po9FIY>. We'll also be asking Alan to post it to the KJCC site.

October Anniversaries

		Years
2nd	Jonathan & Arlene Line.....	37
2nd	Paul & Barbara Bernstein.....	19
15th	David & Toby Goldfinger.....	54
23rd	Michael & Suzanne Gilson.....	12
31st	Harvey & Judith Klein.....	59

Birthdays

2nd.....	Michael Gilson
4th.....	Michael Kanarek
4th.....	Michael Krissel
6th.....	Joel Bernard
7th.....	Jordan Feig
11th.....	Cynthia Arsenault
11th.....	Ian Bader
11th.....	Olivia Landes
12th.....	Benay Krissel
13th.....	Salomon Turner
13th.....	Sean Bader
14th.....	Paul L. Friedman
14th.....	Sidney Finkelstein
15th.....	Marcia Kreitman
15th.....	Matthew A. Silverman
16th.....	Kiersten Persoff
16th.....	Ronald Kaplan
17th.....	Stacey W. Seewald
18th.....	Payton Borisoff
20th.....	Barbara Knowles
21st.....	Sammy Knowles
22nd.....	Joseph Shabathai
22nd.....	Susan Roberts
24th.....	Marnie Gershowitz
24th.....	Stacy Temkin
25th.....	Landon Strasser
26th.....	Natalio Abrudsky
29th.....	Adriana Sherman
29th.....	Patricia Schocket
29th.....	Shyella Mayk
30th.....	Franklin Greenman
30th.....	Katie J. Schur
30th.....	Mark Hitzig
31st.....	Brittany Schur
31st.....	Susan Cooper

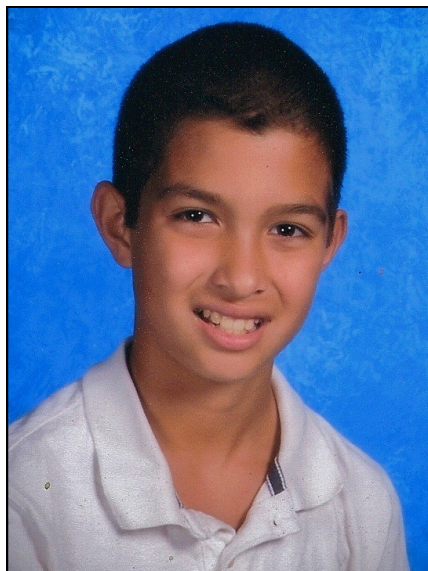
Oneg Sponsors for October 2013

October 4th - John and Arlene Line for their anniversary.

October 11th - Richard and Barbara Knowles for Barbara's birthday.

October 18th - Joel and Linda Pollack in honor of Will Pollack's Bar Mitzvah.

The Congregation is invited to attend the Bar Mitzvah of Will Travis Pollack, son of Roy and Vippi Pollack of Austin, Texas, and grandson of Joel and Linda Pollack, on Saturday, October 19th, 2013, at 10 a.m. Please join in celebrating this simcha as Will is called to the Torah. Rabbi Richard Agler will officiate at the ceremony. A Kiddush lunch will be served in the Ruth Richardson Social Hall following the service.



Ongoing Projects and Mitzvah Programs of KJCC

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE: If you know of any member who should receive a get well, congratulations or condolence card from the KJCC, call Gene Silverman at 305-664-3316.

CEMETERY INFORMATION: If you wish to plan for the very distant future, you can reserve space at the Kendall Mt. Nebo Cemetery in the KJCC section. Call Stuart Sax, 305-586-8729.

MEDITATION GARDEN: Have you visited our beautiful garden? Call Steve Steinbock, 305-852-6152, to reserve a bench, brick or tree plaque for posterity.

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

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

KJCC TREE OF LIFE LEAVES and ROCKS, SANCTUARY SEAT PLATES, YARTZEIT MEMORIAL PLAQUES, BOOKPLATES for siddurim: Call Carol Steinbock to arrange your donation, 305-852-6152.

JNF TREES IN ISRAEL: A gift of a tree, or two or more, makes a long remembered way to honor a loved one, a relative, a friend or an occasion. Both Israel and the KJCC benefit. Call Georgia Landau, 305-393-9885.

CHAI-LIGHTS MITZVAH: Place a greeting or notice in Chai-Lights. Call Carol Steinbock, 305-852-6152, to make your donation.

ADVERTISEMENT IN CHAI-LIGHTS or DIRECTORY: Your business ad will appear in every issue of Chai-Lights. Call Linda Pollack, 305-852-8575, for 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. Honorarium and memorial cards can also be requested. Donations can be earmarked to our various ongoing funds; e.g. Holocaust Education Fund, Meditation Garden, Rabbi & Cantor Fund, Scholarship Fund, Sara Cohen Memorial Tzedukah Fund, Sunshine Fund, or General Fund.

KJCC Live Green - Recycle



In our quest to help you help the planet, we are collecting:

- ◆ **ink cartridges**
- ◆ **laser toners** (not previously recycled)
- ◆ **cell phones**
- ◆ **lap top computers**
- ◆ **i devices**
- ◆ **tablets**
- ◆ **and more.**
- ◆ **Items can be working or in need of repair.**

**Contact Carol Steinbock
(305) 393-1205
or just bring to the KJCC.**



Sisterhood

Barbara Knowles



The High Holidays have been completed and we're left with the most wonderful memories. I hope everyone enjoyed and appreciated the services that were performed by Rabbi Richard Agler and Cantor Mark Halpern. The word that kept flowing to my mind every time someone asked what I thought of the services was "electrifying." I think that word just sums it up. In my opinion they were the best High Holiday services I have ever been to. Time just flew by and I truly believe everyone there really wanted to be there. The powerful new sound system that we now have thanks to the efforts of Dave Feder and Sam Vinicur also sounded amazing. No matter where Rabbi Agler walked in the Sanctuary, his voice amplified.

There are so many of you that I owe my sincere thanks and appreciation to for chairing, cooking, cleaning and for making both our "terrific" Erev Rosh Hashanah Dinner and our Break-Fast huge successes.

I can't say thank you enough times to Erica Garrett for taking control of the Rosh Hashanah Dinner and to Lauren Sax and Kathy Shabathai for our Break-Fast. We had more people at both events than I've seen in the past and both were a-list events thanks to the efforts of all of Sisterhood and others that contributed. Thank you also to Miriam Sklar for the homemade Challah that we enjoyed. Thanks just pour out of me to *everyone* who donated their time, efforts and food; it was all such a wonderful team effort. Sincere, emotional congratulations and thanks to all. If I haven't mentioned everyone personally, it's not that anything that was done went unnoticed; there were so many people who made these Holidays a complete success that if I mentioned everyone I'd get in trouble for way too long a column. But know you all have my personal thanks and wishes for a wonderful new year.

Moving a little backwards, I also understand that S'lichot was a huge success as well. Thanks to Lauren and Stuart Sax who hosted, providing the pizza, movie, snacks and opening act. I'm told everyone had a wonderful time.

Though the Holidays are over, Sisterhood is winding down only a little. We'll be sponsoring another wonderful Shabbat Dinner on Friday, October 11th. It will start at 6:30 before services and will be a "chicken" dinner. We are very fortunate that two of our new members, Joel and Toby Bofshever, have decided to donate all the cooked "Kosher" chickens for this event. They are doing this to honor their long-time friend Joyce Peckman and to welcome her back to the Keys. The side dish commitments are still a little sparse. I will be chairing this event, so anyone wishing to bring side dishes, or help in any way, please coordinate with me at 305-772-0503. The donation for this dinner is \$10.00 per person for members- no charge for children 12 & under. Non-members, including children, will be \$15.00. There will also be a 50/50 raffle before sundown.

We also will be having another big event happening in October, and that's Joel and Linda Pollack's grandson's Bar Mitzvah. Will Pollack is being called to the Bema on October 19th for what is promising to be a great and sweet day.

I am still working on our big fundraising event for the year, which will be a raffle of a trip for \$100.00 per person. The drawing will be held at our annual brunch after the installation of Officers, on February 9th, 2014. (There will be much more information about this.)

Again, a very Happy New Year to all and make it a great month! ♦

Sisterhood's Count Your Blessings Fundraiser

As we begin the New Year, and in the spirit of thanksgiving, the KJCC Sisterhood wants to recognize and appreciate all the blessings in our lives, both big and small. Please support our "Count Your Blessings" fundraiser by focusing on gratitude and help our Sisterhood projects.



Please check the blessings listed and make a donation for each. You are welcome to compose your own personal blessings by adding them below.

- _____ Today my family is healthy and well.
- _____ My life is abundant and prosperous.
- _____ My friends support and love me.
- _____ I have a loving and supportive partner.
- _____ My grandchildren bring me joy and love.
- _____ Today I have reached out to others in need.
- _____ I love my job and the rewards it brings.
- _____ Today I received great news.
- _____ I am blessed to live in the Florida Keys.
- _____ Today I took care of my body and exercised.
- _____ I am not alone.

My own blessings _____

Total number of blessings _____

@ \$2.00 per blessing \$ _____

Additional Contribution \$ _____

Total Contribution \$ _____

Complete and return by
November 28th to:
KJCC Sisterhood
PO Box 116
Tavernier, FL 33070

Please copy this page, or
tear out of Chai-Lights,
and send with your check.

**Finally, a
Fundraiser you do
not have to attend!**

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.

Bookplates

Ginsberg, Bernard

In Memory of

Joseph Goldberg, MD

Rabbi & Cantor Fund

Bernstein, Paul & Barbara

Calev, Barbara

Ginsberg, Bernard

Gross, David & Patti

Hayden, Beth

Kaufman, Michael & Lorena

Levy, Ron & Beth Kaminstein

Lieberman-Garrett, Erica

Mont, Dave & Georgia Landau

Pincus, Linda

Rose, Skip

Smith, Steve & Barbara

Chai-Lights

Bernstein, Paul & Barbara

Pincus, Linda

Rose, Skip

Roy, Medina

Smith, Steve & Barbara

General Fund

Begam, Delores

Beinfest, Bennett & Deborah

Cole, Ronald

Cooper, Alan & Susan

Gilson, Michael & Suzanne

Ginsberg, Bernard

Harell, Allan

Kreitman, Marcia

Pincus, Linda

Roberts, Paul & Susan

Willner, Sherrie

In Honor of
please pray for Cathy

love offering

Scholarship Fund

Bernstein, Paul & Barbara

Levy, Ron & Beth Kaminstein

Roy, Medina

Singer, Mary Lee

In Honor of

memory Robert W. Singer
& Jon R. Singer

Holocaust Education Center

Roy, Medina

Steinbock, Steve & Carol

Sisterhood General Fund

Rose, Skip

In Memory of
Rene Rose

Meditation Garden

Bernstein, Paul & Barbara brick - in honor of "Gabbi"

