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Exit interview

Councilman Simcha Felder leaves on top

By Michael Orbach

Before he announced that he would be resigning from his position as City Councilman of the 44th District to become Deputy Comptroller of New York City, Simcha Felder posed a question to his family, his friends, and to rabbis in Brooklyn with whom he is close: Could he leave a position to which he was just voted in for a third time?

"There was a consensus of all those I spoke to — if I was leaving government to go to private industry that would not be right, because I just asked people to vote for me and they elected me with no opposition," Felder related on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 31, in his last official day as a member of the New York City Council. "But since I would be going to a position city-wide where I would hopefully be able to do good, not only for the community but the city as a whole, it was a rare opportunity for a frum person to make a kiddush Hashem and they encouraged me to do it."

Felder set one condition in order to be interviewed for this article: it would need to take place before Felder left office and took up his new position. Over the phone, Felder apologized in a nasal voice, saying he had been suffering from a cold and was trying to get over it.

Felder, while not the only Orthodox Jew currently serving on the New York City Council, is the only member in Council history to have been educated at the chassidische Karlin Stoliner yeshiva. His district includes the heavily frum neighborhoods of Borough Park, Midwood and Bensonhurst. Two months into his third term, which he was able to seek after Mayor Michael Bloomberg successfully put an end to term limits, and after losing an election for state senate, Felder announced he would be resigning to join the team of
Continued on page 3

Frum & female, but a rabbi?

Agudah welcomes new title for controversial clergywoman

By Mayer Fertig

After years of beating around the bush, Rabbi Avi Weiss came right out this past week and said what everyone assumed he's been thinking all along: Sara Hurwitz, the woman he has mentored and trained to function as an Orthodox cleric is, in his view, an Orthodox rabbi.

Rabbi Weiss of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, who founded both Yeshivat Chovevei Torah (for men) and Yeshivat Mahara"t (for women), announced that after a year-long trial run for Hurwitz with the title "Mahara"t" — an acronym for Manhiga Hilchatit Ruchanit Toranit — she will henceforth be known by a more familiar-sounding title: "Rabbah."

"This will make it clear to everyone that Sara Hurwitz is a full member of our rabbinic staff, a rabbi with the additional quality of a distinct woman's voice," Rabbi Weiss explained.

"Over this past year, I have, on numerous occasions, in talks and symposia around the country, said as clearly as I could that Mahara"t means rabbi, and that Sara Hurwitz has received semicha. Having studied the same curriculum as any man would study for ordination, she has achieved this goal."

But outside of his shul in Riverdale, the title of Mahara"t wasn't really working, Rabbi Weiss indicated.

"When Sara Hurwitz has officiated at funerals or visited hospitals or when the title Mahara"t appears in news-

Continued on page 3



Photo by Karsten Moran

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Inside
THE JEWISH STAR

Classified Ads	22
Editorial	16
I'm Thinking	13
Crossword	26
Kosher Bookworm	20
Letters to the Editor	16
On the Calendar	6-8
Opinion	12-16
Parsha	11
Slice of Life	18
Sports	17
The Other Side of the Bench	15
That's Life	26

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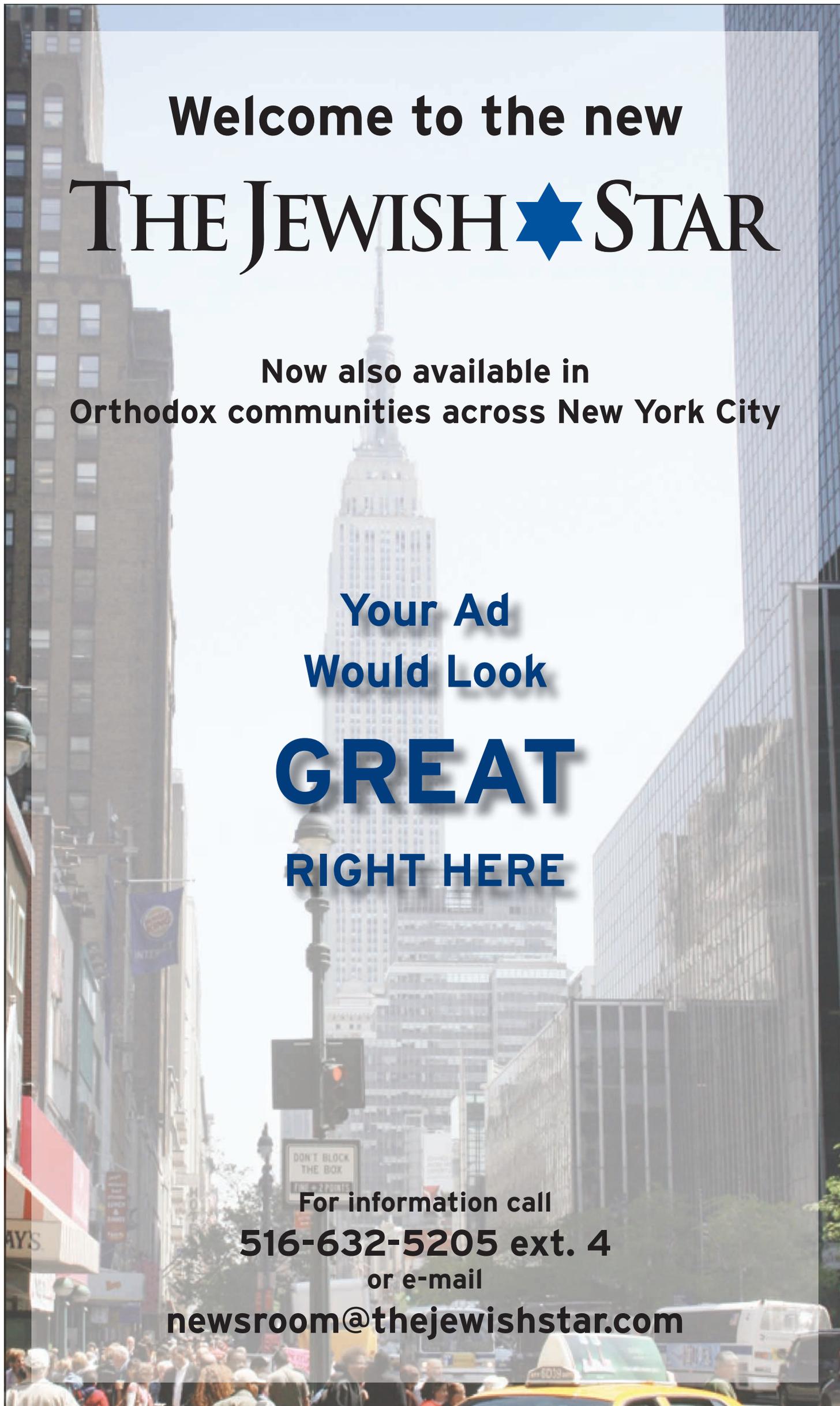
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Frum & female, but a rabbi?

Continued from page 1

papers, it has not resonated. Moreover, at times the term Mahara't has been used inappropriately in a disrespectful way," he said.

The announcement was met with approval from Rabbi Avi Shafran, a spokesman for Agudath Israel of America, though perhaps not for the reason Rabbi Weiss might have been looking for.

"It is laudable that the disingenuous title has been abandoned, the new one better reflects the intention of its conferrers. Now it would be good for them to come clean, too, about what the entire venture really is: an essential break with the mesorah of Klal Yisrael," Rabbi Shafran said.

"It saddens me when people accuse me of being the cause of a potential split in the community," Hurwitz, 33, told The Jewish Star, but "the community has a lot of problems; I'm not going to wear that on my shoulders."

The Rabbinical Council of America and a number of individual congregational rabbis declined to comment.

"You can't change people's minds in a day," said Hurwitz. "And what's going to change their minds is facts on the ground, and what I mean by that is having competent, talented people serving the community."

More women like her, studying for the equivalent of the rabbinic ordination known as Yoreh Yoreh, are preparing to join her.

"I don't think anything I'm doing is outside the boundaries of halacha," she stressed. The more advanced semicha, "Yadin yadin is a little more controversial because women are not supposed to be judges or witnesses. It's a little more halachically complicated."

"I'm pretty traditional," Hurwitz admitted drolly with a faint South African accent. "I know halacha. I keep halacha very carefully. I have tremendous emunah. I can't convince

somebody else that I really am Orthodox and that Rabbi Weiss is really Orthodox. The only way is for somebody to realize it themselves. And they'll realize it."

"All I'm doing is teaching Torah. Learning Torah. Helping people in their difficult times and their happiest times; and through Yeshiva Maharat I'm helping others learn to do the same."

"In four more years we'll have four more women out there, acting as rabbis. And the community that's to the right of us will see that having women who are talented, sensitive clergy will be a boon to the community. But that takes time," Hurwitz said.

Whether her title is Mahara't or Rabbah, "My job description is rabbi. I don't care what people call me. Although a title does help me function. When I'm describing my role, in order to help people understand what I do, I call myself 'rabbi.' I'm doing a funeral in a

little bit - and when you're dealing with the funeral home, the medical examiner's office, the hospital, you don't really get anywhere if you start to explain, 'Well, there aren't really female Orthodox rabbis' - it's just easier. Rabbi is a one-word description of my job responsibilities and it conveys what I'm there to do."

Can she envision a future where, despite not being counted for a minyan, and so forth, a woman could function as the head of an Orthodox congregation?

"It's possible. We've struck quite a nice model right now. I work side by side with Rabbi Steven Exler," The Hebrew Institute of Riverdale's Associate Rabbi, "Rabbi Weiss isn't really involved in the day-to-day functioning of the shul. In terms of job responsibilities, we split everything down the middle. Co-rabbinic positions: the wave of the future."

Councilman Simcha Felder leaves office on top

Continued from page 1

New York City Comptroller John Liu.

"I'm supposed to say something to make people curious like when John Liu runs for mayor, I'll run for comptroller, but I won't say that," Felder explained. "It's a possibility. I'm not thinking that; I'm thinking about starting at eight and figuring out how to make it through the day."

As deputy comptroller he will oversee the city budget, putting to use his training as a Certified Public Accountant. Prior to being a council member, Felder was a tax auditor for the city, auditing large corporations like IBM and Johnson & Johnson. He also taught business management at Touro and Brooklyn College.

Sharon Lee, a spokesperson for Comptroller Liu, said that Felder was picked for the "wealth of experience that he brings from both his City Council service and his previous tenure in the Comptroller's Office..." and his being "invaluable in working out solutions in our tough economic environment."

The switch marks the end of Felder's colorful tenure in the City Council, which he managed with equal parts political savvy, sagacity and being a yente. In one example, Felder supported Christine Quinn, an openly gay woman, for speaker, though for religious reasons he felt it necessary to abstain from the actual vote. He solved the problem by leaving the council chamber to go the bathroom during the balloting.

In an hour-long interview only interrupted when one of his daughters entered his kitchen (Felder does not discuss his family publicly; only to say that he has three daughters and one son, and two grandchildren), Felder looked back at his years in office with pride, focusing mainly on the small improvements he was able to make in the lives of his constituents, like changing garbage truck routes to ease traffic congestion in Borough Park, passing legislation against dumping leaflets and menus on city doorsteps, and providing funding to parks and playgrounds in his neighborhood.

"I would say I love slush, every flavor," Felder explained. "What people criticize as slush is the engine that allows government to help in areas which would never ever get the help. Parks, libraries, organizations like Tomchei Shabbos, Hatzalah, Ohel, [and] Chai Lifeline."

One single accomplishment stands out in Felder's mind. As a freshman councilman he was surprised to find that council meetings didn't begin with the pledge of allegiance. When he sought to make the pledge of alle-

Setting a good example: during his years in office Simcha Felder was notable, time and time again, for reflecting well on the Orthodox community with good humor and by being a mentch.



Photo by Claudio Papapietro

giance mandatory at all meetings, the then-speaker initially demurred.

"I said I'm going to do it at every single meeting until you give me a commitment to make it part of the meetings," Felder recalled. The speaker relented and asked him for a month to make the change. "To this day, every stated meeting they pledge allegiance to the flag of America. I don't like taking credit for things, but I'm delighted to take credit for that. It may be symbolic but I don't have to announce I'm Jewish when I enter a room. I have a yarmulke and somewhat of a beard, so the very fact that an Orthodox Jew feels strongly about this country, and it's public, was a highlight."

He also pushed and succeeded in having a flagpole placed on Foster Avenue at a heavily trafficked entry point to Borough Park.

"The community should have an American flag right at the entrance to show how much we appreciate living in this wonderful country and the freedom it affords us," Felder said. "That gives me real nachas."

A recent controversy involved a five-minute grace period on parking meter tickets which the City Council passed over Mayor Michael Bloomberg's veto. Felder answered the concern over how the city would make up the lost revenue with typical plain spoken logic.

"It's a good question, but I don't care," he said. "What do I mean? Of course the city needs money, but if the city states this is a tax. like a real estate tax. a tax called ticket-

ing, this is another story. The purpose of the ticket in the city is not to raise revenue but to encourage compliance. If that's the case then you don't drive people nuts."

Close to 300,000 of all parking tickets given out in New York City are given in the five minutes immediately after the meter runs out.

"Could be likened to vultures waiting, which is crazy," Felder said.

He praised Mayor Bloomberg with a Yiddish word, punctlich, which he said meant "efficient."

"Everything has to be where it should be. He's very focused and there's nothing that he won't really do himself. For example, I once saw him bend down in the bullpen [in his City Hall office] to fix some wires himself."

Felder had a much publicized falling out with Assemblyman Dov Hikind, a Brooklyn Democrat, who supported Kevin Parker over Felder in the State Senate election. Felder was once Hikind's chief of staff. About Hikind, Felder said:

"Let me tell you, before I got elected, I consulted with a rebbe I had in Israel and he told me if I run for office and succeed, I should make sure to focus on two things: one is make sure that I spend my energy and time serving my constituents with local problems, and [the other is to] not try to be the prime minister of Israel." The latter was clearly a reference to Hikind's penchant for public statements regarding events in Israel, far from his elected district.

Reached for comment about Hikind's departure from the city council, Hikind was generous.

"As far [Felder's] eight years in office, he was extremely dedicated, totally devoted to the community to make a difference, just like the period when he was my chief of staff. He was very serious about his job; he tried to make a difference and was straightforward with people. He was a public servant and he'll do very well where's he going," Hikind said.

