

THE JEWISH STAR

Independent and original reporting from the Orthodox communities of Long Island

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www.thejewishstar.com



DAY OF REST ON WHEELS

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GOOD HEALTH

Special section
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IN MY VIEW

Don't point fingers

'Not just a Syrian problem; we are all scapegoats'

BY DAVID BIBI

The way the Jewish papers and blogs wrote about the recent arrests in New Jersey requires some comment. One expects mis-statements and exaggerations from the international media, but do the Jewish papers need to follow suit? Rumor had become perceived fact, as so often happens. What happened to *dan lekaf sechut* — giving the benefit of the doubt — and innocent until proven guilty?

Rabbi Noah Weinberg zt"l tells of what he calls "A Jewish consciousness story."

Three rabbis are accused of succumbing to compassion. Was there personal gain for any of them? I highly doubt it."

A gregarious son partying each night brags to his father that he can count 100 true friends. The father congratulates his son, noting that in all his life, he has only achieved half a friend. The father suggests a test. "Take a goat, slaughter it,

put it into a sack, get some blood on you and in the middle of the night go to your friends," the father says. "Tell them you got into a fight with a guy at the bar, one thing led to another and you killed him. Beg them to help."

As so the son goes to each of those friends and all slam the door in his face. Dejected, he returns to his father and asks what the father's half friend would do. His father tells him to go and see.

In the middle of the night, still holding the sack and covered in blood, the son knocks at his father's friend's home. He tells the same story. And the half-friend hesitates, saying, "Although I shouldn't do this, you're Chaim's son, and I'll help you."

They take the sack and bury it together.

The boy returns to his father in shock.

The story continues and the father explains that a true friend would never

See VIEW, Page 5

Rabbi David Bibi leads the Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach. He can be reached at DavidBibi@gmail.com.



Girls at this year's session of Camp Simcha Special making a run for it through a gauntlet of friends and staff members. Photo courtesy Chai Lifeline

Summer in Camp Simcha Special

What summer is like for the doctors

BY MICHAEL ORBACH

Dr. Robert Van Amerongen's patients have kidney diseases, cerebral palsy, hydrocephalus and familial dysautonomia — a rare disorder that causes a failure in the

autonomic nervous system. Some patients suffer from conditions that so far doctors have been unable to diagnose. And this isn't a hospital; it's a summer camp.

But then again, Camp Simcha Special, a See CAMP SIMCHA, Page 8

Racing the clock after a heart attack

Balloon angioplasty and the 90-minute deadline

BY MALKA EISENBERG

As the EMT's roll the heart attack patient out of their ambulance and the wheels of the stretcher are locked into place, a clock begins to tick.

For patients who require balloon angioplasty to open a blocked artery, the clock moves even faster. During the procedure a balloon-tipped tube is threaded through to the heart, where it is inflated to clear plaque that is blocking or partially blocking an artery. However, research has demonstrated that the procedure is most effective when performed within 90 minutes of a patient's arrival at the hospital.

"We know it improves mortality," said Dr. Jason Freeman, director of interventional cardiology at South

Nassau Communities Hospital. "If you open up the blood vessel for them within 90 minutes, patients die less and live more."

South Nassau Communities Hospital is among the 569 hospitals awarded a Gold Medal in coronary artery disease from the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines program. This program ascertains that hospitals comply with current protocol for cardiac and stroke patients.

Rabbi Elozer Kanner, coordinator for Hatzalah of Nassau County and the Rockaways, said that Hatzalah transports most heart attack patients to South Nassau.

"It's requested by the community at large," Rabbi Kanner explained. "Balancing closeness and care, this is See RACING, Page 7



Clowning from coast to coast

The Five Towns-based medical clowning troupe Lev Leytzan is busy in Budapest this week, teasing smiles from the elderly and infirm on a 10-day mission of mercy to Europe. Last Thursday the teen and young adult clowns, led by the group's founder, Woodmere psychologist Dr. Neal Goldberg, appeared on the CBS Early Show on the CBS Television Network. This Monday they were profiled on local television, in a piece by WCBS-TV reporter Cindy Hsu.

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Shabbat

Candlelighting: 7:44 p.m. ■ Shabbat ends: 8:47 p.m.
Torah reading: Parshat Eikev

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That's Life
Edited by Miriam L. Wallach

Dear That's Life,

There's something about the image of a pregnant woman walking into a liquor store that just screams 'trailer park.'