Bernie Ginsberg

Bernstein, Paul & Barbara brick -in honor of the 3

morahs, Gloria Avner, Yardena Kamely, Susan Gordon

Roy, Medina

Silverman, Mort & Gene

Vinicur, Sam

In Honor Of

Sisterhood Oneg Fund

Bofshever, Joel & Toby

In Honor of
Joyce Peckman's
homecoming

Coltman, Barney

Gross, David & Patti

Kaplan, Linda

Lieberman-Garrett, Erica

Line, Jonathan & Arlene

Pollack, Joel & Linda

Pollack, Joel & Linda

Smith, Steve & Barbara

Chanukah Dinner
Will Pollack's Bar Mitzvah

New Year's Greeting

Bernstein, Paul & Barbara & Joshua

Wishing our

Mishpocha a healthy, happy new year

Sunshine Fund

Mandel, Mark & Ruth

Steinbock, Steve & Carol

In Memory of

Rene Rose

Rene Rose

Tree of Life - Leaves
Bernstein, Paul & Barbara
Gross, David & Patti

In Honor of
Joshua Samuel Bernstein
Bar Mitzvah 11/5/11
Alvin S. Gross

Yahrzeits
Boruszak, Joan
Rubin, Mike & Myrna
Cooper, Claire
Gould, Maryon

In Memory of
Jim Boruszak, Lillian Goldstein
Anna Applebaum
Sarah Sandberg
Paul Gould, H. Robert Walters

Yahrzeit Plaques
Alter, Barry

In Memory of
Franne Alter

Yizkor Book
Bernstein, Paul & Barbara
Calev, Barbara
Chasteen, Dale
Conklin, Rita & Wes

Cooper, Alan & Susan
Friedman, Steve & Jane
Gilson, Michael & Suzanne
Ginsberg, Bernard
Goodman, Jamie & Laura
Gorson, Janice
Greenbaum, Marilyn
Gross, David & Patti
Hayden, Beth
Levy, Ron & Beth Kaminstein
Lieberman-Garrett, Erica
Pincus, Linda
Rose, Skip
Roy, Medina
Schulberg, Alan & Elaine
Silverman, Mort & Gene
Singer, Mary Lee
Smith, Steve & Barbara
Steinbock, Steve & Carol
Willner, Sherrie

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

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

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

Garden Bricks: \$125 buys a single brick and \$200 a double brick in our magnificent Meditation Garden walkway, engraved with your personal message. An example: "You were the best, Aunt Goldie. No one ever made tastier blintzes."

YEDA VE'TORASHA

Yardena Kamely



The Yom Kippur War

Looking Back After 40 Years

In the history books we read: On October 6, 1973 — Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish calendar — Egypt and Syria opened a coordinated surprise attack against Israel. The equivalent of the total forces of NATO in Europe had been mobilized on Israel's borders. On the Golan Heights, approximately 180 Israeli tanks faced an onslaught of 1,400 Syrian tanks. Along the Suez Canal, fewer than 500 Israeli defenders were attacked by 80,000 Egyptians.

The war was the fiercest Arab-Israeli war since the 1948 War of Independence because Egypt and Syria's attack caught Israel off guard. The Egyptians crossed the Suez Canal and controlled its entire length on the east bank; the Syrians overran the Golan Heights and came within sight of the Sea of Galilee. In his book "Living History, A Memoir," Chaim Herzog, former general in the Israeli army (Tzahal), ambassador to the U.N. in the 1970s, president of Israel in the 1980s, describes his experience of the Yom Kippur War: "On Yom Kippur, I was in synagogue atoning for my sins, like the rest of Israel. People were leaving in groups, and the congregation was emptying. Gradually, I realized what was happening. Our troops were being mobilized. We were facing attack." Herzog was summoned to general headquarters; he was asked to go on the air because of the success of his broadcasts in 1967. He was given access to military information and began broadcasting in Hebrew and English, on radio and television, along with the noted Arabist Professor Shimon Shamir, later Israel's ambassador to Egypt and Jordan. Their job was to lessen people's fears when possi-

ble, and alert them to danger when necessary.

The counterattacks were at first unsuccessful. Israel suffered many losses. Not one city, town, or village escaped losses. A total of 2,688 Israeli soldiers were killed in this war. Writes Herzog: "The nation experienced a nightmare. But we dug in and the momentum gradually shifted. The Israeli bank of the Suez Canal was the site of the biggest tank battle since the battle of Kursk in World War II. We followed this victory with a series of successful counterattacks, as the division under Ariel Sharon crossed the canal. Within days, we had surrounded the Egyptian Third Army on both banks of the Suez Canal." On October 22, the Security Council adopted Resolution 338, calling for "all parties to the present fighting to cease all firing and terminate all military activity immediately." The vote came on the day that Israeli forces cut off and isolated the Egyptian Third Army and were in a position to destroy it.

Yet despite the Israel Defense Forces' success on the battlefield at the end, the war was considered a diplomatic and military failure.

Shortly before this year's Yom Kippur, an article in the Israeli newspaper Ma'ariv discussed the upcoming 40th anniversary of the Yom Kippur War. The author says that Israel has had enough of "the Yom Kippur War festivals that take place every year as the holy day approaches," and believes that "Forty years since that trauma/fiasco, the time has come to mature, return to normal and restore to Yom Kippur its original function." The paper suggests that "The forty-year-long introspection is – how to put it – a little too long, espe-

cially when it deepens the trauma instead of healing it."

I do not agree.

For me, this war has a lot of significance. It shaped my life.

For the first time I had lost fellow students, friends and cousins my age.

For me and my peers this war was a new experience;

it had changed our view of the world we lived in, of Israel. We realized how vulnerable Israel was and understood for the first time what our parents and grandparents went through during World War II and what was the real meaning of the Holocaust. They wanted to shield us from this trauma, by raising us Sabras as tough, fearless fighters. They were right. The young soldiers fought heroically, and they knew what was at stake and understood that Israel's fate was in their hands, and, in their own words, they expressed their feeling that this war was like the Holocaust, the nightmare the Holocaust survivors had told them about.

I want to remember all the Israelis that died in the Yom Kippur War, the battles they fought so that Israel could survive, in the same sense we are remembering the Holocaust. There is no end to the stories of the war, to the stories of those who lost their life and those who survived. Chaim Herzog remembers: "For me, as for many others who served in Israel's battles, the Yom Kippur War was a new experience. Instead of me being in the field, our two elder sons were serving." One of his sons was fighting in Sinai near the Suez Canal. The Herzog family was without news of him for weeks. One friend, serving with him in the same unit, managed to get leave because he was wounded and he called them, re-



General Ariel Sharon led the armored Israeli counteroffensive in the Sinai in 1973.

porting that the unit was having a very hard time.

Herzog tells: "I visited the underground headquarters of the armed forces every day for my broadcast briefing. There I saw parents like myself, senior officers anxiously searching out the location and

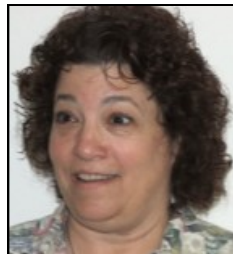
fate of the units to which their sons were assigned, without appearing to do so. No one wanted to show anxiety or fear, but none of us could really hide what we were feeling." Herzog's sons returned home safely. The one who fought at the Egyptian front was, he said, "utterly exhausted and traumatized. He basically was shell-shocked." But he stayed in the army and went to Officers School, where, fortunately, he could "regroup psychologically and emotionally." His father tells: "But I shall never forget his return from the front. As I opened the door, he staggered in and said softly, 'Father, war is a terrible thing. It is no picnic.' That is the understatement of my lifetime. And I can only hope that my grandchildren never have to make it." ♦



Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and Prime Minister Golda Meir.

World Jewish Report

Medina Roy



A Talmudic Loophole?

Did you suffer from the dreaded Yom Kippur head-exploding, caffeine-withdrawal headache because you were fasting? Did you ask yourself, how am I expected to focus on serious atonement for my sins without my morning cup of joe? Have no fear, there's a solution. You can now plan ahead for next year's Day of Atonement. This serious Yom Kippur problem can be alleviated if you can get your hands on a product available from pharmacies in Williamsburg, the Hasidic neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York. Ready for this? It's huge, rectally-inserted caffeine suppositories. Though it sounds like cheating, some rabbis claim that the prohibition of eating and drinking on Yom Kippur applies only to things ingested through the mouth. Other bodily orifices are not included in the prohibition. But other rabbis disagree. They say that consuming anything – through the body's entrance or exit – is against the spirit of the ritual of fasting. Rabbi Simcha Weinstein, a Hasidic leader said, "We want to keep Jews in the synagogue and not in the bathrooms." (www.jewniverse.com, 9-13-13)

Finally...A Formal Recognition

Israeli legislators have established a new law recognizing Jews who fled persecution in Arab countries. The law, approved by the Ministerial Committee on Legislation, has designated February 17th as the annual date on the Israeli calendar to remember the 850,000 Jewish refugees who were forced out or who had to flee their homes in Arab countries in the middle of the last century. On that date in 1948 the Arab League approved a law permitting member states to place severe sanctions against their Jewish populations. Dr. Shimon Ohayon, Knesset member (*Yisrael Beiteinu*) drafted the law known as "Day Commemorating the Jewish Refugees from Arab

Countries." The law is part of a concerted effort to have the rights of these Jewish refugees recognized in Israel, the Arab world and the international community. He has called on the Arab League to "accept historic accountability for the humiliation, the suffering, and the losses incurred by innocent Jewish victims of the Arab world's declared war against the State of Israel." Dr. Ohayon and his family fled Morocco in 1956. (www.thejc.com, 7-15-13)

Israel's "Green House"

Israel is now officially a world power in environmentally sensible home design. "Team Israel" came in fourth overall in the *Solar Decathlon*, a contest occurring every two years where design and technology teams from around the world compete against each other to see who can come up with the best "house of the future." Israel's entry, an 85-square-meter modular house built of locally produced materials, came in first in the "energy balance" category for homes that produce more energy than they consume. The team also won the hot water production category, was second in the architecture category and fourth in the market appeal category. The contest took place in mid-August in Datong, China. The *Solar Decathlon*, a contest with ten categories, was first held in 2002. It is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy. This year's event was the first time it took place outside the United States. The purpose of the contest, which is open to teams from universities and colleges around the world, is to "encourage teams to design, build, and operate the most attractive, effective and energy-efficient solar-powered house." "Team Israel" included students and faculty from nearly a dozen Israeli academic institutions. The team was chosen last year in a semi-final event as one of 20 teams to participate in this year's

finals. (www.timesofisrael.com, 8-22-13)

A New Memorial Planned

The first day of Rosh Hashanah this year coincided with the 41st anniversary of the massacre of eleven Israeli athletes and their coaches at the 1972 Munich Olympics. On this occasion, the Bavarian Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs announced plans for the construction of a memorial to the athletes and a German police officer killed by *Black September*, the Palestinian terrorist group. The plans call for a Hall of Remembrance to be built near the site that housed the games. The memorial will allow visitors to learn about the events and the victims and to view the site of the failed rescue attempt at Furstenfeldbruck airfield. Scheduled to be completed by 2016, the memorial is expected to cost approximately 2.25 million dollars. Charlotte Knoblach, head of the Bavarian Jewish community, thanked the state of Bavaria and Germany as a whole for “their recent efforts to ensure a transparent explanation of the events of 1972 and to answer the last remaining questions from family members and Israeli authorities, in cooperation with them.” (*The Forward*, 9-5-13)

Taking a Trip Back to the Dark Ages

At the end of June, Israel's Education Ministry asked textbook publishers to eliminate chapters on human reproduction, pregnancy prevention and sexually transmitted diseases from science textbooks used in state religious junior high schools as well as from their teacher manuals. Some publishers have made the changes. Others agreed to the modifications, but when the ministry began requesting additional revisions, such as eliminating any reference to the female body throughout the book or softening any text or image that might offend the religious community, the publishers changed their minds. The ministry requested the changes at the urging of officials in the state religious school system. “The ministry capitulated to one of the most extremist factions of the religious public,” one publishing executive charged. Until now, all state schools, whether religious or secular, used the same science

textbooks. Removing the chapter on reproduction means that religious students will not have an opportunity to learn about reproduction from a scientific perspective unless they take a biology course in high school. The chapters scheduled for removal include basic scientific information about the reproductive system.

