

Chai~Lights



December 2010

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Keys Jewish Community Center

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P.O. Box 1332
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President's Message Alan Beth



Can you believe it is December already! Let me tell you, I am shocked at how fast this year has flown by. Thanksgiving is now behind us and New Years is just ahead, so it would behoove me to wish you a Happy Chanukah and a (slightly early) Happy New Year! This is also the time we warmly welcome back our KJCC snowbirds.

December marks a momentous event for my family, and me personally. It has been almost a year since my father passed away. As you know, traditionally we say the Mourner's Kaddish for eleven months. In a few days I stop reciting it for my dad. Standing and saying Kaddish has become a habit I have been getting into, and now to stop seems strange indeed. It makes me think of how quickly this year has gone.

Lately, I have taken up cycling as a means of stress relief (from work – not the KJCC!) and trying to lose some of those extra pounds obtained at our wonderful and so-delicious Sisterhood Onegs and potluck dinners! A few days ago, I zoomed past St. Justin's Catholic Church in Key Largo and in the corner of my eye happened to see the following message pasted on the church's outdoor message board: *"Enjoy life now, it*

comes with an expiration date." Well, needless to say the message grabbed me. I stopped, reread the message and immediately thought: that is so *Jewish*. So, let me ask you, is this not the type of message that belongs outside of our KJCC? Instead, our message is on a Catholic church!

This phrase reminded me of a Hebrew word all of us know: *L'Chaim*, which means "to Life!" (Note: yes, it always comes followed by an exclamation mark.) We use it all the time – when we have a drink, for a toast and especially after Kiddush. It is now such a common word that I am sure it will soon be in the New Oxford Dictionary. We even have a song: "To Life, To Life - L'Chaim." (Did you know that the first name of Topol, who played Tevya in the movie of "Fiddler," is Chaim?).

L'Chaim is the essence of Judaism, to treasure life, to enjoy life, and of course to see life as a gift. Well, December is here and for us in the Keys that means blue skies, low humidity, dry weather, warmth, no mosquitoes, calm seas and no hurricanes. What blessings, and how precious life is. We need to treasure every moment.

L'Chaim!

Alan

December 2010

24 Kislev - 24 Tevet

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Names denote leaders of Friday services. <i>Italicized</i> names are Oneg sponsors. KJCC has Shabbat services every Friday night.</p>			<p>1 First Night of Chanukah</p>	<p>3 Second Night of Chanukah</p>	<p>3 Gloria Avner & Yardena Kamely <i>Zoe Berk</i> Chanukah Potluck Dinner 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>4 Fourth Night of Chanukah</p>
<p>5 Fifth Night of Chanukah Sisterhood Meeting 9:30 a.m.</p>	<p>6 Sixth Night of Chanukah</p>	<p>7 Seventh Night of Chanukah</p>	<p>8 Eighth Night of Chanukah</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 Randy Kominsky</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12 KJCC Board Meeting 9:00 a.m. Strudel Workshop 1:00 p.m.</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17 Ken Atlas</p>	<p>18 Havdalah Service at Joyce Peck- man's House 5:30 p.m.</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 George Swartz & Yardena Kamely</p>	<p>25 Rabbi Agler Service at KJCC <u>10:00</u> Steinbocks' Xmas Open House, 12-6</p>
<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31 Stuart & Lauren Sax 6:30 Service <i>Stuart & Lauren Sax</i></p>	

Nosh

An Oneg Fit for Elijah

Those of you lucky or wise enough to attend the early service on October 29th were treated to an incredible Oneg provided by Kathy and Joe Shabathai. Most of the dishes were handcrafted by Kathy, including the desserts and the challah. (It isn't often that KJCCers are treated to freshly cooked salmon at an Oneg...not lox, fresh salmon.) Trust us, you'll want to keep an eye out for the next announced Oneg the Shabathais are sponsoring. But you do have to go to services first. We'll be stamping hands.

Oneg Sponsors for December 2010

December 3rd—Zoe Berk in honor of Cammie's birthday.

December 31st—Lauren & Stuart Sax for Stuart's birthday.

Welcome to New Members

KJCC is pleased to announce two new members of our growing *mishpocha*, Leo Haviv of Islamorada and Martin Fabian of Key Largo. We think you'll find a warm and amazing, active center of Jewish life here, though we're off the beaten path and not at all your typical shul.

A Note of Thanks

As most of you are already aware, issues related to cancer detection and cancer awareness are very near to our hearts. We recently completed our second October Cancer Awareness Month at Angelika Clothing Boutique, with a variety of informational events as well as a fundraising effort to benefit the Cancer Foundation of the Florida Keys. Many thanks to our KJCC *mishpocha* who supported this effort, both financially and by their attendance. You know who you are and we are deeply grateful.

Lauren & Stuart Sax

Study Group Forming

Students in the adult Hebrew classes have shown interest in exploring a number of subjects relating to Israel and the Jewish people. As a result, since class time is limited, a small, informal study and discussion group is forming that will meet monthly, the first meeting to be Saturday, December 11, in the afternoon (time to be determined) at Yardena's (and Michal's) house in Venetian Shores. If you're interested, call Rich Peine for more information, 853-5664.

Havdalah Service Scheduled

We will meet at Joyce Peckman's house on December 18th at 5:30 p.m. for Havdalah, what Gloria calls "the shortest and sweetest of all Jewish services." Joyce's address is 235 Lee Avenue (Taylor Creek Village), MM 104.5, oceanside. After the sun sets and we see three stars, we will ritually say goodbye to the Sabbath. Please let Joyce know you'll be coming, at 240-1000. (She also gives directions.)

December Anniversaries

	Years
5th	Ron Levy & Beth Kaminstein.....21
8th	Lawrence & Pearl Jacobs.....57
11th	Arthur Lee & Johanna Willner.....45
11th	Jamie & Laura Goodman.....5
14th	David & Pat VanArtsdalen.....29
17th	Larry & Stephanie Gilderman.....44

This Year's Service for the Homeless

On December 21st, at noon, at the Community Park near Sunshine Market in Tavernier, there will be a memorial service for the homeless men, women and children who died in the Florida Keys this year. A number of us participated in this moving ecumenical event last year. Please join us. The theme this year is "Shalom." Gloria Avner and I will be helping lead the service.

-Carol Steinbock

Mishebeyrach Cards

The following note was sent to Jim and Joan Boruszak from a friend who they'd sent a Mishebeyrach card to. (The kind that sit at the back of the sanctuary for just such a purpose.)

Thank you for the blessing. I had never seen anything like it and am so touched. I have it in a very visible place and can look at it often. It's so soothing. I am truly doing better. And yesterday I got one great report... I do not have dementia. Whew!!!! A few more reports like that and maybe I can start living again. Hope all is well with you.

Love ya., N.

Give Us Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Huddled Ink Cartridges...

Carol Steinbock has put a collection box in the KJCC lobby to collect and recycle used and spent ink cartridges, from ink-jet or laser and any manufacturer. Recycling is a green thing to do, and KJCC actually will make money for each cartridge we send in.

Two Socko Events on December 25th

On Saturday morning, December 25th, Rabbi Richard Agler has agreed to lead a service at KJCC, to begin at 10:00 a.m. This is wonderful news to all who've attended his thoughtful, learned and accessible services in the past, and a great opportunity for the rest of you to join in.

Just after the end of Rabbi Agler's service, Steve and Carol Steinbock will be having their annual Christmas Open House at their Plantation Key Colony home, 147 Gardenia Street, from noon – 6 p.m. As always, all members of KJCC are warmly invited. There will be plenty of food and drink. Please R.S.V.P. to Carol at 393-1205.

The KJCC extends deepest condolences to

Dave Feder and his family

on the death of Dave's mother

Harriet Feder

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 KJCC, call Rene Rose, 305-852-3959.

Cemetery Information – If you wish to plan for the very distant future, you can reserve space at the Kendall Mt. Nebo Cemetery in the KJCC section. Call Bea Graham, 305-852-0214.

Picture Postcards – We have beautiful picture postcards bearing the Millard Wells representation of the KJCC, which was commissioned by Sisterhood. Quantities to fit your needs and can be mailed to you or your gift recipient. The price is \$36 per hundred but we will sell lesser quantities. Contact Joan Boruszak, 305-852-0833.

Oneg Shabbat Sponsor – To schedule your special date with Sisterhood, call Joyce Peckman, 305-451-0665.

Meditation Garden – Participate in our newest venture. A beautiful garden is in progress and you can be part of this exciting new project by making a donation for an engraved brick, an engraved bench, or for plants in honor or memory of a loved one or event. Call Steve Steinbock for information, 305-394-0143.

KJCC Tree of Life Leaves and Rocks, Sanctuary Seat Plates, Yahrzeit 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 Nancy Kluger, 305-852-4353.

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 and/or annually in the Directory. Call Gene Silverman 305-664-3316 852-8575 for 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, Scholarship Fund, Sara Cohen Memorial Tzedukah Fund, or General Fund.

