

Chai~Lights



April 2018

16 Nisan - 15 Iyar 5778

The Wonder of Whales - page 33

Purim Revisited - page 37

Women's Seder Report Part I - page 46

Keys Jewish Community Center

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

April 2018

16 Nisan - 15 Iyar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Sisterhood Meeting 10 a.m.	2	3	4	5	6 Joe Shabathai <i>Nettie & Jules Seder</i> <i>Kathy & Joe Shabathai</i> <i>Yizkor Service</i>	7 Film 7 p.m. "Free Men"
8 KJCC Board Meeting 10 a.m.	9	10	11 Yom HaShoah Film 7 p.m. "Orchestra of Exiles"	12	13 <i>Susan Ellner</i> <i>Geri & Stuart Smith</i> <i>Laurie Blum & Gary Margolis</i>	14
15	16 New Moon Rosh Chodesh Iyar	17	18	19	20 Israeli Dinner 6 p.m. <i>Lynn Nobil</i> <i>David & Pat Van Artsdalen</i> <i>Toby & Joel Bofshever</i>	21 Yom Ha'Atzmaut Film - "Hill 24 Doesn't Answer" 7 p.m.
22	23	24	25	26	27 Steve Hartz <i>Lynn Nobil</i>	28 Rabbi Agler Torah Learning Service 10 a.m.
29	30					

**2018 - 2019
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CHAI-LIGHTS is the
monthly publication of the
Keys Jewish Community Center
P.O. Box 1332, Tavernier, Florida 33070
chailights@keysjewishcenter.com

President's Message Beth Hayden



Shalom u'vracha,

KJCC will receive an enormous gift from the Aglers. We are delighted to receive this gift which is a collection of antiquities from Israel. The collection consists of amphorae, oil lamps, an arrow head, and a pilgrim's flask. These are antiquities, some of which date from the Bronze Age and testify to our heritage. They not only come to us from Israel, they come to us from ancient times and ancient soil – they are literal testaments to our heritage. The first man in our tradition was named Adam – from the Hebrew word adamah (earth) – related to adam for the red color of the iron rich soil in Israel.

Israel, as we know, was given a great measure of desert - the Negev. When one journeys through the Negev, the red color of the earth with its iron is remarkable. New settlements when I lived in Israel included Maaleh Adumim and Kfar Adumim.

I was fortunate to live in Israel when the Sinai had not yet gone back to Egypt. I had the wonderful opportunity to visit the vast expanses of the Sinai – to see the wrecks of the Israel Defense Forces jeeps and trucks abandoned in the incredible recapture of the Sinai in 1967. The Sinai is so vast and so incredibly beautiful – everywhere one looked – the lack of human habitation

and the incomparable shapes of the stones and mountains were beyond imagination. For me, this was such an incredible experience, because I had spent my life in practice rooms, coming out at 8:00 p.m. to play a concert and here I was in this amazing landscape. Something so far beyond my imagination as everywhere I looked it seemed to me I saw the hand of HaShem. It was very easy in the Sinai to understand how people worshipped elemental forces such as rain, wind, fire and storm. In these vast spaces people are so fragile and so impotent – it is an extraordinarily humbling experience.

I also had the opportunity to visit Israeli settlements and to hear what the settlers said as these territories were given back to Egypt. How can I tell you about Na'amah – on the tip of the Sinai? The settlers were strong, independent people who literally made the desert bloom. They did not want compensation from Israel. And in closing, how about that Beattie Deutsch? She is 28, a US-born mother of five and Israel's fastest woman. She won the Jerusalem Marathon running in a long skirt and head covering. Only in Israel!

B'todah, Beth

Nosh

Yizkor Service on April 6th

The third Yizkor service of the ritual year 5778, will take place during services at KJCC on Friday night, April 6th. Both Erev Shabbat and Yizkor services will be led by Joe Shabathai. We look forward to the special flavor of his services with the Sephardic melodies he learned growing up in Aden, then a British colony in Yemen.

KJCC's Film Festival Continues

We loved the films that Medina Roy and her Adult Education Committee brought to us in March, and we are already looking forward to the showings in April (see the schedule on page 30). Three films will be shown. The last two are related in theme to important observances near the dates of their showing: *Yom HaShoah* (Holocaust Remembrance Day), on Wednesday, April 11, and *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut*, Israeli Independence Day, on Saturday, April 21st. All films begin at 7:00. There will be refreshments, there is no charge and you are encouraged to bring your friends.

Happy Anniversary, Israel!

This year we will celebrate *Yom Ha'Atzma'ut* with a special Israeli-themed dinner, starting at 6:00 p.m. Sisterhood President Susan Gordon will be taking reservations and coordinating food dishes, so make sure to read her column and see the poster on page 6 for contact information. Many thanks to Toby and Joel Bofshever, who are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary with us and sponsoring this dinner. There will be

no charge. There is, however, a plan for Israeli folk dancing after services, so save your dessert eating for after dancing.

Rabbi Agler's April Torah Service

Rabbi Agler will lead his next Shabbat Torah learning service on April 28th at 10:00 a.m. It will be his last Saturday morning service of 5778; we will miss them. His services this season have been beyond instructive. We were engaged, inspired, and often awed by the things we didn't know which came into view with clarity through well-led discussion. If you have not been to one of these Saturday morning services, please come and be a part of the experience and a part of saying thank you. We will be looking forward to the mornings and learnings to come next season.

Jane's Garden

We've been eating more and more vegetable dishes these last two months thanks to the patient, hard work (and cookery) of Jane Friedman and her husband Steve. They drove a truck filled with dirt, plants and fencing material to KJCC from Florida City, and Steve put it all in and up with the aid of one helper. We are grateful and will continue to contribute to this fine work of Tikkun Olam and Tzedakah. There is a box in the social hall for contributions to our garden.

Notes of Gratitude

There are many people in our congregation who contribute to the smoothness of our flow of activity regularly and quietly. They do things well, when they are asked, and they make life better and simpler for all of us, especially those already overloaded. We could not function without them. This month a special "thank you" to two quiet, hard-working people, Donna Bolton and Linda Pollack. Linda, after stepping down from years as our Treasurer and keeper of institutional memory (well, she still is that), has taken on the writing of thank you notes for contributions, the ordering of bronze plaques, and at a moment's notice several times each month she will whip out an attractive poster to advertise a coming event in Chai-Lights,

BOOK PLATE

In Memory of
Eve L. Greenstein

by *Barney Coltman*

April Birthdays

1st.....	Bennet Beinfest
3rd.....	Justin L. Lebofsky
4th.....	Larry Weber
4th.....	Lauren Lane
4th.....	Thomas Brodie
5th.....	Jon Tainow
9th.....	David Feder
9th.....	Gene Silverman
10th.....	Abigail Everson
10th.....	Addison Greene-Barnett
12th.....	Richard Knowles
13th.....	Eve Knowles
13th.....	Samantha Lebofsky
13th.....	Sylvia Rimm
14th.....	Herman Katzenell
15th.....	Toby Bofshever
16th.....	Adam Starr
16th.....	Alfred Rimm
16th.....	Dave VanArtsdalen
17th.....	Katie Greenman
17th.....	Susan Ellner
18th.....	Carol Roaman
18th.....	Jennifer Garrett
18th.....	Lauren Sax
19th.....	Augie Moss
20th.....	Jonathan Nobil
22nd.....	Robin S. Denker
22nd.....	Susan Temkin
24th.....	Lynn Nobil
24th.....	Susan Gordon
24th.....	Tiffany McNew
27th.....	Elinor Grossman
28th.....	Joni Sages Dandrea
29th.....	David Goldfinger
29th.....	Linda Pollack
30th.....	Jason Sherman
30th.....	Rachel Barrett

with never a complaint about requested changes. Thank you, Linda. Donna Bolton, who is in her second year on the Board as Financial Secretary, has also taken on organizing the office, recycling unnecessary publications, assisting Ritual Committee, shopping for events, and though she in-

April Anniversaries

	Years
3rd Jules & Nettie Seder.....	52
10th Stuart & Geri Smith.....	53
19th Barat & Rosemary Barefoot.....	32
25th Murray Rapoport & Barbara Osder...	22
30th Jerrold & Roos-Mary Benowitz.....	11
30th Mort & Gene Silverman.....	63

sists she will sit on her hands, can't help volunteering to be helpful. Thank you, Donna. And a big thank you to all the people unnamed who put energy and funds into creating a community where we want to be, to learn, to pray, enjoy each other's company and, yes, to eat.

Art Discussion Series Grand Finale

KJCC took on a new adventure in adult education this year. A series of three discussions, held January through March on the topic of "Ground-breaking Artists and Their Connections to Judaism," came to a stimulating end on March 21st with a presentation on Judy Chicago by Marcia Kreitman. For genesis of this brainchild we give thanks to artist Beth Kaminstein. In the role of co-creators were artists and educators Marcia and Gloria Avner. Depth, side stories and Jewish context, cultural, religious and historical, was added to the mix at all three events by the enthusiastic input of Rabbi Richard Agler, DD, our KJCC Resident Scholar. Judging from the excellent attendance and active group participation in discussion, the series was a success. Chaim Soutine, Rembrandt van Rijn, and Judy Chicago, representing three very different eras in art, now all seem like part of our *mishpocha*. Shall we have a reprise next year? With three new inspiring subjects? Give feedback to any of the participating artists or to Medina Roy, head of the Adult Education Committee, under whose *aegis* all of this Jewish enrichment (and delicious nourishment for the body as well) takes place.

We Have Arlo's Books

On Wednesday, March 7th, The Jews of Key West, documented in book form by Arlo Haskell, Director of the Key West Literary Seminar, came face to face with the Jews of Key Largo, Tavernier, Islamorada and Marathon. There were many nexus points. When talking about the first rabbi in Key West, both he and we were gratified to realize that the grandchild of that rabbi (now an elder himself) had visited our shul and told some of us his story. Arlo's slide show was illuminating (thank you, Sam Vinicur, for encouraging him to bring it), and the turnout of 33 people was extensive enough to be gratifying for Keys native Arlo and excellent for multiple book sales. (Lots of us bought single copies to be signed, but some had three or four books under their arms, waiting patiently for inscriptions.)

Arlo did not charge us for the talk but asked instead if he could sell his books. We were delighted to buy them. It was a stimulating evening. Everyone went home happy. And for those who missed the talk, we have copies of the book available for purchase. Just ask Medina Roy, to whom we owe another debt of gratitude for having her Adult Education Committee organize and host this memorable program.

Welcome New Members

Our KJCC family/*mishpocha* is expanding, by three and we are happy about it. Please welcome these new members when next you see them. Karen Beard drives all the way from Duck Key and has already joined us at many services. Orlando Quesada has been with us at services and onegs, too. Jan and David Ichel live part of the year in Manhattan and part in Key Largo. We

*The KJCC offers its deepest condolences
to the Bloom and Galanty families
on the death of Barbara Galanty,
Mother, Grandmother, Great-Grandmother.*

Oneg Sponsors for April 2018

April 6th - Nettie & Jules Seder in honor of their 57th wedding anniversary. Kathy & Joe Shabathai in honor of Hannah and John.

April 13th - Susan Ellner in honor of her birthday. Geri & Stuart Smith in honor of their 53rd wedding anniversary. Laurie Blum & Gary Margolis in memory of Arlene Sugarman Margolis.

April 20th - Lynn Nobil in honor of Lynn and Johnathan Nobil's birthday. David & Pat Van Artsdalen in honor of Dave and Barrett Van Artsdalen's birthday. Toby & Joel Bofshever in honor of their 50th anniversary.

April 27th - KJCC Sisterhood.

trust they will take part in KJCC activities when they are in residence here in the Keys. New members increase our vitality and make us a stronger, ever more interesting, Jewish community. *L'chaim.*

The Passing of Barbara Galanty

Barbara Galanty and her husband Marvin were here for many years before Marc and Ellen, Ellen's sister Gail and Marc and Ellen's girls decided to come south and join Ellen's parents. Both Barbara and Marvin were extremely active in all facets of running this shul in its earlier years. You can see Barbara's photo on the wall of Sisterhood Presidents. We don't have space to list all the important and loving things she gave to us. A belated thank you to you, Barbara, for all you did and meant to KJCC and for bringing us continuity: the amazing Marc Bloom and his wonderful family. May your memory be for a blessing.