Science textbooks aren't the only ones being revamped for use in state religious schools, which, for a long time, have had different history and literature curricula than the secular schools. About a year and a half ago, the ministry decided to alter their Hebrew language textbooks as well. All women pictured in these texts now wear head coverings and all the girls wear skirts. *Meretz* chairwoman Zahava Gal-On described the Education Ministry's decision as “not only ridiculous, but also worrying. More than 200,000 children today are in the state-religious education system, which is 200,000 future citizens of the State of Israel who will grow up with ignorance and with the sense that the human body, or to be more specific, the body of the woman, is something dirty.” (*Meretz* is a left-wing Israeli political party concerned with human and civil rights and the separation of religion and state.) (www.haaretz.com, 9-3-13)

“A Breathtaking Discovery”

A recent excavation in Jerusalem's City of David, only fifty meters from the southern wall of the Temple Mount, has unearthed 36 gold coins, gold and silver jewelry and a unique gold medallion inscribed with images of a menorah, a shofar and a Torah scroll. The discovery was led by archaeologist Dr. Eilat Mazar of the Hebrew University's Institute of Archaeology. Researchers believe the medallion was an ornament for a Torah scroll, and if so, it is the earliest Torah scroll ornament found in archaeological excavations to date. Dr. Mazar has called the find “a breathtaking, once-in-a-lifetime discovery.” She said, “We have been making significant finds from the First Temple Period in this area, a much earlier time in Jerusalem's history, so discovering a golden seven-branched menorah from the seventh century CE at the foot of the Temple Mount was a complete surprise.” The gold treasure was discovered in a ruined Byzantine public structure. The

menorah, a candelabrum with seven branches that was used in the Temple, is the national symbol of the State of Israel and reflects the historical presence of Jews in the area. Given the date of the items and the manner in which they were found, Mazar estimates they were abandoned in the context of the Persian conquest of Jerusalem in 614 CE. Dr. Mazar made headlines earlier this year when she announced the 2012 discovery of an ancient Canaanite inscription, recently identified as Hebrew, the earliest alphabetical written text ever uncovered in Jerusalem. (www.israeltoday.co.il, 9-12-13)

Presidential Medal of Freedom

Daniel Kahneman, a psychologist known for his application of psychology to economic analysis, has been awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama. The Princeton University scholar, who shared the Nobel Prize for economics in 2002, escaped Nazi Europe and served in the Israeli army. Fifteen other individuals will receive the award later this year, among them Gloria Steinem, the feminist pioneer, and the late Senator Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) who for decades was a pro-Israel leader in Congress. The Presidential Medal of Freedom was established in 1963 by President John F. Kennedy. Along with the Congressional Gold Medal, it is the highest civilian honor available in the United States. (www.jta.org, 8-8-13)

Rabbi Kathy Lee?

Kathy Lee Gifford, co-host of the "Today Show," recently revealed her dream of becoming a rabbi. Here's how it unfolded: A 60-year-old viewer posted on Facebook her interest in returning to college later in life. This prompted a debate between Kathy Lee and her co-host Hoda Kotb. Gifford, a born-again Christian with Jewish roots, said, "I want to go to Yeshiva University and become a rabbi. I want to get my Orthodox rabbinical degree...I want to understand what words mean, what all the context is. I'm so fascinated by that stuff." Gifford was born Kathryn Lee Epstein. Her paternal grandfather was a Russian Jew from Saint Petersburg. After seeing the Billy Graham-produced film, *The Restless Ones*, at

age 12, she became a born-again Christian. She once told interviewer Larry King, "I was raised with many Jewish traditions and raised to be very grateful for my Jewish heritage." (By the way, her brother, Rev. David Paul Epstein, is an evangelical Baptist preacher and pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in New York City.) Good luck, Kathy Lee. (www.jta.org, 8-19-13)

The Other Speaker Fifty Years Ago

August 28th marked the 50th anniversary of the historic March on Washington and one of the most important speeches ever delivered in the United States. But did you know that right before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech, Rabbi Joachim Prinz stood at the podium and said, "I was the rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin under the Hitler regime." The horrors witnessed by Prinz in Nazi Germany compelled him to challenge America in the 1960s. "Bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problems," he said to the crowd gathered at the Lincoln Memorial. "The most shameful and most tragic problem is silence." (www.cbsnews.com, 8-31-13)

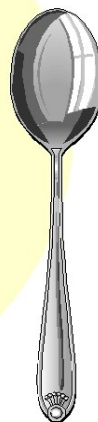
Did You Know...

- The Ashkenazi version of the melody of *Kol Nidrei*, repeated three times before sunset when Yom Kippur begins, was arranged in 1880 by the non-Jewish German composer Max Bruch for cello and orchestra. It was done on commission from the Jewish community of Liverpool and became his most popular work. (www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org) ◇

600,000 and Counting

In an attempt to boost the Sea of Galilee's dwindling fish population, 600,000 tilapia now have a new home. The fish are expected to boost the lake's biodiversity and also to clear its waters of toxins originating in seaweed – the tilapia's food source. The fish will also act as biofilters to balance out the lake's ecosystem. Masses of tilapia are introduced into the Sea of Galilee each year by Israel's Agriculture Ministry. Along with the tilapia, some 300,000 silver carp were also added and an additional 400,000 tilapia will be introduced in October. (www.timesofisrael.com, 9-12-13) ◇

KJCC
SISTERHOOD SHABBAT
DINNER
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2013
6:30 PM
CHICKEN DINNER



Contact Barbara Knowles
(305) 772-0503; iweddu@bellsouth.net
to reserve your spot and coordinate your
covered side dish or dessert

-raffle before sundown-



Donation: Members \$10;
Children 12 and under no
charge
All Non-Members \$15

Photo Gallery

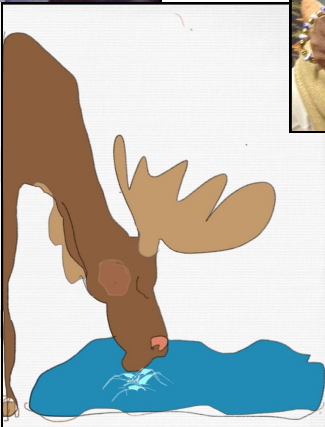
As she does every year, Lee Schur summered with family in Chicago. She sent us these photos of her at Wrigley Field (the Cubs lost) and with grandchildren Brittany and Jeremy prior to attending a Blue Man Group Performance in Chicago.



Several KJCC members had voiced concerns about security, so Bernie asked Robert Tanen, center, the ADL's Associate Regional Director, to come give us an assessment. (We passed.) Also at the meeting was KJCC member Jason Madnick, a Monroe County police sergeant.



Joyce sent us the photo below of son Daniel erecting the family sukkah in Denver. That's Michal bracing Dad on the ladder and Yosef on the roof laying schach.



Gloria's mom Bea Avner reads last month's issue of Chai-Lights, above. At left is a delightful moose doodle Gloria did with one finger on her iPad.

KJCC Gift Shop

*It's the Time to Shop-
FREE Chanukah candles with a
\$20 minimum purchase!!*

Remember us for Chanukah



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

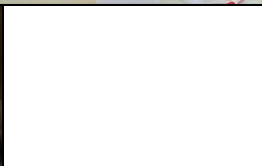
**See our new items from Israel
handpicked by our Mishpocha
on their recent tour.**



For further information contact:
Susan Gordon (305) 766-3585



September 8th was the first class for this year's KJCC religious school. With his interest in our children, Prez Bernie is always available to help out. Morah Gloria was ready.



The young tree at right is one of the new fruit trees donated to KJCC by Mort and Gene Silverman to help create our own orchard. Mangoes and avocados, yum.



Siyum Sefer Torah

Completion and Dedication of a Sefer Torah in Zurich, Switzerland, August 18, 2013

by Joseph Shabathai

Our KJCC congregation is reminded each week of the preservation and significance of the *Sefer Torah* when we recite a special, final Kaddish for Holocaust victims while our "Holocaust" Torah, rescued from Czechoslovakia after the Second World War and now on permanent loan from the Westminster Synagogue in London, is displayed. Jewish tradition tells us that the *Sefer Torah* itself has its own life, so to speak. It is created by a scribe, usually an Orthodox rabbi, writing the entire five books of Moses, letter-by-letter, word-by-word and paragraph-by-paragraph on parchment. When the entire testament is complete, the *Sefer Torah* is carried under a *chuppah* to its home in the Temple Ark with much rejoicing, as if we were celebrating a kind of heavenly marriage. The Torah under the *chuppah* is the bride and we, the Jewish people, are the bridegroom.

As marriage can be a discovery – of one's self and one's partner together revealing the other half of one's soul – our sages tell us that the writing of a *Sefer Torah* is also a discovery of one's self. Through it one discovers oneself as a person, as one's soul attaches to its mirror image in the written Torah and initiates the beginning of a lifelong relationship which requires effort and care; the Torah is our spouse.

So it was with particular interest and honor that I was invited to participate in *Siyum Sefer Torah* – the completion and dedication of a new Torah at a Lubavich synagogue in Zurich, Switzerland this past August. Tradition

has it that whoever participates at all in the writing of the *Sefer Torah*, it is as if he or she has written the entire *Sefer Torah* him- or herself.

The new Torah was donated in memory of a friend of mine, Joseph Moradian, who died last October (2012) in Zurich. Joseph was a Baghdadi Jew born in 1929 who was forced to flee Baghdad in 1951 and was smuggled into Iran. From Teheran he founded a successful business, traveling to Israel and across the Middle East to India and to Europe until the Iranian revolution in 1978 forced him to flee again, this time with a wife and four children. Leaving everything behind, he settled in Zurich, in a country with an unfamiliar language and culture, starting once again from scratch.

A man of great optimism, Joseph had a stroke fourteen years ago and lived dependent on assistance until his death last year, never believing that adversity would ever stop him. He taught us never to give up, that there is so

much more to life than we see and that being united with family is what counts.

The last few sentences of a new *Sefer Torah* are deliberately left in outline, with members of the congregation invited to write an individual letter with quill pen and ink guided by the scribe. You will see me in the attached pictures seated at the table performing this very task. (Family members complete the last few words and letters. The last letter in the Bible is a "lamed," or "L," and the first



**Joe finishes a letter or two of the
Sefer Torah, in honor of his friend.**



The Torah's beginning, where the first letter is a Bet, for B'rashit.

letter of the Bible in Bereshis is a "Bet," or "B"; the two combined make for "Lev," or "Love" (as in "heart").