The bells atop the door jangled as I walked into the store and was greeted by the friendly cashier.

"Hi," she said, "Can I help you?"

Knowing my way around (it's not important why), I told her I was fine. "I know where the vodka is, but thanks," I said, then added, "It's got to be a real white trash moment for the big, fat pregnant woman to be buying a large bottle of vodka." No

response. I guess I was not the first.

Having picked my brand of choice (Grey Goose), I proceeded to the checkout counter where the woman rang up the sale and asked: "Would you like to sample one of the new kosher rums we got in?"

Completely befuddled — not only am I quite apparently pregnant but I'd already made a joke about it — I declined. "Uhhh, kosher or not kosher, I'm pretty sure that rum is not good for the baby," I said.

Unfazed, she continued with the sale. Trying to reconcile the exchange in my head, I realized that she probably thought the vodka was for me and so why would I turn down the free rum?

I tried to make it better.

"Do you have any mixes?" I asked, and she said that she had three choices, one of which was for Cosmopolitans. "Perfect," I replied, and added, "My friend, whom I'm buying this for, is definitely a 'girly drink' drinker."

And even though it was true, and even though I turned out to be right about the call for the Cosmos, I don't think the cashier bought it.

Maybe it was the broad smile on my face as I left that made her doubt my story. Or maybe she didn't care either way. But I smiled my big, toothy grin anyway, imagining what someone watching me leave the store with my big, brown paper wino bag, my protruding belly and my classic pregnant waddle

might be thinking. I have to imagine it would be something out of When Harry Met Sally: I'll have what she's having.

MLW

Dear That's Life,

Going to Keyspan Park and watching a Cyclones game, you can be sure of two things: your \$12 is going to be well spent and expect the unexpected.

Medieval Times Night was even more fun than Hora night — who would've thought? But the on-field sword fight followed by the king and queen in full regalia heralded by trumpeting horns is really even more than I could've dreamed of for single-A ball.

A particularly rowdy crowd was in attendance and the woman next to me (clearly an out-of-towner, as she tried to clean up her peanut shells) was here for her first time. Not used to the, um, heckling, taunting and otherwise classic New York behavior, she was a little taken aback by some of what was being said by the fans.

"First time at a game?" I asked. "First time at a game here," she replied. Less than a minute later, a batter for the opposing team hit a rocket to left field that cracked the score board — almost a moment out of The Natural, for those who can appreciate the reference.

While the shot was impressive and many people initially cheered, as the runner rounded the bases a spectator sitting behind me screamed, "Hey Buddy, you break it, you bought it!"

Laughter erupted all around us, and the woman next to me smiled. "Welcome to Brooklyn," I said. "I guess that's the only way to put it," she answered.

MLW

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If something happened to you "that could only happen around here," you've got to share! Was it funny? Outrageous? Hopefully, it wasn't too painful. No matter what, if you type it up and sent it to letters@thejewishstar.com you'll have a chance to win a \$25 gift certificate to Burger's Bar on Central Avenue in Cedarhurst — in other words, you could win an outstanding meal at one of Nassau County's most popular kosher restaurants.



Submissions should include your name, your town, and your daytime and evening phone numbers. Sorry, but anonymous submissions cannot be considered. All decisions by the editors are final and all submissions become the property of The Jewish Star.

In case you were wondering, Burgers Bar is under the supervision of the Vaad Hakashrus of the Five Towns and Far Rockaway, and plays music you can find on MLW's iPod.

onlysimchas!

Celebrating Jewish Life

IN

THE JEWISH STAR

Engagements

- Engagement of Orah Melnick (West Hempstead, NY) & Avi Lasko (Hollywood, FL) — August 2, 2009
- Engagement of Talia Braun (Englewood, NJ) & Dudie Silberman (Montreal, Canada) — August 2, 2009
- Engagement of Yerachmiel (Rocky) Ziegler (Monsey, NY / Israel) & Bina Walkenfeld (Boro

Park, Brooklyn / Israel) — July 28, 2009

- Engagement of Motty Berger (Brooklyn, NY) & Mali Gutman (Monsey, NY) — July 26, 2009
- Engagement of Ilya Verzub (Cleveland, OH) & Sahra Bulow (Long Beach, NY / Denver, CO) — July 24, 2009
- Engagement of Laura Gerson (Hillcrest, NY) & Zohar Kastner (New York, NY) — July 19, 2009