Gunther Gets Proclamation

On the first day of Spring, March 21st, Gunther Karger was honored with a "Proclamation" at Homestead City Hall for his 85th birthday and his major life achievements. *Mazel tov*, Gunther, and *Yom Huledet Sameach* for the 85th time.

Our Meditation Garden Welcomes Spring

The weather here has been a little cockabolished (as someone's Latvian grandmother used to say), but there are ample signs that, finally, spring has sprung. Purple and yellow and red blossoms have begun joyfully erupting. We've had some rain, and the trees and bushes and flowers and shrubs have noticed, magically drinking just the amount their chlorophyll needs.

They're shedding their winter torpor and reaching longingly toward the sun. One of the reasons we've always stressed native plants is that they know best when it's time to awaken from the dryness of winter and rekindle their zest for life. Count has also begun to lay new beds of red mulch around the trees and paths. If you haven't felt the special quiet and warmth of the KJCC garden lately, do take a walk around the next time you're here.

Ongoing Projects and Mitzvah Programs of KJCC

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

CEMETERY INFORMATION: If you wish to plan for the very distant future, you can reserve space at the Kendall Mt. Nebo Cemetery in the KJCC section. Call Beth Hayden, 305-773-0067.

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

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

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

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

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

PICTURE POSTCARDS: We have beautiful picture postcards in the KJCC Gift Shop bearing the Millard Wells representation of the KJCC, commissioned by Sisterhood. They can be packaged to fit your needs and mailed to you or your gift recipient. The price is \$36 per hundred but we will sell lesser quantities. Contact Sydney! Faye-Davis, 305-613-3010, or Susan Gordon, 305-766-3585.

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE: If you know of any member who should receive a get well, congratulations or condolence card from the KJCC, call Chana David, 305-744-6048.

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

TREE OF LIFE LEAVES and ROCKS, SANCTUARY SEAT PLATES, SOCIAL HALL CHAIR PLATES, YAHRZEIT MEMORIAL PLAQUES: Send your desired inscription to Linda Pollack at lindap4000@ymail.com.

Call the names listed above for assistance or send your request and check to the KJCC, P.O. Box 1332, Tavernier, FL 33070. Recipients of your gifts will be notified by card and listings will appear in Chai-Lights as well. Honorarium and memorial cards can also be requested. Donations can be earmarked to our various ongoing funds, e.g. Rabbi & Cantor Fund, Holocaust Education Fund, Meditation Garden, Scholarship Fund, Sara Cohen Memorial Tzedakah Fund, Sunshine Fund, or General Fund.



KEYS JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

SISTERHOOD SHABBAT DINNER

Celebrating Israel Independence Day Yom HaAtzma'ut

Israel's Independence Day is celebrated on the fifth day of the month of Iyar, which is the Hebrew date of the formal establishment of the State of Israel, when members of the "provisional government" read and signed a Declaration of Independence in Tel Aviv. The original date corresponded to May 14, 1948.

Join us on Friday, April 20, 2018, at

ישראל

6:00 p.m.

**for Israeli Food, Music,
and Folk Dancing!**



- Contact Susan -

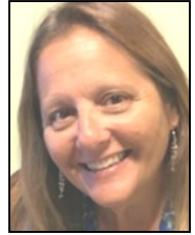
susangordon424@yahoo.com - (305) 766-3585

to reserve your spot and coordinate your covered dish.

Please rsvp by April 16th - No Charge

**To Joel and Toby Bofshever - Happy 50th Anniversary
and thank you for sponsoring this dinner.**

Sisterhood Susan Gordon



By the time you are reading this April issue of Chai-Lights, we will have just completed what I feel to be our busiest month at the KJCC -- March. This past month was loaded with exciting activities! One of my favorites is the Sisterhood led Shabbat service. We had twelve women taking their turns up on the *bimah* on March 2nd, the first Friday evening in March. Blending our voices in song and prayer was truly a beautiful experience for me. I hope that the service was enjoyed by all.

Sisterhood met for our monthly meeting on Sunday, March 4th. We had much planning to do for two Passover seders, the first being our most treasured Women's Seder. This was our 15th year hosting the Women's Seder at the KJCC. I am grateful to all of the dedicated women who work so hard, with a smile, to keep this very special tradition thriving and full of energy! I would like to give thanks to Sharon Silva, who completely edited, re-designed and printed 45 brand new copies of our *Haggadahs*. Sharon lives in Marathon and owns the UPS Store in Key Largo. Last year, she attended the Women's Seder with Judy Greenman, and she saw the need for a fresh, new *Haggadah*. When I spoke with Sharon; she generously offered to donate her professional expertise as a graphic designer, as well as her printing facilities at the UPS Store. This is a most appreciated gift. We will enjoy our new *Haggadahs* for years to come!

Each year, we donate all proceeds raised from the Women's Seder to three organizations whom we feel can benefit from *Tikkun Olam* giving. This year, the recipients are the Talia Agler Girl's Shelter, the KJCC Scholarship Fund, and the Key Largo School Needy Fund.

We also give honor to a woman who is active within the KJCC and Sisterhood. The chosen honoree this year is Joyce Peckman. Joyce's contributions to the daily functioning of both the KJCC and Sisterhood are endless, and we appreciate everything she does! See pages 45 and 46 for more on Joyce and on the

honoree from history, Nechama Leibowitz, Joyce presented so well.

The other seder which is planned by the women of the KJCC Sisterhood is the annual Community Passover Second Night Seder, held at the Islamorada Fishing Club. Speaking personally, it's so very nice, on a special occasion, to enjoy a fully and professionally catered dinner. It is one rare night when we can stay out of the kitchen!

The recently formed KJCC Sisterhood Book Club has met for the third time, on Monday, March 26th, at Mangrove Mike's Café in Islamorada. The book of the month was "The Great Alone" by Kristin Hannah. The Book Club has shown itself to be a much needed, enjoyable activity within our community. We are always happy to encourage and welcome any new ideas from our Sisterhood members which will enhance our experience as KJCC members.

Immediately following the excitement of the Passover seders, Sisterhood will hold our monthly meeting on the morning of April 1st at 10 a.m. (This is no April Fool's joke!). April promises to be a more relaxing month at the KJCC. We are planning a festive Shabbat dinner on Friday, April 20th at 6:00 p.m., followed by Shabbat services at 7:30. Come celebrate Israeli Independence Day, *Yom Ha'Atzmaut*, with your KJCC *mishpachah*! We will be serving a bountiful buffet, complete with Israeli dishes. Be entertained while listening to traditional Israeli folk music, and, if we are feeling energetic, we may even try some Israeli folk dances! Please R.S.V.P. to me, at 305-766-3585 or by e-mail to susangordon424@yahoo.com. There is no charge for this dinner, thanks to our generous sponsors, Joel and Toby Bofshever, who are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary! Please see the flyer for the dinner in this issue of Chai-Lights. Wishing everyone a happy (and relaxing) April! ◇

In Memoriam April 2018

In Memory Of

Helen Berman

By Sylvia Berman



In Memory Of

Clara Bloom

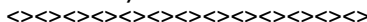
By Marc Bloom



In Memory Of

Nat Feldblum

By Marc Bloom



In Memory Of

Jean Blumenfeld

By Marvin A. Blumenfeld



In Memory Of

Neil H. Tomor

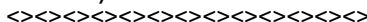
By Barbara A. Calev



In Memory Of

Joseph T. Cline

By Meredith A. Cline



In Memory Of

Ellen Coltman

By Barnet O. Coltman



In Memory Of

Becky Kanowsky

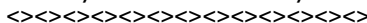
By Wes & Rita Conklin



In Memory Of

Gertrude Weisberg

By Gerri & Frank Emkey



In Memory Of

Alex Perl

By Gerri & Frank Emkey



In Memory Of

Vivian Faye

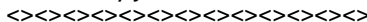
By Sydney! Faye-Davis



In Memory Of

Carmel Catanese

By Jane Friedman



In Memory Of

Frances Wolfe

By Michael & Suzanne Gilson



In Memory Of

Bill Gordon

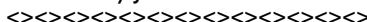
By Susan Gordon



In Memory Of

Julie Gorson-Marrow

By Janice Gorson



In Memory Of

Marty Graham

By Mrs. Marty Graham



In Memory Of

Belle Kirschenbaum

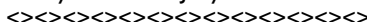
By Marilyn Greenbaum



In Memory Of

Amalia Kahn

By Franklin & Judy Greenman



In Memory Of

Belle Scaller

By Herbert & Elinor Grossman



In Memory Of

Harry Grossman

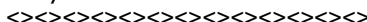
By Herbert & Elinor Grossman



In Memory Of

Shirley Grossman

By Herbert & Elinor Grossman



In Memoriam April 2018

In Memory Of

Stella Hartz

By Steven & Jan Hartz



In Memory Of

Michael Janowitz

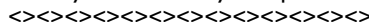
By Sam & Leslie Janowitz



In Memory Of

Gertrude F. Kaplan

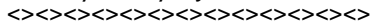
By Marshall & Myra Kaplan



In Memory Of

Nathan Klein

By Harvey & Judith Klein



In Memory Of

Fred Klimpl

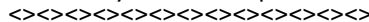
By Michael Klimpl



In Memory Of

Marilyn Janet Barr

By Michael Klimpl



In Memory Of

Arlene Sugarman Margolis

By Gary Margolis & Laurie Blum



In Memory Of

George Nobil

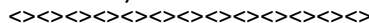
By Lynn Nobil



In Memory Of

Erwin Moss

By Linda Pollack



In Memory Of

Dr. Joel Pollack

By Linda Pollack



In Memory Of

Rabbi Milton Greenwald

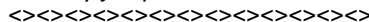
By Paul & Susan Roberts



In Memory Of

Louise Folks Baker

By Joseph & Susan Sachs



In Memory Of

Sam Sax

By Stuart & Lauren Sax



In Memory Of

Richard Schulberg

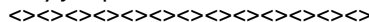
By Alan & Elaine Schulberg



In Memory Of

Sally Shabathai

By Joseph & Katherine Shabathai



In Memory Of

Ginger Lewis

By Robert Silk



In Memory Of

Louis S. Smith

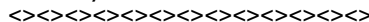
By Steven & Barbara Smith



In Memory Of

Morris Smith

By Stuart & Geri Smith



In Memory Of

Claire Smith

By Stuart & Geri Smith



In Memory Of

Cantor Alex Chapin

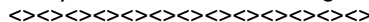
By Steven & Barbara Smith



In Memory Of

Rose Wainer

By Richard & Sheila Steinberg



In Memoriam April 2018

In Memory Of

Ida S. Reider

By George & Muriel Swartz



In Memory Of

Dr. Milton A. Wohl

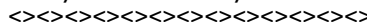
By Joan P. Wohl



In Memory Of

Hilda Mazur

By Sanford & Nancy Yankow



In Memory Of

Norma Cutler

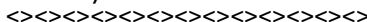
By Donald Zinner



In Memory Of

Ellen Coltman

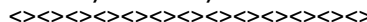
By Barnet O. Coltman



In Memory Of

Marty Graham

By Mrs. Marty Graham



MISHEBERACH – A PRAYER FOR HEALING

When the Torah is read, we are granted an especially opportune moment to invoke blessing for those in need of divine intervention. So for hundreds of years it has been a tradition, before the Torah is returned to the ark, to recite the names of those who are ill, asking that Hashem, who blessed our founding ancestors, also bless those in need of healing. The person is not called by the standard Hebrew name (ex: *Moshe ben {son of} Amram*). Instead the mother's name is invoked (*Moshe ben Jochebed*.)

When the Reform movement moved the major Shabbat service from Saturday morning to Friday night, the prayer for healing, often in the form composed by Debbie Friedman, became an important element of their Friday night service.

The KJCC is non-denominational, but we too have incorporated the *Misheberach* prayer into our Friday evening service, after the *dvar Torah* (Torah talk.) We maintain a list of long-term and short-term names, as well as inviting names to be called from the congregation. There are even post cards at the back of the room to be used by anyone who wants to inform a friend or family member that they have been the subject of our community's prayer.

If you have someone that you wish to add or remove from KJCC's *Misheberach* list, please, call or e-mail and let us know. We'll happily include any name (or names) you tell us about. The main KJCC number is 305-852-5235. The website, which accepts e-mail, is keysjewishcenter.com.