After the scroll is complete the Torah is "dressed," and then with much rejoicing is passed around with music and dancing much as in a wedding ceremony. It is then carried under a *chuppah* outside of the building to the Temple Sanctuary, where it is placed in the Ark. Following this procession there is more dancing (men and women separately, the Lubavitch way). After the dancing, we enjoyed a sumptuous meal for everyone prepared meticulously by Chabad member Karin Rosenberg.

A *Sefer Torah* can now cost anywhere from \$20,000 to over \$100,000, depending on the scribe and the donor. It takes about a year for

one to be written by hand. Each paragraph is scanned and checked by computer and as well as visually by other rabbis; there can be no mistakes.

After completion, there is great celebration, and then the Torah is placed in an Ark.



My father, now 96 years old and living near Geneva, Switzerland, reminded me that the Shabathai family itself donated two *Sefer Torahs* in Aden (at the time a British colony and now a part of Yemen) earlier in the last century. When the Jews were forced to flee Aden the same *Sefer Torahs* were rescued and escorted to Israel. One is now with the Adenite congregation in Bat Yam and the other in Tel Aviv at Temple Sha'aray Zion; they are a living heritage to the memory of those in whose honor they were created (respectively my great-grandfather Shabathai and my aunt Rosa, who died at birth).

I have always been impressed by the ingenuity, resilience and resourcefulness of our people, as exemplified by Joseph Moradian's spiritual and material success,



An old photo of the two Torahs the Shabathai family donated to synagogues in Aden. They both now reside in Israel.

which I attribute to the influence of the teachings of the *Sefer Torah*. In particular, I thought of my own family's journey from a relatively backward, centuries-old community in Aden to the modern, developed world. I was proud to have achieved academic success as a graduate of one of America's finest universities and to recently learn that my young half-cousin Ehud Shabtei (we share the same grandfather) had just sold his Israeli tech company "Waze" to Google for \$960 million dollars! ♦

Note: Some of the religious and inspirational commentary mentioned above was provided by Rabbi Sholom Rosenfeld of the Chabad Esra in Zurich, Switzerland. –Joe

It all began with S'lichot on August 31st. There was a sumptuous Erev Rosh Hashanah feast, then a full house for Day One, then Taschlich, then Friday services, then Shabbat Tshuvah; a week later came Kol Nidre and then the long and challenging full day of Yom Kippur. There was freshness, and substance, and brilliant orchestration. It was KJCC.

The Fullness of High Holy Days 5774

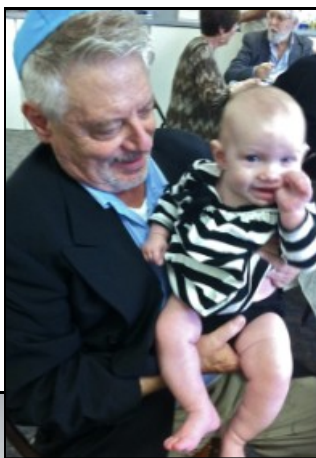
by Gloria Avner

High Holidays would be different this year. Under the leadership of Rabbi Agler (from whom many of us have learned during Shabbat morning services) respected scholar, educator, dynamic speaker, and friend, it seemed inevitable we'd sail some different seas. Over the Ten Days, there was excitement and there was awe. Comments heard in hallways had a theme, echoed service every service, every day: "These were the best High Holidays I've ever experienced."

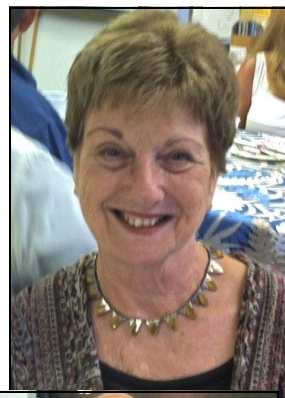
But let's start at the beginning. The first event of our new year began with

bounty, a joyful pre-Rosh HaShanah community feast presented by a hard-working KJCC Sisterhood under the guidance

of Erica Lieberman-Garrett and Barbara Knowles. Miriam Sklar's three

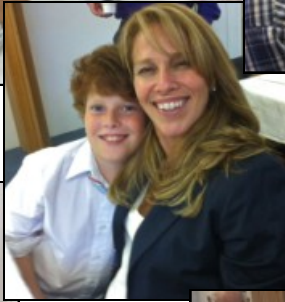


kinds of homemade challah (cinnamon – a new treat!) were followed by Erica's delicious chicken soup with matzoh balls, three varieties of brisket, Sofy Wasser's amazing roast chicken and tables full of homemade trimmings, backed up by more desserts than can be named (though

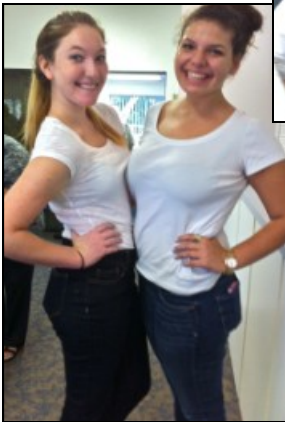




event set records. People generously performed their honors with seriousness and grace. Our children and *Bar Mitzvah*'d



Some moments captured at the Erev Rosh Hashanah dinner before services.



Linda Kaplan's honeycake with apples was a standout). We schmoozed, digested, walked and meditated



young people took part willingly. Our path was one of high vibration. Every-

in our garden, got re-acquainted with members and guests until services began.



Transitioning from feast to prayer to Cantor Halpern's chanting to Rabbi Agler's introductory talk, our *mishpocha* began to see what was in store for us. These Days of Awe would be a journey. Each of us would be in the company of fellow travellers.

The two days of *Rosh HaShanah*, our Torah services, the singing, our *Taschlich* bits of bread tossed into the ocean hoping for our sins to be washed away, our surprisingly well-attended tuneful musaf services, the Friday night service immediately following Day two, *Shabbat Tshuvah* service on the following morning, and *Havdalah* under the stars on Saturday night cinched it. Attendance at each



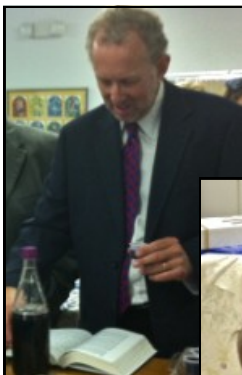
one felt it, elevated, radiating, hushed and moved.

When we gathered again for *Kol Nidre* and the beginning of our fast, the sanctuary was filled to capacity with eager, expectant faces. Rabbi Agler and Cantor Halpern continued

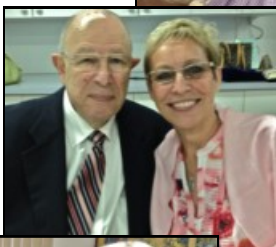


their smooth interaction; our past and present presidents of KJCC and Sisterhood held and passed on each Torah reverently. Tone and scene were set for our final, food-free, day.

On *Yom Kippur*, the Torah service, *Yizkor*, the children's service led by David Feder (to whom we are also indebted for the notable improvement in sound), the repeated recitation asking for forgiveness, all built on the intensity of



At the Day Two Kiddush. No one could remember a bigger crowd for Day Two.

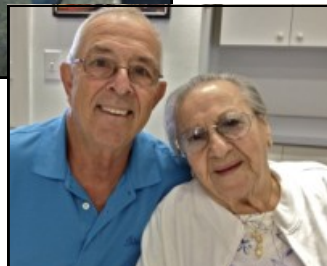


what had gone before. We loved the addition of Joe Shabbathai's Sephardic chanting. The reading of Noah was a particular pleasure with alternate Hebrew and English verses voiced beautifully by Yardena



and Sam, framed by our president's soulful *Haftarah* blessings.

For the first time in KJCC history,



a large core of people did not go home for rest, but stayed throughout the day, participating in each of the five services and the new parts in between, the rabbi's "fast" talk discussion of blessing and poetry, an hour of Jewish medi-



The four photos at top are from **Taschlich on R.H. Day One.**



within, to become fellow travelers on a journey that would take us deep and high. Whatever our beliefs about God, our life paths, histories, or goals, our prayers would connect us to

tation, and deep camaraderie.

This was an extraordinary period for KJCC *mishpocha* and friends, our ten Days of Awe. This



all members of our tribe. Cantor Halpern's *Hineni* prayer would be a model to us of humility. All

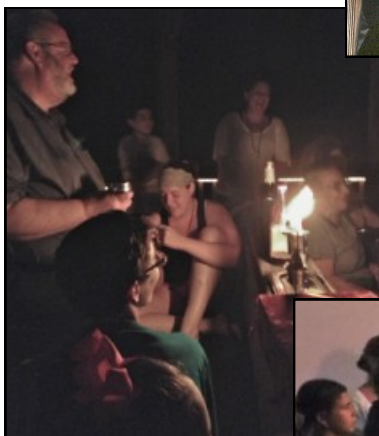
exploration in search of forgiveness would reinforce our commitment to *tikkun olam*, repair of the world, starting with *tikkun* of ourselves.

Our helmsman, Rabbi Agler, walked among us, talked to us directly and powerfully, as much in the aisles as on the *bimah*. People loved that. We became participants in a process, not

watchers in an audience.

With the last shofar blast, strong and harmonious, from

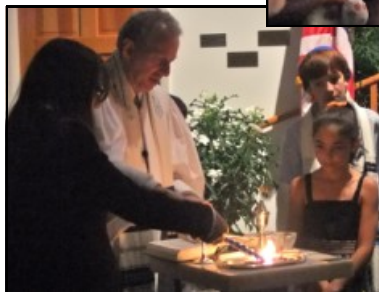
Rachael Bloom and our tireless, devoted president, Bernie Ginsberg, the guiding architect of our



At left, Havdalah on Shabbat Tshuvah. Below, Havdalah after Yom Kippur a week later.



is what happened: the whole became greater than the sum of its parts. From the very beginning of



Rosh Ha-Shanah, our rabbi helped us set an intent, to listen to the still small voice





After Musaf on Yom Kippur, but before Neillah, the late afternoon service, Rabbi Agler gathered the weary but willing for several hours of stimulating “fast talk.” He and Yardena spoke of Jerusalem during the Yom Kippur War. No one wished they’d slept.

Holidays, the lights were lowered. The Havdalah candle lit, our rabbi stood surrounded by wide-eyed children. All of us

sang, weak but uplifted. As wine put out the flame, we were as one, released.

Another Sisterhood feast was waiting.

L'Shanah Tovah. ♦



Break-the-Fast was, as always with KJCC Sisterhood, another feast.

The delightful smiling watermelon whale was created by Barbara Bernstein.



Sukkot at KJCC – 5774

by Gloria Avner

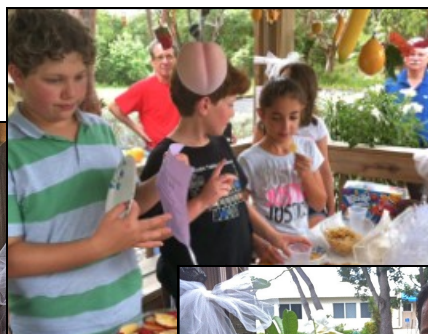
Thanks to President
Bernie Ginsberg's High
Holiday announcements



lulav and et-
rog. Noah,
Cole, and

Westley lead the group in the blessings and
Susan leads us in singing "*Hinei MaTovu Ma-
Nayim.*"

Despite the
heat and
humidity it
is wonder-
ful to sit
inside our
"booth"
with *mish-*



from the Bimah,
many adults
showed up to help
decorate our Suk-
kah. They were the
perfect "*ushpizim*,"
the sacred ances-
tor-visitors we are
to welcome
throughout the
eight days of Sukkot.