December Birthdays

1st.....Bob Freundlich
 1st.....Paul Hudson
 2nd.....Joseph Burke Grossman
 2nd.....Marshall A. Field
 3rd.....Ashley Berk
 3rd.....Cammie Berk
 3rd.....Jackie LePree
 3rd.....Rick McNew
 3rd.....Tracy B. Nikolas
 4th.....Judith Klein
 5th.....Geri Smith
 5th.....Joseph Beth
 5th.....Stuart Sax
 6th.....Gerald Hirsch
 6th.....Haley Boruszak
 6th.....Kevin Gershowitz
 6th.....Leslie Boruszak
 6th.....Neal A. Jacobson
 7th.....Franklin Rose
 8th.....Alan Stocking
 8th.....Leslie Dillon
 9th.....George Swartz
 9th.....Jim Boruszak
 10th.....Harvey Robins
 10th.....Susan Greenbaum
 11th.....Sara Rose Friedman
 12th.....Lilian Forbes
 13th.....Robin Margulies Juenger
 13th.....Sarah Boruszak
 13th.....Susan Widrich
 15th.....Stephan Ban
 16th.....Diana Lal
 16th.....Samuel Klimpl
 17th.....Bruce Forman
 17th.....Jeffrey Schocket
 18th.....Emelyn Anne Juenger
 18th.....Jerome Horowitz
 18th.....Lily Chen
 19th.....Aaron Stuart
 19th.....David Gitin
 20th.....Alan Schulberg
 20th.....Jennifer VanArtsdalen
 20th.....Teresa Kwalick
 21st.....Roberta McNew

December Birthdays

22nd.....Stuart Smith
 25th.....Lori Kay
 26th.....Steven Smith
 27th.....Steve Kasinof
 28th.....Elaine Schulberg
 28th.....Emily Sherman
 28th.....Michael Klimpl
 29th.....Joan Stark
 30th.....Ellen Bloom
 31st.....Elliot S. Schenker

Many Types of Donations are Available

The end of the year, and the beginning of KJCC's high season, seemed a good time to remind everyone of the many ways and many reasons there are to donate to our Jewish center. For those who have belonged, or currently belong, to a synagogue to our north, we think you'll agree that our price schedule is extremely reasonable, even low. Please contact Alan Beth by e-mail or Linda Pollack, 852-8575, for further details on wording or payment options.

Siddur Bookplates:	\$ 25.00
Chair Plates:	300.00
Tree of Life Rock:	1,200.00
Tree of Life plaque:	50.00
Yahrzeit Board plaque:	400.00
Meditation Garden:	
Engraved Bench:	\$ 750.00
Double Brick, 8 x 8:	200.00
Standard Brick, 4 x 8:	125.00

Tree of Life Volunteers Needed

We've noticed (well, Alan noticed) that we're getting so many names on our Tree of Life Boards in the Sanctuary that it's hard for people to find their or their relatives' plaques. So we're going to catalog and computerize all the names. This will be a fair amount of work, so we'll need volunteers, some to call out names and some to enter them in a laptop. Alan will take care of a new program to properly arrange all the information. Contact Alan at president@keysjewishcenter.com if you can help.



SHOP ISRAEL

Check your KJCC Gift Shop and buy Israel.



Magnificent crystal mezuzahs designed by the artist Udi from the Blue and White gallery in the Cardo in the Old City of Jerusalem - Wonderful wedding gifts!



Multi-colored over-the-shoulder fabric purses and challah covers from Rifkas in the Old City of Jerusalem



Also: Silver star necklaces with multi colored stones and hand made parchment note paper from Zickran Yaakov.



Beautiful talit and kepehs from Jaffa



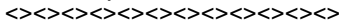
Individual orders can be accommodated.

In Memoriam December 2010

In Memory Of

Alex Avner

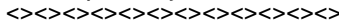
By Gloria Avner



In Memory Of

Frances Bader

By Ivan & Jean Bader



In Memory Of

Rose Beth

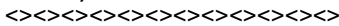
By Alan Beth & Candace Stanlake



In Memory Of

Daniel Birnbaum

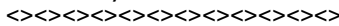
By Norbert Birnbaum



In Memory Of

Arnold Biskar

By Rosie Biskar



In Memory Of

Joseph M. Bloom

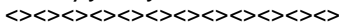
By Marc & Ellen Bloom



In Memory Of

Burton V. Boruszak

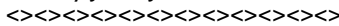
By Jim & Joan Boruszak



In Memory Of

Julius Kohlenbrener

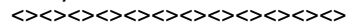
By Jim & Joan Boruszak



In Memory Of

Eva Levine

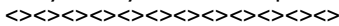
By Barnet & Ellen Coltman



In Memory Of

Edward Sandberg

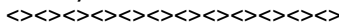
By Murray & Claire Cooper



In Memory Of

David M. Orans

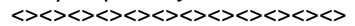
By Alvan & Carol Field



In Memory Of

Harry J. Friedman

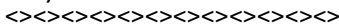
By Stephan & Jane Friedman



In Memory Of

Harry Wolfe

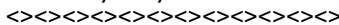
By Michael & Suzanne Gilson



In Memory Of

Jeanne Schneider

By Maryon Gould



In Memory Of

Edwin Jackson

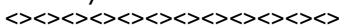
By Kenneth & Jerri Grossman



In Memory Of

Sylvia Sarah Grossman

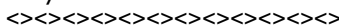
By Stuart Grossman



In Memory Of

Herbert Gontar

By Robert & Eileen Hermann



In Memory Of

Dinah Levy

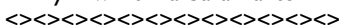
By Michal Kamely



In Memory Of

Barbara K. Silverberg

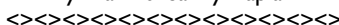
By Erwin & Barbara Kantor



In Memory Of

Evelyn Stockser

By Frank & Sandy Kaplan



In Memory Of

William Kay

By Harvey & Joan Kay



YEDA VE'TORASHA

Yardena Kamely



Remembering *Kristallnacht* at the KJCC

On our first Shabbat Service last month, we briefly commemorated *Kristallnacht* at the KJCC. On November 9, 1938, the Nazis unleashed a wave of pogroms against Germany's Jews. Thousands of synagogues and Jewish businesses and homes were damaged or destroyed. This event came to be called *Kristallnacht*, or "Night of Broken Glass," for the shattered home and store windows scattered on German streets.

The pretext for this violence was the November 7th assassination of a German diplomat in Paris by a Jewish teenager whose parents, along with 17,000 other Polish Jews, had been recently expelled from the Reich. Though portrayed as spontaneous outbursts of popular outrage, these pogroms were calculated acts carried out by Nazi party organizations. Stormtroopers killed at least 91 Jews and injured many others. For the first time, Jews were arrested on a massive scale and transported to Nazi concentration camps. About 30,000 Jews were sent to Buchenwald, Dachau, and Sachsenhausen, where hundreds died within weeks of arrival. Release came only after the prisoners agreed to emigrate and transfer their property to "Aryans."

"Pages of Testimony," which have been submitted to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem since the mid-1950s by family members and

friends, record the names and biographical data of those who perished. They serve as symbolic paper tombstones for those who have no marked graves. The "Pages of Testimony" are an attempt to give the victims back their personal identity, and dignity. One story, a corpse

with a name: Selma Zwienicki was shot and killed in her home in Bremen, Germany, during *Kristallnacht* by SA stormtroopers when she refused to reveal the whereabouts of her husband. The synagogue, which had already been the target of acts of violence, was set on fire, the cemetery was desecrated, and Jewish men were arrested. (This "Page of Testimony" was submitted by Selma Zwienicki's



The Baden-Baden synagogue in flames on the night of November 9, 1938.

daughter.)

Egged on by the Nazis, rioters burned or destroyed 267 synagogues and vandalized or looted 7,500 Jewish businesses. Some around the world protested, but not a single country would change its immigration laws and receive the Jews. The Jews of Germany were trapped. As Rabbi Leo Baeck put it: The thousand-year history of Jews in Germany had come to an end.