The split has been highlighted with the race for Felder's seat [see page 4]. Hikind has endorsed community activist Joe Lazar, a former Regional Director of the New York State Office of Mental Health, while Felder is pictured with David Greenfield, a figure behind Teach NYS. During the interview Felder declined to speak about the upcoming special election to be held on March 23.

"Some have said that the community should be united in favor of one candidate, I will say there's absolutely no conceivable rationale for anyone to say that the community has to be united for a particular candidate," he stated.

"When you talk about a statewide election, the community should be united to show strength, but in the community itself we're talking about, there are capable people who are running. It's not good and evil, I don't see that, and I think this is a democracy and that's what's good about living in this community. The candidates offer different strengths to the community and the community is smart enough to choose someone who will be a good advocate on their behalf. Us, politicians, are sometimes delusional to think we have control [over] what the community does when it comes to elections."

One thing Felder says he won't miss is the "lack of privacy" that comes from being a public official.

"Today I was in shul for Maariv and somebody started talking to me about issue. If it's a matter of life and death then there is nothing sacred, but it wasn't. I don't think I'm going to miss that," he reflected.

Felder grew up a few blocks from where he currently lives and has spent most of his life with his constituents. Felder's father, who was the rabbi of a small shul in Borough Park, passed away last year and Felder finished saying kaddish during the week before he took up his new position.

"My father was a special person," Felder said, "His yahrtzeit is Purim. Someone said, seriously or kidding, that my father wanted to take care of me getting a real job before the year ended."

Dishing dirt: race for Felder's seat becomes nasty

By Mayer Fertig

A candidate for the still-warm New York City Council seat vacated on Monday by Simcha Felder has had an embarrassing setback. Joe Lazar said he doesn't know why State Senator Kevin Parker now denies endorsing him.

"I spoke to Kevin last Thursday and thanked him for his endorsement and as far as I knew he was on board. I don't know what may or may not have changed," Lazar told The Jewish Star. He hopes to meet with Parker in the near future, he added.

Lazar and at least three other candidates are running for the 44th Council District, covering Borough Park, and parts of Flatbush, Kensington and Bensonhurst.

Other candidates include David Greenfield, who is perhaps best known for leading the grassroots TEACH NYS effort to obtain more state aid for private schools; tax attorney Nachman Caller, and Jonathan Judge, president of the Brooklyn Young Republican Club.

Former State Senator Seymour Lachman told the Daily News on Wednesday that he would not enter the race; late last week, former Councilman Noach Dear, now a judge, told The Jewish Star he would not run.

Parker's now-you-see-it-now-you-don't endorsement became public knowledge when theyeshivaworld.com, an influential website that covers news of Orthodox interest, published a letter from Parker denying that he had taken sides.

Later the website reported that only four of a dozen or so community leaders shown with Lazar in a picture released by his campaign were, in fact, endorsing him.

"Three were insistent that this was no



Courtesy www.theyeshivaworld.com

(l-r) Rabbi Yaakov Landau (Mosdos Satmar), Rabbi Shlomo Braun (Aleh and Sen. Marty Golden's office), Sol Werdiger, Shmuel Lefkowitz (Agudath Yisroel), Dov Hikind, Joe Lazar, Rabbi Mayer Weinberger (Chasam Sofer), Naftali Klagsborn (Mosdos Satmar), Rabbi Chaim Garfinkel (Yeshiva Yagdil Torah administrator - Ger), Rabbi Yechiel Kaufman (Sefardishe Shul and Boro Park JCC), Menachem Garfinkel (Yagdil Torah - Ger), Zalman Leib Gombo (Pupa)

endorsement and they were simply asked to take a photo and were shocked when it was attached to a press release implying their endorsement," the website said. "Two refused to comment and two more were unavailable to confirm or deny."

Lazar denied the later report was true and tried to cast doubt on the website's veracity.

"I don't believe in responding to negative publicity that is unfounded. I think Yeshiva World is coming out with piece after piece that is lies and I'm just not going to respond to lies. You will see whether I do or do not have that support and that's all I'm going to say."

Through his campaign manager, Nachman Caller declined to comment. In a telephone interview, Greenfield, who is on leave from his job as executive director of the Sephardic

Community Federation, sought to focus on his own efforts.

"I can't speak to how Joe Lazar is running his campaign, he said. "All I can tell you is that we're proud of the support we have."

One important endorsement Lazar has is that of State Senator Dov Hikind. He has been using the pulpit of his weekly radio program to proclaim his support for Lazar, whom he has known for 30 years, and to attack Greenfield, who once worked as his chief of staff, and the Yeshiva World website, which has come out for Greenfield.

On the Jan. 23 broadcast, Hikind and his co-host, his longtime aide Charnie Shochet, shared this exchange:

Hikind: "The race is unfolding. Everyone is going to get an opportunity to listen to the

candidates. It's very easy to make claims that you have already saved the world."

Shochet: "They call that the messiah complex, don't they?"

Minutes later:

Hikind: "and there's one particular blog, almost like a hate blog."

Shochet: "Blogs are supposed to be fair and honest, it's painful to watch this become manipulated by an entity."

Hikind: "There's one particular blog that's disgusting. I think people know who it is, I'm not gonna mention it."

A week earlier, on the Jan. 16 program, Hikind said, apparently about Greenfield, "There are people out there who run for office who take credit for everything in the world and I don't respect people like that ... some people just make these claims that are unbelievable. There's one guy running who claims all these things he did in Albany - two years ago I never saw him there. Not once."

The race has "unfortunately gotten rather nasty very early and I think the level of nastiness and negativity is bad for the community as a whole," said Michael Fragin, once an aide to Governor George Pataki and Mayor Michael Bloomberg. "Somebody is going to win the race and it's important for everybody to be able to live and work together after its over."

Lazar said he doesn't see any dirt coming out of his campaign or from his chief sponsor, Assemblyman Hikind.

"I have not seen any dirt come out of our campaign. If you see any I would like to respond to it. I don't like dirt. I won't put dirt out and I don't know of any dirt that Dov has put out there. I don't believe he has done anything negative."

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Intel finalist Joshua Pfeffer's big finish

By Sammy Steiner

Last summer, Joshua Pfeffer tried every night to explain the first line of his mathematical research paper to his mom and dad. It's not exactly clear if he succeeded, but someone else understood the value of what Joshua was up to: The Intel International Science and Engineering Fair recently notified Joshua of his acceptance as a finalist in this year's competition. Pfeffer, who lives in Plainview, is a senior at North Shore Hebrew Academy High School in Great Neck,

His project, entitled "Super Kähler-Ricci Flow," focuses on topology, space, and theoretical mathematics to generalize about the place of supermanifolds in string theory (are you following along, so far?). String theory, in case you'd like just a little more information, can be described as a theory about the functionality of the universe (still with us?). Pfeffer pursued this area of mathematics because, "I've been drawn to topology and theoretical mathematics because of their elegance and simplicity."

Pfeffer began his research at SUNY-Stony Brook over the summer. With the aid of a mentor in theoretical mathematics, Professor Martin Rocek, he spent many hours in a math library researching the literature and advancing his project.

"I've always dreamed of entering this world where you can develop your own ideas, create something new, and talk about them with other mathematicians," Joshua

said. However, Professor Rocek attended a math conference and was away for about half the summer, leaving Pfeffer alone to tackle much of the work on his own. "It was like working as a PhD. student in a lab," Pfeffer described.

Pfeffer submitted the Intel contest application by November 15th, he found out that he made it to the semifinals in mid-January, and he was notified about a week ago that he was a finalist.

As a ninth grader in 2007 Joshua came in second in the national Chidon Ha'Tanach

The competition will be held in Washington from March 11-16, where the fortyfinalists will gather to present their research to the judges as well as display them for public exhibitions. Joshua is also excited because, "We will also get a chance to meet the President."

Pfeffer has competed in academic competitions since the beginning of high school; as a ninth grader in 2007 he came in second in the national Chidon Ha'Tanach.

Mathematic has always been his passion. In tenth grade, Pfeffer placed second in the

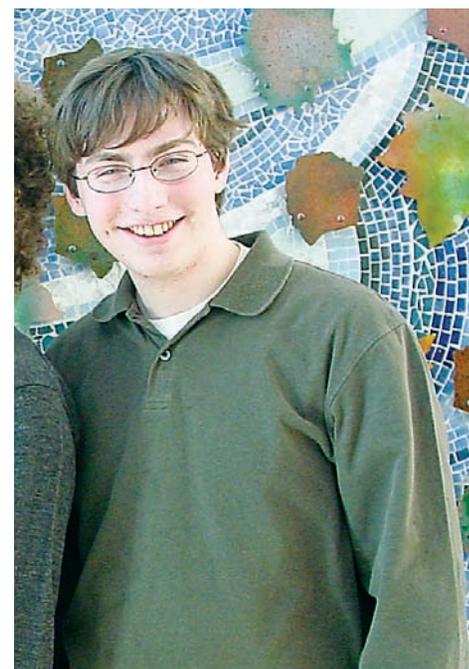
USA Mathematical Olympiad. He is one of a few, if not the only, shomer Shabbat students to attend the USA Mathematical Olympiad Summer program, a 3-4 week intensive program in advanced problem solving, in Nebraska, the following summer. Earlier this year, Pfeffer was a regional finalist in the 2009-2010 Siemens Competition in Math, Science, and Technology with the same project he will exhibit in the Intel Competition. He is currently a National Merit and Presidential Scholar candidate.

"Baruch Hashem, through his own abilities and hard work, our son Joshua has achieved the greatest success in his study of mathematics," said Joshua's parents, Daniel and Mindy Pfeffer. "Every night last summer Joshua tried to explain the first sentence of his research paper to us as we were eating dinner; it is a tribute to him that he never gave up. We are deeply indebted to Dr. Daniel Vitow and the teachers at North Shore Hebrew Academy High School for their excellent education and support."

Sarah Ditchek, Pfeffer's classmate who also was an Intel semifinalist, said she was "thrilled to hear Josh won."

"He definitely deserves it. He's a mathematical genius! Not only that but he puts 1000% effort and attention into everything that he does, and he excels at everything that he does," she said.

Pfeffer is unsure of his plans for next year, but in the long run, he would like to continue down the path to study theoretical



mathematics in college and ultimately go on to a career in mathematical research. "It's a hard process but you work hard and earn the respect of the professors and it is really satisfying in the end."

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ON THE Calendar

Feb. 6

Casino Night

THE JCC OF THE GREATER FIVE TOWNS, located at 207 Grove Ave. in Cedarhurst, has scheduled "Casino Night," beginning at 8 p.m., at the Lawrence Village Country Club, located at 101 Causeway Rd. in Lawrence. For further information and/or reservations please call the JCC office at 6516-569-6733.

Feb. 7

Blood drive

CONGREGATION ANSHEI CHESED will host a blood drive from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Hollander Early Childhood Center, located at 413 Serena Road in Hewlett. For more information please contact Pam Bluth 295-0947. Walk-ins welcome.

Book Discussion

THE SEPHARDIC CONGREGATION OF LONG BEACH located at Lafayette Blvd. and Penn St, will be hosting a book discussion of Gerald Brooks' People of the Book led by Sandra Sustain at 7 p.m. Sustain will be talking about the novel and the real story behind the Sarajevo Haggadah. This is the perfect book for anyone interested in Sephardic history and culture. Whether you've read the book or not, you're welcome to join in to learn about this little known treasure of the Jewish people.

A DVD will be shown and handouts will be given to enhance your Passover Seder. Coffee and cake will be served. For more information call (516)-889-5923.

Celebrating a new home

KEHILLAS BAIS YEHUDA TZVI will be holding a Chanukat Habayit to celebrate the completion of its new building at 395 Oakland Avenue in Cedarhurst. The event will begin at 1:30 p.m., with dancing in the street from the shul's temporary home next door into the new building. A program in the new building led by Rabbi Yaakov Feitman, rav of Kehillas Bais Yehuda Tzvi, will follow the dancing. A children's program is planned as well. The festivities will conclude at 3:30 p.m. For more information visit www.kbyt.org.

A cappella concert

MAGEVET, which bills itself as the premier Jewish Hebrew and Israeli a cappella group of Yale University will be giving a benefit concert at Temple Hillel of North Woodmere, located at 1000 Rosedale Road, Woodmere, at 1 p.m. The concert



Chabad of the Five Towns will be dedicating a Torah on February 21 in memory of Levi Wolowik a"h.

will be for SULAM-LI, a religious school for Jewish children with special needs. Magevet will be joined on stage by the children of the Brandeis School Choir of Lawrence, under the direction of Janet Goldman. Students from SULAM-LI will also join in. SULAM-LI is a cooperative program of seven local synagogues. The children of SULAM-LI receive Jewish education on Sunday mornings specially geared to meet their learning needs. Call Dena Stein for tickets at 516-449-6678. Tickets for adults are \$25, children (ages 3-17) are \$15. A Family Pkg (2 Adults/ 2 Children) is \$72. For more information about SULAM and its programs please call Libby Adler, the educational director at: 516-474-1500

Vos Iz humor?

THE JEWISH HERITAGE MUSEUM, located at 36 Battery Place in New York City, is presenting a night with Ari Kelman, author of "Is Diss a System? A Milt Gross Comic Reader" (NYU Press, 2009). He will be interviewed by Harry Katz, editor of Cartoon America: Comic Art at the Library of Congress. Working during the decline of vaude-

ville and the rise of the newspaper cartoon strip, Gross captured American humor in transition. He adapted the sounds of ethnic humor from the stage to the page and developed both a sound and a sensibility that grew out of an intimate knowledge of immigrant life. His parodies of beloved poetry sounded like reading primers set loose on the Lower East Side, while his accounts of Jewish tenement residents echoed with the mistakes and malapropisms born of the immigrant experience. The event is co-sponsored by the National Yiddish Book Center. The program will begin at 1:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5, free for members of the Museum or the NYBC and are available online at www.mjhnyc.org or by calling the Museum box office at 646.437.4202.

Sunday Funday

THE JCC OF THE GREATER FIVE TOWNS, located at 207 Grove Ave. in Cedarhurst, invites all children with Autism to a "Super Sunday Funday," scheduled from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. at the JCC. For further information please call the JCC office at 516-569-6733.

Music for your Soul(farm)

SOULFARM will be performing at Temple Beth-El of Bellmore located at 1373 Bellmore Road in North Bellmore. Led by C Lanzbom, the band was formerly known as Inasense, and is heavily influenced by jam, blues, rock and roll, and the Middle Eastern heritage of the performers. They have performed around the world. "Who would ever think that a band that covers 'Dovid Melech' could sell out one on New York City's most popular and renowned nightclubs? Yes, it's happening, and repeatedly at that," the Jewish Star wrote about the band. This concert is presented in memory of Rabbi Harvey Goldscheider. Tickets are \$18 per person. Donations are gratefully accepted. Call 781-2650 for tickets and information.