The scene: Sunday morning after Yom
Kippur. Our KJCC religious school students
are excited and busy coloring posters and
hanging bright beads. The adult women help
tie white ribbons to plastic fruit for hanging
and prepare challah, wine, sweets and real
fruit for our (pre)Sukkot repast. The men cut
palm fronds, stand on ladders, and add en-
thusiasm. Almost thirty people eat in and
around our beautifully decorated sukkah.
(Thank you, Candy Stanlake and Alan Beth,
for building us a multi-functional gazebo).
Mikhaela and Natalie read to us about the

pachah.

Now we
are pre-
pared for
the con-
gregation's
celebration
on Friday
night, September 20th, Rabbi and Mindy Agler's
Sukkot Havdalah service the following night,
and the family Sukkot celebration that next
Sunday morning, back among our own decora-
tions in the KJCC Meditation Garden. ♦



On Sunday, September 15th, mere hours after the end of Yom Kippur, KJCC's students and interested adults gathered to decorate the KJCC sukkah. After all the work, plus as you saw on the previous page some snacks and an antic or two, everyone gathered for this group shot.

The next Friday, after services, we all assembled in our gazebo/sukkah for Kiddush plus the seasonal Sukkot prayers. Prez Bernie was more than happy to instruct Westley and Cole Silverman on the fine art of shaking lulav and etrog. And, no, we didn't neglect the blessings for wine and bread. (Rabbi Agler, by the way, says that the etrog rind is particularly tasty in a martini.)





On Saturday, September 21st, all of KJCC was invited to the beautiful bayside home of Mindy and Rich Agler for Havdalah. We watched the sunset, ate, looked for three stars, listened to Rabbi Agler talk about Sukkot, celebrated Havdalah and sang "Elijah HaNavi" outside on a perfect tropical evening.

Keys Jewish Community Center

CHANUKAH BAZAAR!

Join us for a very special day of shopping,
friends, food
& refreshments!

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD
11:00am to 2:00pm
at the KJCC
MM 93.5



You may have shopped at The Chosen in Miami over the years.
The owners want you to
know that the store is now closed and they have become an
on-line shopping site
THE CHOSEN GIFT
<http://www.thechosengift.net>

We are hosting an exclusive one-day sale at the KJCC
in order to bring you many beautiful Chanukkah items
and exciting gifts from
THE CHOSEN GIFT

(A portion of all proceeds will benefit the KJCC Sisterhood.)

We will also have a Raffle for Chanukah Merchandise!

(All raffle proceeds go to the KJCC sisterhood)

Israel Trip Diary: Part II

Last month we joined our intrepid band as they began a twelve-day odyssey in Israel of discovery and connection. They visited Tel Aviv, and Haifa, the Herodian city of Caesarea, the cliffs of Rosh HaNikra and the mystical medieval city of Tzfat. In Part II, the conclusion, they are nearing Jerusalem, for 3,000 years the embodiment of Jewish identity. Once again our reporters are Gloria, Joyce and Medina.

Day Eight

Gloria, Late Afternoon:

I am impressed with Israel in more ways every day. Not only do the people figure out how to make the desert bloom, become the technological R&D center of the Middle East (and one of the best in the world), maintain a top-notch defense force and intelligence system, but they put time, effort, design smarts and money into protecting natural wonders and providing exquisite facilities for joyful rest and recreation. Take the Gan HaShlosa Nature Preserve called Sachne. Rabbi Agler compares it to the Garden of Eden. It lies at the foot of Mt. Gilboa (really more a ridge

than a single mountain) and looks like an etching out of an old book of Middle Eastern botanical drawings. Surrounded by large palms, beautifully landscaped pools of water – all different sizes and shapes, all fed by natural warm springs – invite exploration, swimming, and lolling about. There are places to cook, grassy expanses for rest, a meandering path connecting it all, and a pleasing flat stone walkway across the water between one of the largest pools and a water-fall (which gives excellent back massages).

Joyce, Evening:

The Tomb of Maimonides is a place visited mainly by the Orthodox. Rabbi Agler wanted us to appreciate the magnitude of the Rambam, and so our group learned and I fulfilled my longtime desire to pay homage to this amazing physician sage. Gloria unfortunately

missed the last paragraph of the intro; she turned right instead of left, wandered into the men's section and took a few photos before she realized her error. I took the time at the grave to pray for the health of my daughters and their children, and for the fruitful pregnancies of three wonderful young women. I repeated that same prayer at the Western Wall six hours later, this time in a prayer circle of eight women

focusing their hearts and prayers for these girls, then a silent personal prayer, then to-



Rabbi Agler made sure that a visit to the Rambam's tomb was on the KJCC itinerary.



I guess I'm lucky no religious police are at my door yet :-). That quarter-cylinder is the Rambam's actual tomb. The other half of it is on the women's side. The praying man did not seem to mind me (or even be aware of me, thank goodness). The Orthodox visitors either ignored us or were very gracious. What a giant of a man Maimonides was: physician to Saladin, one of the great Caliphs; scholar; writer (sometime I'd like to read "Guide to the Perplexed"); philosopher; Biblical exegete; and high-ranking advisor to kings. -Gloria

gether, amen.

We will have five nights in this amazing city, so our prayers can be repeated.

In between these two powerful emotional and spiritual events – visiting the tomb of one of the greatest Jewish sages and entering Jerusalem, the holy city – we went swimming at Sachne, a jewel of a park in the desert. Gloria called it Gan Eden, which it must have seemed to any ancient travelers who came upon this oasis with its warm pools of water, palm and olive trees. It is now a beautiful national park complete with picnic tables, large deep natural pools separated by a

man-modified waterfall that wonderfully massaged our backs, and tiny fish that tickled our heels and ankles. An Israeli woman told me in broken English that she likes that pedicure, as they nibble

dead skin. There is a kiddie pool separated by natural stones, visited by the same fish, which the children seemed to like.

On the way to Jerusalem we followed the Jordanian border, passed Mt. Gilboa, where King Saul and his sons were killed in battle, and heard David's emotional eulogy.

We stopped for delicious salads and iced coffee at Café Café, passed into the occupied territory with scattered Bedouin settlements, and Arab and Israeli towns. At the same overlook where we stopped with the Mayk-Shuker tour group (when I was here three years ago

for Shyella and Amit's wedding), we again said *shehechianu* and made prayer over wine and bread, and sang *Yerushalayim Shel Zahav*, before we went to the Wall. Now having settled into the Dan Pano-



I was an innocent. As directed, I had dressed respectfully for the visit to this Orthodox-run site. Wandering from the group for just a minute to take a photo of the giant metal openwork tent sculpture over Rambam's tomb, I missed the instruction for women to go to the left. Enchanted by cases full of books, I took some photos and intuitively went to the right, noticing one man praying by the half-cylindrical stone tomb of Spanish-born Moshe Ben Maimon and a few young men studying at a table, but I saw none of our group, so I moved on. Following a sign about saints, I stepped behind a wall and into a whole different world, a universe of women and girls, praying, studying, washing hands. We prayed together, especially for our younger women friends. The women were accepting and unjudgmental. It was an uplifting experience in all directions. -Gloria

rama Hotel's luxurious rooms, Gloria, Medina, Susan and I are going to wander the city looking for a place to try FIDG (the name of a fig brandy that my kids raved about and I haven't been able to find). Gloria and I are heading to the hotel bar right now to see if they have it!

Gloria, Evening:

As if visiting Maimonides' tomb, swimming at a park/oasis/natural hot springs (as close as we'll ever get to the Garden of Eden) and driving along the Jordanian border were not enough(!) for one day, we go on to enter Jerusalem. The sight takes my breath away, but it is the ceremony with our little *chevrah* and Rabbi's story of the two brothers and the two Jerusalems that starts the tears. All the tour buses are gone now. We have the view to ourselves. We bless our wine, eat bread with salt, sing *Jerusalem shel Zahav*, recite *Shehachiyanu*.

Life here is so rich. We move on to the Wall itself. But it is the whole site that embraces. More tears, happy to be sharing a piece of Wall with Medina, and then a very moving, Impromptu ceremony circle, a *misha-*



The Gan HaShlosa Nature Reserve, known as Sachne, sits at the foot of Mt. Gilboa. There are natural pools, and waterfalls, olive trees, and a graceful bridge of large stones.



beyrach with *mishpacha*, for our daughters, granddaughters, babies-to-be, and mothers. We pray through the stones, not to them, and a big part of what melts me is the sight of those pieces of paper tucked into crevasses.



At the end of Day 8, Jerusalem. At the Kotel, the Wall, Gloria takes her first photo of the holy site.



Day Nine

Gloria, Evening:

Today was all about walking – up stairs, down ramps, into cave-like structures that have been painstakingly excavated, one-wheelbarrow-full of stone and sand at a time; lots of discoveries in the past twenty years. Imagine sifting through tons of debris and finding small clay seals identifiable as the signature, in proto-Hebrew lettering, of a specific secretary/scribe who sent out papyrus governmental documents in the time of David (roughly 1,000 BCE). How did the seals survive? Baked when the city was destroyed by fire. It does something visceral to both body and mind to think you are standing where David's palace once stood and you are staring at the actual



It's amazing that we are all still intact. They let cars drive down these narrow quasi-streets. -Gloria



Rabbi Agler, at one of the early Jerusalem archaeological sites, explains the dig, the rubble, and the treasures beneath.

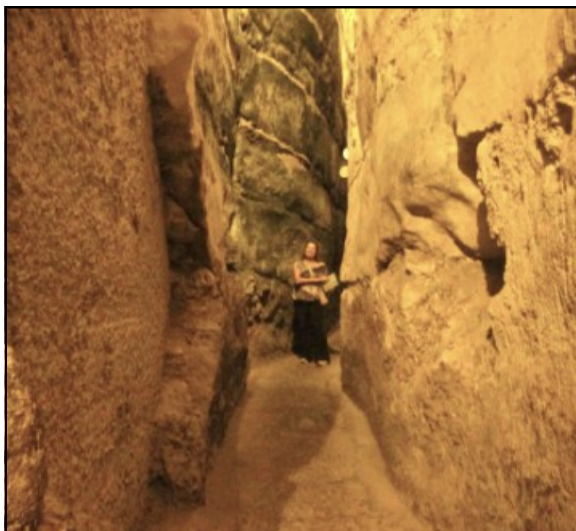
stone remnants. Oh, even better, Rabbi told us about an amulet found at an HUC-sponsored dig that actually had the Priestly Blessing inscribed on it. Whew!

2,500 years ago we

were here, doing what we still do.

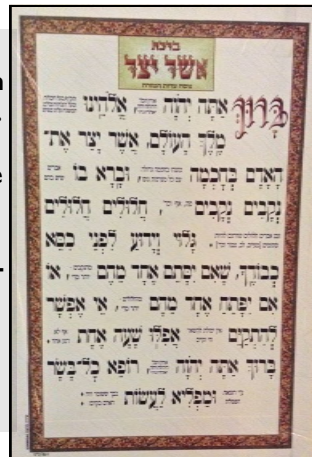


The Old Wall at Jerusalem's Lion's Gate.