World Jewish Report

Medina Roy



The Jewish History of Mr. Potato Head

It all started with vegetables in a kitchen in Brooklyn. It was the 1950s and you (or your kids) stuck little plastic face pieces attached to pushpins into potatoes. Well, did you know that the toy was invented and developed in 1949 by Brooklyn-born George Lerner, a Jew of Romanian descent? Later, in 1952, Lerner showed his idea to Polish-Jewish immigrant brothers Henry, Herman and Hillel Hassenfeld. They saw a good future in the toy. Hassenfeld Brothers, Inc. – later renamed Hasbro – produced Lerner’s creation, dubbing it Mr. Potato Head. Hasbro sold the first Mr. Potato Head as a kit of facial parts, suggesting using real vegetables and fruits. It was the first toy advertised on television and has remained in production ever since its debut, selling more than a million sets in its first year alone. However, due to complaints regarding rotting vegetables and new government safety regulations, Hasbro began including a plastic potato body in the set in 1964. Hasbro is now the world’s third-largest toy company. (www.thejewniverse.com, 12-14-17)

Buffett Invests in Israel

Warren Buffett, probably the most successful and high-profile billionaire investor in the world, has historically avoided the biotech industry. But not anymore. His company, Berkshire Hathaway, now holds a new position in Teva Pharmaceutical, an Israeli biotech company that has fallen on hard times. Berkshire bought a 1.9 percent stake in the company, worth \$358 million at the time. It’s now at \$400 million. (Since news of Berkshire’s investment broke, *Teva’s* share price has appreciated.) “It’s far better to buy a wonderful company at a fair price than a fair company at a wonderful price,” Buffett has been quoted as saying. “Great investment opportunities come around when excellent

companies are surrounded by unusual circumstances that cause the stock to be misappreciated.” *Teva* is heavy with debt from its purchase of *Allergan’s* generic drug division.

This is not Buffett’s first investment in Israel. In 2006, Berkshire purchased an 80 percent stake in *Iscar*, an industrial manufacturing company and its first international acquisition, for \$4 billion. (In 2013, Berkshire bought out the remaining 20 percent of the company.) So, what is it about Israel that Buffett finds so attractive? “I’m not Jewish but Israel reminds me of the United States at its birth,” he said. “The determination, motivation, intelligence and initiative of its people are remarkable and extraordinary. I’m a big believer in Israel’s economy.” (www.forbes.com, 2-26-18)

Israel Steps in to Help

Ten days after the shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, experts from the *Israel Trauma Coalition* (ITC) arrived at the site to guide teachers and community leaders, teaching them how to face the future. ITC members Yotam Dagan from *Natal Israel Center for Trauma and Resilience* – our 2013 Israel trip with Rabbi Agler included a visit to a *Natal* Center in Tel Aviv – and Alan Cohen from the Community Stress Prevention Center, led sessions for about 600 community leaders. Unfortunately, Israelis have extensive experience and long-term insight from what they’ve seen at home. The ITC was created in 2002, a year of unrelenting terror attacks in Israel. Originally focused on direct care, the organization expanded to professional training for community recovery and national emergency preparedness in Israel and elsewhere. Thus far, ITC has sent 17 delegations abroad – usually two or three professionals from ITC partner organizations who speak the local language. (www.israel21c.org, 3-7-18)

The Anne Frank Sanctuary Movement

Inspired by Anne Frank, hundreds of Israeli rabbis and educators have come together saying they are willing to hide some 40,000 African asylum seekers – predominately from Eritrea and Sudan – facing forced deportation from Israel either to their homelands or to another sub-Saharan state. The campaign to protect the Africans – most of whom crossed Israel's border with Egypt over the last ten years due to regional civil wars and economic oppression – was organized by *Rabbis for Human Rights*, an Israeli organization led by Rabbi Susan Silverman, sister of American comedian Sarah Silverman. “Anne Frank is the most well-known hidden person,” Silverman said. “...we have documentation that these people [the Africans] are facing possible death.” The Israeli government plans to start deportation of the African asylum seekers this month (April) and continue the expulsions for two years. In January, the government had said it would give migrants a choice: receive \$3,500 to be deported to a third country or be sent to a detention facility indefinitely. But migrants are fearful because, according to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, Africans already deported from Israel have suffered torture, detention and human trafficking. Israel claims that the mass deportation of asylum seekers – referred to by Prime Minister Netanyahu as “infiltrators” – are needed to “protect the Jewish and democratic character.” Rabbi Silverman, who immigrated to Israel from Boston in 2006, says she hopes the Israeli government will reconsider.

(www.newsweek.com, 1-17-18)

“Silence Encourages the Tormentor...”

The *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (USHMM) has revoked a prestigious human rights award given to Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's civilian leader and Nobel laureate, because of her failure to stop – or even acknowledge – the ethnic cleansing of her country's Rohingya Muslim minority. The award, named for Elie Wiesel, is given annually by the museum “to an outstanding prominent individual whose actions have advanced

the museum's vision of a world where people confront hatred, prevent genocide and promote human dignity.” The museum claims Ms. Suu Kyi has failed to live up to that vision. “We had hoped that you – as someone we and many others have celebrated for your commitment to human dignity and universal human rights – would have done something to condemn and stop the military's brutal campaign and to express solidarity with the targeted Rohingya population,” the museum wrote in a letter to her. Instead, the letter asserts, she and her political party have refused to cooperate with the United Nations investigators, blocked access to journalists and spread hateful rhetoric against the Rohingyas. In 1991 Aung San Suu Kyi won the Nobel Peace Prize for using non-violent means to try to move Myanmar (originally Burma) from military rule to democracy. Ms. Suu Kyi spent fifteen years under house arrest for challenging the military dictatorship. Upon her release, she was appointed state counselor (in essence Prime Minister) after her party's landslide victory, raising hopes that the country might emerge from military dictatorship.

Even Ms. Suu Kyi's many admirers, including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, view her handling of the Rohingya situation as a betrayal. “If the political price of your ascension to the highest office in Myanmar is your silence, the price is surely too steep,” Tutu wrote in an open letter. The Holocaust Museum's letter to her closes with a quote from Elie Wiesel: “Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.” (www.nytimes.com, 3-7-18)

They're Worth More Than Uranium?

Researchers from the Ramat HaNegev Desert Agriculture Center in southern Israel have succeeded in cultivating desert truffles, whose market price reaches \$120 per pound – just a bit less than the cost of silver and four times that of uranium. The researchers created a symbiosis between the fungus *Terfezia leonis*, which occurs rarely and unpredictably in nature, and the common desert shrub *Helianthemum sessiliflorum*. This marks the first time that truffles, the highly sought-after delicacy, have been cultivated. The researchers said that

farmers will be able to harvest unprecedented yields in small areas. Both the fungus and its host shrub require little water and no fertilizer, potentially making truffles a very cost-effective agricultural crop. Commercial cultivation by Israeli farmers may begin as early as next year. (www.ynetnews.com, 3-1-18)

A Regrettable Mistake?

Mishpacha, a popular English-language ultra-Orthodox magazine, has been harshly criticized for blurring the faces of women in a photo taken in a Nazi death camp. The weekly periodical – widely read both in ultra-Orthodox communities in Israel and the United States, said it was a mistake but, as of this writing, has yet to correct the photo in its online version. Ultra-Orthodox newspapers and magazines do not publish photos of women, a policy that has caused outrage internationally, on social media and in the Israeli press. (One newspaper photoshopped Hillary Clinton completely out of a White House photo.) Shoshanna Keats Jaskoll, founder of the religious women’s organization *Chochmat Nashim* (wisdom of women), posted on Facebook that what the paper did “utterly disgusts” her, saying that pixelating the women was actually erasing their memory. “If she’s a Nazi victim, you’ve murdered her again. If she’s a Holocaust survivor, you’ve done what the Nazis didn’t, and if she’s a liberator you’ve desecrated her name,” Jaskoll said. *Mishpacha* has defended the policy of not publishing photographs of women. (www.timesofisrael.com, 1-30-18)

In Memoriam

★ Heinz Jakob “Coco” Schumann, a German-Jewish jazz legend who was forced to play for Nazi officers, died at the end of January. He was 93. Schumann fell in love with jazz swing music while living in Berlin in the 1930s. He was arrested in 1943 and sent to Theresienstadt, where he played in a band called the *Ghetto Swingers*. He was later sent to Auschwitz and survived the death march forced on the prisoners before Allied soldiers arrived. Schumann later returned to Germany – but always kept a packed suitcase in his

closet so that he could be ready to flee at a moment’s notice – and became one of the country’s best-known jazz musicians and one of the first German electric guitarists, working with the likes of Marlene Dietrich and Ella Fitzgerald. (www.israelnationalnews.com, 2-2-18)

★ Russ Solomon, founder of the music superstore *Tower Records*, died recently at the age of 92. Solomon, who revolutionized the music retailing business (before that business model was destroyed by digital downloads), was described as “a larger than life character, with a personality as charismatic as many of the rock stars whose records he sold.” He grew up in California during the Depression and dropped out of school when he was sixteen, selling jukebox records from his father’s drugstore. In 1960, he opened his first *Tower Records* store in Sacramento; the company eventually grew to 200 stores in fifteen countries and housed some 125,000 titles, virtually all of the popular and classical recordings on the market. Out of business by 2006 after his second bankruptcy, Solomon had never taken the company public and said that not selling stock “was the dumbest thing I ever did.” (www.jta.org, 3-6-18)

Did You Know...

★ Yeshiva University’s (YU) men’s basketball team has qualified for this year’s NCAA Division III basketball tournament. Winning the Skyline Conference championship earned them an automatic spot, one of the coveted 65. (YU is the flagship university in Modern Orthodox Judaism.) (www.jta.org, 2-26-18)

★ Lin-Manuel Miranda, creator and star of the Broadway smash hit “Hamilton,” belonged to the *Mazel Tones*, a Jewish *a cappella* group when he was a student at Wesleyan University. Miranda, mostly of Puerto Rican descent, has long been a friend of the Jewish community. While a student at Hunter College Elementary School in Manhattan, most of his friends were Jewish. Before making it big on Broadway, he helped pay his rent by performing at bar and bat mitzvahs. At his own wedding party, he sang a song from “Fiddler on the Roof.” In 2016, he appeared in a fund-raising video for Yeshiva University. YU awarded him an honorary doctorate in 2009. (www.jta.org, 2-26-18) ◇

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.

Adult Education

Williams, Jim & Rita

Advertiser's Dinner

Anonymous
Brush, James
Coltman, Barney
Foley, Robert
Kaufman, Michael & Lorena
Remer, Janis
Steinbock, Stephen
Stelli, John
Williams, Jim & Rita
Wohl, Joan

Book Plate

Coltman, Barney

First Night Seder

Smith, Steven & Barbara

Fundraiser

Hartz, Steve & Jan
Peckman, Joyce

General Fund

Plutzer Family
Quesada, Orlando

Leaf on the Tree of Life

Mah Jongg

In Honor of

film festival

In Memory of

Eve Greenstein

In Honor of

Feder Concert
Feder Concert

In Memory of

Elaine Schulberg's brother

Oneg Sponsorship

Bofshever, Toby & Joel
Ellner, Susan
Friedman, Jane

In Honor of

Yom Ha'Atzmaut dinner
her birthday
her birthday

Oneg Sponsorship

Hartz, Jan & Steve
Nobil, Lynn
Roy, Medina
Seder, Nettie & Jules
Van Artsdalen, David & Pat

Jan's sister's birthday
birthdays of Lynn & Jonathan Nobil
Carl's birthday
their 53rd anniversary
birthdays of Dave & Barrett Van Artsdalen

Tikkun Olam

Kaplan, Linda
Smith, Stuart & Geri

In Honor of

Barney Coltman
vegetable garden

Tzeddakah

Anonymous
Blum, Laurie
David, Chana
Levine, Steven
Peckman, Joyce
Rimm, Sylvia
Roy, Medina
Steinbock, Stephen

In Honor of

Purim party
Purim party
Purim party
Purim party
Purim party
Purim party
Purim party
Purim party

Women's Seder

Bolton, Donna
Pollack, Linda

Yahrzeit

Blum, Laurie
Blum, Laurie
Harvey, Mitch & Perloff, Linda
Olsen, Jerry & Sheila
Sheinker, Miltra
Tallent, Lillian
Temkin, Robert

In Memory of

Annie Kleinfeldt Bernstein
Janet Blum
David Harvey
Louis Weinstein
Warren Sheinker
Ida Tallent
Anne Temkin

Eye on the Arts Joyce Peckman



I am broadening my net to include the South Miami Dade Cultural Arts Center (SMDCAC), located in Cutler Bay just west of the Florida Turnpike, exit 12, just across from Southland Mall.