On November 9th we remember the tragedy of the German Jews. We also remember the stories of the few Righteous Gentiles, and we remember the opportunities the world had to stop the violence and hate, but did not. May the memory of the victims of *Kristallnacht* lead us to a better world. ◇

Contributions to KJCC

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

General Fund

Brown, Alan & Barbara
 Caplin-Maleady, Bonnie
 Gordon, J. Bruce & Rechelle
 Jones, Ballarena/Lunch Bunch
 Kominsky, Randy & Eileen
 Pollack, Joel & Linda
 Wagoner, Ralph

In Memory of

Jerry Tabasky
 Jerry Tabasky
 Jerry Tabasky
 Jerry Tabasky
 Brian
 Harriet Feder
 Jerry Tabasky

Scholarship Fund

Peckman, Joyce
 Peckman, Joyce
 Peckman, Joyce
 Pollack, Joel & Linda

In Memory of

Harriet Feder
 Mauro Ojeda
 Simon Skolnick
 to match Bridge Walk

30th Anniversary

Steinberg, Richard & Sheila

General Fund

Nobil, Jim & Lynn
 Tobin, Andrew

Meditation Garden

Nobil, Jim & Lynn

In Memory of

Joel & Sara Cohen

Meditation Garden

Sax, Stuart & Lauren

In Honor of

Pauline Roller's citizenship

Yartzeit Contributions

Anonymous
 Anonymous
 Isenberg, Henry & Patricia
 Kwalick, Teresa
 Steinberg, Richard & Sheila
 Steinberg, Richard & Sheila
 Tallent, Ralph & Lillian
 Wolfe, Larry & Dorothy

In Memory of

Kenneth Gorelick
 Jerry Spero
 Helene Tulsy
 Barry Kwalick
 Joel Cohen
 Saunders Cohen
 Samuel Tallent
 Diana Wolfe

Yiskor Book

Lessner, Howard & Shaloma
 Olsen, Gerald & Sheila
 Schocket, Jeffrey & Patty
 Steinberg, Richard & Sheila

KJCC Meditation Garden

Bricks and Benches are now available for our new Meditation Garden. These can be purchased as honorariums or memorials and as gifts. Place your order for one or several to support this new project.

Size: Standard Brick (4"x8") \$125
 Double Brick (8"x8") \$200
 Bench \$750

Donations for other amounts are also welcome and will be used toward the purchase of native plants, shrubs and trees.

Inscription: Please print on a separate sheet. We will send a notification card to the honoree or giftee at your request.

Sisterhood Joyce Peckman



The cool wind from the north that blew away summer's heat and humidity seems to be slowly blowing our northern travelers back to the Keys. Almost every week, sometimes at Friday night services, or more often at Publix, I see another returning friend. Of course, only recently many of you were warmly welcoming *me* back, just as I am now happily greeting our returning snowbirds.

We at Sisterhood have been planning a warm and active season. Since food and friendship are the fuels that keep the Keys Jewish community chugging along, we are planning to have a potluck dinner once every month. Our first this year featured new and familiar faces, and an amazing amount of food from across the world. Erica did a great job of coordinating. Georgia, Candy, Jane and I set up and everyone brought something good! The next dinner will be the Friday night of Channukah, December 3rd, at 6:30 p.m. Erica Garrett will again coordinate the dairy/vegetarian menu. Please let her know what you plan to bring, or call her for suggestions. Her office phone is 853-1003, or e-mail at hippiejap@hotmail.com. There will be no monetary donation required this time, since Joel and Linda Pollack have generously sponsored the event. The Friday night potluck after that is scheduled for January 14th.

Next we will fuse the characters of Julia Child and Bubby to present "Georgia's Strudel Workshop." This event, scheduled for 1 p.m. on Sunday, December 12th, will be for a limited number of aspiring pastry chefs willing to pay \$18 for the privilege of working with phyllo dough, apples and whatever else it takes to produce the delicious strudel that Georgia Landau brought to our Yom Kippur break-the-fast. Participants will take home recipes and a strudel of their own making. All of the ingredients plus coffee will be provided. (You may wish to bring your own apron.) My friends know that I am far from

being an accomplished cook. Yet when I went with Bea Graham, and Nissan and Liati Mayk, to a similar professional class this summer in New York, we had a blast. Contact me at 451-0665 for your reservation.

Still in the spirit of Bubby and Julia, we are again gathering recipes. The goal is to preserve the recipes we at KJCC have enjoyed over the years, as well as others you may want to share. We can begin with the collection gathered and distributed two years ago at the Women's Seder. We'd also like to add any personal stories or memories that may be connected to the recipes. Georgia Landau is coordinating, and can be contacted at moogoomom@gmail.com.

Tuesday January 18th – hold that date! Our fashion show this year will focus on how we can use accessories to give new and different looks to our current wardrobes. Lauren and Stuart Sax of Angelika's will bring out the "model" in each participant, dressing up what you wear while you are enjoying lunch and dessert. You won't want to miss this new take on a wonderful annual event.

We are taking reservations now for "The 25th Annual Putnam Valley Spelling Bee" at the Actors Playhouse in Miami on Sunday, February 6th. This is a thoroughly enjoyable musical. Please let me know if you are going, then send your check for \$40 to me or to Nancy Kluger. On Sunday, February 27th, we are planning a Deli fun night. Details next month.

The next Sisterhood meeting will be on Sunday, December 5th at 9:30 a.m. At that time the new board will be officially nominated and voted upon. Every KJCC "sister" is a member of Sisterhood. We are a family. Please try to attend. ♦

Georgia's Strudel Workshop

*Sunday, Dec 12, 2010
1:00 pm*

*KJCC
Sisterhood*

*RSVP:
Georgia 305-393-9885*



Sisterhood is sponsoring a cooking workshop and invite all to attend, men and women alike. Georgia Landau will be instructing us in the art of making apple strudel.

Space is limited so please let Georgia know you are coming by December 6th.



Donation: \$18

World Jewish Report

Medina Roy



Mixing Water, Bagels and New York Pizza

Most bagel connoisseurs know that the secret ingredient to a delicious New York City bagel is local tap water. A story broke in the summer of 2009 that a South Florida company, The Original Brooklyn Water Bagel Company (OBWBC) designed a water filtration system that would duplicate the taste of New York City tap water. The bagels have been such a hit in Florida that another company, Mamma Mia's Trattoria & Brick Oven Pizzeria, (MMT&BOP) is using the same filtration system to make "authentic 'New York Style' pizza." But hold on - not so fast - OBWBC is suing MMT&BOP, claiming that the latter stole the former's recipe for Brooklyn tap water. To make things even more complicated, MMT&BOP claims it bought the water filtration system for \$20,000 from a *third* company, Famous New York Baking Water Corporation (FNYBWC), founded by former employees of the bagel company (OBWBC), including the owner's father-in-law. MMT&BOP is countersuing, accusing OBWBC of making false claims about patenting their method of filtration. (By the way - New York City's tap water beat out all brands of bottled water many years ago in a Consumer Reports issue.) (*The Forward*, 10-26-10)

A Visit to the Holy Land

Israel's Tourism Minister Stas Misezhnikov has extended an official invitation to the 33 Chilean miners, who were trapped underground for 68 days before being rescued, to experience a "spiritual journey" this Christmas in the Holy Land. The men and their spouses have been invited to Israel for a week-long, all-expense-paid sightseeing tour of various Christian holy sites. "Your bravery and strength of spirit...was an inspiration to

us all," wrote the tourism minister in his invitation. "It would be a great honor for us to welcome you as our guests in the Holy Land." (www.haaretz.com, 10-18-10)

From Now on, Made Only in Israel?

In early November, an Israeli Cabinet-level committee, with the backing of many Knesset members, passed a bill that would require all Israeli flags purchased by government agencies to be made in Israel. For the past several years, most of the flags have been bought from China and other Asian countries. The bill must be passed on second reading, pass another committee vote, and pass a final vote in the Knesset before becoming law. (www.israelnationalnews.com, 11-1-10)

"Couples Aware" Campaign

The Jewish Genetic Disease Consortium and the New York Board of Rabbis have launched a campaign to encourage couples to go for screenings for Jewish genetic diseases before starting a family. The "Couples Aware" campaign consists of training sessions for rabbis where they review genetic basics and learn ways to incorporate genetic screening into their premarital counseling sessions. About one in five Ashkenazi Jews are carriers of at least one of 16 genetic diseases that can be fatal in childhood or cause serious mental and physical problems. Having two carriers of the same disease increases the chances of giving birth to a child affected by it. Brooklyn Rabbi Joseph Potasnik said, "Saving human lives is the paramount mitzvah of our people...it was obvious that rabbis should do as much as possible to counsel couples about Jewish genetic diseases." (*World Jewish Congress*, 10-21-10)

Israel's First "Socially Conscious Street"

Ten businesses on Ringblum Street in Be'er Sheva have signed a commitment to uphold labor laws, offer handicapped access, protect the environment and contribute to the community. The idea of getting the entire street to sign the *Tav Chevrati* (literally, the "social seal") came from two young women, volunteers for the city's *Tav Chevrati* project. The two stated, "Our objective is to brand the street as socially conscious, and we hope this will send a message. The idea is that we, the consumers, tell business proprietors: We will not enter your business if you do not ensure proper working conditions for your... workers..." The seal will serve as a sort-of socially conscious *kashrut* certificate." (www.haaretz.com, 10-11-10)

Where's My Falafel?