Feb. 8

Thrift store opening

THE ISRAEL CHILDREN'S CANCER FOUNDATION is happy to announce the opening of its Treasure Chest Thrift Shop located at 141 Washington Avenue - Suite 205 in Lawrence. The store will be open Monday through Thursday, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The store will sell a treasure trove of giftware and bric-a-brac bargains with all proceeds going to help wage the war against cancer. Donations are greatly appreciated. To arrange a pickup, please call 516-375-6080 or 516-295-3518.

Feb. 9

Jewish heritage at MSG

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN hosts the 2nd Annual Jewish Heritage Night with the New York Knicks. The Knicks will be playing the Sacramento Kings and the game begins at 7:30 p.m. The event is organized by the Jewish Community Relations Counsel, an affiliate of the UJA Federation of New York. Tickets are \$36 for seating in the 300 Level and include a Hebrew Knicks item. Visit tinyurl.com/jcrrcJHN2010 and enter promo code: JCRC. For more information contact Seth Bettan at 212.465.6516 or email seth.bettan@thegarden.com

Motivational speaker

KULANU CENTER FOR SPECIAL SERVICES, located at 620 Central Avenue in Cedarhurst, will be hosting "Don't Judge a Book By Its Noises" an evening with Marc Elliot at 7:30 p.m. Marc was born with a rare disease that left him with virtually no intestines and he developed a neurological disorder called Tourette's syndrome; he now inspires audiences by sharing his life story to convey the value of tolerance and the basic attitudes and behaviors that allow it to flourish. The program is free and refreshments will be served. The event is sponsored by The Friendship Circle, a project of the Jean Fischman Chabad Center, the JCC of the Greater Five Towns, and the Kulanu Center for Special Services. Please reserve your spot before February 5 by calling Jonathan Cooper at (516)-569-3083 ext. 136 or via email at jonathanc@kulanukids.org.

Feb. 10

Meet the author

THE MUSEUM OF JEWISH HERITAGE located at 36

Continued on page 6

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348267

Battery Place in New York City hosts author Anne Nelson who will be joined by filmmaker Stefan Roloff and Museum curator Bonnie Gurewitsch for a discussion of Nelson's book *Red Orchestra: The Story of the Berlin Underground and the Circle of Friends Who Resisted Hitler* (Random House, 2009). *Red Orchestra* tells the compelling story of an intrepid band of German artists, intellectuals, and bureaucrats and their dangerous battle to unveil the brutal secrets of their fascist employers. The book documents this riveting story through the eyes of Greta Kuckhoff, a German working mother. The program will begin at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$5, free for members and are available online at www.mjhnyc.org or by calling the Museum box office at 646.437.4202.

Special needs workshop

THE KEREN ELIANA PARENT ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTER will be holding a workshop on how to access public programs for children with special needs. The workshop will take place at Kulanu Center for Special Services at 620 Central Avenue in Cedarhurst from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. Topics will include how to get early intervention, information about Medicaid, Child Health Plus, and the Physically Handicapped Children's Program, as well as information about the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Delays (OMRDD) and their Home and Community Based Medicaid Waiver Program. Speakers will be Shannon Jauck, a Nassau County Department of Health medical social worker and early intervention supervisor, and Maria Corso, a Medicaid Service Coordinator at Human First. The program is free of charge for those with Kulanu Family membership and \$10 for non-members. Pre-registration is requested. Contact Mark Hoffacker at 516-569-3083 x 136 or mark@kulanukids.org. The resource center is part of Kulanu.

Networking Dinner

THE SOUTH SHORE BUSINESS GROUP will be hosting an "Evening of Business Networking and Kosher Wine Tasting" at Traditions restaurant, located at 302 Central Avenue in Lawrence. The event is for business owners, self-employed professionals, and freelancers. Event will run from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The wine tasting is sponsored by Chateau de Vin. Cost is \$20 with pre-reservation and \$25 at the door. For more information call 516-902-5327 or email brandiideal@yahoo.com

Feb. 13 Oneg post-Shabbos

Feb. 14 Ping pong

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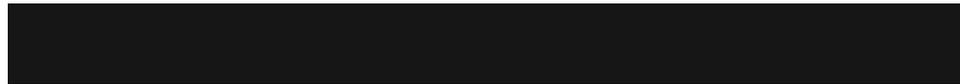
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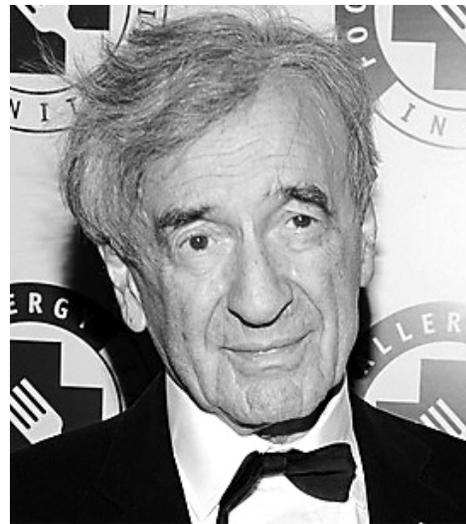
ON THE Calendar



One of the pieces of art that will be on display at the Hadassah art show on March 3.

THE ROC HOUSE, located at 550 W. 110 th St in Manhattan, presents Oneg Shemesh. Shemesh, an original member of the Moshav Band, fuses folk, blues, and Carlebach to create his own unique type of Jewish music. Doors open at 8:30 p.m. Tickets are \$16 for adults and \$12 for students. For more info call 212-222-2470, email therochohouse@gmail.com, or visit the Roc House online at www.therochohouse.com.

Wine and cheese tasting Congregation Shomrei Torah, located at 19-10 Morlot Avenue in Fairlawn, will be holding a wine and cheese tasting event beginning at 7:30 p.m. The event will be led by premier wine expert Keven Rouche of Queen Anne Wine and Spirits and will feature a selection of high end kosher wines and cheeses. Desert will be served after the presentation and participants will have the opportunity to purchase from an immense selection of wines at discounted prices. Cost is \$25 per person or \$36 per couple. For more information contact the shul office at (201) 791-7910.



Nobel Laureate, Elie Wiesel will be speaking at Adelphi University on April 14.

ANSHEI SHALOM, located at 472 Hempstead Ave, West Hempstead, presents the 3rd Annual Anshei Shalom Ping Pong Tournament. There will be events for beginners, advanced, men aged 50+, teens and children. The event goes from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Cost will be \$10 or \$15 with trophies going to the winners. For more information download the registration form at www.anshei.org or call (516) 292-0323.

Feb. 15-19 Winter Camp

THE JCC OF THE GREATER FIVE TOWNS, located at 207 Grove Ave. in Cedarhurst, will be holding "Winter Camp" for one week, beginning Monday through Friday. For further information please call 516-569-6733, ext. 218.

Feb. 16 3rd annual dinner

PUAH INSTITUTE, an Israel-based international organization that works with Jewish couples with

fertility issues, will be holding their third annual dinner at the Manhattan Beach Jewish Center, located at 60 West End Avenue, Brooklyn, NY at 6:00 p.m. The Gift of Life honoree will be Dr. Michael J. Glassner. The cost is \$250 per couple. To make a reservation call (718)-336-0603 or via email at puahfamily@gmail.com

Feb. 16-18

Winter Camp: the sequel

CHABAD OF THE FIVE TOWNS, located at 74 Maple Avenue in Cedarhurst, will be holding a "winter camp" for boys and girls between the ages of 5 - 13. The program will be three days of activities, games, sports and field trips in a Jewish environment. In collaboration with the Friendship Circle, there will also be a program for children with special needs.

Camp hours will be from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and is \$45 per child. Registration is required. Contact Rabbi Meir at 516-295-2478 ext. 19 for more details. For Friendship Circle call Batsheva at 516-295-2478* 13 or Batsheva@chabad5towns.com

Feb. 21

Torah dedication

CHABAD OF THE FIVE TOWNS will be dedicating a Torah in memory of Levi Yitzchak Wolowik a"h. The procession will begin from the Wolowik home, located at 748 Central Avenue in Woodmere at 1 p.m. For more information contact Chabad at 516-295-2478.

Purim Masquerade

THE PURIM MYSTERY MASQUERADE will be held in BLVD, located at 199 Bowery St. in Manhattan. The Masquerade will be a night of flowing drinks, friends, and costumes beginning at 6 p.m. This year's party will be raising money for Stand Together, an Israeli organization that provides food, clothing, and supplies to Israeli soldiers in the field.

Tickets are \$60 in advance (before February 17) \$85 at the door -- \$127 for VIPs (which comes with a special VIP gift bag). Check out <http://www.purimgala.org>

Feb. 24

Benefit dinner

JUST ONE LIFE, an Israeli organization that helps pregnant mothers, will be holding a benefit

Continued on page 7

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ON THE Calendar

Continued from page 8

dinner at Abigail's, located at 1407 Broadway, between 38th and 39th Street in Manhattan. The dinner will honor Cliff Broder, Yehudith Gellis, Edie and Louis Goldberg, and Zelda and Danny Wildman. Buffet dinner begins at six. More information can be found on www.justonelife.org or by calling (212) 683 6040.

March 3

Art show

THE DEVORAH GROUP OF HADASSAH will be hosting an evening of fine art beginning at 7:30 p.m. The works showcased will be from Hadassah members Pola Bradman, Sheila Feirstein, Wendy Kaplan Friend, Linda Goodman, Paula Gach Moskowitz, Nava Ramek, and Felice Soifer. Artwork will be available for purchase with a portion of the proceeds going to Hadassah. Cost is \$36 and includes one raffle ticket and wine and cheese. Husbands are welcome at no additional charge. For location and reservations contact Miriam at 516-569-9343 or via email mabraha1@optonline.net

March 9

Book Awards

THE NATIONAL JEWISH BOOK COUNCIL presents the 59th Annual National Jewish Book Awards ceremony. The event will be held at the Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16th Street in Manhattan and begins at 7:30 p.m. The ceremony will be hosted by Alana Newhouse and Ari L. Goldman. Each winning author is called upon to speak briefly about the background for writing the book. The event is free of charge. For more information contact (212) 201-2921 or visit the National Jewish Book Council's website at www.jewishbookcouncil.org.

March 21

Jewish Harlem

The Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy, located at 15-17 Willet St., between Grand and Delancey St. in Manhattan will be presenting a slide lecture on Harlem's Jewish past with Yeshiva University professor Jeffrey S. Gurock, author of "When Harlem was Jewish: 1870-1930." In 1917, Harlem was home to more than 175,000 Jews, making it the third largest Jewish community in the world. Gurock will discuss the historical forces that shaped Jewish Harlem. Cost is \$18. For more information call (212) 374-4100 ext. 1.

April 14

Elie Wiesel

ADELPHI UNIVERSITY will be hosting "An Evening with Elie Wiesel." The event with the Nobel Peace Prize-winning Holocaust survivor, author and activist will take begin at 7:00 p.m. in the University's Center for Recreation and Sports, 1 South Avenue in Garden City. The event is sponsored by the William E. Simon Lecture in American Civilization and Values Endowment.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit aupac.adelphi.edu or call the box Office at (516) 877-4000. Tickets for the public, can be purchased in-person at the Box Office, over the phone, or online, are available for \$25 for premium floor seating and \$10 for regular seating.

Shiurim

Monday

Halacha Shiur followed by a Parsha shiur by Rabbi Yaakov Feitman beginning at 9:00 PM at Kehillas Bais Yehuda Tzvi, 395 Oakland Ave., Cedarhurst.

Tuesday

Maharal on the Chumash by Rabbi Eytan Feiner from 8:15 p.m. to 9:15 p.m. at Congregation Kneseth Israel, 728 Empire Ave., Far Rockaway.

Thursday

Night Seder with chabura and hot chulent at 10:30-11:30 PM at at Kehillas Bais Yehuda Tzvi, 395 Oakland Ave., Cedarhurst.

Supernatural household help Wanted: Golem for light cleaning/tutoring

By Michael Orbach

Say you're in need of a six-foot-tall anthropomorphic being derived from Jewish lore. Where do you turn?

Craigslist, of course.

A three-member family in Astoria, Queens, was apparently seeking a rabbi "versed in the Dark Talmudic Arts to create a golem," according to an unusual ad posted Saturday night under the Domestic Gigs section of the online classified ad site.

Don't expect the Golem to be able to slack off. His duties would include, "rudimentary household chores such as dishes & sweeping, basic Math Tutoring for our daughter in 3rd grade and basic household security. Golem must be obedient and fairly unobtrusive on our everyday lives."

All that the requested Rabbi of the Dark Talmudic Arts would be required to do is animate the creature. The family would provide "all materials needed (clay, twigs, calfskin parchment, etc) to create the Golem."

You probably won't be surprised to learn that The Jewish Star has determined there is no actual family living in Astoria seeking a Rabbi versed in the "Dark Talmudic Arts." The ad was the brainchild of improv comedian and arts educator Louie Pearlman, of Astoria. He and his roommates came up with the idea late one night.

It refers to the supernatural creature said to have been created to protect the Jewish community of late 16th century Prague by the rabbi known as the Maharal.

"It's weird when you're in the [entertainment] industry and you do something for five minutes that gives you more attention than you've had for five years," he said.

Pearlman's favorite part of the ad is the part that specifies they don't want Gollum, a character from Lord of the Rings.

Not "Gollum," the ad specifies, "a former Hobbit turned into monster and looking for 'precious.' This is important! We have no interest in living with Gollum."

"My roommate thought it was important to differentiate, that the family had in the past gotten Golem and they needed to make it clear," Pearlman explained.

Since the post has been up, he's received a number of responses from people making various offers.

One advised the family to purchase a volume called "Sefer Yetzirah" from "any upstanding Judaica or mysticism shop."

The letter concluded:

"Usage of said book, with a simple eHow tutorial should go a long way to allowing you to make your golem yourself, from the comfort of

your own backyard. It will save you pocket cash on the exorbitant kabbalist fees too."

Two days after the ad was posted it was taken down off Craigslist. In unrelated news, citizens in Astoria were alerted to be on guard for a six-foot tall ageless gray male wielding a broom and a math book.