Creative Tuesdays at Key Largo Library – Purple Isles Art Guild Members are in the Community Room from 1-3 p.m. All are welcome to watch or bring materials and work on a project. (Watercolors, acrylics, pastels.) There are always people to help. For information, contact Jackie Campa at jackiecampa@aol.com.

Dulcimer Club Acoustic Jam – Wednesday, April 4th 4:30-6 p.m. at the Key Largo Library. Listen to your friends, tap your toes, and maybe you will be inspired to take up an easy instrument.

Americana Jam Night at the Key Largo Library – On the first and third Thursdays of each month, from 7-8:30 p.m. an eclectic group of guitars, banjos, sometimes a bass, and whoever else shows up, always make joyful music.

25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee – A musical comedy presented by The Keys Players on April 6, 7, 12, 13 & 14th at 7:30 p.m., and April 8th at 2 p.m. at the Murray Nelson Government Center's professional theater, MM 102 bayside. For info: 305-942-4339 or www.thekeyplayers.org.

Bay Jam 24 at Islamorada Founders Park – Sunday April 8th from 11-7. This is an ICE event, with proceeds funding arts scholarships for our students. Admission is free. This year, the talent and food are locally sourced. A major event conceived and led by KJCC's own Dave Feder.

Bing Futch plays Dulcimer at the Library – Friday, April 13th, 6 p.m. at the Key Largo Library Community Room. This is the final concert of this year's library concert series.

The Other Mozart – Various times April 13-15 at SMDCAC's Black Box Theatre. This is the true, forgotten story of Nannerl Mozart, sister of Wolfgang Amadeus, another prodigy who regularly performed with him as children. Tickets, \$45, for one of four performances can be purchased at www.SMDCAC.org or 786-573-5300.

La Boheme – Puccini's opera, perhaps the world's most popular will be performed at SMDCAC on April 14th at 8 p.m. and April 15th at 4 p.m. Tickets \$27-47, on the main stage.

Contra Dancing – Is it folk art or exercise or just fun? Live music makes it the real deal. Check it out at the Key Largo Library on Saturday, April 14th and 28th at 6 p.m.

Morada Bay Art Walk – Thursday, April 19th, 6 p.m.- 9 p.m. at MM 81.5. Enjoy the evening air while perusing the wares of art and craft vendors, enjoying drinks and snacks and listening to live music. www.Moradaway.org.

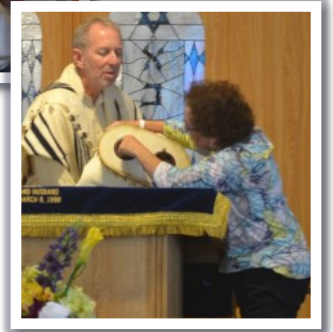
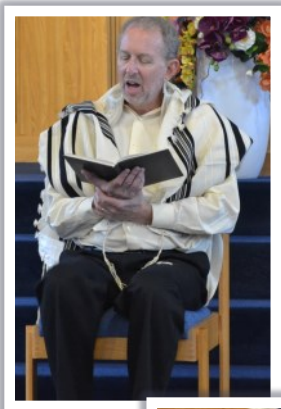
Young Musicians Concert – 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 21 at Islamorada Founders' Park. Bring a blanket or lawn chair, snacks, your dog, and a smile for our kids.

Tango Lovers – Saturday, April 21, at 8 p.m. on the Main Stage of SMDCAC. The passion of tango comes alive in a performance featuring costumes of the '40s and '50s. Tickets (\$35-65) at www.SMDCAC.org. or 786-573-5300.

Miami Art Quilters Exhibit – All of April, in the Key Largo Library Community Room during library hours. ◇

Photo Gallery

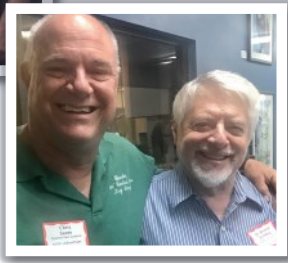
All photos on this page are from the February 17th Saturday morning Torah Learning Service with Rabbi Richard Agler. In the photo at far right bottom Rabbi A. shows off a treasured personal book featuring beautiful artist's renderings of the original tabernacle built after the near-fatal debacle at Mt. Sinai with the golden calf.



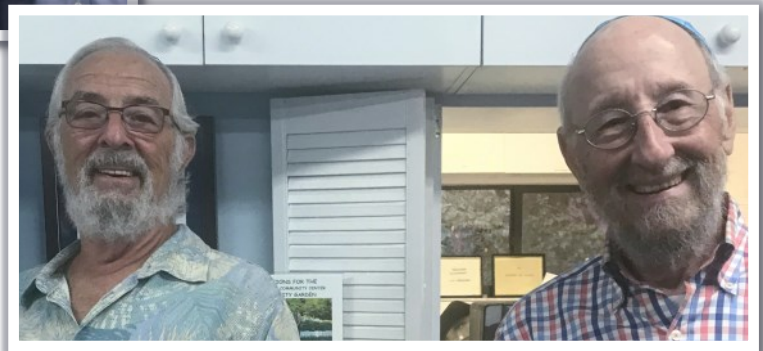
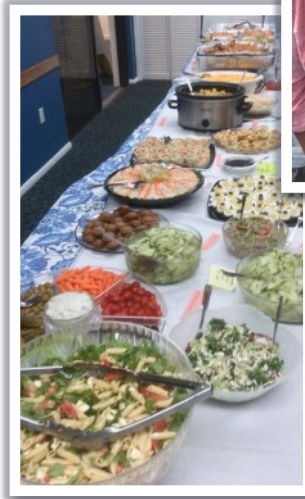
Friday, February 23rd saw our now-annual Advertisers and New Member dinner, where we invite all advertisers in both Chai-Lights and our Membership Directory (members and non-members), plus all those who have become KJCC members in the past year, to join us for a scrumptious buffet dinner as the rest of us heartily celebrate both groups.

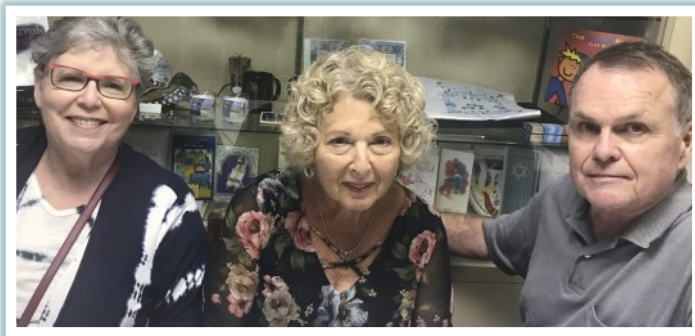


At left, member advertisers **Barbara Bernstein** and **Erica Lieberman-Garrett**. Below, non-member **Chris Sante** and member **Bernie Ginsberg**.

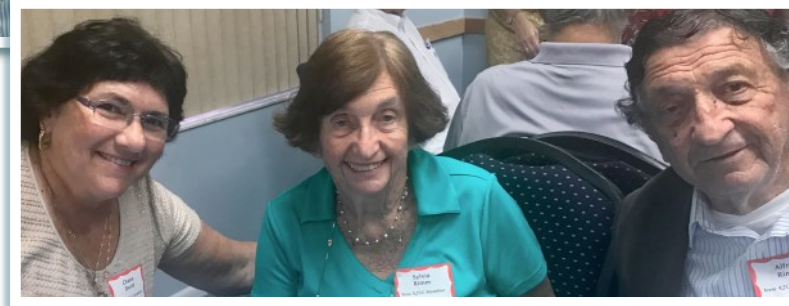
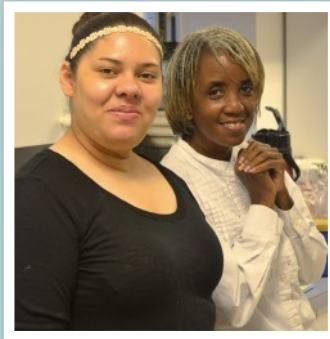


More from the Advertisers Dinner: at right, non-member advertisers Dr. Bob Foley and Carol Chandler with member advertiser Mindy Agler. Below, with Bernie, are Drs. Martha Edwards and Marta Pawluk.





As always, our Advertisers/New Member dinner was one of the highlights of high season. At far right, with Zelig, er, Bernie, is Dr. Bruce Boros. In the photo at bottom are three new members, Chana David with Sylvia and Al Rimm.



Each season the women of Sisterhood get together and jointly lead a Shabbat service. This year's was on March 2nd. (Our new candlesticks, by the way, were hand-crafted by famed local potter, teacher and KJCC Board Member Beth Kaminstein and donated to KJCC.)

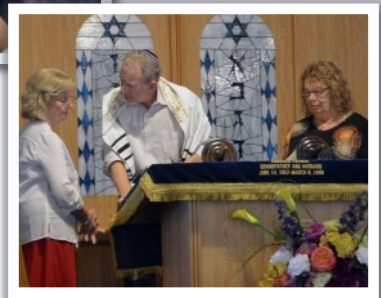
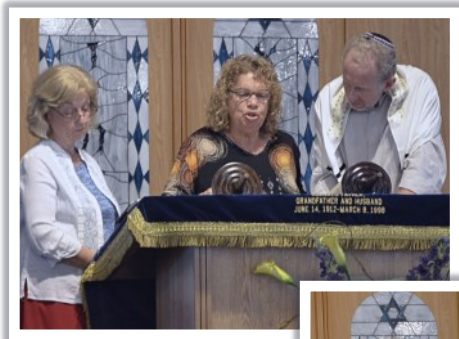
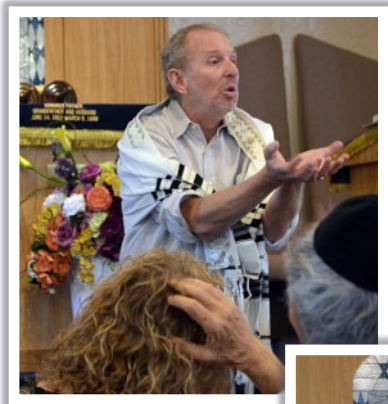


This happy South Florida couple, Stan and Laurie Gold, came to visit us to say Kaddish on

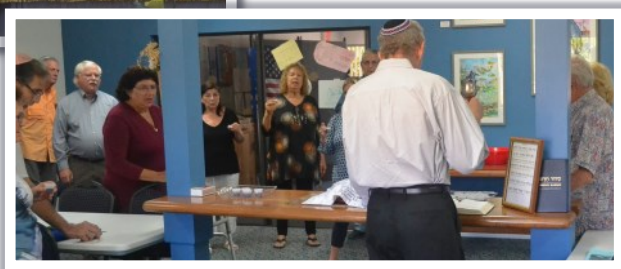
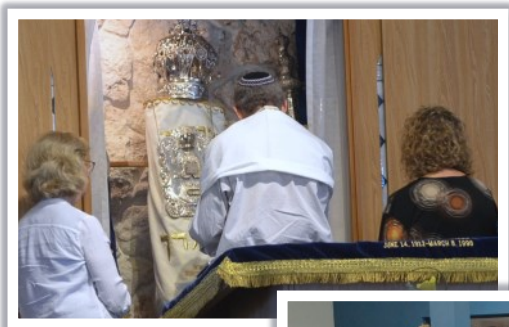


her father's Yahrzeit. (It's a way we meet many new friends for the first time.) The unexpected bonus, besides enjoying us and the service, was being introduced to our resident scholar, Rabbi Richard Agler. Jaws dropped and eyes filled. The Golds lived in Boca years ago and they were unexpectedly seeing the rabbi who had married them.

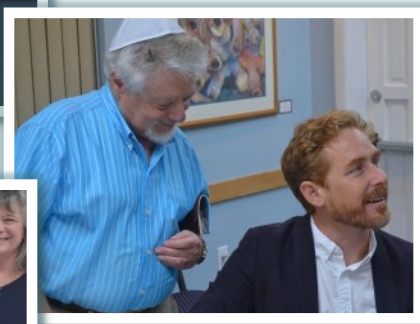
The morning following the Sisterhood-led service, March 3rd, saw Rabbi Agler's Torah Learning Service for March. The parshah for the week was Ki Tisa, the golden calf story, merely one of the most complex and multi-layered stories we have.