Laura Gerson & Zohar Kastner



Ilya Verzub & Sahra Bulow



Orah Melnick & Avi Lasko



Talia Braun & Dudie Silberman

New York State Education Department*

Results from the English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematic Assessment Tests

| SCHOOL DISTRICT | SUBJECT | % LEVEL 1 | % LEVEL 2 | % LEVEL 3 | % LEVEL 4 |
|--|-------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|
| Entire Nassau County | MATH | 2.2% | 6.2% | 49.1% | 42.4% |
| John Philip Sousa School (Port Washington) | MATH | 3.3% | 1.1% | 53.8% | 41.8% |
| John F. Kennedy School (Great Neck) | MATH | 0.0% | 1.1% | 23.0% | 75.9% |
| Manorhaven Elementary | MATH | 3.8% | 5.1% | 52.6% | 38.5% |
| SCHWARTZ TORAH ACADEMY | MATH | 0% | 0% | 12.5% | ▶ 87.5%! ▶ |

| SCHOOL DISTRICT | SUBJECT | % LEVEL 1 | % LEVEL 2 | % LEVEL 3 | % LEVEL 4 |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-------------------|
| Entire Nassau County | ELA | 2.7% | 10.2% | 69.3% | 17.8% |
| John Philip Sousa School (Port Washington) | ELA | 1.2% | 10.5% | 59.3% | 29.1% |
| John F. Kennedy School (Great Neck) | ELA | 0.0% | 1.1% | 82.8% | 16.1% |
| Manorhaven Elementary | ELA | 4.1% | 11.0% | 67.1% | 17.8% |
| SCHWARTZ TORAH ACADEMY | ELA | 0% | 0% | 62.5% | ▶ 37.5%! ▶ |

* Level 4 - Exceeds the standards / Level 3 - Meets all the standards / Level 2 - Meets some but not all the standards or partially meets the standards / Level 1 - Shows serious academic problems

300629

To view entire galleries, please visit www.onlysimchas.com



Photo by Miriam L. Wallach

A short shopping list for the troops

The Living Torah Museum in Fallsburg, N.Y., Camp Hillel and HAFTR are conducting the "From Day Camp to Base Camp" project, collecting tube socks, Ziploc bags, Purell, granola bars and baby wipes to be delivered to troops serving in Iraq. Those items, specified by the U.S. Army, can be placed in the labeled bins outside

the Camp Hillel office at 33 Washington Avenue in Lawrence before 4:00 p.m. this Friday, August 7, 2009. Camp Hillel staff members will drive the bins to the Fallsburg Post Office on Monday, where postal workers and local families whose sons and daughters in uniform are in Iraq, will pay to ship the items overseas.



Photo by Sasson Tiram

Home at last

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky greeted 238 new immigrants from the US and Canada - including families from Far Rockaway and Long Island - at a welcoming ceremony at Ben Gurion airport Tuesday. The new Israelis - including 55 army recruits - left JFK Monday on a Nefesh B'Nefesh charter flight, the second such flight this summer. (L to R: Tzvi Mark from Maryland, Netanyahu, Sophie Lee from New York, Sharansky and NBN co-founder Tony Gelbart).

A people in harmony

An open letter to Israel's President Shimon Peres

BY DAVID G. EBIN

Dear Mr. President,
My wife and I recently spent two weeks in Israel where a most unexpected thing happened to us. It seems to me that it is worthwhile to write about it because of what it says about Israelis.

We were traveling from Jerusalem to Caesarea (more precisely to Kibbutz Sedoth Yam) by train, to visit relatives of our neighbors. The trip involved a change of trains at Beit Shemesh and at Tel Aviv, where our problem occurred. I entered the train with my wife right behind me, but much to our surprise, the doors closed before she was able to enter. We both tried to get the doors to open again but they would not and the train started to move.

So there we were, on our way to visit some people, but my wife was left on the platform and I was now in the moving train. I had the tickets and our money, and knew only that a man named Yuval was to pick us up at the station. My wife had the phone number and full names of our hosts, but no money or tickets. As you can imagine, this was most disconcerting.