Questions or comments? Contact Michael Orbach at morbach@thejewishstar.com



Golems, creatures from Jewish mystical lore, are not usually recommended for domestic positions, so it comes as no surprise that no family in Astoria is seeking a Rabbi versed in the 'Dark Talmudic Arts' to animate one



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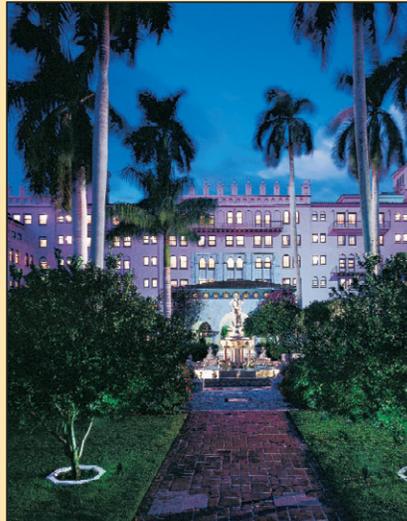
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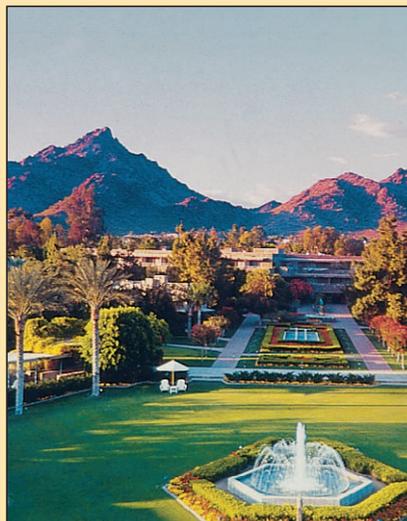
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No love lost

Has Obama earned Orthodox Jews' distrust?

By Michael Orbach

Pundits may wonder whether buyer's remorse has set in among the 78 percent of Jews who voted for President Obama in the 2008 election, but one segment of the Jewish population never made the purchase in the first place.

And one year into the president's term, it doesn't seem like they'll be buying anytime soon.

Prior to the election in 2008 a poll conducted by the American Jewish Committee revealed that only 13 percent of Orthodox Jews said they would support Obama. After the election, the Orthodox Union compiled a short-list of precincts with "High concentration of Orthodox voters."

Lakewood, NJ voters favored the McCain-Palin ticket by a margin of 69 percent to 31 percent for Obama-Biden. The Lawrence Middle School polling station in Lawrence, NY recorded 81 percent of people voting for McCain, the highest percentage on Long Island. While the numbers are not too shocking given the tendency of Orthodox voters to support Republican platforms, anecdotally it seems as if the president is faring even worse in the Orthodox community than might otherwise be expected.

"Where the past administration acknowledged that the Orthodox community is thriving and deserving of a seat at the table, today's administration has not placed that same emphasis or importance on the positions of the Orthodox community," said Chaskel Bennett, a Brooklyn community activist.

He lamented the attention the current administration gives to organizations like J Street and Americans for Peace Now.

"Ignoring mainstream Orthodox organizations bolsters the perception that the Obama administration has a different world view than ours," said Bennet.

A modern Pharaoh?

One local Jewish weekly recently compared President Obama's relationship to the Jewish community to the Egyptian Pharaoh's relationship with the Jews of his time.

"Not unlike Pharaoh, the goal was to deal with them wisely and expeditiously, that is before anyone had a chance to really understand what was going on," the paper wrote.

The main issue of contention between Orthodox Jews and Mr. Obama, unsurprisingly, is Israel.

"Because so many Orthodox Jews have relatives and friends in Israel and so on, that is not surprising that they go together," explained Jonathan Sarna, the Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University, who is currently on sabbatical in Israel.

"Israeli polls were something on the order of 80 percent distrust for Obama and have been from the start. I think that for many Orthodox Jews the central issue on which they support or oppose the president is really Israel."

Nathan Diamant, director of the Institute for Public Affairs of the Orthodox Union, said that he had felt strong sentiment against the administration.

"In the context of the Orthodox where the majority in the community identify with the settlement movement in Israel, there's a great deal of tension, let alone opposition, to the president's efforts last year to push Israel to undertake a settlement freeze," he explained by phone.

Diamant stressed that while the issue of



'I tell my Charedi friends that if the big health insurance companies are against the plan, then you should be for it, since you know the vast majority of our community cannot afford a health plan that costs \$15,000 a family'

— Ezra Friedlander

settlements was tense, relationships between Israel and America are strong as they had been.

"As Michael Oren, Israel's ambassador to the US, has said publicly, and I would agree with, there are many other aspects of the Israel-US relationships that are as good, if not better, than they have been for many years.

It's a multifaceted relationship that includes military cooperation, economic trade, partnerships, intelligence sharing and many other things, and all of that is going full speed ahead the way it was during the last administration," Diamant explained. "The number one issue of the Israel government is the nuclear threat of Iran, so far, and I underscore so far, the Obama administration and the Netanyahu government have

been working closely together and are very much on the same page. Looking back on 2009, Obama and Netanyahu were working together in a way that the community ought to appreciate..."

Half full or half empty?

"Orthodox see the glass as half empty they shouldn't ignore the glass half-full."

David Singer, director of research for the American Jewish Committee, disagreed with the notion of specific sentiment inside the Orthodox population against President Obama. Any sentiment was simply part of the political give-and-take, he said.

"There are not particularly strong feelings one way or the other," Singer explained.

"Because Orthodox Jews tend to be more to the right of the political spectrum there's a certain measure of distance, but you don't sense a sharp differentiation. There's some disapproval but these are normal political difficulties."

Some of those who see a conflict wonder if there are racial undertones to dislike of the administration.

"I think there are a strong anti-Obama feeling in the Orthodox community, in part because his father was a Muslim and in part because Obama is viewed as being far less pro-Israel as George W. Bush. And then there is the race issue, which is especially strong among Charedim, perhaps because of years of living in urban areas that border on or are part of large concentrations of poor blacks," said Shmarya Rosenberg, the blogger behind Failed Messiah.

"In some ways, in the Orthodox community, Obama is paying the price for the Crown Heights pogrom and his father's religion as much as he is for his policies toward Israel, and that's a shame."

'Listen to Rush Limbaugh'

"Most religious people I know barely gave him a chance," said Heshy Fried, of *frum-satire.net*. "He was a black Democrat who supported things religious Jews are against. If you want to know how most frum Jews think, listen to Rush Limbaugh one day and you will see how they think."

For the Charedi population, the adage coined in the 1950s by essayist Milton Himelfarb, that Jews earned like Episcopalians (then a largely wealthy minority) — and voted like Puerto Ricans (then a largely poor minority) has been reversed, according to one political consultant. Ezra Friedlander, CEO of the Friedlander Group a public and government relations group based in DC and New York, and who campaigned for Obama, said that he's seen communities voting against their own interests.

"I tell my Charedi friends that if the big health insurance companies are against the plan, then you should be for it, since you know the vast majority of our community cannot afford a health plan that costs \$15,000 a family," he said.

Friedlander offered an introspective take on the matter of race and Orthodox Jews feelings about Mr. Obama.

"The Chareidi community feels more comfortable with an African American as opposed to a secular Jew, even an Orthodox Jew," asserted Friedlander.

"Someone who has zero connection to the community, they have much greater chances of shaping that person's perspective of them and their community and the issues of the greatest importance to them, as opposed to someone who shares a religious background or cultural background."

As for whether this is 'good for the Jews,' the jury is still out.

"I think that it's probably to the benefit of the Jewish community that we have two parties vying for the Jewish vote and they can't take it for granted," said Sarna. "When we had a Republican president who was advised to 'Eff the Jews, they don't vote for us,' that was clearly a bad thing from the point of view of the Jews. Most know that the two presidents in recent decades who were most disliked by the Jews, Carter and HW Bush, were one-term presidents. Mr. Obama, if he wants to be a two-term president, he will remember that."

Of fathers-in-law and sons

A previous column discussed the father-in-law-son-in-law relationship using Lavan and Yaakov as the model protagonists. This week we will explore the same relationship through the eyes of Yitro and Moshe.

Yitro arrives at the Israelites camp bringing his daughter and “her two sons.” This verse leads to a number of questions: why are they with Yitro? Didn’t Tziporah accompany Moshe to Egypt in chapter 4? Why are they referred to as her sons? Aren’t they also “Moshe’s sons?”

After all the efforts to get Moshe to greet his family, we find that the only person Moshe seems able to relate to is his father-in-law, Yitro. Beginning in 18:7 when Moshe leaves the camp to meet them, the Torah says, “Moshe went out to greet his father-in-law” — only to Yitro, not to his wife or sons.



Rabbi Avi Billet

These points are debatable, of course, as the Torah often leaves out details. There is room to suggest — much of this is in the Midrash — that Moshe divorced his wife, saw no need for her to be in Egypt, viewed his sons as his connection to a Midianite life he no longer lived, and, as G-d’s devoted shepherd, did not feel a connection to his immediate family.

But Yitro was different. He was a political ally as the “Kohen of Midian.” And his history with Moshe had been one of more than total support.

After Moshe saved Yitro’s daughters from shepherds, it was Yitro who said, “Where is he? Why did you leave him? Invite him here to eat with us.” It was Yitro who gave Moshe a wife, a job, and total trust. He even gave Moshe his blessing when Moshe said, “I need to branch out and return to Egypt.” (2:20-21, 3:1, 4:18)

Moshe had a sense of appreciation for this man that went beyond the claim of, “This is my father in law.”

Yitro comes in to observe Moshe’s practice of sitting all day to judge the people and, frankly, he is not impressed. As the parsha states: “18. You cannot do it all alone. 19. You must... bring [their] concerns to G-d. 20. Show them the path they must take... 21. But you must [also] seek out from among all the people capable, G-d-fearing men — men of truth, who hate injustice. You must then appoint them over [the people] as leaders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.” In essence, the key word is “delegate.”

Verse 24 is ambiguous when it says, “Moshe listened to his father-in-law. He did all he had said.” That Moshe listened is clear. But who did all who had said? Rabbi Elazar Hamodai in the Mechilta suggests that after listening to Yitro, Moshe did all that G-d had said.

When we examine what Moshe did, we see he did not do exactly as Yitro said. “25. He chose capable men from all Israel,” also known as “anshei chayil” but he left out Yitro’s other criteria — “G-d fearing men of truth who hate injustice.” Either he could not find such men, or he felt the other criteria were too high a standard for judges. Yitro had suggested that “big cases” (hadavar hagadol)

be brought to Moshe, while Moshe instructed that “difficult cases” (hadavar hakasheh) be brought to him.

In other words, Moshe takes the advice for what it is, knows it is good and comes out of love, and appreciates it. But he must do it his own way — in a way that works for him.

Finally, when the air is getting too stuffy, “27 Moshe sent his father-in-law on his way, and he went away to his homeland.”

Apparently, even for Moshe there is such a thing as an overextended visit.

May all fathers-in-law and sons-in-law

have a courteous and respectful relationship. May all fathers-in-laws respect their sons-in-law’s choices in life and be as emotionally supportive as possible, with blessings when possible.

And may all sons-in-law see that the advice given by those who care for you (when warranted and in a setting that is appreciated) comes out of love, and that someone with a little more experience may have a perspective you do not share.

Then do it your way, and either fail or fly.

Moshe takes his father-in-law’s advice for what it is and knows it is good, but he must do it in a way that works for him.

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Opinion

Mourning in the Caribbean

We were looking forward to a typical Caribbean getaway: palm trees, blue skies, hot sunny days, and relaxing on the beach. Well, the climate cooperated beautifully and nature stayed its course, but unfortunately in more ways than we expected. We were staying with my cousins, whose dad was quite ill in the hospital, but none of us could have predicted that the patriarch of my family in San Juan wasn't going to make it since my uncle had always recovered from his close calls.



Miriam Bradman Abrahams

My cousins generously and graciously hosted us for the first few days of our visit, seemingly happy to have short breaks from the sadness of their hospital vigil. They made time to tour us around showing us some sights on their beautiful island. We visited my aunt at her husband's bedside and eagerly caught up on other family news and reconnected with her children who we meet up with at bar mitzvahs and weddings. But conversations inevitably returned to their father and their growing resignation and acceptance of his current state. Though I don't

know if my uncle was cognizant of our presence, I felt that we were meant to be there to represent the Brooklyn/Woodmere branch of the family and so I was grateful for the coincidental timing of our visit. And when he passed away on the last day of our stay, we offered some comfort to the family when we participated in a uniquely Caribbean gathering on the eve of the funeral. We paid our respects to our cousins and aunt at the funeral home where our uncle rested.

According to my cousin, San Juan's tiny Jewish community maxes at about 1800 individuals including Chabad, Conservative and Reform. It is the only Caribbean island with synagogues for all three denominations. The Cuban community members are a majority at the Conservative shul, Shaarei Zedeck. The shul is also the oldest on the island and also functions as the Jewish Community Center. Most tourists attend the Chabad shul which is close to the hotels. A wave of Jewish refugees arrived on the island around World War II and more arrived during the revolution in Cuba. The Cuban community is very closely knit, like an extended family on their adopted island.