For the first time at KJCC, Ritual Chair Gloria Avner chanted directly from the Torah on Shabbat. Linda Pollack chanted the Aliyah before and after.



All photos on this page were taken during the Wednesday, March 7th talk at KJCC by Arlo Haskell about his book “The Jews of Key West - Smugglers, Cigar Makers, and Revolutionaries (1823-1969).” Did you know that the early, and wealthy, cigar-makers in Key West were all Jews? Or that Jewish businessmen had secretly helped José Martí plan and finance his revolution, including the smuggling of weapons?



Please see the Nosh item on page 4 for more details about our evening with Arlo. (He also left us a few copies of his book for those who couldn't be there to buy one that evening.)





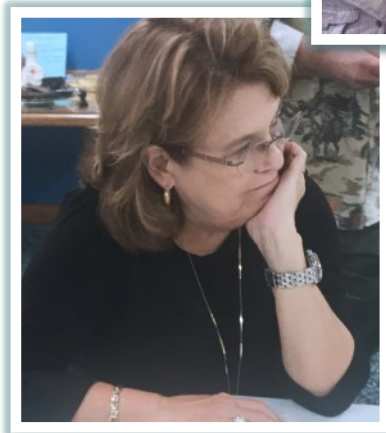
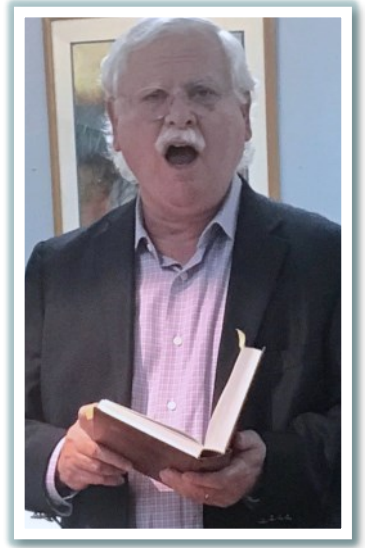
On the same evening as Arlo Haskell's talk, we also played host to and were joined by the first group of Scubi Jews affiliated with Rabbi Ed from outside Florida, from the University of Arizona. (Yes, they have a marine conservation program there in the desert.) The shirt they brought as a gift to Ritual Chair Gloria Avner, below left, says "Arizona" in Hebrew.



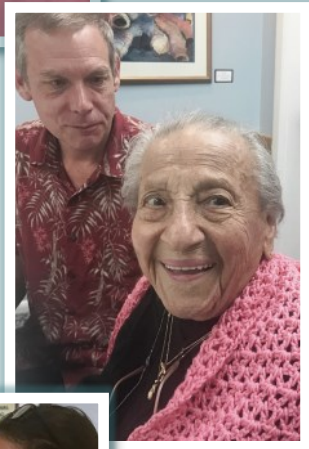
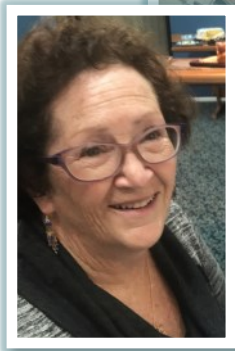
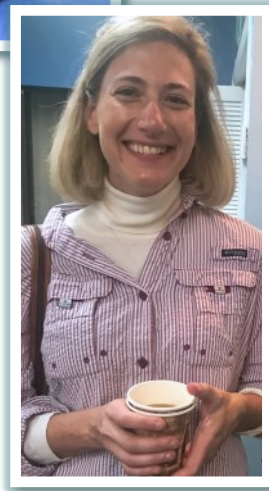
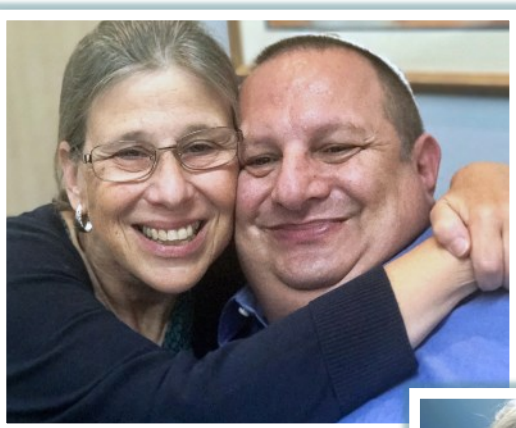
On Wednesday, March 14th, we had the second of our discussion groups on significant artists and their relationships with Jews, this time about one of the most famous artists of all, Rembrandt van Rijn of the Netherlands. He lived in Amsterdam's Jewish quarter for many years, and painted rabbis and scholars and just ordinary Jewish neighbors in addition to many scenes from the Hebrew Bible.



Some photos from the March 9th oneg. Steve Hartz had led the service. The oneg was sponsored by Medina Roy and Laurie Blum & Gary Margolis. Two of the Arizona Scubi Jews, Michael and Liv, after a long day of diving and reef clean-up, joined us for the service and, as you can see, were also given the honor of HaMotzi.

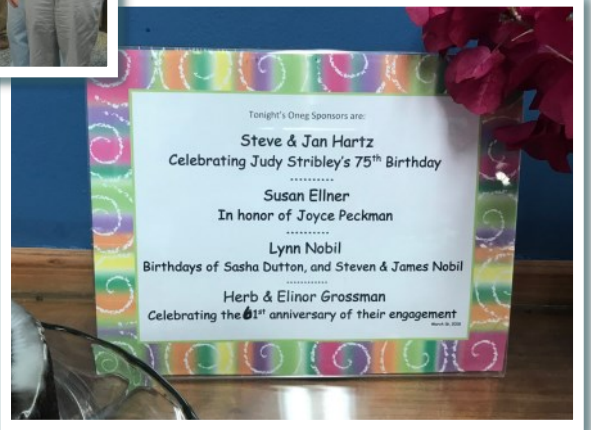


Additional photos from the March 9th oneg. Two of the evening's oneg sponsors, Laurie and Gary, are shown at right. Pauline was extremely happy, below, with the brand-new shawl Nettie Seder had just knitted expressly as a gift to her.

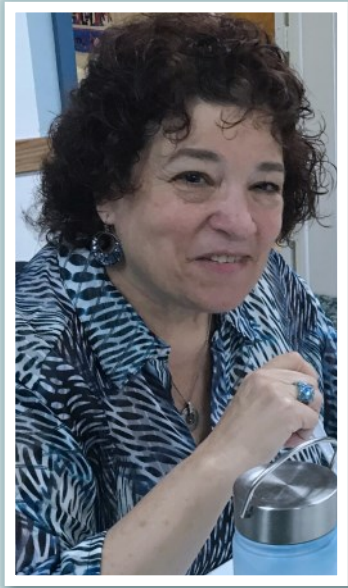




The photos here are from the oneg after the March 16th service led by Medina Roy. The oneg, as you can see below, had a full gaggle of sponsors that night, Steve & Jan Hartz and Susan Ellner and Lynn Nobil and Herb & Elinor Grossman. Jan's sponsorship was in honor of her sister Judy's birthday, shown at bottom left.

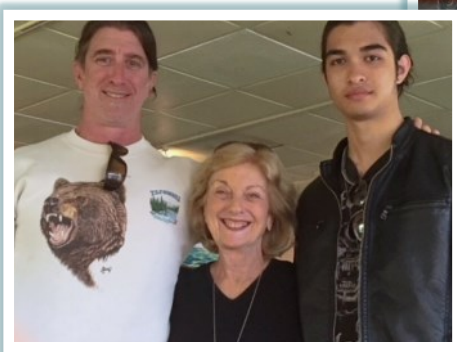
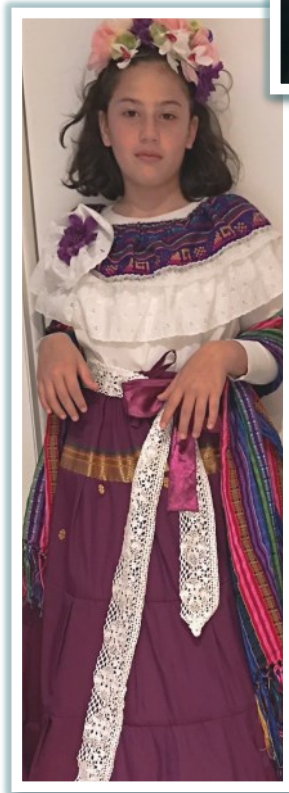


Additional photos from the oneg after Medina's March 16th service...



Jan Hartz has had a busy spring, with many of her photographs showing in local art shows, even as she traveled to the Silver Banks to swim with and photograph the majestic humpback whale. (That story begins on page 31.) Here Jan, at right, with her blue ribbon winning photograph from the Purple Isles Art Show. Her riveting black-and-white photograph just below won the People's Choice Award at the Garden Walk Art Show.

Joyce Peckman's granddaughter Michal is shown dressed as artist Frida Kahlo for Purim.



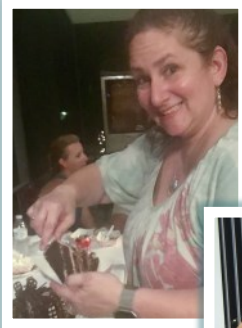
In the photo above, Suzi Feder as part of a performance by a local belly-dancing class. In the photo at left we see three generations of Pollacks: Roy at left,

with son Will at right and mom Linda standing on tippy toes (and two phone books) in the middle.

In the center photo, Randy Klein-Gross cutting a cake celebrating both Tomar's birthday and the grand opening of their new Indian Harbor home. Below, Rabbi Ed Rosenthal and his latest group of Scubi Jews arrived on Saturday, March 17th, just in time for that evening's Film Fest offering, "Dancing in Jaffa."



At left and below, Susan Gordon enjoying some quality Tennessee grandma time with her best beau, grandson Rhett.



Above, Rabbi Ed with the Scubi Jews après the long trip and pizza. At left, Shirley Karger in this year's Homestead Mardi Gras parade. A native of New Orleans, she'd been that city's parade princess in 1954. (Note the sash.)

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Tikkun Hayam:

Journey to the Wonder of Whales

An Eye for Art and Nature

Jan Hartz (Louise Lindsay in her professional life) has had quite a successful photography season. In the last few months, she has won a People's Choice award for her giant "Dahlia" at the Garden Walk show, a first place blue ribbon for Digital Photography at the Annual AGPI Art Guild Show, and she has had three pieces displayed for a month in the National Parks Photographers' Show in Homestead. Below, she shares an experience taking photographs of whales, one month ago, 90 miles off the coast of the Dominican Republic. We are inspired. Two of her photos already hang in our halls. KJCC's Art Committee will build on that inspiration to create a new exhibit for 5779: "Art, Nature and the Jewish Perspective." A good part of the exhibit will focus on "Tikkun HaYam." Rabbi Ed's teachings and the work of his Hillel Scubi Jews from Florida and Arizona, (who were all visiting here in March) helping to restore our coral reefs and clean up Irma debris, are coalescing into artistic intent.

My Trip Swimming with Whales

And a Precious Moment of Intimate Eye Contact

by Jan Hartz

For my 70th birthday present to myself, I chose to take a trip to the Silver Banks to swim with humpback whales. Over time, I will share more of my pictures and stories. But here are a few tidbits of coming attractions.

As many of you know, I love encounters with nature of all kinds. I also love photographing experiences that speak to me. You may not know that I used to dive, but had to stop because of ear problems. I miss diving and photographing the view of the underwater world that comes with it. Last summer, while watching a video on Netflix, called *Tales By Light*, starring one of my favorite photographers, Darren Jew, I discovered that he created his beautiful images of humpback whales underwater by only snorkeling with them. Hence, was born the thought, "I can do that!"

I did have many trepidations as I got ready for my trip. I was grumbly about having to share my room with an unknown roommate, but now I have come away with a beautiful new friend. I was nervous about having the physical stamina to undertake such an adventure, as well as nervous about having the skills needed to get in and out of small boats in the water quickly, as well as the ability to stay safe during a weeklong trip at sea. I worked out for months, studied up on and ordered all sorts of gear, and pestered all of my friends for advice. Many of you gave me precious tips which made all of the difference. For that I am most grateful.

I almost canceled my trip because I could not find my way into a wetsuit. But the advice of many friends led me to find the perfect wetsuit that was easy to get into and that kept me warm in the water. Other people rec-



“The rainbow with the boat photo shows the boat we lived on for a week - the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. I tried to get a photo of a whale at the end of the rainbow, but that never worked out.”