At right, an "Asher yatzar" prayer upon leaving a bathroom. (Is there anything that doesn't require a prayer?) -Medina

At left, Joyce photographed Gloria in the newest tunnel under the Western Wall.



Did I mention that we spent a good part of the day walking single-file through winding, damp, skinny underground tunnels the whole length of the Western Wall?? I'm thinking 21 football fields. Poor Dave. The ceilings were low.

We even saw the little shops/stalls where the money changers plied their trade, also selling animals for sacrifice to people from far away who could not bring their own. The truly remarkable part to me of many of these sites is that some of them were parking lots just ten years ago. Doesn't it make you wonder what else is there? Actually, all I wonder now is how my legs and feet will rejuvenate for tomorrow. I think my thighs have turned to iron over the course of this last week.

A sign on an ancient Old City Wall guides visitors to the four old Sephardic synagogues in the Jewish Quarter.



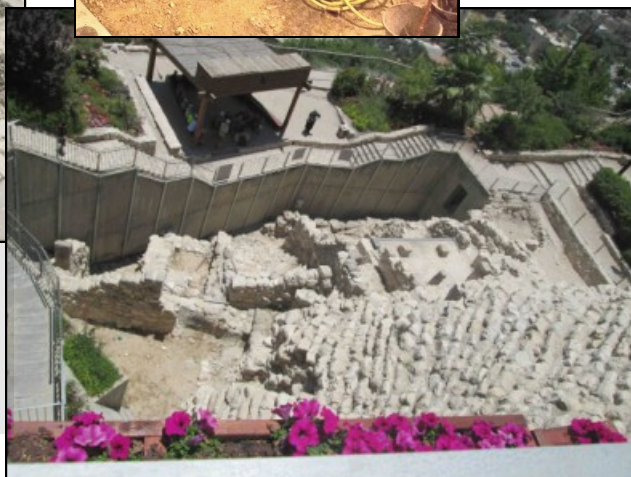
My heart has definitely gotten a workout too, the biggest still on that first Jerusalem day (could it really be just yesterday?) sobbing uncontrollably with Medina, our foreheads pressed to the

Western Wall stone.

(We just came back from the sound-and-light show at Jaffa Gate. David had told me not to bother. He saw it fifteen years ago and was pretty unimpressed. Well, it's still Jerusalem-

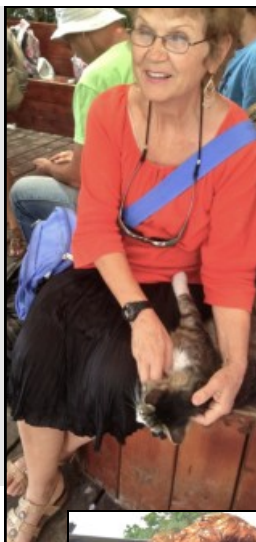


Joyce shot these two views of the ongoing archeology digs in the Biblical City of David. The ruins above are well below modern street level.



This kitty cat came, uncalled, to Georgia to be stroked and loved. And maybe to communicate. We were taking a moment's break (*shirutim* call) at the City of David archeological site in Jerusalem when the bonding happened. The cat couldn't have been happier. (Neither could Georgia).

—Gloria



After a long day, Medina and Georgia pause to rinse off some of the dust that goes with Jerusalem archeology, below.



history-lite, but oh, the visual technology! Stunning and totally fitting to the natural magnificence of the site. My favorite scene was when the whole stone panorama – with all its niches, angles and architectural details – turned into a massive 3-D library with giant leather-bound volumes on the shelves and two or three ethereal people browsing



It was a day of history and archeology. In the evening we were having a fine time walking the shopping streets

I spoke to this rug merchant in Hebrew and loved his accent. Turns out he is from Iran, Mashhaadi like David and Michal Kamely and said he knows Yarden's whole family. Says he sold rugs to her uncle. -Joyce



of Ben Yehuda in Jerusalem, people-watching, eating bitter chocolate ice cream, buying a few hand-embroidered Druze bags for the KJCC gift shop from a Bedouin down the alley from the main drag, when all of a sudden these gorgeous, exotically costumed men start pouring out of a side door. Who are they and can we have a picture? The man smiles, puts his arm around Joyce and voila. A classical music moment. We may have missed the performance – they're a troupe of Georgian singers and dancers – but we're happy anyhow, especially Joyce. Below the medals are a row of decorative, um, bullets. -Gloria

the spines. Rich was very cute shepherding us there, like a man leading his ducklings. Only two of us got lost. Medina says it's because she and Susan are short and they got swept away. They were quickly found and all was well. Another memorable day.)

**The
ramparts
at Jaffa
Gate in
old Jeru-
salem.**



Day Ten

Joyce, Evening:

Having read "The Dovekeepers," this amazing place (Masada) takes on even more meaning. So much of it is original; I can touch the same plaster walls that King Herod and later the 900-plus doomed refugees from



devas-
tated
Jerusa-
lem
walked
through.
We sat
in the
syna-
gogue
room
where
on that
final

Our day was intense, serious, salty, and rugged by turns. Camel-riding was the least of it (apparently the new oasis configuration is parking lot, gas station, convenience store complex). But I love Barbara's obvious delight and how she rides as if to the manor born. - Gloria



night the men debated their course of action, wrote their names on pieces of pottery, and then left to slaughter their families and after that take each other's lives. We saw the dove-



Viewing Masada from the desert floor. The snake trail is clearly visible, as are the cable car cables, at top, by which most visitors arrive. Due to the desert heat, walking is only possible in early morning.

cote. It was so real.

We arrived there about 10 a.m. Maybe 10:30. Still early, already hot. I remember thinking how much safer the snake trail was, with its 700 steps and numerous guardrails, compared to the narrow, harrowing trail of earlier years. By the time we left at about 12:30 it was scorching. Lunch began about

1:00, then we had to be out of the pool and ready to leave at 3:00, and then we went to Ein Gedi....just writing this, I can understand why only three of us were up for joining Richard and Mike for the climb up the hill to the second waterfall.

From there we went to the Resort by the Dead Sea. I had fun wading up to my ankles and taking pictures with Gloria's camera, which I am sure she will send on. I loved relaxing in the pool.

Next stop was Ein Gedi, a marvelous national park in the middle of the desert, complete with pools and waterfalls. As we left the bus, an ibex walked by in the distance, followed by several more, and we watched mesmerized as a huge group of at least fifty, small and very large, strolled across the scrub ahead of us. Our tour guide had said we would be fortunate if we saw one, and in all the years he had been there, he had never seen so many. We continued up the trail to the pools and waterfalls,



Mike, the invaluable guide, begins the story of Masada next to a scale model of Herod's palace. The Starling listens in.



The Tristram's Starling that helped escort KJCC around Masada. The Dead Sea and desert are far below.

where we soaked in the cool shallows.

Back in Jerusalem, we went our separate ways for dinner. Gloria, Barney, Susan and I joined Rabbi Agler for a walk to Emek Rafaim for shakshuka.

Tomorrow Yad Vashem.

Joyce against a Masada wall, the black line marking separation of original stonework and re-construction. -Gloria

Gloria, Evening:

Spiritual Teaching from Geography: Two Different Seas. Yam Kinneret (the Sea of Galilee, really a lake) has an inlet and an outlet. Beautiful. Why is Yam Kinneret alive? It takes and then it gives back. Yam HaMelach (the Salt Sea) is the Dead Sea. It takes and keeps; life comes in, but none leaves.



Gloria Reflects on Masada:

We did not visit Masada until our tour was almost finished. I'd been looking forward to the experience at the same time as fearing it. The steep cable car climb from the valley floor to the nearly dizzying top of the plateau-perched ruins was not what unnerved me. It was the harsh, brutal, yet inspiring reality of what happened here. The Roman armies laid siege to a band of Jewish rebels, the Zealots, in the time of the Second Temple. Lasting beyond all expectations, the Jews chose to die by their own hands rather than lose their freedom and be tortured by their enemies.

(Once the trip-dust settles, I want to read "The Dovekeepers" again, that brilliant, history-based re-imagining of all that led up to the dramatic conclusion for the 940 holdouts in the 1st century

C.E. Jewish zealots' battle against Rome.)

Wandering past a series of adjoining large rectangular store-rooms — each with high walls of large stones, roofs long gone, windows non-existent — made the small stone individual mikvah around the corner from

another warren of stone-walled, unceilinged rooms, seem very intimate, personal. We walked through Herod's handiwork, saw brilliant fragments of original frescoed wall painting, small palaces, living quarters, thermal baths with an array of column heights, and a synagogue. We stood on large expanses of tamped earth perfect for looking out in all directions, over ramparts, to the garrisons and desert below.

A bird seemed to be following me, perching on a protective iron railing (no doubt placed there to prevent tourists from falling over the edge). He kept opening and closing his mouth, as if hesitant about his message. An earlier sighting of him and two companions on top of a wall above my head, their dark gray silhouettes with rust-trimmed wings, stark against the pale blue



At top Gloria stands at the highest point of Masada. Joyce took this photo of the desert area around the Dead Sea, over 400 feet below. Lower left is the remains of a Roman-style hot room, a caldarium, under the bathhouse. (This had, after all, been a royal palace.)



sky, was both startling and familiar.

We could see for miles the clear traces of original winding roads that led to Roman fortifi-

cations 2,000 years ago and take note of the brilliant aqueduct systems used to gather and store water for this seemingly unreachable flat-topped spire in a nearly empty land-

On Masada, we were fascinated by a black bird that followed us around.

(Gloria mentioned him, and he's in several photos. And, yes, we all thought of Edgar Allan Poe.) In the group photo of us sitting around, the bird left a load on Steve's hat. -Joyce



scape (think Acoma Pueblo if you've traveled in the

Southwest but not in Israel).

Our walk around Masada, and the ever-present 360-degree view, made everything I'd
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read feel totally real. Then, as if I needed more historical validation, I passed the Dovecote, with its small assortment of stone-built mini-houses, one above the other, for the doves used for communication, early versions of



The vibrant colors on the nearly 2,000-year-old wall frescoes in Herod's palace at Masada amazed me. Of course he imported the finest pigments. -Gloria

first name of a man was clearly inscribed. It all matched the description recorded by Josephus, the Roman/Jewish historian who was an eyewitness to the Roman siege and wrote in detail about the last day. (His narrative had probably been aided by interviewing the two sole adult survivors, women who had hidden in a drainage pipe with four children.) The ten fragments named the last members of the Torah-devoted community, the ones who would draw lots to see who would kill the last of them, after the 940 had killed



Reproduction (originals are in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem) of the lots with the names of the ten men who were to kill people at Masada rather than be captured by the Romans. -Medina

homing pigeons. I was walking where the women of the book had done their work. I could feel their strength and their challenges. *Dayenu!* That would have been enough. But it was something absolutely tiny that rocked me and sent

me back two millennia — a display, in photos, of recently unearthed pottery shards, irregular fragments no larger than one or two inches square. On ten of these shards, the



When I look at these photos of us in Yam HaMelach, the Dead Sea (Medina at top, both of us below at left), I remember how hard we laughed at how hard it was to stand up once we were rock-a-byed in that big, thick, silky-salty waterbed :-) -Gloria

their own wives and children. It seems impossible, but they were not called zealots for nothing. They cheated the Romans of victory, choosing freedom through self-imposed death rather than expose their families to torture at the hands of their enemy.