My aunt and uncle and their first child arrived from Cuba after a brief stop in the U.S. in the early 60's. Their three other children were born in Puerto Rico. Although the children were all sent to study at universities on the mainland like most of the Jewish community's teens, my aunt's four children all re-

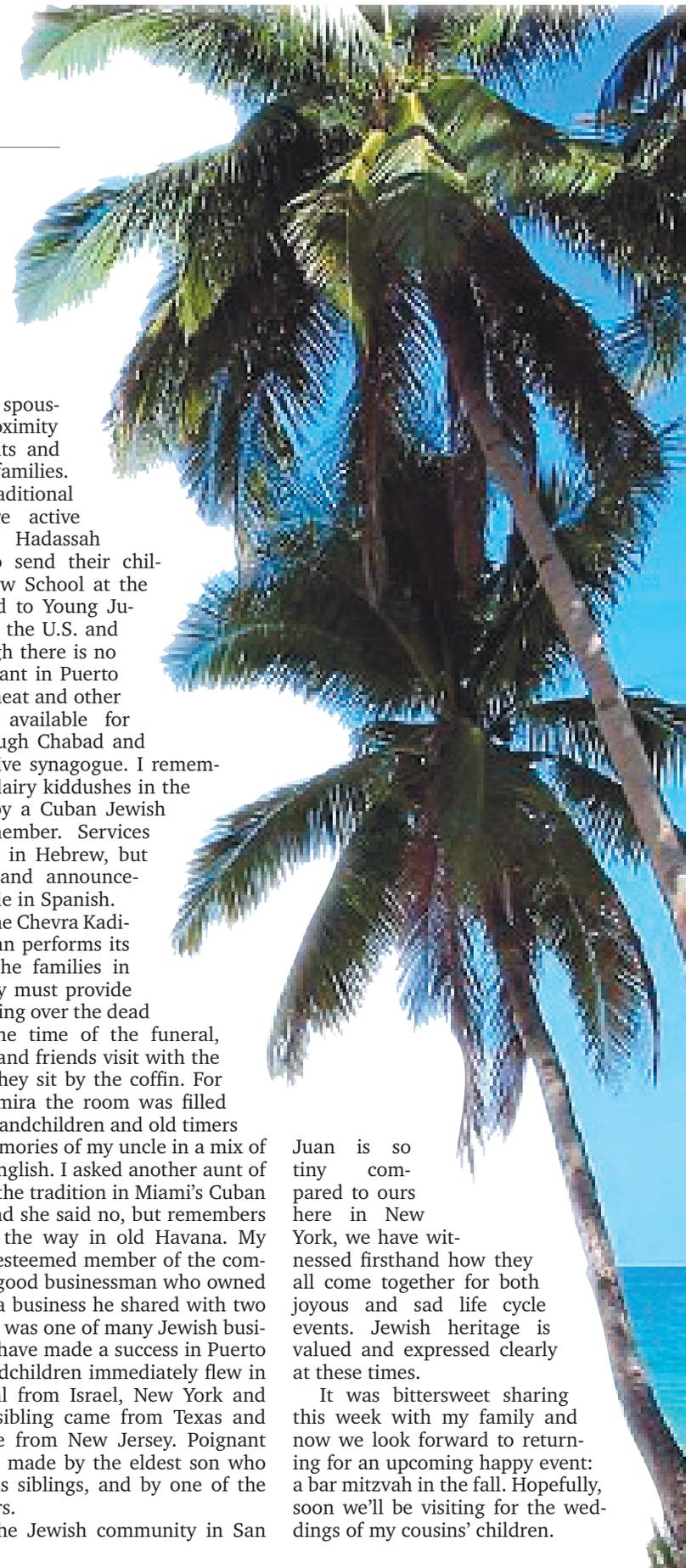
turned to live on the island. Here they have resettled with their spouses in close proximity to their parents and have raised families. They are traditional Jews and are active Zionists and Hadassah members who send their children to Hebrew School at the synagogue and to Young Judea camps in the U.S. and Israel. Although there is no kosher restaurant in Puerto Rico, kosher meat and other products are available for purchase through Chabad and the Conservative synagogue. I remember delicious dairy kiddushes in the shul catered by a Cuban Jewish community member. Services are conducted in Hebrew, but Divrei Torah and announcements are made in Spanish.

Although the Chevra Kadisha in San Juan performs its sacred duty, the families in the community must provide shmira [watching over the dead body] until the time of the funeral, and so family and friends visit with the mourners as they sit by the coffin. For my uncle's shmira the room was filled with tearful grandchildren and old timers recounting memories of my uncle in a mix of Spanish and English. I asked another aunt of mine if this is the tradition in Miami's Cuban community, and she said no, but remembers that this was the way in old Havana. My uncle was an esteemed member of the community and a good businessman who owned and operated a business he shared with two of his sons. He was one of many Jewish businessmen who have made a success in Puerto Rico. His grandchildren immediately flew in for the funeral from Israel, New York and California; a sibling came from Texas and a cousin came from New Jersey. Poignant speeches were made by the eldest son who represented his siblings, and by one of the granddaughters.

Although the Jewish community in San

Juan is so tiny compared to ours here in New York, we have witnessed firsthand how they all come together for both joyous and sad life cycle events. Jewish heritage is valued and expressed clearly at these times.

It was bittersweet sharing this week with my family and now we look forward to returning for an upcoming happy event: a bar mitzvah in the fall. Hopefully, soon we'll be visiting for the weddings of my cousins' children.



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No one-state solution

World leaders and diplomats always have one plan on the table, one plan in the drawer and one plan on the shelf. The Palestinians, in the hope of pushing Israel and by extension the United States towards a resolution of the Palestinian/Israeli problem, are dusting off their plan on the shelf. They are reviving talk of a one-state solution.

I'M THINKING



Micah D. Halpern

While I am not an advocate of the one-state solution, neither am I in total opposition to the idea, threatened by the concept, or fearful for the future of Israel. A one-state solution, as advocated by the Arab world, is not only an empty threat, it is an impractical solution to the problem.

Those world leaders advocating for one Palestinian/Israeli state would be shocked to learn that the concept

dates back to Zionist ideologues that understood that the creation of a Jewish state in the Middle East would necessitate rapprochement with local Arabs.

One of the configurations they seized upon was the idea of a single state, that they termed a Bi-National state. Supporters were known as bi-nationalists and the most notable among them was Martin Buber.

At the time there was no entity called the Palestinian movement and the definition of a Palestinian, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, was a Jew living in Palestine.

The idea was discarded by Zionist thinkers as impractical. Years later, it was picked up and championed by Israelis and others including Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and even Libyan leader Muammar Ghaddafi who named his plan "Isratine." The Arab world never refers to the state as Bi-National because that would imply that Israeli Jews would have significant long-term rights, and that is not a part of their plan.

Palestinian and other Arab leaders envision a state that would begin with two nations living in one country, with one government, that would, in short time, become one Palestinian-only nation. They are convinced that the only weapon they need is the Palestinian birth rate.

Arab birth rates are dropping

Statistics prove otherwise. The birth rate of Arab citizens of Israel is dropping significantly and the birthrate of Jews continues to climb. Generally speaking, the more educated the community in the Arab world the fewer children they have.

That is now the case with the Palestinians. There are substantial risks to the Bi-National state. First is the Jewish nature of Israel, but Palestinians will fail miserably at trying to take over Israel through their secret weapon — the womb.

Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, is threatening Israel by saying that if a two-state solution is not immediately negotiated, he will force the one-state solution that, in his mind, means the end of

Israel. This type of wishful thinking, common among Arab leaders, is sometimes couched as democratic thinking and called bi-nationalism, as was espoused by Tony Judt in his infamous essay that ran in the New York Review of Books.

If a one-state solution ever came into being, if Israelis and Palestinians were to live as one nation, under one flag, democracy would be seriously challenged. But the map would once again include the West Bank. If Israelis

and Palestinians were to live as one nation, Palestinians would be provided with a better infrastructure and be better educated and Israel would have better access to intelligence on terror.

And there would be a serious crackdown on unlawful activity. And immoral, corrupt Palestinian leadership would be ousted by their irrelevance.

Palestinian leaders can threaten, but if One-State comes into existence, the Palestin-

ian dream of a Palestinian state will die. Palestinians will be living in the State of Israel; Israelis will not be in a Palestinian state. The idea of an independent Palestinian state will be dwarfed by the success of living in highly technical, sophisticated Israel.

One-State will fail because Palestinian nationalism will fail. One-State failed in Lebanon. It failed in Pakistan, it failed in Yugoslavia and it will fail for Israelis and Palestinians.

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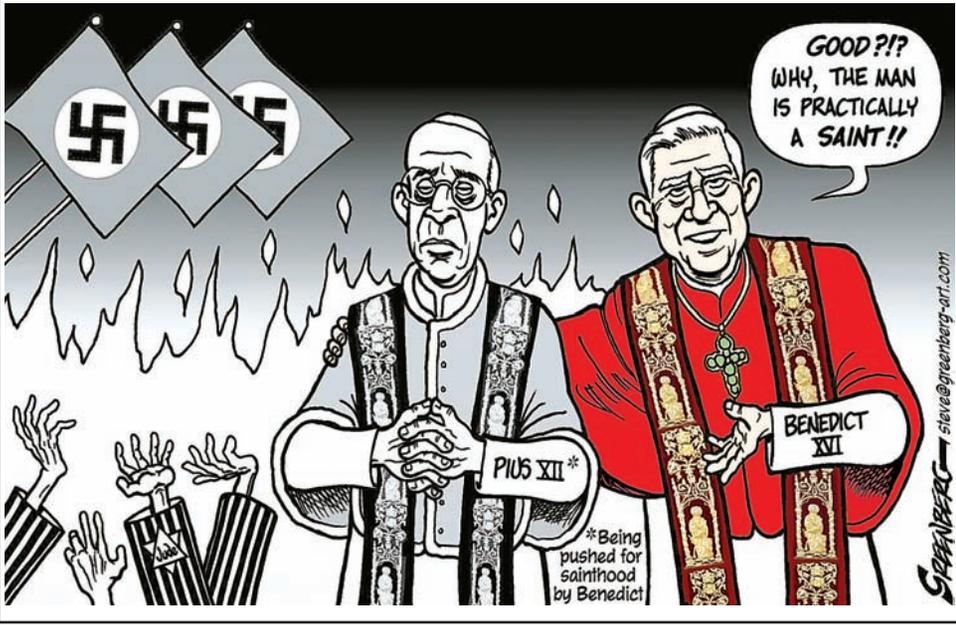
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"All That Is Necessary For Evil To Succeed Is That Good Men DO NOTHING."
 —Edmund Burke



In winter time, a little summer

A collage of photos from last weekend's "Chai Lifeline/ Camp Simcha Get2Gether" at the home of Yehuda and Beth Honig in Lawrence. Campers and counselors got together to see mentalist David Jaison, and have their faces painted by Robin London and her staff at Little People Entertainment. Music was provided by Neshoma Orchestra: Yekusiel Sebrow (drums), Aryeh Kunstler (guitar) and Mo Rosenblum (keyboard) with singer Yosef Wartelsky.

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Leading without direction

What's worse than being lost in the Poconos with four family members — all sick, tired and hungry? Did I mention that we were almost out of gas with no gas station in sight? Did I mention that we had been in the car for almost four hours on what was supposed to be a two-hour trip?

Twice I transcended and conquered my male ego and stopped to ask for directions. Twice the directions were contradictory and neither of them matched the route set forth on our GPS, a GPS which I would like to

sue. What is worse than the above I ask? If you have an answer I would like to hear it, because for those five hours in total that we were lost running on empty without a soul in sight, nothing worse seemed possible.

My mistake was relying on my GPS. I should have called the hotel or better yet, someone else who had been there previously and had navigated the winding roads of the Poconos. We did encounter one farmer who told us that if we

couldn't find our destination within an hour we should come back to him and he would redirect us. Thanks buddy, but if I was still driving an hour later I think I would've passed out from anxiety.

Furthermore, the chances of finding that one farmer and his house an hour later were not that great. In any event, I figured that I only had about 10 more minutes of driving as the fuel in my minivan dwindled.

Hope sprung eternal as off in the distance I spotted a gas station. My prayers had

been answered, or so I thought. As I pulled up, I noticed a handwritten sign on the pump that read, "No gas till Monday." The possibility of spending the night in the minivan was becoming all to real. For no particular reason we continued to drive in the direction that our van was facing, and possibly because there were no other roads that we had not already traveled on, we happened upon our intended destination.

My heart sank as I heard the other men in the check-in line brag to each other how they made it to the hotel in record time of under two hours. I sold my GPS later that evening, vowing to always go to the "source" when I wanted information.

A public servant also must go to the source. But for the public servant the source is not the codified law. Rather, the source is the people whom he or she represents.

When the will of the people is ignored by the public servant, one begins to wonder whether the elected official is placing too much emphasis on the word "public" and not enough emphasis on the word "servant." When the leader acts in defiance of the source, the people, then as the saying goes, "Houston we have a problem." To act defiantly and insist on policies that the populace has rejected is to ignore the "source." To point fingers

at everyone else for creating the reality bus that you are charged with driving, is an act of cowardice. At a certain point in time on the road, four hours into a trip that should only have taken two hours, one needs to own up to the fact that maybe he or she is lost and that a phone call to the source needs to be made. Redirection is in order and an acknowledgment that no one else is to blame, not even a GPS, must sink in.

Before the public servant can engage in transforming ideas and policy into law, he must consult the source, he must consult the people, and he must listen to the will of the people.

Failing to listen to the will of the people indeed is worse than driving in the Poconos, lost as lost can be, with an empty fuel tank, and a GPS that has its own idea of where it wants to go.

FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BENCH

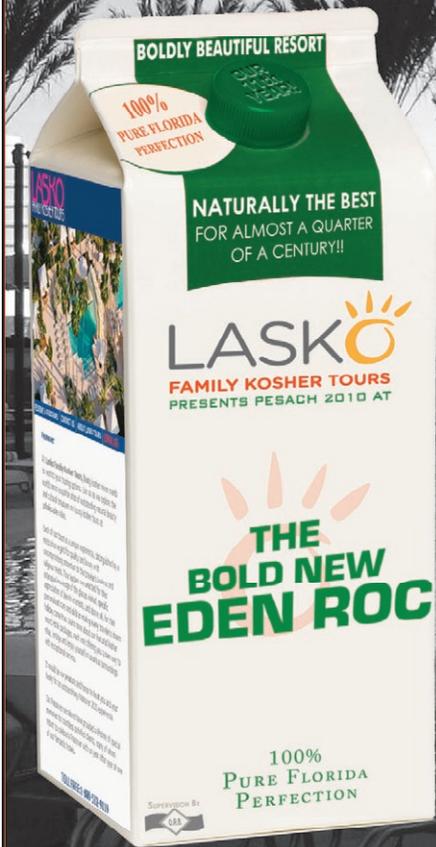


David Seidemann

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Editorial

February 5, 2010 21 SHVAT 5770

Goldstoning Iran

Feel free to disagree, of course, but the prospect of Iran finally obtaining nuclear weapons worries us a great deal more than the ever-present threat of another al-Qaeda attack on the United States.

Intelligence officials told Congress this week that a terrorist attack — at least an attempted one — on the US in the next six months was a “certainty.” Perhaps that comes from information being squeezed out of the undie-bomber, the last individual to make such an attempt. Nonetheless, Iran seems to be much more threatening and in a position to potentially do much more damage, G-d forbid, to Israel, the United States or Europe.

For that reason, we were relieved to learn last Thursday that the Senate passed the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability and Divestment Act of 2009, a fast track sanctions bill similar to one that passed the House of Representatives almost a month-and-a-half ago. Among other things, it would put a crimp in Iran’s gasoline supply since, despite the Islamic Republic’s massive oil reserves, the country lacks sufficient gasoline refinement capabilities and must import much of its gasoline. People who remember the Arab oil embargo of the 1970’s and the resulting gas lines may take a moment of satisfaction at imagining Iran brought to its knees by stranded drivers. Don’t take more than a moment though: US intelligence reports indicate Iran is already looking for alternate sources of supply, which could mitigate the effects of sanctions.