“There were two boats. The photo of the small boat full of people, with the whale beside it, was taken by me from the second boat. It was pretty amazing.”

commended safety equipment. I was so well prepared that I became known as the most prepared “gadget person” on the trip. My yellow bag that held all of my photography equipment and other gadgets became known as the magic bag of Mary Poppins that produced anything that was needed. I tried to grant the wishes of all of my fellow passengers to produce whatever was desired.

Many of my friends understandably confessed to me that they would be scared to get in the water with whales. That was the one fear I did not have. Indeed, I experienced a longing to be in the water with these magnificent creatures. Somehow, I have always had a way with animals. Being with creatures in an intimate setting has always been a rather spiritual experience for me. Certainly, my trip was as much of a spiritual quest as an adventure.

A search online for trips to swim with whales resulted in my choosing a trip to the Silver Banks, 90 miles out to sea northeast of the Dominican Republic. There are, I believe, only two places in the world where one is allowed to swim in the water with humpback whales, should they choose to encounter humans. One place is Tonga, near Fiji in the Pacific Ocean, and the other place is the Silver Banks. There are about 14 different families of whales, which live in cold waters but which congregate in various warm places around the world in the coldest months of winter. Whales, along with birds, are the original snowbirds, I guess. Whales did evolve after birds, about 50 million years ago. Human-like primates walking on two legs evolved about 4 million years ago.

The 5,000 - 7,000 whales who all show up every winter at the Silver Banks swim thousands of miles to get there. They leave their northern homes in Greenland, Iceland, Canada, and the northeastern United States, as well as Norway, and they then meet up in the Silver Banks, where they all originally were born. The females who have been pregnant for ten months make the long trip and give birth in the Silver Banks. They raise their calves there and prepare them for the long swim back up north. Other females and all of the males come to the Silver Banks to mate. Humpback whales are part of the group of baleen whales. Unlike Jonah’s whale, baleen whales could not swallow a person. They cannot swallow anything larger than a small apple. They eat tons of small crustaceans, such as krill.

Once they take off on their journey in December to their winter home, they do not eat until they return in April or May. There is no food for them in the Silver Banks.

From the beginning, my trip was lined with gifts for me at every turn. Some higher power clearly had a hand in co-creating this trip. I learned from others on my Silver Banks trip that the whale trips to faraway Tonga were not well organized and were rather chaotic. I was lucky I chose the Silver Banks trip. Still, each of the four weeks prior to my trip had been plagued with terrible weather in the Silver Banks, including winds so high that the smaller tender boats could not go out and with seas so rough that everyone was constantly seasick. I knew that rough, murky seas would be a risk but decided to give this chance-of-a-lifetime trip a go anyway. As it turned out, each day of my trip was better than the last, with calm seas, beautiful rainbows, and even the gift of the full moon rising as the sun set over the open water. The gifts kept raining down on me. I could not have designed a better week weather-wise or whale-wise. Normally, one has to book these trips two years in advance, but there had been a cancellation late last summer, which gave me the gift of this perfect week.

It is harder to write about my encounters with the whales, as there are few words to describe these experiences. My trip included wonderful, caring guides who helped us develop encounters.

We went out on 26-foot tenders. We could see whales breathing, breaching and slapping the surface, often in all directions. We moved slowly in our tender, approaching whales that, in our guides' accumulated wisdom, might want to encounter us. Sixty-foot whales can obviously swim away very fast if they do not want to have an encounter. There is no chasing down a whale. There is only a willingness to interact and the search for a mutual encounter. We were given detailed instructions, which included quietly slipping into the water, staying near our guide, and quietly floating on the surface, remaining receptive to what the whales might initiate.

During one such encounter, I slipped into the water and floated on the surface with our group of ten humans. Two adult whales rested about 30 feet below us. I floated above the head of one whale, aware of my own breathing and of a connection with this magnificent

creature. I thought, "I can't believe I am lying here, floating above this beautiful whale, feeling so peaceful and safe and connected." I floated there for what seemed like an eternity, although it was probably about five minutes. Whales are conscious breathers. Unlike humans who can breathe involuntarily and automatically, whales have to consciously take and expel every breath. They can stay underwater

on one breath for up to 40 minutes, but they usually surface to take a breath every 10 to 20 minutes. I was aware of my gentle rising and falling with each breath while the



"The up-close picture with the eye is of a mother whale. She swam right by me, with her baby just above her nose, where the babies often 'ride.' The brighter white streak is the baby's pectoral fin."



whale below me remained still.

Then, first one and then the other whale started very slowly to surface, right underneath us. They had been resting with their pectoral (or side) fins angled out at about 30 degrees. We had been warned to stay far away from their pectoral fins, as each weigh one and a half tons. An accidental grazing of a fin can cause major damage to a human. The whales rose up slowly and moved slightly away from us. For the first time, I experienced a hint of fear, noticing that the closest whale was about eight feet away from us in the water and that

her pectoral fin was very close to us. The moment this fear arose, the whale moved her fin tight against her body, safely away from us. That was the moment it became very clear to me that these magnificent creatures are aware of us, are sensitive and intelligent, and are seeking interaction. The female swam right by me and gazed into my eyes and soul. The encounter was mutual and beautiful.

The whales were very generous in sharing their water world with us. They were as curious about us as we were about them. I came away with a sense of reverence for these whales, and a great respect. It is easy to feel a connection with God when one has been gifted with a week of so many miraculous connections and experiences.

Hopefully, I will get to share more stories with you. We also encountered a mother with a curious, playful baby, and we got to hear the beautiful soulful singing of one humpback whale. As I write this, I can still feel a hint of the rocking boat that stayed with me once I got back on land. Memories of rainbows, sunrises and sunsets, and one glorious full moon rise and moon set wind their way through my dreams. Picture-taking was sometimes a challenge because the water was rather murky from the weeks of preceding storms. I am making my way through the many pictures I did take, savoring the memories they hold for me, and hoping to develop a few images that might help share my experience with others.

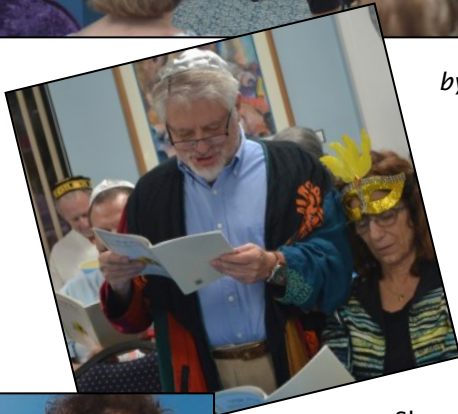
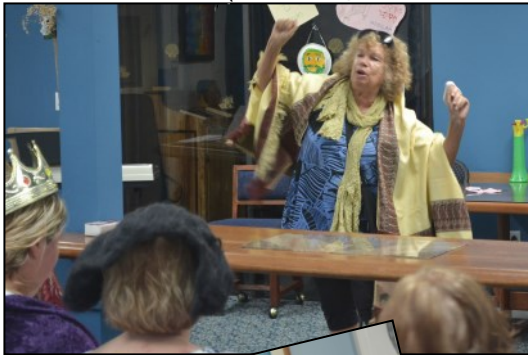
Even if you never encounter a whale, know that they are out there in the seas. They are curious about us. They are caring and generous and intelligent. They present us with many mysteries. They are spiritual creatures. ◇



Jan was able to capture this dramatic moment when the pectoral fins of both mother and calf simultaneously breached the surface.

Purim Revisited

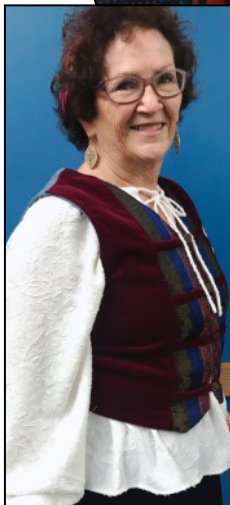
An Evening of Mitzvahs, Costumes, Laughter, Boos and Pizza



by Gloria Avner

It was a fine party. And 47 people, from age 4 to nearly 103, heeded the call to come and make *mitzvahs* – all four that the rabbis say we should complete. But before there were *mitzvot* (the correct Hebrew plural of *mitzvah*), the merrymaking had already begun. Sean showed up in a brand-new, full-body Black Panther costume. Masks were donned, shawls were turned into *kaffiyehs*, crowns were worn lightly or tossed to the ground. (Poor Vashti, the archetypal – and only recently fully appreciated – feminist.

She spoke naked truth to power and got the boot). Queen Vashti's rebellious refusal to bare her charms for royal guests may not have been appreciated by King Ahashueros, but the KJCC crowd loved it. Represented in song by Susan Gordon, accompanied by the accomplished Jules Seder on keyboard, Vashti brought the house down with a defiant cabaret song – sort of an ancient Persian version of "My Way" – and our own dynamic duo





Ah, Purim. Sort of the Jewish Mardi Gras. When costumes allow inhibitions and typical reserve to be “masked” and inner imps to emerge. But rabbis would not have smiled at the Dionysian revelry of Mardi Gras. And the Book of Esther is full of sober lessons and an underlying motif about wits and survival being connected. But still, the costumes are lots of fun...

set a wildly enthusiastic tone for the whole evening. Bring on the *groggers* (noisemakers) and stamping of feet; get Rachel Levine, chief Boo leader, to run back and forth along the Social Hall stage with her large lettered audience-guiding sign each time the name of the evil plotter against the Jews is mentioned (with occasional accompaniment by Maddy Bloom and Sean Kaufman, Boo-leaders in training).

But wait. Some serious stuff needed to happen first. After the singing, it was time to set our intent. Mitzvah number one: We would participate in round-robin reading, but most important, as the mitzvah actually commands, we would *listen* and hear the Book of Esther, every word, the *ganze megillah*. Bernie Ginsberg, in his Coat of Many Colors (okay, so we occasionally mix Biblical metaphors) set us on course, sharing the fact that this is the only one of our scroll-stories that does not once mention the name of God. (And yet, the sages tell us, God’s hand is working tirelessly behind the scenes throughout the story.) Ever the sharer of fun facts, Bernie pointed out, on the authentic parchment scroll gifted to us years ago by a friend of the Aglers, the tiny delicate crowns carefully inked on the top of every appearance of “*melech*” (the Hebrew word for King).

Joyce Peckman, early initiator of KJCC’s Megillah reading ritual, took charge of the round-robin reading, moving it smoothly through threat of annihilation to the eventual



triumph of Esther and Mordechai, ending with the complete humiliation of Haman (boo, hiss). Once again we were saved from extinction thanks to the wiles and wisdom of a strong and dedicated Jewish woman, who not only saved her own generation but also, incidentally, the future of her entire people.

With Mitzvah number one fulfilled honorably, we moved on to numbers two, three, and four. We shared a joyous meal of pizza, salads and delicious *ibberglebbibineh* (Yiddish for leftovers) thanks to the gustatory riches of the recent Advertisers dinner. We distributed *mishloach manot* (baskets of food for friends and neighbors – gratefully accepted by Linda Pollack and Donna Bolton, who had helped create them). Finally, we raised nearly \$500 for *tzedakah*, many times more than we have ever done before, and with the Board's approval we will divide that sum between the Sara Cohen Tzedakah Fund and the KJCC Tikkun Olam Fund.





As for the fifth commandment, the exhortation to drink so much alcohol that we can no longer distinguish “blessed be Mordechai” from “cursed be Haman,” we did not, alas, do so well, but we did manage to stay awake and have a wonderful time, fully enjoying Medina’s film selection for the evening, “A Matter of Size,” in which four decidedly overweight Israelis decide to spurn failed diets and turn a negative trait into a positive one: they train to become Sumo wrestlers. Part funny, mostly warm, with psychologically complex and engaging characters, the film made for a fitting end to a *mitzvah*-filled evening. Next year, let’s do our own *Purimspiel*. In the meantime you might want to borrow that film from our ever-expanding library of good entertainment choices.