The past year's scorching heat and severe drought have taken a toll on fruit and vegetable crops in the Middle East. In addition to prices skyrocketing for salad ingredients, the supply of chickpeas and other legumes has been threatened. Hummus manufacturer Moshe Kaufzell is calling on the government to lower taxes on imported chickpeas. The last time the hummus supply was threatened in Israel, it had nothing to do with agriculture. In 2005, intruders broke into Kibbutz Einat and stole 75 tons of chickpeas. (*The Forward*, 10-26-10)

In Memoriam

-Joseph Stein, the Tony Award-winning librettist of "Fiddler on the Roof," has died at the age of 98. Stein wrote more than a dozen Broadway musicals, but is best known for "Fiddler," which won nine Tony Awards in 1965. The show opened on Broadway in 1964 and ran for over 3,200 performances with Zero Mostel playing Tevya, the lead character. Stein also wrote "Enter Laughing," "Zorba" and "Rags." (www.jta.org, 10-26-10)

-Jerry Bock, who along with Sheldon Harnick composed the scores for some of Broadway's most successful shows, including "Fiddler on the Roof," died at the age of 81. Bock died ten days after the death of Joseph

Stein. (www.nytimes.com, 11-3-10)

-Louis Henkin, a pioneer in human rights law, died in mid-October. He was 92. Henkin influenced the development of human rights law while a law professor at Columbia. He found fault with the United States for failing to sign international human rights covenants. He was born Eliezer Henkin in 1917, the youngest child of a rabbi, in what is now Belarus. Henkin and his family fled to New York in 1923. (www.jta.org, 10-19-10)

Forbes' Top Choice for Growth

In a survey of cities around the world, Forbes magazine has chosen Tel Aviv as the city "most likely to succeed," to thrive in the coming decades as high-tech continues to dominate the world economy. "The Tel Aviv metropolitan area has the most dynamic economy in the Middle East," the magazine stated, adding that the city and its suburbs were home to dozens of high-tech businesses, "making it the closest thing to Silicon Valley outside California and Southeast Asia." (www.israelnationalnews.com, 10-24-10)

A New Online Catalog

A register of some 20,000 artworks looted by the Nazis from Jewish families in Nazi-occupied France and Belgium can now be searched in an online catalog. The intent of the project is to reunite the paintings and objects with their rightful owners. Begun in 2005, the project is a joint initiative by the Conference of Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Decades after the greatest mass theft in history, families robbed of their prized artworks can now search this list to help them locate long-lost treasures," said Claims Conference chairman Julius Berman. Holocaust survivors and their heirs, art collectors, galleries and museums can freely access the service. The Nazis always meticulously cataloged their spoils. "It is now the responsibility of museums, art dealers, and auction houses to check their holdings against these records to determine whether they might be in possession of art stolen from Holocaust victims," Berman said. According to the Claims Conference, well over

half of the stolen property has never been returned to its rightful owners, their descendants or their country of origin. So far, some 260 collections and 269 owners have been identified in the database. (*World Jewish Congress, 10-18-10*)

A New World Record

Israeli chess Grand Master Alik Gershon has set a world record by playing 527 ranked players simultaneously and winning 87 percent of the matches. The 30-year-old native of the Ukraine, who immigrated to Israel in 1990 and now hails from Herzliya, broke the record set last year by Iranian Grand Master Mortaza Majoob. Many of Gershon's opponents were also immigrants from the former Soviet Union. The event was sponsored by the Jewish Agency and the Israel Chess Federation, to mark the 20th anniversary of the mass *aliyah* from the crumbling Soviet Union. Gershon began to play chess at the age of two, and by the time he was five he was competing. He won the world championship in 1994 for youth up to age 14 and became Israeli champion in 2000. (www.jta.org, 10-22-10)

Dead Sea Scrolls go Digital

The Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), in collaboration with Google's research and development center in Israel, will soon place the Dead Sea Scrolls online, allowing anyone with an Internet connection to take a new look into the Biblical past. The \$3.5 million project aims to produce the clearest renderings yet of the ancient scrolls. "This is the most important discovery of the 20th century, and we will be sharing it with the most advanced technology of the next century," IAA project director Prina Shor said. The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of some of the oldest known surviving Biblical texts, as well as evidence of the Second Temple.

Using advanced imaging technology and high-resolution images, each of the scrolls' 30,000 fragments will be freely accessible. The new technology will help to expose writing that has faded over the centuries and allow for further research.

The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered be-

tween 1946 and 1956, in and around more than eleven caves in the ruins of the ancient settlement of Khirbet Qumran on the north-western shore of the Dead Sea. The texts include the oldest surviving copy of the Ten Commandments. The scrolls are written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, mostly on parchment with some on papyrus. The Scrolls themselves are on display at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

(*World Jewish Congress, 10-19-10*)

Global Day of Jewish Learning

As described in Newsweek, "Jewish lore is filled with tales of formidable rabbis. Probably none living today can compare in genius and influence to Adin Steinsaltz, whose extraordinary gifts as scholar, teacher, scientist, writer, mystic and social critic have attracted disciples from all factions of Israeli society." On November 7th, renowned Torah scholar Rabbi Steinsaltz, 72, completed his 45-volume translation and commentary on the Talmud. The monumental achievement was marked with a global simulcast of the event, the "Global Day of Jewish Learning," from Jerusalem. "Torah is the shared inheritance of all the Jewish people," said Steinsaltz. "It does not belong [to an elite group]. We have a responsibility to share our common heritage with all Jews."

Steinsaltz was born in 1937 to secular parents and began his scholarly life studying physics and chemistry at Jerusalem's Hebrew University. At age 23 he became the youngest school principal in Israel's history. Steinsaltz began work on the commentary in 1965 when he was 27. He is well known for his classic work on the Kabbalah, "*The Thirteen Petalled Rose*," as well as some 60 other books and hundreds of articles. A spiritual mentor of Russian Jewry, Steinsaltz founded the Jewish University, the former Soviet Union's first degree-granting institution of Jewish studies. In 1989, he received the Israel Prize, his country's highest honor, and in 1995 was also awarded the *Legion d'Honneur*, the French Order of Arts and Letters. Steinsaltz and his wife live in Jerusalem. (www.israelnationalnews.com, 11-3-10) ◇

Hanukkah

5771

KJCC Hanukkah Shabbat Dinner

Friday, December 3, 2010
Covered Dish Dinner--Dairy
at 6:30 PM

Followed by Chanukah program by children

And Services at 8 pm

Contact Erica @ (305) 853-1003
hippiejap@hotmail.com to reserve your
spot and coordinate your covered dish.



No Charge

Photo Gallery



The two top photos are from the KJCC Oneg on October 22nd. Rosie Biskar sponsored in honor of her late husband

Arnold. She also, for the evening, hung some of the paintings she'd done of him.

The rest of the photos on this page are from the Havdalah on October 23rd at Steve and Carol Steinbock's house. It's a wonderful (and brief) ceremony and they're wonderful hosts. Gloria always lends her own special touch.





Our matriarch Pauline has been a U.S. citizen since...well, for a long time. But she never



had the papers to prove it. (It's a long story.) That little issue was resolved on October 26th. Two federal officials made a special trip to Key Largo to certify Pauline as U.S. Koshers. As you can see, lots of Pauline's KJCC friends also showed up, for moral support and rousing cheers.

The three bottom photos are from October 29th, at an open house introducing Gloria Avner's paintings to the Key Largo Art Gallery at MM 103.2. In the bottom photo, Gloria stands with Carmen Sotolongo-Kelley, the gallery's owner.



The KJCC Religious students plant a tree each year on Tu B'Shvat. But the one from two years ago, a star fruit, didn't make it. So Jane Friedman brought in a lychee tree, and on November 14th it was planted near our new Meditation Garden, with a little help from parents Michel Bitton and Robert Werthamer. Another parent, Richard Knowles, took the photo.



The two center photos are the result of an impromptu Havdalah arranged at Friday services on November 5th. First there was dinner at Num Thai, then the ceremony at Alan and Candy's house on Key Largo, led by Gloria and Joyce.

The photos below and below left were taken on Sunday, November 7th by Stuart Sax. Twice each year, on Memorial Day and Veteran's Day, Stuart, who served a year in Vietnam, goes to the KJCC section of Mt. Nebo Cemetery in Miami to place flags at the graves of fellow Jewish veterans. This year Steve Steinbock went with him. At left Steve is standing at the grave of David Kamely, who fought in Israel's 1948 War of Independence and the 1956 Sinai Campaign. The plaques at bottom are for the parents of Roberta McNew.





The photo at top is from the Pool Prowl, a November 11th event to benefit the Domestic Abuse Shelter. All the other photos are from our first potluck dinner of the season on Friday, November 12th. Because Bernie was conducting services afterwards, almost everyone who came for dinner actually stayed for the non-food-based portion of the evening.



-This Month in Jewish History-

December

127 C.E. – In a document drawn up at a government office in Rabbatg, east of the Dead Sea, four date groves in Maoza are registered as part of a provincial census ordered by the Roman governor. The groves about the property of Tmar, daughter of Thamous (Tamar, daughter of Thomas). We don't know who Tamar or Thomas were, but the document proves that women in Palestine near the beginning of the Roman era could own property in their own right.

220 C.E. – Rabbi Judah Hanasi dies. His greatest claim to fame is compiler of the *Mishna*, the Oral Law which will serve as the basis for both the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, and still serves as a code for regulation of all Jewish life.