Nonetheless, it’s good to know that there

are members of Congress who recognize the true urgency of preventing Iran from getting the bomb, and are resistant to the idea of just running out the clock with useless chatter while Iran realizes its nuclear potential (see: United Nations).

In other words, the international community is not being quite so forward thinking. China and Russia are dragging their heels; Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was working this week on persuading China to go along with sanctions, despite its reliance on Iranian oil to power its growing economy.

‘It’s good to know there are members of Congress who recognize the true urgency of preventing Iran from getting the bomb, and are resistant to the idea of just running out the clock with useless chatter while Iran realizes its nuclear potential.’

In addition to the nuclear threat Iran poses, it would be an added bonus to see the United States and the international community act against Iran’s illegitimate president, Ahmadinejad, and his illegitimate government. Two people who took part in the demonstrations against last year’s rigged election were hanged in Iran not long ago; nine more such cases are undergoing judicial review. We find it simply amazing that there has been virtu-

ally no reaction from the world community to these government-sponsored murders.

Imagine. A mini-war launched to end terrorist rocket attacks on Israeli civilians leads to the United Nation’s fatally flawed Goldstone report, which is still making headlines months later — but the tens of thousands of brave Iranians who took to the streets of Tehran, in some instances at the cost of their lives, to protest a corrupt, cruel government, are forgotten.

As someone once said, it’s a mad, mad, mad world.

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Independent and original reporting from the Orthodox communities of Long Island and New York City
All opinions expressed are solely those of The Jewish Star’s editorial staff or contributing writers

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Letters to the editor

Not next to my house

To the Editor:

We have nothing against Hatzalah as an organization (Neighbor’s against Hatzalah garage; Jan. 29, 2010). However, here’s our message to all those who think it’s fine to put their garage in a residential area. We live next door to 752 West Broadway, and we don’t want ambulances speeding out of their driveway in front of our house 24 hours a day, blaring sirens.

There is barely enough parking for the current residents of the surrounding blocks, and the Hatzalah application for variance states that they’ll need 33 parking spots on the street (although the building occupancy is to be 97 people — why only 33 spots?), since their building will not have parking for their “events.”

We could go on and on, but if you still think it’s okay to build an ambulance garage on a residential block, build it next to your house, not ours!

Judy & Richard Nemes
Woodmere

Hatzalah is a good neighbor

To the Editor:

I would like to respond to this past week’s front-page article in The Jewish Star regarding the Hatzalah Garage (Neighbor’s against Hatzalah garage; Jan. 29, 2010).

For approximately the last 10 years I have been a neighbor residing about a half a block from the current Woodmere “garage” (in reality an outdoor driveway) located on a similar-sized street at Cong. Bais Tefilah on Edward Ave.

I am able to report that Hatzalah has been a considerate neighbor, with respect to the manner of operation and upkeep of their current facility.

The vehicles are driven considerately, quietly (no blaring sirens or excessive light usage) and in an appropriate manner. Sadly, other *non-emergency* drivers have raced down Edward Ave, recklessly, night and day.

As a liaison between Hatzalah and the Edward Ave. shul I have observed, first-hand, that the Hatzalah organization in general and Rabbi Kanner in particular have always been sensitive and immediately responsive to any concerns raised by the shul, which has donated the usage of the current driveway to this worthwhile organization, that benefits the entire community.

I am not a member of Hatzalah but, sadly, both of my recently departed parents were frequent “customers.” I have experienced, first-hand, the benefits Hatzalah

represents to the community, as well as to the immediate neighbors who have access to Hatzalah, which outweigh any potential issues.

The concerns expressed may be that the proximity of this new building will affect the safety, aesthetics or property values in the immediate residential area. I have not seen any affect to those of us who currently live near those two ambulances.

All of us are sensitive to preserving the suburban, residential nature of this community. However, it is a purely demographic reality that the need for Hatzalah’s services will only continue to increase as the community grows and continues to age.

The concerns of the immediate neighbors should be recognized and addressed, along with balancing the entire community’s needs as a whole.

Herb Marek
Woodmere

Kudos for the New Jewish Star

To the Editor:

Just wanted to let you know that I LOVE the new look! The best part is the shorter pages — I hated folding the paper every page to read it. Now it’s kitchen-table-ready, and the typeface and color pictures are nice too.

Keep up the great work, the original reporting and fearlessness at reporting things as they are, and good luck with your expansion into other neighborhoods.

Nichie Fendrich
Far Rockaway

Remembering Bubby

To the Editor:

This coming Shabbos, February 6, 2010 — 22 Shvat 5770, is the 60th yahrtzeit of my Bubby Sarah (Dingenthal) Barcham, may she rest in peace. She arrived in New York City around 1900 with Zeide Avraham Zev Barcham. They came from Stanislav, Austrian Galicia. They struggled hard to keep Shabbos & all the other mitzvos. They came with two daughters, Malka and Esther, who strived to emulate her, as did Uncle Hershel. Among their other children were our Zeide Yaakov Dov and Uncle Kiva.

She left dozens of descendants, the majority of whom are observers of Shabbos and mitzvos. We should all try to strengthen our Torah and mitzvah observance on this coming Shabbos.

Reuven Bleich
(a great-grandchild)
Jerusalem



Rosenberg shoots past Pasternach for 2 points.



Schwartz moves around a Wildcat defender.



Mendlowitz shoots for the Wildcats.

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Slice of Life

How to feed hordes of hungry people at your house for the big game

By Eileen Goltz

Ok, team, today is the big game (the NFL doesn't like when you say s-u-p-e-r-b-o-w-l without paying them). The clock is ticking and the first play is about to begin, but wait, there's a flag on the field before the kickoff. What's that the ref is saying? Illegal use of cheese? Store-bought guacamole? Guests arriving in an hour? "Oh, the humanity"

(that's a Hindenburg reference for those non-history buffs). Time to send the designated player to the grocery store for last-minute ingredients to feed the rampaging hordes.

Huddle up here, Foodies. Cooking Coach Eileen to the rescue. The following recipes can all be whipped up in less than 20 minutes and are guaranteed to feed a crowd of righteously crazed Colts or Saints fans and guarantee you'll score a touchdown and the extra point.

WHITEFISH AND CRACKERS (fish)

8 ounces cream cheese, softened
3-4 teaspoons prepared white horseradish
2 tablespoons ground pecans
30 Benton water crackers
1 to 2 lbs smoked white fish or chubs
3 to 4 green onions, thinly sliced
Cocktail sauce, optional

In a food processor blend the cream cheese with the horseradish and pecans until smooth. Spoon approx 1 teaspoon of the mixture on each cracker and top a piece of smoked white fish. Sprinkle with the top with the green onion and then add a small dollop of the cocktail sauce for color on top. Makes 30 pieces. Can be doubled or tripled

Submitted by Angela Small Indianapolis, IN

PEPPER WRAPPED CHICKEN BITES (meat)

1 to 2 pounds chicken thighs pieces cut into appetizer-size pieces
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
2 tablespoon brown sugar
15 slices turkey or beef pastrami, cut crosswise into thirds

Preheat broiler. Sprinkle the chicken with garlic powder, brown sugar. Wrap each piece of chicken with a piece of pastrami (you can secure it with a toothpick if you like). Arrange them on a broiler rack. Broil turning occasionally, 3 to 4 inches from heat for about 8 to 10 minutes, until the pastrami is crisp and browned. Serve with cocktail picks. Makes about 45 appetizers. Can be doubled or tripled

MOCK CRAB STUFFED PORTABELLAS (fish)

2 cups cornbread, crumbled
1 cup bread crumbs
1 egg
1 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup chopped celery
1 green bell pepper chopped
2 cups flaked mock crab
1/2 teaspoon tarragon salt and pepper
2 teaspoon minced garlic
6 Portabella mushroom caps
1/2 cup grated Parmesan
3 tablespoons melted butter
1 cup Grated Mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 375. In a large sauté pan combine celery, onions, peppers, garlic and butter, cook until vegetables are just soft, combine with breadcrumbs and cornbread; add salt and pepper to taste and the tarragon. Remove the mixture from the heat and add the Parmesan cheese and egg. Mix to combine. Add the mock crab and mix well, mixture should be easily pressed into "stuffing consistency." If too dry add melted butter. Divide the stuffing mixture into 6 equal portions and stuff caps of mushrooms, sprinkle tops with grated mozzarella and place them on a greased cookie sheet. Bake until the cheese is bubbly and stuffing is set, about 5 to 7 minutes. These can be served whole or cut into

quarters. Makes 6.

Modified from www.cdktichen.com

MARINATED CHEESES (dairy)

1/2 cup olive oil
1/2 cup white wine vinegar
1/4 cup lime or lemon juice
6 oz. jar roasted red bell peppers, drained and diced
1 can artichoke hearts, drained, quartered
1 can large black olives, drained
3 green onions, minced
1/3 cup chopped fresh parsley
1/4 cup chopped fresh oregano
1 teaspoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Use any cheese that you like, but here's what I typically use:

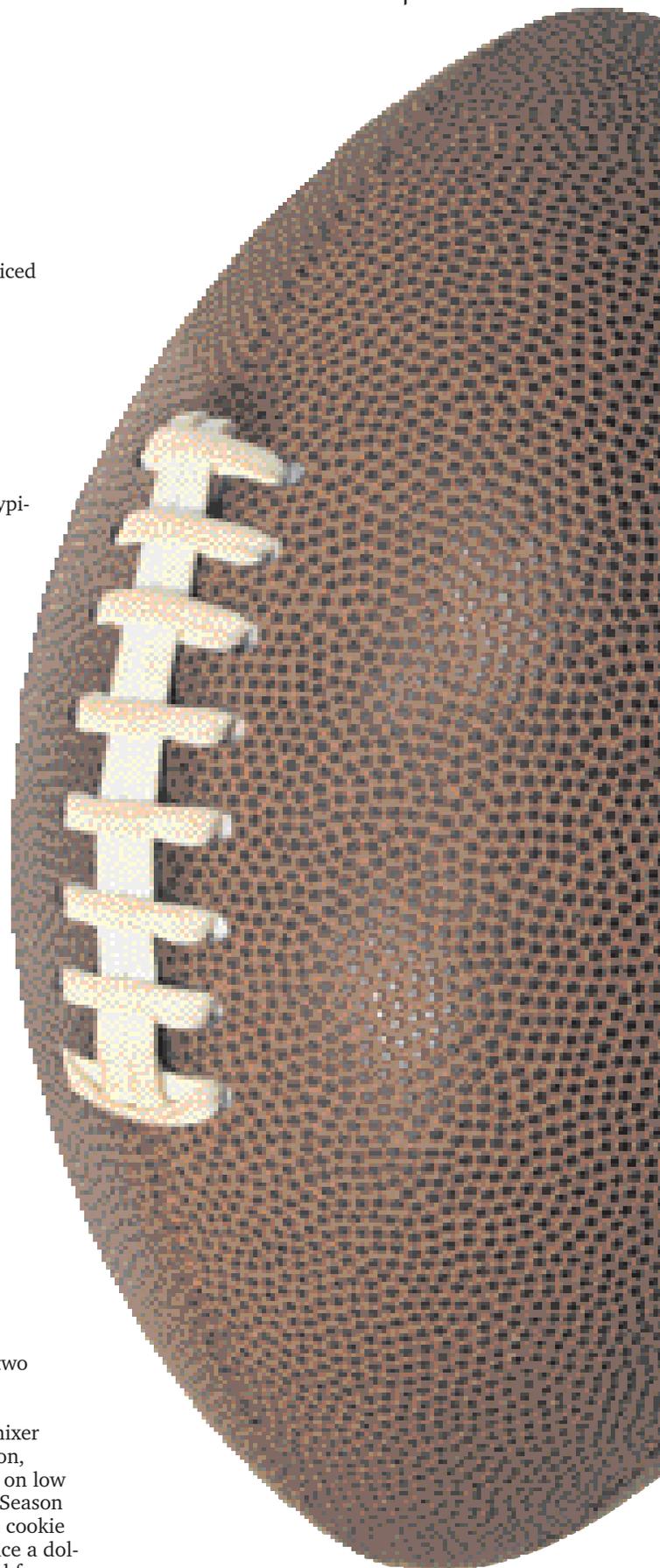
1 (8 oz.) pkg. pepper Jack cheese
1 (8 oz.) pkg. Havarti cheese
1 (8 oz.) pkg. Mozzarella cheese
Cut these into 1/4 inch cubes

In a large bowl whisk together the olive oil, white wine vinegar, and lime juice. Add the red peppers, artichoke hearts, olives, green onions, parsley, sugar, salt and pepper. Place cheese cubes in a shallow glass dish (9X13 works great); pour marinade over top. Cover and chill for at least 1 hour but 5 or 6 is best. You can make this the night before if you want a really deep flavor. Arrange the cheese chunks and on a serving platter making sure to drizzle a little of the marinade over the top. Serve with tooth picks and chunks of French bread to mop up the marinade. Serves 12

CHICKEN NACHOES (meat)

1 lb. chicken (cooked and cut into small pieces, you can use deli)
12 oz. mock cream cheese at room temperature
1 red pepper chopped
3 tablespoons chopped red onion
2 teaspoon minced garlic
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 1/4 cup bread or cracker crumbs
1 egg
salt and pepper to taste
1 cup salsa
6 small size pita breads, cut and separated into two rounds each

Preheat oven to 375. In the bowl of an electric mixer combine the mock cream cheese, egg, peppers, onion, garlic, cumin, chili powder and bread crumbs. Beat on low speed until blended. By hand stir in diced chicken. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Place the rounds on a cookie sheet and divide the filling between the rounds. Place a dollop of salsa on top and bake for 7 to 8 minutes. Cool for a minute and cut into quarters. Makes 24 pieces



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Celebrating Jewish Life

Marriages

Wedding of Burry Greenbaum (Teaneck, NJ) & Shuli Raskin (New Hempstead, NY) — Jan. 31, 2010

Engagements

Engagement of Yael Parnes (Lawrence) & Yitzi Brach (Far Rockaway) — January 24, 2010.

Mazel Tov to Debbie & Yanki (Jack) Brach and Chani & Aaroni Parnes on the engagement of their children.