Thank you to all the wonderful people who made this night happen: To Medi-



na Roy, for finding and presenting the film. To Sam Vinicur, for technical help and photography. To Nettie Seder for her unending helpfulness and masterful *hamantaschen*-making. To Jules Seder and Susan Gordon for rehearsals and fine performances. Big thanks to Marc and Rachael Bloom for getting the pizza to us despite logistical challenges, to Bernie and Joyce for their erudition, to Jane for her delicious cookery and garden contributions, and to all the people I haven’t named who wore masks, sang



along with songs, spun *groggers*, read their parts, helped clean up, and put money in the basket. Take a collective bow, you cast of 47 *mitzvah*-making souls. Same *simcha*, next year? ♦

- THIS MONTH IN JEWISH HISTORY -

APRIL

742 – Charlemagne, King of the Franks, is born, the son of Pepin the Short and grandson of Charles Martel (who had halted the Moorish invasion of western Europe at Tours in 732, confining their conquest to the Iberian Peninsula). The lands Charlemagne acquires become the basis of The Holy Roman Empire (which, despite its name, seldom includes territory in Italy during its 900-year reign). Resisting pressure from the Church, Charlemagne treats his Jewish subjects well and they play a prominent role in his realm.

1199 – King Richard I of England dies in France from an infection following removal of an arrow from his shoulder. (He was almost never in England, and in fact could not speak English.) Richard's death puts his brother John on the throne. John openly exploits his Jewish subjects. His tyranny and overall incompetence has the English barons force the *Magna Carta* upon him in 1215, several sections of which specifically discuss how to manage debts to Jews.

1453 – Mehmed II (sometimes called Muhammad II) begins his siege of Constantinople, the Christian Byzantine capital. After conquest it will be renamed Istanbul and become, until 1918, the Ottoman capital. Muslim rule greatly improves the lives of the city's Jews. Further, Mehmed actively solicits Jews living in Crete, Transylvania and Slovakia to relocate to Istanbul.

1609 – English navigator Henry Hudson sets sail from Amsterdam harbor. His sponsor, the Dutch East India Company, instructs him to sail east in search of a shorter passage to the Indies. Fortunately for Jewish history, Hudson ignores these instructions and sails west, seeking more glory in attempting to map the fabled Northwest Passage to the Orient. Exploring river systems he thinks might be the gateway, Hudson sails past what is now New

York City and up what we now know as the Hudson River, claiming all surrounding land for the Dutch. Because of this act of disobedience, the 23 Jews deposited in New Amsterdam in 1624 by the Dutch Navy arrive in a territory controlled by the comparatively tolerant Dutch as opposed to Catholic Spain or France, neither of which would likely allow Jews to stay. (Try, if you can, to imagine New York without Jews.)

1775 – Pope Pius VI issues the *Editto sopra gli ebrei* ("Edict Over the Hebrew"), a proclamation reinstating all former anti-Jewish legislation. The *Editto* prohibits, among other things, the possession of Talmudic writings, mandates death to Jews who pass the night outside the ghetto, prohibits Jews from selling bread and meat to Christians, and forbids any Christians from entering a synagogue. It remains in effect until the arrival of Napoleon's army 25 years later, which tears down ghetto walls everywhere it marches throughout Europe and in effect allows modern European Jewish life to begin.

1844 – A newspaper report states that a census conducted in Istanbul/Constantinople reveals 900,000 people living in the city. Over 11 percent, or some 100,000, are Jews.

1874 – Ehrich Weiss is born in Hungary. His family later settles in Appleton, Wisconsin, where Ehrich's father, Mayer Samuel Weiss, serves as rabbi of the Zion Reform Jewish Congregation. After losing his tenure, Mayer moves to New York City with Ehrich in 1887, where they live in a boarding house on East Seventy-Ninth Street. Ehrich Weiss will later become the most famous escape artist of all time, using the stage name Harry Houdini. The name "Harry" supposedly comes from a pet name for young Ehrich, *Ehrie* (which of course sounds a lot like the way one might say "Harry" through a Yiddish accent).

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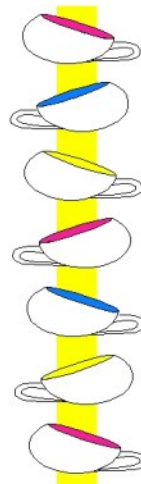
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1897 – Walter Winchell is born. The son of Jewish immigrants, Winchell leaves school at 13 to go into vaudeville, appearing with other Jewish beginners such as Eddie Cantor. Winchell's career then takes a different turn. He enters the world of journalism, where he invents the gossip column. At his peak, Winchell's column appears in 2,000 papers every day and his 1930s radio show is heard by 50 million. Winchell dies a much-diminished figure in 1972. However, he is another example of a Jew inventing something often considered uniquely American.

1903 – The Kishinev pogrom begins. The riot starts after a Russian Christian boy is found murdered. Though it is clear that a relative (later found) has killed the boy, the government chooses to call it a ritual murder plot by Jews. Mobs are incited by the editor of the anti-Semitic newspaper *Bessarabetz* and by the vice-governor, both using the age-old libel that Jews kill Christians to use their blood in preparation of matzoh. The Minister of Interior supposedly gives orders not to stop the rioters. At least forty-seven Jews are killed, with 92 severely wounded and 500 slightly wounded; over 700 houses are looted and destroyed. This pogrom is considered the first state-inspired action against Jews of the 20th century. Despite a world outcry, only two rioters are tried and sentenced. This pogrom is instrumental in convincing tens of thousands of Russian Jews to leave for the West or for the pioneering life in Palestine.

1904 – A thirteen-year-old Jewish girl and her mother arrive at the White House with a supply of matzoh. With her mother waiting in the anteroom, the girl walks into the president's office and presents the unleavened bread to Theodore Roosevelt. The president thanks the girl for the gift and compliments her on her tact and courtesy.

1909 – *HaShomer*, the first Jewish self-defense organization, is founded to protect Jewish settlements in Ottoman Palestine. Until *HaShomer*, local Arab militias are paid to protect farmers and others from marauding

bands. Early Zionists, providing their own farm labor, now decide to also provide their own protection. Arabs are not happy about this, an early example of how Zionists are resented not just for being Jewish, but also for failing to conform to corrupt local culture as well as reducing income from local Arab leaders. *HaShomer* is eventually absorbed into the *Haganah*, the Jewish defense force formed in the 1920s that becomes the foundation for Israel's IDF.

1914 – Paul Heyes, a native of Bonn and the first Jew to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, dies at the age of 84. Upon receiving the award in 1910, he is lauded for his “consummate artistry, permeated with idealism, which he has demonstrated during his long productive career as a lyric poet, dramatist, novelist and writer of world-renowned short stories.” One of the Nobel judges says “Germany has not had a greater literary genius since Goethe.” Jews love to *kvell* about their Nobel laureates, but today Heyes is virtually unknown.

1926 – *New York Times* correspondent T. Walter Williams writes that the American Zionist Commonwealth and the Palestine Securities Corporation are paying \$20 a *dunam* (quarter of an acre) to Arabs for land in Palestine and selling it to Jewish settlers for \$100 per *dunam*. Nice markup, yes, but also evidence that much land that will become the new Jewish state has already been legally purchased from Arabs.

1930 – Haile Selassie is proclaimed emperor of Ethiopia. His title includes the honorific “Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah,” a reference to the contention by Ethiopian rulers that they descend from a union between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

1948 – A ship from Yugoslavia docks at Tel Aviv. Hidden in the ship's cargo of potatoes and onions are 500 rifles, 200 machine guns and a large quantity of ammunition. Jewish dockworkers unload the vital supply of munitions and deliver them to the *Haganah* despite close scrutiny by the British. ◊

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE LAST HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR DIES?

Will Yom HaShoah Survive?

By Gloria Avner

Yom HaShoah, 2017. A group of KJCC friends and members of our Holocaust Committee traveled off the rock to hear Medina Roy's childhood friend, Professor Deborah Lipstadt, (Medina has the high school yearbook to prove it) talk at an Aventura synagogue about her internationally famous battle against Holocaust denial and its practitioners. She spoke of her six-year fight against David Irving, whom she had referred to in her seminal book "Denying the Holocaust" as a pre-eminent modern practitioner of Holocaust denial. He sued her for libel in British court; under British law she was then forced to prove that her assertions about him were correct. (In American courts the plaintiff has to prove their case, not the defendant.) We had seen the movie ("Denial," starring Rachel Weisz as Profes-



sor Lipstadt) and knew she had in the end been victorious, but what we heard that day about liars and twisters of truth, about neo-Nazis dressed up as rational researchers, made me concerned then, and even more so now, that these battles will become harder, nastier, better-funded, and, if possible, more viciously underhanded, when there are no living people with tattooed numbers on their wrinkled arms available to tell young teenagers and old politicians their hard-won stories of survival. One thing we all certainly learned from Deborah Lipstadt that day in Aventura as far as strategy in dealing with the new avalanche of Holocaust denial: whoever it is, whatever their supposed credentials, demand proof of what they say or write, hold their feet to the fire of truth, and resist manipulation.

Deborah laughed when she first heard the words Holocaust denier. Who could dispute the most well documented event in human history? Look how many people would have to be wrong? The millions of victims. The hundreds of thousands of witnesses and bystanders. And the perpetrators themselves, who though they may have said they had no choice, never said it didn't happen. So she, a Holocaust scholar and tenured professor at Emory University,

laughed at the phrase and thought that serious people would give it no time or consideration.

Ten years later she was asked to do research about the deniers. She laughed again, at first. She was eventually persuaded, did her research and wrote her book. Here is what she found: Today's deniers are wolves in sheep's clothing. They don't wear swastikas or give Hitler salutes – they parade as researchers, researchers who publish journals

of “historical review.” A new name has been invented. The name is not Nazi or Neo-Nazi. Or White Supremacist. The new word is “revisionist.” But one inch below the surface of revisionism is racism and rabid anti-Semitism, parading as rational discourse.

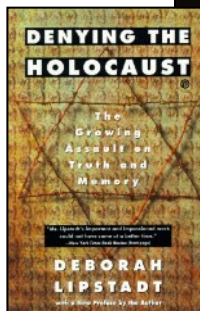
Professor Lipstadt knows, as we do, that there are such things as facts, opinions and lies. Deniers want to take lies and dress them up as opinions. Opinions can then encroach upon truth. She wrote her book outing David Irving as a Holocaust denier with facts. He then brought suit against her for libel.

She had the burden of proof. If she didn't fight he would have won by default and been able to say the Jews had made everything up with the aid of the Allies to get money from Germany. He would be able to say that Hitler caused no suffering and the Holocaust never happened.

After a long trial, the British court found Irving to be a liar, and agreed that he did all his lying deliberately. His evidence was distorted, facts were changed, and he did not prove what he wanted to prove. This Neo-Nazi polemicist had a dual objective: Blame the Jews. Exonerate the Nazis. He lost.

Meanwhile, Jewish life goes on. At KJCC, we will have our Yom HaShoah ceremony and observance as we do every year. Six people will be called up to light one of six large candles, each symbolizing one million of the souls lost in HaShoah, murdered by perpetrators of the Holocaust. We will have our own survivor, Gunther Karger, light one of the candles. In Aventura that day one year ago, some survivors were helped to the stage with their canes and walkers. Others came in wheelchairs, pushed up a ramp by their children and grandchildren. The multiple generations crowding the stage were a moving, impressive testament to and metaphor of survival and resilience as well as truth. Our friends at the Aventura shul will also have a memorial service, though perhaps with fewer survivors this year.

I was listening to a Ted Talk today when I



"There are facts, there are opinions, and there are lies," says historian Deborah Lipstadt. Scholarship often necessitates bravery, as she proved when she publicly confronted Holocaust denier David Irving.

heard a familiar voice say, "Truth and fact are under assault." Ah, Deborah. She went on to warn that social media, for all benefits, has allowed the difference between established fact and outright lies to be flattened. There are no burning crosses visible or hate-filled signs held aloft, but the same extremism parading as national discourse is expanding its reach.

What can we do? Not be beguiled by rational appearance, says Deborah. When someone makes an outrageous claim, no matter how high the office or how loud the voice, she says, we must demand proof. Go on the offensive; do not be defensive. We must ask, "Where is the evidence?" Indisputable facts exist. Galileo knew that the earth moves around the sun. Even though he was forced to recant by the Vatican, he still is purported to have said afterwards "and yet it moves." The earth is not flat. The climate is changing. Truth is not relative.