1685 – King Charles XI of Sweden orders the governor-general of the capital to see that no Jews are permitted to settle in Stockholm, or in any other part of the country, "on account of the danger of the eventual influence of the Jewish religion on the pure evangelical faith."

1728 – Congregation Shearith Israel purchases a lot on Mill Street in lower Manhattan in order to build New York's first synagogue.

1763 – The Touro Synagogue opens in Newport, Rhode Island. Sephardic Jews in Jamaica, Surinam, London and Amsterdam are sponsors of the first major center of Jewish culture in America. The oldest synagogue in the United States, Touro introduces an important innovation in synagogue design. Its women's gallery features a low balustrade that offers women an open view of the rest of the sanctuary, with no high or opaque barriers meant to keep women out of the sight of men. The open plan is imitated by most of the early American synagogues that follow Newport.

1797 – German/Jewish author Heinrich Heine is born. Converting to Christianity in 1825, Heine says, "The baptismal certificate is an admission ticket to European culture." But his assimilation

plan fails. Christians see him as an opportunist, Jews as a turncoat. In the end he supposedly regrets his act, saying "It is extremely difficult for a Jew to be converted, for how can he bring himself to believe in the divinity of another Jew?"

1848 – Franz Josef I becomes Emperor of Austria, reigning until his death in 1916. Franz Josef sees himself as the protector of his Jewish subjects, at one point telling his ministers, "I will tolerate no Jew-baiting in my empire." He describes anti-Semitism as "an illness." In 1869, he visits Jerusalem, where he meets with a group of local Jews and contributes to the building of a new synagogue. Austrian Jews speak highly of the Emperor during his reign and at the time of his death. Behind his back, his enemies refer to him as the "Judenkaiser."

1882 – Fiorello La Guardia, future Republican Congressman and three-term mayor of New York City, is born to a Jewish mother and Italian father. At one point, Democrats run a Jewish candidate against La Guardia. According to legend, La Guardia demands to debate his opponent in Yiddish. La Guardia is fluent in the tongue of Eastern European Jewry, but his opponent has to beg off since he isn't.

1905 – A French law mandating the Separation of Church and State is passed by the Chamber of Deputies in Paris. Functionaries of all religions in France – Catholic, Protestant and Jewish – cease to receive state funding and no longer conduct their affairs under state supervision. France has become a secular nation thanks to backlash from the recent Dreyfus Affair.

1917 – Future ice cream mogul Irvin Robbins, of the future team of Baskin & Robbins, is born in Canada. According to family legend he uses money from his Bar Mitzvah to fund the start of the legendary "31 Flavors" company. ◇

Stained Glass of KJCC

Part four of our closer look at the story behind the art.

As our viewing carousel groans to life, lurching once again in a clockwise direction (ever been on the old G.E. paean-to-progress-through-electricity ride at the World's Fair or Disney?), the next KJCC sanctuary window we face offers probably the

most stark, and least visually lyrical, of all the stained glass art in the series. There are no brilliant, yellow bolts of sunshine cascading down in this window, or any lazy, idyllic clouds, or in fact any imagery at all save one, that of a large, imposing and fearsome battle sword. If you look closely, even the glass panels surrounding the sword are jagged, and tense, helping reinforce the image's message as one of readiness, yes, but even more pointedly one of naked menace. It is the window of the Tribe of Simeon.

According to the Bible, Simeon was the second son (after Reuben) sired by Jacob with his first wife, Leah, who gave birth to more than half of all Jacob's children, including Dinah, the only daughter we know of. Dinah would later play a major role in the events that the Bible would use, powerfully, to chisel for us a clear and sometimes disturbing portrait of Simeon's character and legacy.

Simeon is a featured player in only two Torah stories, but both are riveting, and rabbinic commentary, though more varied than is sometimes claimed, leaves no doubt that Simeon is not a man particularly admired, but rather respected for his great strength (a re-

curing Biblical theme...see Samson) and military prowess.

According to Genesis, back across the Jordan after his reunion with Esau, Jacob made camp with his extended family just outside the city of Shechem. His daughter Dinah,

out among the girls of Canaan, is abducted and raped by Shechem, son of Hamor, the area's ruler. But this is not merely an act of fleeting lust, for Hamor approaches Jacob with the hope of arranging a marriage between Dinah and Shechem. Jacob and his sons are not happy with any of this, and are not appeased by an offer of marriage. At this

point "Jacob's sons," as the Bible puts it, concoct a ruse. They tell Hamor that they'll consider the marriage, but all the men of Shechem must first be circumcised. Apparently eager to cooperate, Hamor and his men all agree, at which point the only two of Jacob's sons mentioned by name – Simeon and Levi – enter the story dramatically. As Genesis relates, "...while all of them were still in pain... Simeon and Levi...took their swords and attacked the unsuspecting city, killing every male. They put Hamor and his son Shechem to the sword and took Dinah from Shechem's house and left."

It's easy to understand how the sword came to be associated with Simeon. Yet as stunning as this story is, there's another jaw-dropping element. At the time of this carnage (the two of them, remember, killed



The dramatic window representing Simeon.



An excellent map of the Tribal areas. Simeon was fully encompassed by Judah.

every male in the city, and then plundered it, carrying off all the livestock and women and children), Simeon was said to be all of thirteen years old. Some sources, including rabbinic and Midrashic, claim that Dinah was not abducted at all, and had gone with Shechem willingly. And that to be willing to leave Shechem's bed, Simeon had to agree to marry her himself, which he in fact did, and depending on the source she bore either one or four of his sons.

The second Biblical story in which Simeon was a major player was the Joseph story. Simeon was said to be extremely jealous of Joseph. The Midrashic book Jasher argues that it was Simeon who first proposed that the brothers kill Joseph, and was enraged when he learned that Judah had merely sold him as a slave. Later, in Egypt, when Joseph sent his brothers to bring Benjamin to him, he kept Simeon as a hostage, to assure that they would return. Simeon, however, was not a willing hostage. One Midrash says that Joseph sent seventy strong Egyp-

tians to take Simeon by force, but that Simeon's powerful voice frightened them off. It took Joseph's son Manasseh to convince Simeon to surrender willingly.

Jacob had been furious with Simeon and Levi for their massacre of the Shechemites, and openly chastised them. At the end of his life, when he gave blessings to all his sons, he withheld a blessing from Simeon and Levi, predicting instead that they would become divided and scattered. Levi was to be scattered throughout all of Israel, Simeon dispersed within Judah.

This is exactly what happened. The question, of course, is whether it was a result of Jacob's prophecy or other reasons. Some textual scholars view the entire story as what they call a "postdiction," where a story is concocted to be a precursor to and harbinger of current events. It's known that the Tribe of Simeon did, indeed, dwindle and disperse. (Possibly because his sons were also the sons of his sister?) In the Book of Numbers, at the time of Moses' first census, the Tribe of Simeon is listed as being 59,300 strong. After a plague breaks out, Moses is instructed to take a second census. At that point, according to Numbers 26:14, the descendants of Simeon number only 22,200. Almost two-thirds of their men had disappeared in the wilderness. Was this due to Jacob's prophecy, or other reasons? Were storytellers several hundred years later seeking to explain

the gradual disappearance of the Tribe of Simeon, which they knew to be a fact but weren't exactly sure why?

We do know that the territory in Canaan allotted to Simeon was in the Negev, with historic Beersheba as its main city, and was inside the territory of Judah. (It was the only tribal territory fully enclosed within another.) When the Assyrians defeated the northern kingdom of Israel, Simeonites were safely ensconced in the embrace of Judah. Eventually they became indistinguishable from other Judean shepherds and farmers, and after the return from Babylonian exile were fully integrated with the people who came to be called Jews. ◇



The banner of Simeon. Note the crossed swords.



Original art
by Gloria Avner

*We offer you a blend of history, humor, culture, a kvell or two
and possibly a warm remembrance this year. Enjoy.*

The (Not-So) Ancient Tradition of Gelt

by Eliezer Segal

In comparison with the *Mishloah manot* of Purim or the Afikoman-bargaining of the Passover *seder*, gifts are not a traditional feature of Hanukkah observances.

The closest equivalent to an institution of gift-giving on Hanukkah is the Eastern European custom of distributing "*Hanukkah-gelt*" to the children. However, even this is of recent vintage, and it is hard to find mentions of it before the nineteenth century.

Inspired by the semantic and etymological connections between "Hanukkah" (dedication), and *hinnukh* (education), some Jewish communities used the Hanukkah season as an opportunity to recognize their religious teachers and students. An interesting practical application of these ideals is related in "*Hemdat Yamim*," a homiletical collection first published in eighteenth-century Smyrna.

The *Hemdat Yamim* reports that "in some communities, the custom has arisen of having the children distribute coins to their teachers along with other gifts. Other beggars make the rounds then, though the mitzvah is intended primarily for the benefit of impecunious students."