Engagement of Bati Pister (Toronto, Canada) & Eli Perl (Toronto, Canada) — January 26, 2010

Engagement of Estee Nichtberger (New Hempstead, NY) & Avi Brick (West Hempstead) — January 26, 2010

Births

Lynn & Oded Dashiff (Brooklyn, NY) on the birth of Talya Risa — January 28, 2010



Estee Nichtberger & Avi Brick



Yael Parnes & Yitzi Brach



Talya Risa Dashiff

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The Kosher Bookworm

The long and short of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch

I had always assumed that learning long and hard was a virtue, and that looking for the short and easy way out was a vice.

Well, that was until I learned the history of the composition of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch at RJJ (Rabbi Jacob Joseph Yeshiva) with my rebbe, Rabbi Herschel Kurzrock. In that class this charismatic teacher taught us the virtue of being brief. He demonstrated that Rashi's greatness as a commentator was due to his terse interpretations of Biblical and Talmudic texts. Rabbi Kurzrock also explained to us that later commentators sought to emulate Rashi by explaining and elucidating other sacred writings in the hope of popularizing and making them more accessible to the Jewish public.



Alan Jay Gerber

Among the most successful in this category was the 19th century commentator, Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried. In 1864, he succeeded where others had failed,

and composed a concise version of the Orach Chaim section of the Shulchan Aruch.

Popularly known as "The Kitzur," Rabbi Gansfried wrote in a brief and terse manner, a talent that enabled him to simplify some of the most complicated laws and concepts. He helped enhance the observance of all the mitzvot involved in daily Jewish ritual.

As a Hebrew text, this premier legal work stood for generations next to the Chumash and Siddur on the bookshelves of observant Jewish households.

As time passed, an English translation of the Kitzur became needed in American homes, synagogues and especially in schools. Over sixty years ago a translation by Dr. Hyman Goldin met this need. His work, under the imprint of The Hebrew Publishing Company, became the standard for my

generation.

By the mid 1980's a new work, a more fluid and contemporary version composed by Rabbi Avraham Davis, was released in linear format under the imprint of Metsudah Press. It received acclaim by leading educators and rabbis. A non-linear version published to similar acclaim further enhanced its popularity.

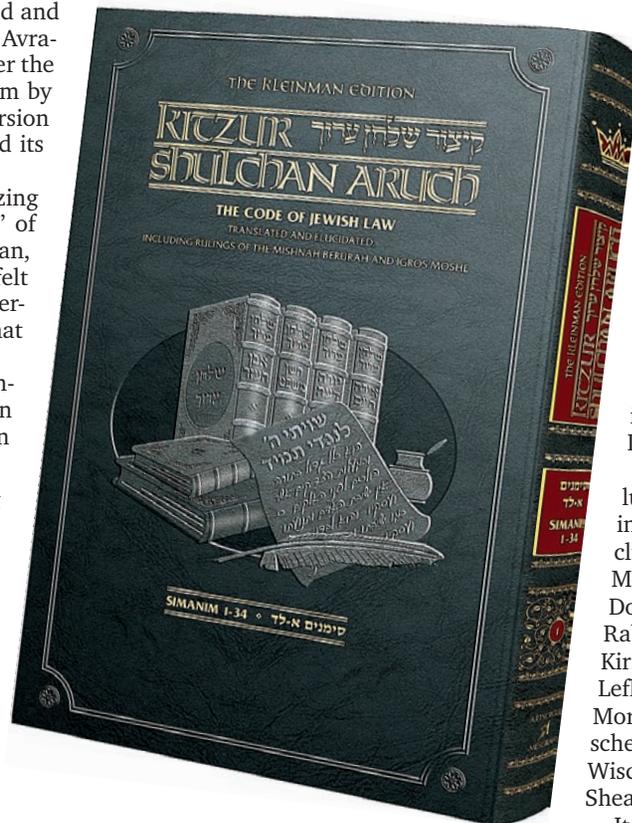
With the success of ArtScroll's format utilizing both a modern translation and "elucidation" of the texts for Rashi and Chumash, the Ramban, as well as the Mishnah and Talmud, it was felt that the classic Kitzur deserved the same literary treatment. Thus we have a new series that is the subject of this review.

"Elucidation" refers to a running sub-commentary on the text within the core translation that helps further explain laws and concepts in layman's terms.

Further, additional footnotes are provided on each page that explain the teachings of the basic texts, sourcing such primary Halachic authorities as the Mishnah Berurah, the Chayei Adam, the Beur Halachah, the Maharshah, and the Igros Moshe among many others.

Each volume contains a detailed set of appendixes that give the reader further technical data relating to the proper understanding of Halachic observance and an appreciation of the Halachic and rabbinic decision-making process. Also, each of the three volumes published to date have mutually exclusive indexes that further enhance the convenience of this work to the learner.

This work was prepared by a team of rabbis under the general editorship of Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Klugman and editorial



director Rabbi Yosef Asher Weiss. The Halachic guide to this work and a prime source of guidance and counsel is Hagoon Harav David Feinstein.

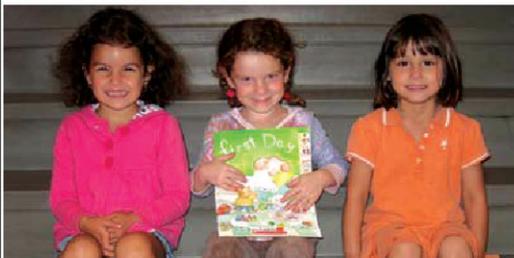
Other rabbinic luminaries involved in this project include Rabbi Chaim Malinowitz, Rabbi Dovid A. Kaufman, Rabbi Shmuel Kirzner, Rabbi Eli Lefkowitz, Rabbi Mordechai Sonnenschein, Rabbi Yehudah Wischnitzer and Rabbi Sheah Brander.

It is anticipated ArtScroll Kitzur will

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Finding Zion Q & A with Charles London

Charles London is the author of "Far from Zion: In Search of a Global Jewish Community" [Harper 2009]. Prior to beginning the book, London "had never strongly identified with my Judaism," he said. During the course of his research for his first book, One Day the Soldiers Came, he stumbled upon the Jewish community in Sarajevo. "They had used their historical experience of disaster, displacement and vulnerability to help that city survive the siege," he explained.



Inspired by the Sarajevo Jewish community and the discovery that his grandmother was raised in a Yiddish-speaking shtetl in Virginia, he set off in search of far-flung Jewish communities "around the world that might teach me something about how they got there, why they stayed, and what it meant to be part of this global people in an interconnected world."

Michael Orbach: So, what did you find?

Charles London: Everywhere I went had something new to show me about a different way to create community and to create a Jewish and a national identity. The diversity showed me the strength and vitality of the Jewish people, even as it showed me the effort it took to have a meaningful Jewish life in the modern world, be it in the 'Bible Belt' in Arkansas or amidst the enforced piety in Iran. I also realized that for every place I went, there were 20 others I could have gone. I could spend the rest of my life looking for these communities and not exhaust the search, though that is changing. Over 80 percent of the world's Jews live in Israel or America now. I do hope that other 20 percent can remain a source of creativity and strength for the rest of us.

MO: What was the highlight of the trip?

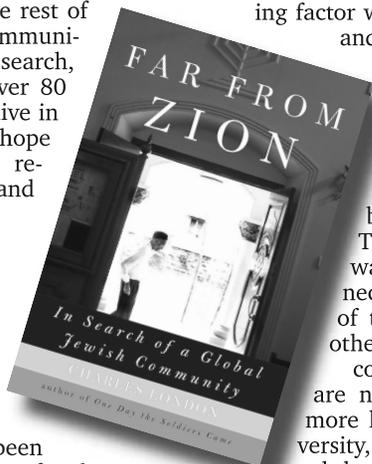
CL: There were so many — enough to fill a book! But right now, two places come to mind. In Uganda, a group of black African subsistence farmers had been practicing Judaism on their own for about 100 years. They had barely survived the reign of Idi Amin, and were just starting to come to the attention of global Jewry. They were making formal conversions by the hundreds and doing some amazing interfaith peace work and economic development. They ran a primary school and a high school serving

youngsters of all faiths. It was an amazing thing to walk along a dusty hill in eastern Uganda on Friday evening and have a group of African school children of all faiths yell out "Shabbat Shalom!" as I passed the Hadasah Primary School. I never thought I would stumble upon a Jewish school in an African village.

And in Bentonville, Arkansas, right in the heart of the Bible Belt, the first new Jewish community in the south in over 50 years is springing up. Like the Jews in Uganda, it's a DIY [do it yourself] kind of community. They are building their faith institutions and practices for themselves, without a professional class of educators and clergy like I'd had growing up on the east coast. In both cases, these communities reminded me that, even as some Jewish communities fade around the world — as they have for centuries — others are springing up. We're a persistent people.

MO: Was there any unifying factor between the disparate Jewish communities?

CL: They all insisted I eat more! Seriously, though, the communities had diverse histories and languages. They were every color under the sun. They had their own politics and communal challenges. They did share the universal challenge of engaging young people and figuring out how to adapt their institutions to the next generations, to create something lasting. But really, the main unifying factor was Torah. They understood and interpreted differently, and some of the communities were deeply secular, but this narrative of the people, whether they viewed as a sacred or a normative text, or something in between, had a role to play. The other unifying factor was simply a desire to be connected to each other, to be part of the same ecosystem as the other Jewish communities. I saw that we are not one people, but rather, more like a rainforest: rich in diversity, stronger for our diversity, and deeply tied to one another. We may struggle amongst ourselves over everything from women's prayer to the politics of Israel, but we are all creating the same project: a living expression of Jewish values on earth, even if we understand those values differently sometimes, and a meaningful and safe Jewish life for everyone who seeks it.



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 Notice is hereby given that I shall, from the 16th day of February, 2010 through the 19th day of February, 2010, beginning at 10:00 o'clock in the morning each day, in the Legislative Chamber, First Floor, Theodore Roosevelt Executive And Legislative Building, 1550 Franklin Avenue, Mineola, New York, sell at public auction the tax liens on certain real estate,

unless the owner, mortgagee, occupant of or any other party in interest in such real estate shall have paid to the County Treasurer by February 11, 2010 the total amount of such unpaid taxes or assessments with the interest, penalties and other expenses and charges against the property. As required by Section 5-44.0 of the Nassau County Administrative Code, the County Treasurer shall charge a registration fee of \$100.00 per day to each person who shall seek to bid at the public auction as defined above. A list of all real estate in Nassau County on which tax liens are to be sold is available at the website of the Nassau County Treasurer at

http://www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/Treasurer/Annual_Tax_Lien_Sale/tax_sale_listing.html. A partial listing of the real estate located in school district number(s) 14, 15 in the Town of Hempstead and in school district number(s) 7 in the Town of North Hempstead only upon

which tax liens are to be sold will be printed in this newspaper during the week of February 8, 2010. THE NASSAU COUNTY TREASURER MINEOLA, NEW YORK Dated: January 15, 2010 #19643E

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In Good Health

Depression: bad for you and your heart

Depression can be a debilitating disorder for many people and it comes in several different forms, some more severe than others.

To simplify the categories of this mood disorder, depression can be understood according to the following easy paradigm. Situational depression is a change in mood that is often referred to as the blues that comes and goes; it is the mildest form. If the blues



Michael J. Salamon

last for an extended period of time this may become a chronic depression, despite the fact that it is relatively mild. Then there are the more severe forms of depression that are often incapacitating. There are times when depression comes with anxiety and a pervasive sense of hopelessness and times when a mood disorder is evidenced almost exclusively with

sleep and eating disturbances and a complete lack of energy.

All types of depression are treatable but too often people suffering from depression dismiss their symptoms or get the wrong care.

In early January of this year a number of news organizations reported the results of a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The teasers used by

the media implied that antidepressant medications do not work to treat depression and that they are significantly overprescribed. But that is not quite what the study said. What the actual study did report was that some older antidepressants may not be as effective for treating very mild depression which is in keeping with the correct protocol.

The news reports also failed to mention that most people seeking care for depression from mental health specialists were likely to receive psychotherapy unless their depression was very severe, in which case they received a combination of therapy and medication, also in keeping with proper protocol.

And most importantly, not reported by the media was the fact that not receiving proper care for a mood disorder may exacerbate a person's depressive symptoms but perhaps even more critically, untreated depression may cause other problems.

Over the years, it has been observed that people with heart trouble are especially at risk for developing anxiety and depression. This makes sense because whenever there is a major life change or illness and pain, and cardiac problems are among these, depression is a common co-occurrence. A National Institute of Mental Health study reported that approximately 20% of people with a cardiac diagnosis also have a diagnosable depression. More recent research suggests that not only can the pain of heart disease

cause depression but depression can cause heart disease. While it makes sense that being told you have a bad heart or experiencing the chest pains that come with it can make you depressed it also is clear that being depressed can cause physical illness, and this is how it works:

Depressed individuals are loathe to exercise.

They often have a poor diet, limited social contact and a variety of other negative lifestyle habits, all of which contribute to the

People with heart trouble are especially at risk for developing anxiety and depression.

development of heart disease.

People who are depressed have higher levels of stress which can, in turn, lead to high blood pressure, irregular heart rhythms, damaged arteries and a weaker immune system, all of which underlie cardiac disease.

Having untreated depression has been shown to increase inflammatory markers in the blood (for example, C-reactive protein), and increase platelet reactivity both of which are high risk factors for cardiovascular illness.

People who already have a cardiac disorder

and also suffer from untreated depression have an increased risk for further heart attacks or other cardiac problems.

One especially important study found that ongoing untreated depression after recovering from a heart attack increases the risk of death within six months of that first heart attack from three percent to 17 percent.

There may not be a clear link that proves that untreated depression actually causes heart attacks but so much evidence currently exists that the American Heart Association has recommended that all cardiac patients be screened for depression.

The American Psychological Association notes that depression and cardiac disease are inextricably linked and is in the process of refining the criterion for cardiac rehabilitation psychology. The emphasis is on screening and intervening for individuals who have a history of cardiac disease to monitor and aggressively treat co-occurring depressions. Perhaps the most important issue is that individuals who suffer from the symptoms and signs of depression get the proper treatment for it. It's not only good for your mood but your heart as well.

Dr. Salamon, a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, is the founder and director of ADC Psychological Services, PLLC, in Hewlett, NY. His recent books include, "The Shidduch Crisis: Causes and Cures, published by Urim Publications.



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In Good Health

IS GLUTTONY A DISEASE OR A CHOICE?

Judaism teaches that we are to enjoy the beauty, benefits, and bounty of creation. However, when it comes to overeating, Judaism is clear that too much of a good thing is a bad thing.