So that the lessons of Yom HaShoah survive beyond the lives of its last survivors, we remember and honor our dead with regular ceremony. We must also balance prayer and ritual with action, paying close attention to Professor Deborah Lipstadt's exhortation with which she ends her talk: "The truth is under assault. The time to act is now. Later will be too late." ◇

- 15th Annual Women's Seder -

Honoring Joyce Peckman

As you are reading this overview of our fifteenth Annual Women's Seder, we, as a congregation, are looking back not at one, but three Passover seders. Photos of ceremony, merriment and camaraderie among friends and KJCC mishpocha at all three of our seders will adorn the pages of May Chai-Lights. For now, we are happy to share the most moving moments of the March 18th event in these pages as we get ready to go to press, filled with gratitude for a lovely and meaningful evening. Not only did all women give generously to the three charities named in Susan Gordon's Sisterhood Column, but we truly delighted in honoring Joyce Peckman as 5778's "Woman of the Year." Susan Ellner's delightful story-filled speech brought us to tears as well as laughter. Having three generations of Peckmans present to celebrate, and granddaughter Michal to chant the Four Questions, was a unique experience for us.

Big kudos to Erica Lieberman-Garrett and her team of committed workers for organizing the food, creating nameplates for us (thank you Donna Bolton) and arranging the room so that the 45 attendees felt as comfortable as if we were sitting at one big dinner table. We loved using and hearing the personal stories of the eight seder plates. Much appreciation to Sharon Silva, owner of The UPS Store for her work with Susan Gordon and Beth Hayden to produce a beautiful, functional new Haggadah for us, free of charge. To Terry Tainow, thanks for stepping up and working with Marcia Kreitman to create the honoree banner as Joyce Peckman joins the legion of productive inspiring women named artistically on



the textile that hangs proudly in our hallway leading in to the room in which we celebrate *mitzvahs* and *chagim*. We are sorry Susan Gordon was too ill to join us but grateful to her for spearheading so well this memorable event. ♦



- 15th Annual Women's Seder -

Every year at the KJCC Women's Seder, we honor a woman from our congregation who has made an impact on us, Judaism and our community; at the same time we also honor an outstanding impactful woman from History. This year our Woman of the Year from the congregation is Joyce Peckman. It seems very fitting that Joyce, who often writes about and presents the honoree from history at our Women's Seder, has chosen a woman with whom she shares many qualities, those of a quiet, hardworking, dedicated and humble teacher.

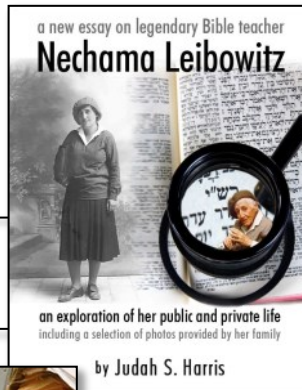
Nehama Leibowitz **Our Honoree from History**

by Joyce Peckman

Nehama Leibowitz was born in 1905 in Riga, Latvia, and grew up in a home filled with culture. She was brought up in complete intellectual equality with her brother, competing in their father's Bible quizzes. In 1919 the family moved to Berlin, where she taught, wrote articles and studied for her doctorate. She married her uncle, Lipman Leibowitz, who was many years her senior, and on the day in 1930 that she finished her doctorate in Bible Studies, they fulfilled their dream and moved to Israel. She was an excellent teacher and traveled around Israel on buses, taxis and airplanes teaching Bible and commentaries to teachers, new immigrants, soldiers, kibbutzniks and thousands of ordinary people. In 1942, some of her students decided that they wanted to continue studying her material even after the



school year had ended. So Nehama Leibowitz began mailing them her worksheets, adding challenging questions, and checking every answer. Word spread to friends and neighbors, who also wished to fill out these sheets. Eventually the correspondents ran into the thousands: young and old, religious and secular, kibbutzniks and city-dwellers.



Nehama Leibowitz functioned as a one-woman Open University Bible correspondence course for over thirty years. In 1957 she began lecturing at Tel Aviv University and became a full professor eleven years later. She also gave classes at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and other educational institutions around the country. In addition to her writings, Leibowitz commented regularly for the Voice of Israel radio station.

She, and her students after her, revolutionized the world of Torah study; today, Leibowitz's question, "What's Rashi's difficulty?" is heard in every Yeshiva and Hebrew School, as is her method encouraging comparison and evaluation of commentaries.

However, Nehama, always the educator, was not satisfied with comparing and contrasting; she always emphasized a moral message from the study. Most medieval rabbis had written that Shifra and Puah, the midwives described in the Exodus story, were actually other names for Zipporah and Miriam, mother and sister of Moses. It is Nehama's teaching about the Egyptian midwives, taken from Maimonides, that we in-

- 15th Annual Women's Seder -

clude in our Women's Haggadah. She wrote: "Neither moral courage nor sheer wickedness are ethnically or nationally determined qualities."

She was a passionate Zionist and refused to leave Israel even when offered large sums of money to lecture abroad. Nehama Leibowitz's modesty and humility were legendary.

She insisted that everyone call her "Nehama" and refused to let newspapers interview her or to allow people to come simply in order to meet her, declaring, "I am not a museum!" She lived a very simple life, with little physical comfort. Famously, she gave a beggar a brand-new suit she had just bought herself. When challenged as to why, she responded, "Should I give him old and worn clothes?"

Nehama was very close to feminists such as Blu Greenberg, but opposed the ideas of secular feminism and the feminist movement. While she spoke up for equal pay and rights for women, Nehama did not want to change the balance of designated gender roles within traditional Jewish society. Yet her unique achievements changed Orthodox society's perception of a woman's capabilities and opened doors for the female Torah scholars who followed.

Nehama passed on in 1997. In accordance with her request, on her

gravestone was written only "Nehama Leibowitz: Teacher." To this day, she is still "teaching" Torah through her books, her methods and her students, many of whom are prominent teachers and rabbis in all branches of the Jewish world. ◇

Notes about a life **KJCC's Woman of the Year, Joyce Peckman**

She grew up the elder of two sisters, first in Jamaica, Queens, and then in Valley Stream NY, so close to Jewish Community Centers that she didn't need a parent to take her. They became her second home. Her mom was wise enough to send her to Hebrew school and so she was the little child singing Ein Keloheinu on the bimah, then eventually leading Junior congregation. When she was 14 years old, the Hebrew school sent her to the United Synagogue Bible contest, where she became a national finalist. It was just about then, that her mother began her fight with breast cancer. In those days, no one spoke the C word, and nobody told her two daughters what was happening. When Joyce was 19, an education major at Queens College, her mother passed away.

A year later, her dad married Edna, a lovely woman with two younger children. Two years after that, she graduated and went with a group of volunteers to Israel, on one of the first flights after the Six Day War. She spent three months at Kibbutz Yad Mordechai on the Gaza border, picking fruit and learning Hebrew in their immersion Ulpan program. She was sent to Ashdod, now a bustling city



- 15th Annual Women's Seder -

filled with art and culture; but in 1967 it was a port town with one main street, a few stores, some small areas of middle class homes, and brand-new housing projects built into the sand: bare-bones four story walk-ups that were being filled with poor North African immigrants. They put her in one of those apartments with two other young women volunteers and made her a teacher's assistant in an elementary school. Her high school French and very basic Hebrew helped her communicate with the young students on their level. It also helped her meet Israelis, one of whom, Margalit, was a teacher from Morocco with a brother in the paratroops. Her brother was the reason she stayed in Israel for two more years and learned to speak Hebrew.

When she decided she did not see a permanent life for herself there, she came back, and in 1972 married Leslie, a math teacher and guidance counselor. They honeymooned in a tent in the Florida Keys, and every Christmas vacation the two educators came back. Soon it was in a motor home with two sons and a dog. They eventually bought property here which would become her home after retirement. Joyce became a resource room teacher and worked with special needs students. In summers, it was time to get on the road in the camper, buy and sell antiques and have adventures with the family. The boys grew up and married lovely young women. Dan and Guisela worked in the Yeshiva and day school in Denver, where they raised Eliana, Yosef and Michal. Joyce was thrilled when this August they moved to Hollywood, Florida. Keith and Rebecca live in New Jersey, with now 9-year-old Libby and 4-year-old twins Isaac and Addie.

When in 2003, Joyce first arrived at KJCC and joined our Synagogue with Leslie, it became quickly obvious that these were people who would have a lot to contribute. Joyce came across as quiet but strong, knowledgeable

about Judaism, generous with her time, helpful and dependable. The first Purim after they joined us, Joyce and Leslie, somewhat horrified that we did not make a practice of reading the *ganze megillah*, presented us with a set of books and a request that we get started. We did. They brought the four mitzvahs to us. There were eight of us around the table the first year. We lost Leslie way too soon, just a year after they became part of us. But the Purim celebration lives on and keeps growing. It did not take long to discover this quietly strong small person's other gifts. She became a key member of Yardena's Thursday night Ulpan group. She became a substitute Sunday School teacher. She became President of Sisterhood and honed her leadership skills. She

became a key figure in all Ritual Committee programming and a respected leader of services. She wrote articles for Chai-Lights and when it looked like Chai-Lights was going to cease to be, she volunteered to keep it going. For several years she volunteered at Pennekamp State Park and at Mariners' Hospital. Her love of music led her to offer to help when one Upper Keys concert producing

group was foundering and a new one was trying to take shape. She stuck with it, was the major force behind its successful continuity, and now is President of the Florida Keys Concert Association.

Two years ago, this unassuming humble person, quick to give rides to persons no longer driving, quick to offer help to centenarians in need, quick to offer her house for a Havdalah or movie night, and to volunteer a delicious fish dish for a dairy dinner, was awarded the Joel Cohen award for Outstanding service to KJCC and the Jewish Community at large. She deserved it, and she deserves this. I love the way Erica put it, "I couldn't believe it, that Joyce had not been given this honor before. I had to go and look at the banner very carefully. She belongs there." ◇

"I couldn't believe it, that Joyce had not been given this honor before. I had to go and look at the banner very carefully. She belongs there."



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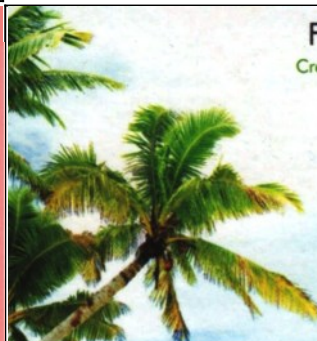
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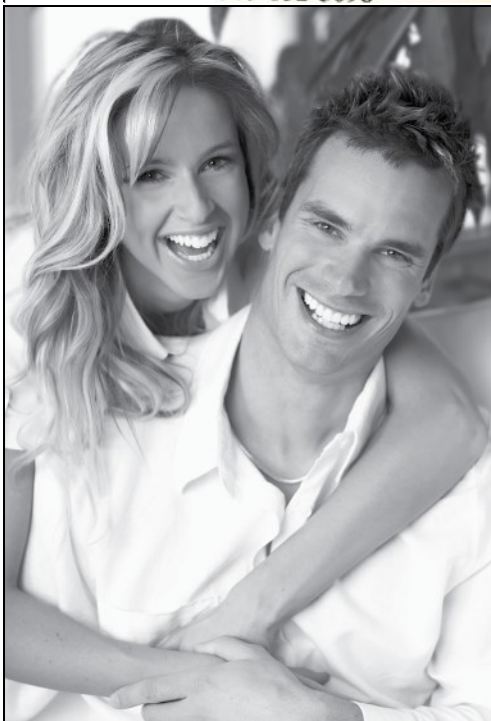
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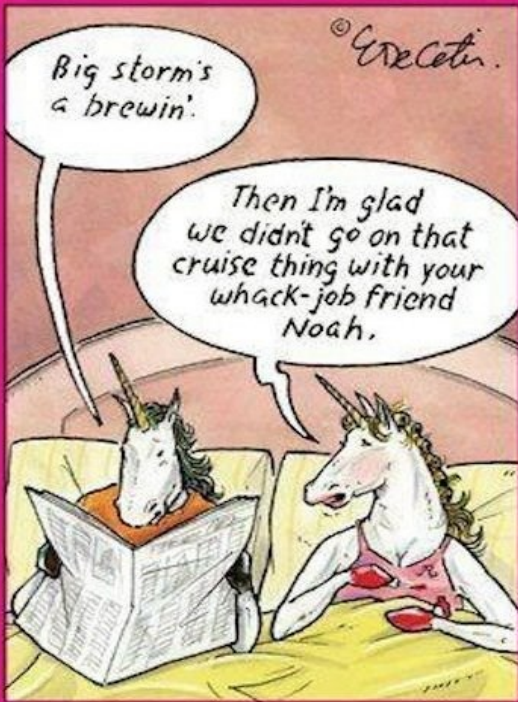
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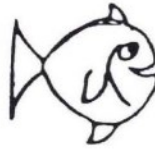
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