Whew. We gathered under a latticed roof, not unlike a Sukkah, grateful for stripes of shade in the unrelenting sun. The discussion, led by Rabbi Agler, was fascinating. Ultimately, the big question: Is it better to die for one's beliefs, like the Zealots of Masada, or to live for them, as

Johan Ben Zakkai did, talking Roman ruler-to-be Vespasian into letting him escape Jerusalem (via casket) and establish a humble community in Yavneh with families and students that would eventually become the new center of Jewish life, passing on Jewish values and learning to new generations?

I leave the big question for a moment to honor Dave Mont. He wanted so badly to walk

Our escorts on the walk up Ein Gedi today, a herd of up to fifty ibexes. Mike, our guide, said he had never seen so many. —Joyce



In the midst of the stark Judean desert there is an oasis now known as the Ein Gedi Nature Reserve. Most of the group washed off the desert dust in the waterfall. At right is “Artzy,” a stylized ibex whose likeness is all over Israel. He’s their Smokey the Bear.



the long winding uphill snake path to Masada, but he was not allowed to do it. When we arrived late morning the 700-step walkway was already under blazing sun, too hot and too dangerous. Still, I applaud Dave's intent and am sorry he did not get to achieve his goal.

Discussion on the life/death question continues among us as the bird reappears. He reminds me of a red-winged blackbird with the call of a grackle, darting among the rafters with his companions while Mike—our extremely knowledgeable, articulate, and entertaining guide—tries to shoo them away. They are persistent. They have lived here and along the shores of the Dead Sea for centuries, if not millennia.

We are the aliens. (I find out later they are called Tristram's Starlings or Grackles, named for the ornithologist who discovered them in the late 1800s.) Tristram's birds fly away and we hear new, important input on the life/death issue.

There has been re

-thinking, apparently, by many more people than our small tour group and Rabbi Agler. Both the hike up Masada and the shout are no longer part of Israeli soldiers' induction. ◇

Day Eleven

Joyce, Late Afternoon:

Only a couple of hours until Shabbat. Hopefully the hotel will get its Internet up and running before then. We are all physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted. We began the day at Mt. Herzl, where an interactive film (think Disney Hall of Presidents) took us into Vienna of the 1800s, with its culture and quiet but deep anti-Semitism that burst to the surface during the Dreyfus trial in 1894. The Herzl museum made him come alive for us...his struggles, his choices. He literally gave his life to the cause. The artifacts in the rooms were his possessions, purchased from his widow who was about to sell them because he had spent all of their money promoting the future Jewish state.

He spent much of the rest of his life on trains, traveling from one head of state or ministry to another, from England to Turkey to Russia, planning and choreographing six Zionist Congresses. Herzl is famous for say-



This section of Mt. Herzl is all from the War for Independence. No differentiation according to rank. Just names, ages, and where they came from. So many teenagers from so many parts of the world. Don't the graves look and feel like peaceful beds? Sad. The "blankets" are made of rosemary. -Gloria



Theodore Herzl's tomb. Rabbi Agler considers him the most important Jew of the last 1,000 years.

state of Israel. It was, almost exactly fifty years after his triumphant First Zionist Congress in

Basel, Switzerland.

In that

Joyce lays a stone at Golda Meir's grave, near the Herzl Museum in Jerusalem.



same cemetery we find the remains

of those who fell during the wars. It was said, "No one is given a new country on a silver platter." Two young soldiers answered: "We are the silver platter." Their graves are there, along with many others who died as early as 1946. We read their places of birth: Iraq, Russia, Jerusalem, Poland...and their ages: 40, 25, 16.

From there we drove to *Yad Vashem*. I was last there in 1967. It is

no longer just a memorial, but rather a graphic, dramatic, visual and auditory testimony to that part of world history. We were only there for two hours. Two days would not have been enough to comprehend it all. One small example: remains of objects pulled from the ruins of Chelmno. Among the spoons and buttons were a few broken shot glasses, the little ones with tiny handles. I visualized the people who had made "lechaim!" with them. My imagination was aided by the thousands of photos everywhere.

We are going to the Wall again before Shabbat.

Gloria, Evening:

Last Shabbat morning Rabbi Agler asked us our first impressions of Israel as we sat on the grass near our Haifa hotel pool. What a difference a week makes. Tonight we are at the *Kotel* (our third time at the wall in four days). It is nearly sunset and the words "Yirushalayim Shel Zahav" suddenly make sense. The evening light *does* turn the buff stone walls to gold. A nearly full moon pops out of the ramparts and the crowds begin to swell. We agree to fifteen minutes of personal time at the wall before we meet near the back of



At top, leaving Lion's Gate, walking down the hill from the gate near the Temple Mount. Just below, the KJCC bus approaches a section of the barrier separating Israeli and Palestinian areas; a discussion on the issues was led by Rabbi Michael Schwartz. The eleventh day culmi-

nated in Shabbat and another trip to the Kotel. The two photos below show the women's section, an amalgam of young and old, formal and casual, orthodox and other. If you look carefully you can see a soldier standing in the center.

the plaza for our own service. I see two circles of women praying and singing as I walk towards the wall. There are so many more people here than on the afternoon of our arrival. But it's Shab-

bat. I wonder how I will answer Rabbi Agler's question for tonight: what experience stands out the most for you?

I nearly jump out of my skin as a great shout goes out from the men's side. (Okay, we're a tiny bit nervous because of this morning's shooting.) Half bedlam, half cacophony, it turns out to be all joy. Some huge group is singing the same Carlebach melodies I loved at Rabbi Shai's services last Friday night. So imagine one great chorus going on while another group is chanting *Bar'chu*

and a third, fourth and fifth are doing their own things at equally enthusiastic volume. (Joyce says the energy of it reminds her of an Orthodox wedding.) I don't see any of this, of course, because of the high *mechitza* (the separating wall between men and women). I marvel at the tolerance of all these different groups towards each other.

Waiting patiently by the wall, I find a space, place my folded prayers in a mini-cave within the stone and put my hands and then my forehead on the wall. Surprising heat flows into me. Today's sun reflected through the stone to me, on the longest day of the year. We get to be here for *Erev Shabbat*, nearly full moonrise, and the summer solstice? Could this have been planned any better?

My prayers of gratitude over, I work my way gingerly backwards to our group. We get a sweet young lady to take our picture and we begin our service, an amalgam of the same songs we sing on Friday nights at shul with little interludes of two or three of us talking about what moved us, impressed us, helped us the most.

Many speak of the beauty of Israel, the resilience of the people, the way that de-

spite the many problems, how happy the people seem, and how amazing it was to be walking on ancient sites and stones, history alive. I thought I was going to talk about the Herzl Museum, the power of one man's dream, the graves of young soldiers from everywhere, killed in the War of Independence, planted in rosemary, with fragrant borders of lavender. But I lost it when we sang *v'Shamru* (it's not even my favorite song). Sudden tears. What hit me was how wonderful it was that we were doing the same thing at the Western Wall in Jerusalem that our KJCC *mishpocha* was doing in Tavernier, Florida. The experience rocked me. Over-abundance of gratitude made for more tears. (This is definitely the most cathartic

trip I've ever been on. It has also been the most fulfilling, exciting, educational, and, um, fun-filled trip ever, an adventure pilgrimage. Gratitude to all who made this trip possible – Rabbi Agler, Dave Mont, KJCC family, our great band of loving fellow travelers, Arzaworld, and cheerleader from afar, David Gitin.)

Medina, Evening:

If I were asked to pick the place that had the greatest impact on me during this trip, I would be hard-pressed to select just one. Independence Hall, Ayalon Institute, Tzfat (where my grandmother was born and where both she and my



From left to right: Carol Raphan, Georgia Landau, Joyce Peckman, Medina Roy, Rebecca Levinsky, Gloria Avner, Barney Coltman, Nils Levinsky, Barbara Smith, Steven Smith, Susan Ellner. In front are Phil Raphan and Rabbi Richard Agler. Missing is Dave Mont, who had joined the men dancing at the Wall. (And Barry and Natalie Dorf, who had already left for home. FYI, Rebecca and Nils Levinsky are not KJCC members. They joined us from Sweden. They had visited the Keys for several weeks this winter, and signed up for the trip.) -Joyce

grandfather are buried), the Tomb of Maimonides, Masada, a dip in the Dead Sea, Yad Vashem, viewing the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Israel Museum, not to mention the emotionally overwhelming visits to the Kotel...how could I possibly choose just one? But I would probably have to zero in on the visit to Mt. Herzl, the burial place of the man who had the vision for a homeland for the Jews in the late 1800s. Had it not been for Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, there might not be a Jewish homeland in Israel today.

The same feeling I had when the flight touched down in Tel Aviv, a definite lump in my throat and tears welling up in my eyes, came over me on this visit. To stand beside, and place a stone on the grave of this man...and he never lived to see the day when Israel would be declared an independent nation.

I will never forget walking through the national military cemetery, adjacent to Herzl's grave. Every Israeli has been touched, in some way, by one of its many wars. We walked through the only section of the cemetery where soldiers under the age of 18 are buried. (Young Israelis, both male and female, do not now enter the military before the age of 18.) This was the section where Israelis who died fighting for independence in 1948 are buried. Our guide Mike told us that just like in America's Civil War, lots of boys under the age of 18 signed up to fight. He told us that the population of Israel in 1948 numbered about 600,000 Jews. One percent of them, namely 6,000 – both military and civilian – were killed in the War of Independence. It was difficult not to become emotionally overwhelmed seeing the graves inscribed with the names of...warrior children. The inscriptions in Hebrew brought tears to all of us - "so-and-so who died in the battle to save Jerusalem, age 17..."

But perhaps the most gut-wrenching moments were when Rich Agler, unable to hold back his tears and finding it difficult to speak, told us the story of Israeli poet Natan Alterman's poem, "The Silver Platter." Based on the phrase often used by Chaim Weizmann in December of 1947 soon after the

adoption of the U.N. plan for the partition of Palestine, Weizmann is quoted as having said, "No state is ever handed on a silver platter." Alterman wrote the poem emphasizing that the land of Israel would not be handed to us on "a silver platter," that there would be a sizable price to pay. Walking through the military cemetery, Rich repeated more than once, that this trip, this place, this country *is* the silver platter. And it was given to us.