Gluttony — let's call our reckless overeating by its proper name! is dangerous and damaging. Sadly, it is also an epidemic proportion in the world today. In the United States alone, there are nearly four million individuals who weigh more than three hundred pounds! There are nearly one-half a million (mostly men) who weigh in at a nearly gargantuan four hundred pounds. The average adult female now weighs more than one hundred and sixty pounds!

These are astonishing numbers. And frightening. Of even greater concern are the trend lines when it comes to obesity — the necessary consequence of overeating.

* Between 1962 and the year 2000, the number of obese Americans grew from 13% to an alarming 31% of the population;

* 63% of Americans are overweight with a Body Mass Index (BMI) in excess of 25.0;

* 31% are obese with a BMI in excess of 30.0;

* Childhood obesity in the United States has more than tripled in the past two decades, and;

* According to the U.S. Surgeon General report obesity is responsible for 300,000 deaths every year.

These frightening trends towards more and more obese Americans are growing, as are the negative consequences of obesity. As more and more doctors and nutritionists have “weighed in” on the overeating crisis, they have contributed to a debate about whether overeating is a “disease” or “willful behavior.”

Most people, when confronted by the question whether overeating is a disease or a behavior, answer reflexively — and with a sense of certainty that comes from such a reflexive answer. The question though, deserves more thoughtful consideration. It is not as simple a question as it first appears. And our response to it has a number of direct implications. Some argue that similar to other disordered eating like anorexia and bulimia, overeating is a disease. Why not overeating? And if obesity is a disease, then much of the stigma of being severely overweight disappears; it becomes easier to get treatment, and could open the door for insurance providers to cover treatments for people grappling with weight problems.

Others reject the argument that obesity is a disease. They consider obesity and overeating solely a failure of self-control. After all, they argue, we each have total control of the calories we ingest and of the time that we spend exercising.

“If you're fat, you've made a choice.”

Disease or choice?

As it does on other questions of behavior, on this question Judaism assigns responsibility to the individual.

We should never forget that Judaism considers the enjoyment of physical things, including food, to be a very good thing. This is why G-d created the world, after all. Raavad advises us that we should not avoid tasty food, it is enough to avoid what is al-

ready forbidden by the Torah. The reasoning is clear. G-d has taught us what we are to avoid. What we are not instructed to avoid, we can — and should — embrace. If G-d has not instructed us to avoid something, then it is to be enjoyed. However, even when enjoying the beauty of creation, it is possible to

Torah's damning description of the wayward son, the ben sorer u'moreh, is one who is “a glutton and a drunkard.”

In parshat Ha'azinu, G-d warns of the terrible spiritual slide the people might experience. The portion begins by warning the people that if they become overly involved in

lar world recognizes that overeating and obesity is “bad.” Go into any bookstore and you will find shelf after shelf of dieting books.

People eat to excess. This is not a disease. It is a moral problem.

What drives someone to overeat? While there may be as many answers to that question as there are overeaters, but there are a number of broad areas that we might consider.

Despite our 24/7 culture, in which stimuli is thrust at people — on television, the Internet, smartphones — constantly and incessantly, many overeaters do so because they are bored. People eat when they don't have anything “interesting” to do or look forward to. Even worse, when people find themselves watching television, they are bombarded by commercial after commercial celebrating food — usually junk food and soda.

Those images conspire with the boredom and drive many people to eat, and not just eat but to eat empty calories.

For others, the reason they overeat is deeper. Our world is profoundly isolating. People reach out to friends but they are “virtual” friends, friends they email, “twitter” or visit on Facebook. But people need more than “interaction.” We all need contact. We need community. We need the support of others. Too many people turn to food when they need love and comfort.

Reaching out to people is hard to do at the end of a long, stressful day at work. Food is so much more accessible. Gratification is immediate — gratification and not satisfaction! Relationships take work and work takes energy. If you are already tired and feeling burnt out; if you feel it is near impossible to muster the energy to reach out to others... well, food is an attractive alternative.

Some people overeat because they have “given up.”

Our society breeds such self-contempt for our bodies! We have created a culture in which young women (and men) are confronted with impossible body ideals and so are left feeling that they are “ugly” and “fat” even if they are perfectly normal. Already feeling that they are fat and ugly, they overeat because “what difference does it make anyway?”

They are sad and lonely. And because of their negative body images, they don't believe they deserve to feel any different.

There are those who overeat in reaction to an emotional hurt. When someone says or does something to hurt another, they eat to make themselves feel better. They eat in response to anxiety and emotional stress.

G-d has created a world that is good. Jewish teaching holds that we are to engage and enjoy the world. This is certainly true when it comes to eating — our celebration of the most joyous event in our calendar, the Exodus from Egypt, takes place around the dinner table! Our holidays are associated with food — blintzes on Shavuot, jelly donuts on Simchat Torah, latkes on Hanukah. To eat is to live.

But to overeat is to cross over from the enjoyment of G-d's creation to the dishonoring of it.

Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu Safran serves as Vice President of Communications and Marketing of OU Kosher. His book “Sometimes You Are What You Wear” has recently been republished in second edition by Xlibris Corporation.

Email questions or comments to newsroom@thejewishstar.com



overdo it. Raavad tells us that when one is eating and has had enough to feel full, yet he still wants more, he should hold himself back to honor G-d, and not surrender to his desires.

This understanding suggests that eating — like any kind of enjoyment of G-d's creation — is really a kind of prayer, a kind of devotion. We should enjoy it. But to overindulge is to give in to extreme desire which dishonors G-d and His creation. Therefore, so one does not accidentally show a lack of honor to the Creator, he should leave over a little food before the last morsel is gone. This practice is known as Taanis HaRaavad — the Raavaad's fast.

Just as on Yom Kippur, when Jews fast to focus their minds and thoughts on G-d, each day it is possible to engage in a “small fast” that accomplishes the same purpose!

The overindulgent one, the gluttonous one, is often the object of condemnation in the Bible. The Torah depicts Eisav's eating habits as a key element to his degradation and corruption. He gruffly demands that Yaakov pour the food into his mouth, and then the Torah states, “He ate, he drank, he got up, and he left; thus Eisav spurned the birthright.”

Eisav's downfall is tied to his gluttony. The

physicality, they will remove G-dliness from themselves — that there is a direct connection between how we are physically in the world and how we are spiritually. “...You became fat, thick and rotund and deserted G-d...” the Torah says of Yeshurun.

Sin is the necessary consequence of overeating.

Our world is profoundly isolating. People reach out to friends but they are “virtual” friends, friends they email, ‘twitter,’ or visit on Facebook. But people need more than interaction. We all need contact. We need support. Too many people turn to food when they need love and comfort.

One of the sad ironies of the over-eater is that he or she no longer even enjoys the food being eaten. Too often, she finishes her meal without ever having taken note of the pleasure of the food or the eating. Her eating is purely carnal.

This is, of course, one of the major causes of overeating — eating without thinking. We should eat slowly and savor the taste of each bite, taking time to recognize G-d's gifts. In this way we will feel full before we overeat. We will be sated. Satisfied.

One would think that someone who overeats does so because he or she completely enjoys

eating. But, ironically, enjoyment and satisfaction are the first “losers” when it comes to overeating.

People do not overeat because they love food and take great pleasure in eating it. As we have seen, in a Jewish context, overeating is tied to sinfulness. However, even the secu-

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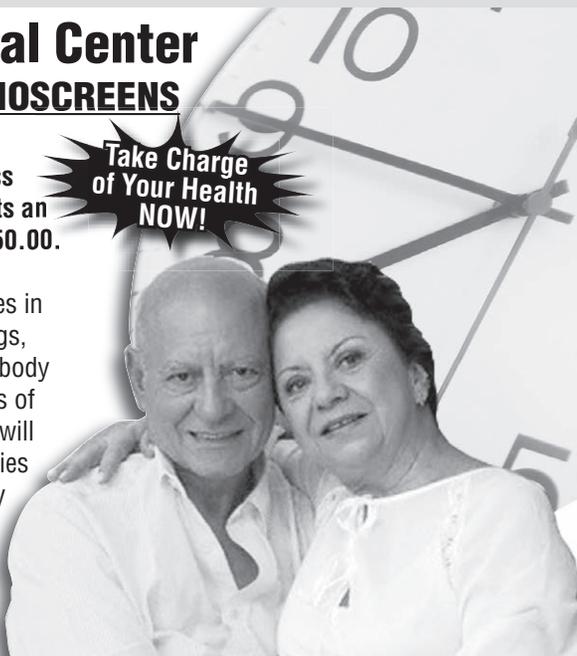
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That's life

Edited by Miriam L. Wallach



Photo by Miriam L. Wallach

Dear That's Life,

When I was a kid, there was a game on Sesame Street called "Which of these things do not belong here?" Watching the screen, you had to figure out which of the four items shown was out of place and did not belong with the others.

As if we were playing that game, we came upon a series of wild poppy flowers growing amidst rubble, debris, garbage, barbed wire and thorns as we were led on a tour of Hebron. Many on the tour took notice of the poppies and some just walked by. There were those of us, however, who stopped to look and take a picture. "Why are you taking a picture of those flowers?" a woman asked, but to me the answer was simple.

"Because they don't belong here," I said, then added, "and it is amazing how something so beautiful could grow amongst such destruction."

Quickly, the woman understood that I saw these flowers as a metaphor for the strong willed and determined group of Jews who live in Hebron, representing a mere 20 percent of the population against the other 80% who are Arab. What were the flowers doing on that hillside? As if defying the odds, they were growing on a small patch of grass, the way wild flowers often do. But how were they able to bloom and blossom despite the thicket of thorns that sat very close by? Perhaps, they were just meant to be there. There was a greater plan.

We walked a little further, noticing other small patches of poppies that had grown in small clusters. After a very short distance, however, there would be no other flowers to find. These delicate red beauties were limited to that area and seemed to stay close to each other, but beyond a certain border they did not go. This was their home. Maybe a strong wind blew the seeds of the first poppies and they settled a little further down, allowing a group to grow and then that cluster begat yet another.

Together, they formed a small garden in a place where no other garden could grow, a strength provided by their numbers and by their will. Their petals were red, representing their power and their might while at the same time, reminding those who admired them of the sacrifices had been made in order for them to be there.

The leader of our tour, Rabbi Simcha Ho-

chbaum, has lived in Hebron for over a decade. He explained to us that many people say they admire the sacrifice he and the others who live there have made. He said he did not consider it a sacrifice but rather, a privilege. However, he added that we, who were taking the opportunity to visit Me'arat Ha'machpelah on what turned out to be a warm and beautiful day in January, should make no mistake — we were only able to visit because he and the others lived there. It was a powerful statement and while I had not thought about it before, he was absolutely right.

The same could be said for anyone who lives in Israel. I can visit because others have the privilege, and many have sacrificed, to live there. It is a truth to behold, appreciate and not take for granted. They, too, are the red poppies of the Middle East — growing, fighting and determined while surrounded by thorns and broken glass, elements that could certainly stunt its growth or potentially destroy it altogether. How are those flowers able to bloom while surrounded by circumstances that would make it impossible for others to break through the soil?

Many would not have given them a chance and the odds were against them as well. But clearly, someone wanted them to be there. They most certainly belong and there is certainly a greater plan.

MLW

Last week's answers

R	S	V	P		A	B	B	Y	E		E	H	H	D
D	L	I	I		I	O	O	O	O		T	T	T	T
N	N	N	N		W	W	W	W	W		W	W	W	W
	W	W	W	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	M	
			M	M	M				M	M	U			
U	U	U	U	U		U	U	U		U	U	G	G	G
G	G	G	G		G	G	G	G	G		G	G	G	G
G	G	G		G	G	G	G	G	G	G		G	G	G
G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	X
X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	C	C
			C	C	C				C	C	C			
C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
C	C	C	C		C	C	C	C	C		Z	Z	Z	Z
Z	Z	K	K		K	K	K	K	K		K	K	K	K
K	K	K	K		K	K	K	K	K		K	K	K	K

1	2	3	4			5	6	7			8	9	90	99
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	90	99					99					99	99	99
99							99				99			
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99							99				99			

The Jerusalem Post Crossword Puzzle

By David Benkof

64. Wineglass part

Across

- Chosen people
- Talkback
- Orthodox
- Obama's office
- Ein ____
- Place for Shelley Berkley (D-Nev.)
- Actress Campbell ("Scream")
- "____ Empire" (What Reagan called the USSR)
- Former PM Sharon
- 1949 border
- Darn
- The Jerusalem of Lithuania
- Actor Efron ("17 Again")
- Milchig ingredient
- Military refuser Shapira
- Author Raphael ("Writing a Jewish Life")
- Saudi ____
- Hurt
- Chulent ingredient, perhaps
- "The ____" (Soloveitchik appellation)
- Anne Frank's hideaway
- Reform clergy org.
- Richard Dreyfuss and Adrien Brody
- Recite the Four Questions
- Economist Arrow
- Some relatives
- "We ____ One" (UJA slogan, once)
- Record company
- "Mapah" author (1520-1572)
- Black-and-white photographer
- Where on a garment to tie the tzitzit
- Not working
- Subway token
- "Man is Not ____: a Philosophy of Religion"
- Grew up
- "Now we are ____"
- "The Red ____" (Diamant novel)
- Barbara Boxer, e.g.

Down

- Novelist Erica
- Always
- Haifa sight
- It's rolled up for tefillin
- Carl of Michigan
- Actress Menzel (Tony winner for "Wicked")
- Stack
- Predict
- Caesarea sight
- Like most Yiddish books
- Lastman of Toronto
- Eerie Uri
- His name is booed
- Spring month
- Pro-Israel org.
- Deck
- Therefore
- Conference of 1938
- Eastern European Jewish history org.
- Sum
- Come up
- They may be stiff
- St. Louis sight
- Tool for Ryan Braun
- Decorate
- Actor Ed ("Up")
- Put away
- Brought the genie out of the lamp
- Wipe out
- Netanya sight
- Shelf
- Party-switcher Specter
- Job for Molly Picon
- Comic Gold
- Absorption org.
- Cutting
- JNF purchase
- Appear
- Streimel, e.g.

Answers will appear next week

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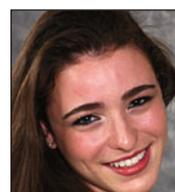
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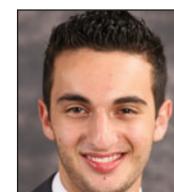
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Mayer Fertig

Mayer Fertig
Editor & Publisher

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