But now came the interesting part. Many passengers on the platform saw my wife's distress and rushed to her aid. After all determined that her best language was English, a young couple set out to help her. They got on the next train with her and proceeded to the second station in Tel Aviv, at which I had gotten off. I was on the platform there when I heard an Israeli voice from a train screaming my name. I was unable to see the bearer of this voice, but I got the impression that he might be on the train on the way to Caesarea with my wife.

"We are in Israel so it's like



The letter writer, David Ebin, and his wife, Barbara, photographed together in the Roman Amphitheater in Caesarea after a travel mishap accidentally separated them for several hours.

home, don't worry," I thought to myself. But I was somewhat worried anyway. It was my wife's first time in Israel.

I got on the next train going north and looked for a passenger who might be of assistance. I quickly found one and explained my predicament. Immediately he said, "Let's contact your wife; do you have a cell phone?" I replied that I did not but my wife did, so he gave me his phone from which to call her. Unfortunately I was unable to locate her number, because hers was a borrowed cell phone. My companion (he was so helpful that I feel I can call him that) then told me that the train we were on didn't go to Caesarea but to Binyamina. However I could get off at Binyamina where he was detouring and take a train one stop back to Caesarea.

I did this, and took the train south with the hope of finding my wife or Yuval at the Caesarea station. I got off at Caesarea, but saw no one waiting for me there. I did see a young man with a rifle however, who seemed to be a station guard. I asked him to see the stationmaster, hoping that

someone had left me a message. He told me that he would help me and would like to do so because it was a good opportunity to practice his English. When I explained my problem, an older gentleman came out of the station house and told me that my wife was already at the kibbutz and Yuval was on his way to get me.

The young couple that had assisted my wife had seen to it that she reached Caesarea. They had alerted the train personnel to our problem and explained to the conductor on the train that my wife had no ticket or money to buy one because we had been separated. The conductor allowed her free passage. All this of course was a great relief.

Why do I think I should bother the president of the country with such a story? The salient feature is that from the time the train doors closed separating my wife and me to the time of our reunion in Caesarea everyone whom we came across tried to help us. In America we read in our newspapers how everything in Israel is tense and how there is strife among Israelis based on religion, politics or ideology. But when some-

one was in need, all who were available did whatever they could to help. Our helpers, judging by their dress, ranged from secular to haredi, but all were helpful without hesitation.

Mr. President, it seems to me that you should be proud to be head of such a country and that all Israelis should be proud that they have such consideration for others.

Finally a note from our tradition: We learn that in our history tragedy befell the Jewish people because they were not kind to one another - the second Temple was destroyed because of Sinath Hinam; a plague struck the students of Rabbi Akiva because they did not respect each other, etc. The Israel that we saw was one of a people in harmony, of people who really cared about their fellows. Surely the Guardian of Israel will protect such a people and make them prosper. In fact the Israel we saw seemed very prosperous as well.

Most respectfully yours,

DAVID G. EBIN
Stony Brook, NY

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Letters

Thanks for the subscription

To the Editor:

I've been receiving your paper and am really enjoying it. Your columnists provide me with insightful new information. Thanks for the subscription — I really look forward to each new issue.

MICHELLE PINTO

Director, Media Relations
North Shore-LIJ Health System

Why single out Syrian Jews?

To the Editor:

I am somewhat upset at the publicity being given to "Syrian" Jews and the "Syrian" Jewish community. It is as if the majori-

ty "Ashkenazi" Jews are not associated with this "outside" community of Middle Easterners. Was Bernie Madoff ever described as an "Ashkenazi" Jew? From my perspective, a Jew is a Jew is a Jew. I am not in need of any adjectives to set me aside from others. If charedim (Ashkenazim and Sfardim) riot in Jerusalem, they are all my burden. If a young Tel Avivian (irrespective of his genealogical background) is ignorant of the meaning of Tisha B'Av while chomping on his burekas, it is my tragedy. And if hundreds of kippa seruga officers and soldiers serve in Zahal - they have my pride - and I do not investigate whether their ancestors were Sfardim or Ashkenazim or Chasidim or Misnagdim.

JAY A FRIEDMAN

Ra'anana, Israel
(with magnificent memories of
Far Rockaway and Shaaray
Tefilah)

OPINION

Required viewing

Editorial

Everyone makes mistakes. That is the legitimate and charitable reaction from the most charitable among us to the arrests that brought shame and embarrassment to the entire Jewish world.