Rabbi Jacob Joseph of Polnoye, the renowned student of Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, wrote that in Eastern Europe it was customary during Hanukkah for rabbis to make the rounds of outlying villages to strengthen their Jewish education. Although initially the teachers were scrupulous about not accepting payment for their services, eventually

they agreed to at least accept compensation for lost time. Before long the tour, with trademark lantern in hand, came to be seen by many as expressly intended for the collection of material tokens of appreciation, and this evolved into a quasi-obligatory gift of *Hanukkah-gelt*. *Hanukkah-gelt* tours are mentioned as a routine matter in some early Hassidic stories, and the practice expanded to encompass additional recipients--such as preachers, cantors, butchers and beadles - as well as a broader variety of acceptable currencies - including whiskey, grain, vegetables and honey. The right to collect *Hanukkah-gelt* would be written into the contracts of communal employees.

It is not until the nineteenth century that we begin to hear about *Hanukkah-gelt* being directed primarily at children. We are not certain how or why this transformation occurred, but it is described in several autobiographical memoirs, especially by children of well-to-do homes.

Variations on these customs were also observed in Sephardic and Oriental communities. Poor Jewish children in Persia would go door to door offering, in return for gifts, to protect their benefactors' households from the Evil Eye by burning special grasses. In Yemen, it was customary for Jewish mothers to give their children a small coin on each day of Hanukkah, with which to purchase sugar powder and red coloring that would be used as ingredients for a special holiday treat: a sweet beverage known as "Hanukkah wine" that was drunk at their nightly parties. ♦

Eliezer Segal, a scholar at the University of Calgary, has written extensively on the relationships between the Bible, other ancient literature, archeology, history, and legend.

Adam Sandler's Original Chanukah Song from S.N.L.

For those unfamiliar, when a regular on Saturday Night Live, Adam Sandler brought out his guitar each year and sang a version of his Chanukah song. Subsequent versions, with updated lyrics, are available on YouTube. But this was his first effort, something of a departure from traditional Chanukah songs. His own intro sets it up perfectly...

“Okay. This is a song that, uh, there’s a lot of Christmas songs out there and, uh, not too many Chanukah songs. So, uh, I wrote a song for all those nice little Jewish kids who don’t get to hear any Chanukah songs. Here we go...”

Put on your yarmulke,
Here comes Chanukah;
So much funakah,
To celebrate Chanukah.
Chanukah is the Festival of Lights;
Instead of one day of presents, we
have eight crazy nights.

When you feel like the only kid in
town without a Christmas tree,
Here’s a list of people who are Jewish, just
like you and me:
David Lee Roth lights the menorah;
So do James Caan, Kirk Douglas, and the late
Dinah Shore-ah.

Guess who eats together at the Carnegie Deli?
Bowser from Sha Na Na and Arthur Fonzarelli.
Paul Newman’s half Jewish, Goldie Hawn’s
half, too;
Put them together, what a fine lookin’ Jew!

You don’t need “Deck the Halls” or “Jingle Bell
Rock,”
‘Cause you can spin a dreidel with Captain
Kirk and Mr. Spock,
both Jewish!

Put on your yarmulke,
It’s time for Chanukah;
The owner of the Seattle Supersonics
Celebrates Chanukah.

O.J. Simpson, not a Jew;
But guess who is? Hall-of-Famer Rod Carew (he
converted).
We got Ann Landers and her sister Dear Abby;
Harrison Ford’s a quarter Jewish – not too
shabby.

Some people think that Ebenezer Scrooge is;
Well, he’s not, but guess who is?
All three Stooges.

So many Jews are in Showbiz;
Tom Cruise isn’t, but I heard his
agent is.

Tell your friend Veronica
It’s time to celebrate Chanukah.
I hope I get a harmonica,
On this lovely, lovely Chanukah.
So drink your gin and tonicah,
And smoke your marijuanakah;
If you really, really wannakah,
Have a happy, happy, happy,
happy Chanukah. *Happy Chanukah!*



Venetian Chanukiah
c.1720

The (Somewhat) Unknown Chanukah *Tidbits and seldom-told parts of the Chanukah story*

• Tradition allows no work by women during the first half-hour of candle-burning on Chanukah, in honor of the role women played in the rebellion. But there is no real explanation of this in Biblical or Midrashic sources. Rashi and other medieval sources wrote that this stems from the claim of Greek generals to the “right of the first night” with Jewish brides. One Hasmonean woman – some stories identify her as this woman, others as that – is said to have



Polish Chanukiah, c.1880

stirred her passive family to action against the Seleucid Greeks by publicly stripping herself naked on her wedding day as a protest against the practice.

- The fullest descriptions of the wars against the Seleucids, the Books of Maccabees and the story we all know about the origins of Chanukah, appear not in the Jewish Bible but in the Christian. The Books of Maccabees are part of what is collectively known as the Apocrypha, “hidden” works that were written but never canonized. They and the familiar parts of the Hebrew Bible had all been translated into Greek, since many of the time had ceased to know Hebrew. This was especially so in Alexandria, then the most cosmopolitan city in the Seleucid kingdom. All of the works, Septuagint and Apocrypha, appeared in the Alexandria Jewish Bible, which ultimately was chosen by the new Christian Church as its official canon. (Some scholars say this could have been because of a mistranslation of Isaiah 7:14 that seems to support the idea of virgin birth.) Never included in the Hebrew Bible, the Books of Maccabee have remained in the Christian Bible, including the 1611 King James translation and the Bible used by Catholics today. The Chanukah story is mentioned in far less detail in the Talmud and other sources derived from the Hebrew.

- Unlike his father Mattathias, Judah Maccabee is not mentioned by name in any ancient Hebrew sources like the Talmud or the Midrash, nor does he appear in the Chanukah prayers. The earliest Hebrew documents that speak of him are from the Medieval period, and then probably derived from Greek or Latin sources.

- The last Hasmonean (Maccabee) king,

Mattathias Antigonus (40-37 B.C.E.), placed images of the menorah on coins minted during his reign. (He was, like many Hasmonean kings, also the High Priest.) These are our oldest depictions of the menorah. Unlike the menorahs on the Arch of Titus in Rome and today’s Official Seal of The State of Israel – whose menorahs both have a broad, solid base – the menorahs on the coins sit on a tripod base. This actually agrees with descriptions in the Talmud.

- The Maccabees were not the first Jewish rebels against Greek rule. A prior attempt at resistance had apparently been made by a group known as Assideans, which is probably a Greek transliteration of the original Hebrew term *Hassidim*, or “pious ones.” The Hassidim (not connected, by the way, to the group that arose in Eastern Europe in the mid-1600s)



Florentine Chanukiah, c.1790

fought fiercely, but the Greeks soon discovered their fatal weakness: they would not fight on the Sabbath. A series of Saturday massacres ensued. This all changed when Mattathias the Hasmonean ruled that it was permissible to

wage defensive warfare on Shabbat. The remaining Hassidim joined the Maccabee resistance, and disappeared as a separate and distinct historical actor.

- One of the many disputes between the Academies of Shammai and Hillel during the Roman era concerned the proper sequence of burning Chanukah candles. Shammai said that eight candles should be burned the first night, with the count then lessened by one each night thereafter. Hillel argued the opposite, that holiness should never be diminished but *increased*, so on the final night we would have a menorah fully ablaze with heavenly light. As in most of their disputes, Hillel’s position – almost always more humanistic and evocative than the formal

and legalistic stances of Shammai – prevailed.

- The earliest records of Chanukah all state that the holiday is to be celebrated for eight days. We understand this to be in honor of the miracle of the cruse of oil. But the oil story appears relatively late in a text of the



Ukrainian Chanukah, c.1800

Babylonian Talmud, and was apparently unknown to previous generations. Even by Medieval times the story was unknown outside of the sphere of Babylonian influence. It is not mentioned in any

of the holiday prayers that originated in early Israel. So why then *does* Chanukah last eight days? According to 2 Maccabees, the eight days were to honor Sukkot, a Biblically mandated eight-day festival not able to be celebrated that year because of the war and occupation of the Temple in Jerusalem by enemies of Judaism.

- The Scroll of Antiochus – sometimes called the Chanukah Megillah – a text familiar to Jews in Medieval times whereas the Books of Maccabee and writings of the Roman historian Josephus (who cited information almost verbatim from the Books of Maccabee) were not, downplays the role of Judah and makes his brother Jonathan the main focus and hero of the story.

- To mystics, Chanukah candles are no less than the primordial light fashioned by God on the first day of creation. Since this light preceded the creation of the sun and stars, it had to be stored away. Where? Some say in the Torah. At any rate, this primordial light supposedly burned for 36 hours, until Adam's transgression caused God to hide it, and this is why we light a total of 36 candles for Chanukah (not including the shamash).