Day Twelve

Joyce, Evening:

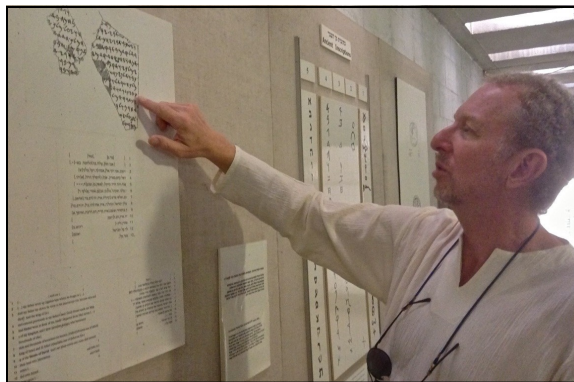
The group had the day off. After taking the Shabbat elevator (local stops only, no buttons to push) to a buffet breakfast (minus omelet station or scrambled eggs), we went our separate ways. Dave and Georgia headed off to the Old City, meandering through the narrow, crowded streets, and bought Armenian pottery and woven shawls. Barbara and Steve, Susan, Gloria, Medina, Barney, Nils and Rebecca and I accompanied Rabbi Agler on the five-minute walk to Hebrew Union College. In the hall we saw examples of the photos of Jerusalem, artifacts from excavations done by their rabbinical students, and photos of a much younger Richard Agler. We were introduced to the dean of students, who leads the Shabbat service. It was about to begin, and she assigned us several honors. Nils, a Levi, received second *aliya*. He is obviously a learned man, judging by the questions he has been asking in broken English with his heavy Swedish accent. Hearing him chant the prayers in perfect Hebrew, we understood how Shabbat transcends nationality and bonds us all together. Barney got *Hagbaah* (lifting and carrying the Torah) and I was given *Galilah* (dressing the Torah). My son Dan would not have been happy with the service, but it was all in Hebrew. Singing our age-old prayers, in Hebrew, in Jerusalem, was extremely meaningful.

From there the four gals and Richard piled into a cab to the Israel Museum. The amiable Arab driver told us that his family came to East Jerusalem from Yemen five hundred years ago. They are Israeli citizens and his eldest daughter is studying law at the Hebrew University.

The museum is featuring King Herod, who

was responsible for building Judea into a magnificent country, rivaling even Rome in volume of construction. He built Masada, Caesarea, Herodius and more, not to mention years of work expanding the Second Temple. We had spent the last week living among his works, so we were fascinated with the exhibit.

Of course we also saw the Dead Sea scrolls; antiquities starting with the early Galilee Man of the stone ages; remnants from Masada, ritual



Before services, Rabbi Agler gave us a tour (he'd done his rabbinical training there in the 70s) and pointed out some of the marvelous finds that HUC-sponsored archeological digs have uncovered. -Gloria

the shuttle comes at one a.m. for our five a.m. flight home.

Gloria, Evening:

Everyone did different things today. We must be subtly getting ready for group dissolution. The Smiths went back to the Old City. Dave and Georgia went to the Wall again. A few caught up on sleep. Seven of us spent the morning at HUC morning services. Who would have thought: a Reform service with barely a trace of English. It was

lovely, musical, and came with another water-works surprise whenever a prayer or song mentioned Tzion, Yisrael, or Yirushalayim. Will I ever get over this?

The woman rabbi's *dvar* gave us the exciting news about the three women who have been ordained as the first Orthodox Spiritual Leaders (someday they may even be called rabbis :-). They were happy to welcome Rich back (and it was fun to see photos of Rabbi Agler in his days as a student there in the early 70s!).

After four hours in the magnificent Israel Museum with its breathtaking Herod exhibit – he was the ultimate egocentric man of power, but oh what magnificent wonders he created, before he covered everything up with sand and rubble so his tomb could sit undistracted at the top of the Hill – we're exhausted. Like little kids who are tired but too excited to go to bed, we wandered the Archaeology Halls and Judaica exhibit as well as the Qumran scroll exhibit (did everybody but me know that *Qumran* comes from an Arabic word for "moon?") and saw some modern art and works of Escher, oh my. Medina, Susan, Joyce, and I are calling it a day (at least until our legs stop aching – or it's time for our farewell dinner). ♦



Barney enjoys a final Jerusalem waffle, covered with peaches, pears and cream. To his left, out of the photo, Richard is waiting for his *shakshuka*, which, unlike waffles, is practically a national dish and can also be eaten for any meal. -Joyce

objects and clothing; and modern Israeli art. Oh yes, a small Joan Miro exhibit as well. We were there for five hours.

One last dinner together. It has been a wonderful trip, with a terrific, compatible group of people. None of us will be the same.

Tonight

Postscript

A Visit with Family

by Medina Roy

Extending my trip for a week to visit and reconnect with family I haven't seen in 39 years.....I loved every moment - from those totally secular to the *chareydi* (and everything in between) - even some who don't recognize the legitimacy of the State of Israel (although that part does bother me a lot).

I spent some time each day with family that I thought I would have nothing in common with. I was prepared ahead of time that I most likely could not relate to them, especially those who are *chareydi*. Just the opposite! We didn't talk politics or religion. We shared family stories, laughed a lot, cried a little but absorbed every moment. They shared stories of my parents, who lived in the town of Petach Tikva, a suburb of Tel Aviv, from 1972 to some time in the 1990s (can't remember exact date at the moment). They ALL adored my mom and dad.

One of the highlights of my extended week was a return to Tzfat, the mystical northern town where my paternal grandmother was born. I have absolutely no doubt that the ancient stone walkways and stairs I climbed were the same my *bubbe* and her family traveled, just as I'm sure they knew well Ashkenazi Ari Synagogue we (the KJCC group) visited a week or so earlier. My visit to Tzfat ended at the cemetery where my *bubbe* and *zaydee* are buried - a visit I will never forget.

There is real joy preparing for Shabbat. It's kind of like Thanksgiving, except it happens once a week, not once a year. Most Israelis now have the day off on Friday or only work half a day and a good part of the day is spent cooking.

At about 7:15 p.m., music from a P.A. system filled the streets of the neighborhood. It was to announce that Shabbat would begin in about 15 minutes. It happened again ten minutes later, alerting the neighborhood that in

five minutes, it would be time to light the Shabbat candles. Soon after, the streets filled with men walking to shul for the evening prayers. When they returned home, it was time for supper, and like Thanksgiving, the time at the dinner table was about two hours, with joyous singing in-between courses. ♦

Walls, Dreams, and Shirutim

by Gloria Avner

There are walls and there are walls.

In Israel, boundary walls walk a snaking green line, a 25 ft. tall, grey cement, smooth-surfaced monolithic protector of families who live close to dangerous borders, especially the borders known for unpredictable incursions of suicide bombers. In some places where the wall exists, it has reduced incidents and casualties tremendously. In others, it has bred hatred and resentment, especially when the wall seemed to be placed capriciously by officials who simply looked at a map, without regard for centuries of olive grove ownership and crop-tending by Arab communities that straddle the line. Finally, some accommodations are being made. Portions of The wall get moved. The Arabs agree to protect the railroad passing through town. The farmers get to harvest their olives.

Time out for a folk song, composed and sung on our "*Alumah* (Ray of Light)" bus by Rabbi Richard Agler (with acknowledgment to Woody Guthrie). It may seem humorous, but it makes a serious point: "This Land is your land. This land is my land, from the Arab border, to the Arab border, from the Arab border, to the Arab border. This land was made for you and me."

We are nearing the end of our Israel trip, and Rabbi Michael Schwartz is guiding our bus to wall-related sites, including a local bus stop where a suicide bomber caused the loss of eight lives. He is discussing the boundary wall problem as a humanitarian and social justice issue. Are we better served by meet-

ing, talking with, and helping to uplift our neighbors, or by building more and higher boundary walls? The question resonates. There are no obvious answers, just arguments. We are exhausted and want to get off the bus, lie down, have a glass of wine, go to dinner. The pollyanna glow of our first few days in Israel is losing its gloss. Like everything else in and about Israel, it's complicated.

The wall that is not complicated is the Western Wall, the Wailing Wall, the pale ancient Temple boundary wall of giant stones that turn the city into *Yerushalayim Shel Zahav* (Jerusalem of Gold) with "end of day" light. If our trip to Israel were a play in three or four or eleven acts (maybe one for each day, each having four or five scenes), this Wall would be a main character. It certainly made for catharsis, emotional release through tears.

We are so tiny against that Wall. Look at any of our photographs. The Wall would embrace us if it could, and it does when we get close, giving solace to us and our little folded-up prayer messages, the paper "please" and "thank you" notes we place in its human-scale little crevices.

We've walked underneath our big Wall, below ground, stooping through tunnels so narrow we could touch their walls by barely raising an arm. They anointed us with insight. They let us in on secrets, mind-boggling construction techniques, foresight in relation to water storage, complexity of an ancient culture brilliant in its architecture.

Outside of Jerusalem we marveled at walls too: the remnants of the amphitheater at Caesarea, Herod's tribute to the emperor Augustus on the Mediterranean; the painted fresco fragments on the remaining walls of Herod's palaces at Masada in the Judean desert; the almost unbreachable walls of the Crusader city Akko jutting out into the sea just above Haifa, with its many solid feet of heaped stone on either side of twelve feet of dirt.

To really understand walls, though, we have to think about what we're walling in and walling out, and why. (I recommend Robert Frost's poem "Mending Wall.") If there is noth-

ing to protect, nothing precious to house, there is no need for walls. What is precious in Israel is both concept and reality: *Ha'Aretz*, the land. It was promised to us millennia ago, only recently made a reality. The reality began with a dream. Everything in Israel begins with a dream.

The Bible and its stories are never far away here. We can find where Abraham was told by three angels that he would found a great nation. Jacob had a dream in the wilderness and wrestled all night with an angel who would give him a new name, this country's name. Moses sealed the deal with God, Torah, and a covenant here on Mount Sinai. And then there are Herzl's words. When he said, in his most famous quote, "if you will it, it is no dream," he proved as good as his word. "Dream and deed are not as different as many think," he said. "All the deeds of men are dreams at first, and become dreams in the end." He thought that people would laugh at him if he said, "At Basel, I founded the Jewish State." Then he added, "Perhaps in five years, certainly in fifty, everyone will know it."

We on the bus certainly know it. It is over 100 years since Herzl voiced his dream, providing the impetus to make the State of Israel a welcome reality for a people without a homeland. It was and is a struggle, both to create and preserve, so we need to keep dreaming it. There is a profound feeling when you walk down a street in which you belong, where all around you are Jews, of every color, description, attitude, belief, and clothing style, but all Jews.

One last thematic thread remains, a banal one, but integrally woven into the complex fabric of our journey. On behalf of our entire band of pilgrims, I would like to thank our guide, Mike Rogoff. In addition to giving great context and a Bernie Ginsberg-like sprinkling of humor to our journey, he always pointed out the nearest "*shirutim*" (bathrooms) and gave us adequate time to visit them. Given our ages, relative infirmities, and simple necessity, we appreciated his attention to this detail before, during, and after every activity, exploration, and event. We wandered from the sublime to the mundane and back again with zest. ♦

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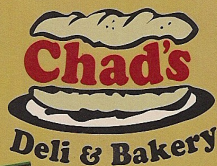


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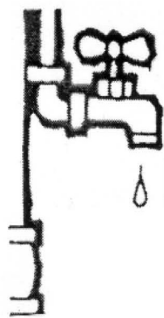
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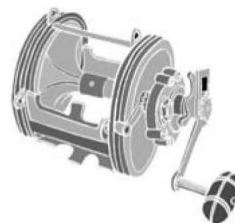
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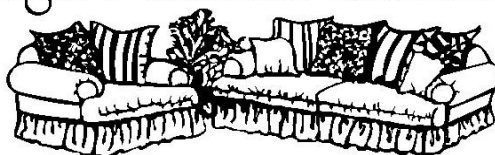


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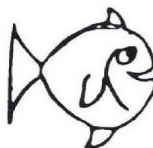
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