- The Maccabee legend of the virtuous woman who feeds cheese to an enemy general, thereby making him drowsy so she can cut off his head (which is supposedly the source of eating cheese on Chanukah), is now thought to be a borrowing of the similar story of Judith. During Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian's siege of Jerusalem just before his conquest of Judah in 586 B.C.E. (about 400 years before the Maccabees), Judith is said to have seduced an Assyrian general by getting him drunk and then decapitating him, thereby saving Jerusalem.

- Lighting the candles on Chanukah has always been the only required mitzvah. Yet in the Babylonian Talmud there is a passage that reads "it is permissible to remove a Chanukah lamp on account of the Habbars on the Sabbath." Who were these daunting Habbars, who could get the rabbis to relax the rules of mitzvot, and whose opposition to lighting the Chanukah candles was considered a serious threat to Jewish lives? To the rabbis of Babylon the term "Habbar" referred to the Zoroastrian Mazdean priesthood, whose religion dominated Babylon during most of the Talmudic era. To them fire – all fire – was sacred, and it was a priestly duty to maintain the holy fires, which they usually did in special fire-temples. Individual fires were banned, which meant that Jews openly lighting candles on Chanukah were in genuine peril. These Zoroastrian priests were also known by another name: the Magi. For western Jews, this is another, and certainly ironic, connection of Chanukah to Christmas. ◇

Chanukah in the Soviet Gulag When the Enemy Answered "Amen"

by Natan Sharansky

The holiday of Chanukah was approaching. At the time I was the only Jew in the prison zone, but when I explained that Chanukah was a holiday of national freedom, of returning to

one's own culture in the face of forced assimilation, my friends in our "kibbutz" decided to celebrate it with me. They even made me a wooden menorah, decorated it and found some candles.

In the evening I lit the first candle and recited a prayer that I had composed for this occasion. Tea was poured, and I began to describe the heroic struggle of the Maccabees to save their people from slavery. For each zek (a prisoner in the Soviet Gulag) who was listening, this story had its own personal meaning. At one point the duty officer appeared in the barracks. He made a list of all those present, but did not interfere.

On each of the subsequent evenings of Chanukah I took out my menorah, lit the candles, and recited the appropriate blessing. Then I blew out the candles, as I didn't have any extras. Gavriliuk, the collaborator whose bunk was across from mine, watched and occasionally grumbled, "Look at him, he made himself a synagogue. And what if there's a fire?"

On the sixth night the authorities confiscated my menorah with all my candles. I ran to the duty officer to find out what had happened.

"The candlesticks were made from state materials; this is illegal. You could be punished for this alone and the other prisoners are complaining. They're afraid you'll start a fire."

I began to insist. "In two days Chanukah will be over and then I'll return this 'state property' to you. Now, however, this looks like an attempt to deny me the opportunity of celebrating Jewish holidays."

The duty officer began hesitating. Then he phoned his superior and got his answer. "A camp is not a synagogue. We won't permit Sharansky to pray here."

I was surprised by the bluntness of that remark, and immediately declared a hunger strike. In a statement to the procurator general I protested against the violation of my national and religious rights, and against KGB

interference in my personal life.

When you begin an unlimited hunger strike you never know when or how it will end. Are the authorities interested at that moment in putting a swift end to it, or don't they give a damn? In a few weeks a commission from Moscow was due to arrive in the camp. I didn't know this at the time, but the authorities, presumably, were very aware of it, which probably explains why I was summoned to Major Osin's office two days later, in the evening.

Osin was an enormous, flabby man of around fifty, with small eyes and puffy eyelids, who seemed to have long ago lost interest in everything but food. But he was a master of intrigue who had successfully overtaken many of his colleagues on the road to advancement.

During my brief time in the camp he had weathered several scandals and had always managed to pass the buck to his subordinates. I could see that he had enjoyed his power over the zeks and liked to see them suffer. But he never forgot that the zeks were, above all, a means for advancing his career, and he knew how to back off in a crisis.

Osin pulled a benevolent smile over his face as he tried to talk me out of my hunger strike. Osin promised to see to it personally that in the future

nobody would hinder me from praying, and that this should not be a concern of the KGB.

"Then what's the problem?" I said. "Give me back the menorah, as tonight is the last evening of Chanukah. Let me celebrate it now, and taking into account your assurances for the future, I shall end the hunger strike."

"What's a menorah?"

"Candlesticks."

But a protocol for its confiscation had already been drawn up, and Osin couldn't back down in front of the entire camp. As I looked at this predator, sitting at an elegant polished table and wearing a benevolent smile, I was seized by an amusing idea.

"Listen," I said. "I'm sure you have the meno-



Italian Chanukiah, 16th cen.

rah somewhere. It's very important to me to celebrate the last night of Chanukah. Why not let me do it here and now, together with you? You'll give me the menorah, I'll light the candles and say the prayer, and if all goes well I'll end the hunger strike."

Osin thought it over and promptly the confiscated menorah appeared from his desk. He summoned Gavriiliuk, who was on duty in the office, to bring in a large candle.

"I need eight candles," I said. (In fact I needed nine, but when it came to Jewish rituals I was still a novice.) Gavriiliuk took out a knife and began to cut the candle into several smaller ones. But it didn't come out right; apparently the knife was too dull. Then Osin took out a handsome inlaid pocketknife and deftly cut me eight candles.

"Go, I'll call you later," he said to Gavriiliuk. Gavriiliuk simply obeyed orders. He was a fierce, gloomy man, and this sight must have infuriated him.

I arranged the candles and went to the coat rack for my hat, explaining to Osin that "during the prayer you must stand with your head covered and at the end say 'Amen.'" He put on his ma-



Indian Chanukiah
c.1900

gor's hat and stood. I lit the candles and recited my own prayer in Hebrew, which went something like this: "Blessed are You, God, for allowing me to rejoice on this day of Chanukah, the holiday of our liberation, the holiday of our return to

the way of our fathers. Blessed are You, God, for allowing me to light these candles. May you allow me to light the Chanukah candles many times in your city, Jerusalem, with my wife, Avital, and my family and friends."

This time, however inspired by the sight of Osin standing meekly at attention, I added in Hebrew: "And may the day come when all our enemies, who today are planning our de-

struction, will stand before us and hear our prayers and say 'Amen.'"

"Amen," Osin echoed back. He sighed with relief, sat down and removed his hat. For some time we looked silently at the burning candles.

They quickly melted, and the hot wax was spread pleasantly over the glass surface of the table. Then Osin caught himself, summoned Gavriiliuk, and brusquely ordered him to clean it up.

I returned to the barracks in a state of elation, and our kibbutz made tea and merrily celebrated the end of Chanukah. Naturally, I told them about Osin's "conversion," and it soon became the talk of the camp. I realized that revenge was inevitable, but I also knew they had plenty of other reasons to punish me. ♦

Natan Sharansky spent eight years in the Soviet Gulag. After years of work by his wife, Avital, and many in the west, Sharansky was exchanged for a Soviet spy. He made aliyah and has now served in several positions in Israel's cabinet. This article is excerpted from his book "Fear No Evil."

On the Origin of Some Sephardic Hanukkah Customs

by Yardena Kamely

Most of the laws of Hanukkah are related to the lighting of the *menorah or chanukiya* (candelabrum). The main difference between



Dutch Chanukiah, c.1750



Viennese Chanukiah 1837

laws and customs is that laws stem from rabbinic interpretations of the Torah and the Talmud, which then filter down to the Jewish people, while customs usually start with the people and filter up to the rabbis. Through customs, the Jewish people have shown their love for God and tradition and immeasurably enriched all aspects of Jewish observance.

Israel

Hanukkah is celebrated in Israel just like everywhere in the Diaspora. The *chanukiya* is lit, prayers are recited and everybody eats *sufganiot* (doughnuts) and *levivot* (potato pancakes), lots of them! Hanukkah is celebrated by attending a lot of parties. The children's kindergarten, schools, the local synagogue, the community center, your neighbors, friends and family all host parties. Most Israelis attend two or more parties during Hanukkah. The children sing Hanukkah songs and have a little "light show." Since Hanukkah is in the middle of the winter, hot drinks like mint tea are served with doughnuts. The doughnuts in Israel are round and filled with red jelly. Children like to play with the *sevivon* (in Yiddish called a *dreidl*).

The only religious observance related to Hanukkah is the lighting of candles. Most households, even the secular ones, follow the Jewish custom to place the *chanukiya* in the window where it can be seen by passersby. Israelis like to walk through the streets of Ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods like Bnei Brak in Tel-Aviv and Meah Shearim in Jerusalem during Hanukkah. The sight of the lighted *chanukiot* in all the homes is beautiful.



Italian Chanukiah, 16th century

Kurdistan

While Jews no longer live in Kurdistan, many Kurdish Jews still observe two unusual Hanukkah customs. One is about the giving of Hanukkah *gelt*: a week before the holiday, children lock the door to their room. Parents are allowed entry only after offering coins.

The second custom was developed by Jews who were

too poor to afford a *chanukiya*. They used eggshells as cups for wicks and oil, and children collected donations of flour and oil to make pancakes. Children would also prepare an effigy of Antiochus. While singing Hanukkah songs, they would carry the effigy from place to place. On the last day of Hanukkah the effigy was thrown into a bonfire.

Syria

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

Bukhara

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

Persia

Today, there are many Persian Jews in New York—in Great Neck, Queens and Brooklyn. Persian Jews share many traditions with Afghani, Bukharian and Iraqi Jews. Iranian Jews give gifts on Purim, not Hanukkah. While giving gifts on



Greek Chanukiah, c.1850



German Chanukiah, c. 1700

popular norms for American Jews, the tradition is fairly new for local Iranian Jews. Not having to compete with Christmas like most Ashkenazim, Jews who had been living in Iran did not give gifts for Hanukkah. In Iran they used to light candles, and maybe every family would have a special meal for only one night. The tradition of gift-giving among Jews living in Iran has always been popular during Purim. For *Norooz* (the Persian New Year), Iranians have the tradition of receiving gifts from the elders. Since this holiday normally coincides with Purim, the Jews in Iran also adopted the same tradition and gave gifts to the children on this occasion.

Tunisia

There are 1,500 Jews still living in Tunisia. Each family hangs its *chanukiya* on the doorpost opposite the Mezuzah. The oil and wicks are homemade. Women do not do any work during the time that the lights burn. The *chanukiya* remains on the doorpost until Purim.

In Tunisia, Jews celebrate the sixth night of Hanukkah as the Girls' Festival, in memory of the Jewish heroines Esther and Judith. In French the festival is called *La Fete des Filles*. Esther saved the Jews of Persia from destruc-

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

On the night of the Girls' Festival, Tunisian girls receive gifts of special pastries. Isabelle, a French woman of Tunisian ancestry, explains the many traditional Hanukkah pastries of Tunisia: "*Yoyos* are round donuts. *Makrouds* are semolina pastries filled with dates and fried and dipped in a light orange-flavored syrup. *Debla* are made of fluffy dough, fried and dipped in light orange-flavored syrup. They look like ribbons and are very delicate. *Baklava* are baked layers of nuts, dates and cinnamon in between phyllo dough sheets. They are moistened with honey syrup. It is not a typical Tunisian recipe but rather a recipe brought by Jews from Turkey."

Morocco

All over the world, Jews celebrate Hanukkah with lighted candles and deep-fried foods. In Morocco, the fundamentals are no different, though the details are.

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



Ukrainian Chanukiah, c. 1825



Fez Chanukiah, 1875

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

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

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

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

In Morocco, each family gathers all the remaining wicks and oil at the end of the holiday and makes a bonfire. ◇

What's in a Number? Chanukah and The Spiritual Significance of "Sh'moneh"

by Gloria Avner

When one writes about a holiday year after year, it can be difficult to find something new to say. I tell myself, "Wait. This is Judaism. If

there is not something new, maybe there is something old yet undiscussed, something hidden under layers, something taken for granted."

What is it, I ask myself, about Chanukah that we take for granted? On the most immediate level, we know that Chanukah, the youngest of all Jewish festivals, is about being willing and able to fight back against tremendous odds. Perhaps the earliest practitioners of guerilla hit-and-run tactics were the Maccabees. When Syrian monarch Antiochus, convinced that the Jewish religion was at the root of opposition to his policy of Hellenization, outlawed circumcision, Sabbath observance, and even possession of a Torah, he also ordered his soldiers to put up a statue of Zeus in the Temple in Jerusalem and to sacrifice pigs in the Holy of Holies. The war fought and led by the Maccabees was a war against assimilation. It was a fundamentalist rebellion, an uprising that saved us our Torah, our covenant, and ultimately, the Jewish way of life as we know it.

If I ask myself, and you, what is the single most important symbol of Chanukah, perhaps something we take for granted, something comes to me: it is the symbol and the sacred number. For years I did not know that there were two kinds of menorahs, or that there was a whole separate word, "Chanukiah," for the Chanukah menorah. The menorah in the Temple, even into the modern day the symbol of Judaism, held six candles and a *shamash*. The Chanukiah holds eight (plus the *shamash*).

What is the spiritual significance of the number Eight? Ok, we know that eight days was the length of time it took to make consecrated kosher oil and bring it to the Temple to keep the sacred menorah, the everlasting light, burning, but even that immediate rationale must have a deeper meaning.

How wonderful that our Hebrew numbers are also part of our alphabet and make up the roots of words. In Hebrew the number eight is *Sh'moneh*, from the root (*Shah'meyn*), "to make fat," "cover with fat," "to super-abound." As a descriptive pronoun it means "one who abounds in strength." As a noun, the implied meaning is "superabundant fertility." As a numeral, eight is the superabundant number, the

number beyond explainable perfection. Even in our own Western culture, the form of the Arabic numeral eight is synonymous with infinity – something without end, beyond human grasp. (Try viewing it sideways.)

In the Zohar, the book that is the text for the Kabbalah, the number eight symbolizes new beginnings. Just as seven was called Shabbat because the seventh day was the day of completion and rest, so eight, as the eighth day, was over and above this perfect completion. It began something new. The eighth day was the first day after creation. God returned to work and the week began again.

When celebrating Chanukah, the lights of the Chanukiah were instructed to be placed outside one's door (except in times of danger) on the opposite side of the Mezuzah, or in the window closest to the street. Rashi, in a note appended to *Shabbat 21b*, says the purpose of these lights is to publicize the miracle.

Just as in Kabbalistic teachings, the number seven symbolizes perfection – perfection that is achievable via natural means. Eight symbolizes that which is *beyond* nature and its (inherently limited) perfection.

The examples are moving. There are seven colors in a rainbow. There are seven musical notes. When something has seven parts, it has reached its state of completion (God having created the world and its natural order in seven days). Between the holidays of Passover and Shavuot we count seven weeks. During these weeks we work on perfecting our seven emotions (love, fear, compassion, ambition, humility, bonding and receptiveness) – one emotion per week. At the conclusion of the seven weeks we have sufficiently perfected ourselves to be worthy of receiving

the Torah on Shavuot. The Holy Temple's menorah, which served to illuminate the natural world with the holy glow of spirituality, had seven branches.

Eight, on the other hand, is symbolic of an entity that is one step above the natural order, higher than nature and its limitations.

That is why we circumcise our male children when they are eight-day-old babies. The *brit milah* symbolizes our nation's supernatural and logic-defying covenant with G-d.

That is why we light eight candles on Chanukah in our eight-branched Chanukiah. The greatly outnumbered Maccabees' resolve to battle the Greeks wasn't logical or natural. They drew on reservoirs of faith and courage that are not part of normal human nature. They merited a miracle higher than nature – a miracle that lasted eight days.

No matter what happened to the Hasmonians – the ruling house begun by the

Maccabees – after their victory (it often wasn't pretty, and they only ruled for a little over a hundred years), no matter how many times the Jews have tottered on the brink of eradication, whether from inner stresses or planned attempts by outsiders, Jewish history (from ancient Jericho to the Persia of Haman – boo! – to the Six-Day War of a few decades ago) is full of villains, heroes, heroines, and battles from which no one with a logical mind could have predicted a favorable outcome. *Nays Gadol Hayah Sham!!* As our schoolchildren proclaim every year in their Chanukah performance: "A Great Miracle Happened There!!"

May great miracles continue to happen every year as we remember our struggles and rededicate ourselves to Jewish continuity. Long may we burn our eight candles (plus the *shamash*). ◇

Top Ten Movie Rentals Over Chanukah

by Jacob Richman

10. Three Men and a Cradle.
9. A Few Good Men.
8. The Godfather.
7. The Rocky Horror Picture Show.
6. Shalom Alone.
5. Goys 'n the Hood.
4. A Gefilte Fish Called Wanda.
3. The Wizard of Oz.
2. Who Framed Roger Rabbit?
1. Prelude to a Kiss.

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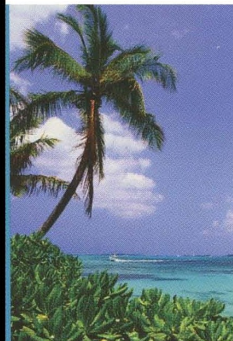
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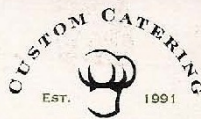
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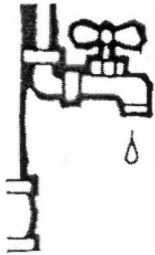
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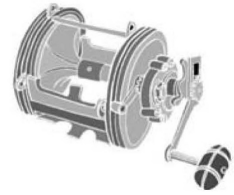
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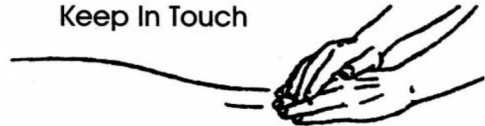


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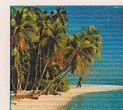
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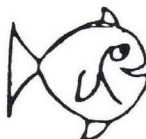
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