Our mistake didn't involve anything illegal, immoral or fattening. We pay our taxes, wash clothes but never cash, do not receive Section 8 housing assistance and have successfully resisted an oddly compelling urge to get rich quick by trafficking in human organs. No, our mistake was a sin of omission. We should have but did not attend the 'Asifa' or gathering sponsored by Agudath Israel in Borough Park last week — the one intended to remind those of us who need reminding that Hashem's chosen people are not supposed to lie, cheat or steal. It's a shame that we need reminding but recent events conclusively proved that we do.

Not attending the get-together in Borough Park was a mistake for two reasons. First, we missed the opportunity to see redemption in

the making — to hear a public mea culpa from a Chassidish rebbbe who has pleaded guilty to money-laundering charges from an earlier round of embarrassing arrests.

The Spinka Rebbe of Borough Park, Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Weisz, apologized for his actions. In so doing he re-earned the respect of many.

"Out of necessity we allowed ourselves to indulge in illegal acts," he said, according to a transcript on the Vosizneias.com website. "As painful as it may be, we must admit we have failed. Things have happened at our mosdos [institutions] that should not have happened. We must acknowledge this, and make it known publicly, because we're hoping it does not repeat itself."

"I'd like to tell you that we've learned it's possible to lead Torah and chessed organizations in accordance with the law. Yes, it is possible. People think it cannot be done, but we've learned this the hard way."

A true leader knows how to admit to making a mistake. Sadly, most of our current leaders don't seem to know it. Rav Weisz, however, has arguably showed himself to be a true leader.

The other reason not attending the Asifa in Borough Park was a mistake because we missed out on the opportunity to hear what may have been one of the most magnificent, on point, speaking-truth-to-power speeches in modern Jewish history.

Lawrence attorney Benjamin Brafman, clean-shaven, wearing a business suit and kip-pah seruga in sea of beards and black hats, told his audience the three saddest words he's ever heard were "Tatty, kimp't aheym," — Daddy, come home — spoken by a three year old boy visiting his father in prison.

If you haven't seen Brafman's speech on YouTube, we urge you to do so. It is required viewing for all of us. Instead of the next round of fundraising chatchkes this year, perhaps every Jewish institution ought to mail out a DVD of Brafman's remarks.

PARSHAT EIKEV

Struggle for observance

By Rabbi Avi Billet

Abe and David were long-time study partners (chavrusas). One day Abe asked David to sign a document as a witness and was shocked when David declined: "Sorry Abe. I can't be a witness because I'm actually not Jewish."

"What do you mean you're not Jewish? We've been chavrusas for 15 years! You're the frummet guy I know."

"Nevertheless," David said,

"the fact is that I'm not Jewish."

"Dave," Abe countered,

"you, of all people, know very well that a non-Jew is not supposed to keep Shabbos. I know you are scrupulous in your observance. Now, explain how you're 'not Jewish.'"

"Well, you don't know this,"

David said, "but I'm always carrying my house key in my pocket on Shabbos."

"So what? We have an eruv!

You're allowed to carry."

"Yes," David said. "But I don't trust that eruv."

Each person's level of observance is relative. People who appear to be identical in practice may, in fact, be at completely different stages in their religious development, depending on the path they've traveled to get to this particular point. Those who continue adding to their repertoire of obedience to the guiding principles of Jewish law are personally on an upward growth ladder. Those who may have been in a stricter environment and choose a more moderate middle ground might or might not be on a downward slide; they may simply be finding themselves and a form of halakhic Judaism they find comfortable.

These who actively ask questions and seek answers are on an admirable journey.

The Torah tells us in the beginning of chapter 8: "You must safeguard and keep the entire mandate that I am prescribing to you today. You will then survive, flourish, and come to occupy the land that G-d swore to your fathers. Remember the entire path along which G-d your Lord led you these forty years in the desert. He sent hardships to test you, to determine what is in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."

Which one is more binding? "You must safeguard the mandate" (meaning "commandments") or G-d tested you "to determine what is in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not?"

There are many today who opt to say, "I am still deciding whether I want to keep commandments. Some of them fit into my lifestyle but some don't agree with me, and I don't agree with them." This is not referring to minute details such as whether one first faces to the right or to the left when turning

one's face during kedusha. Rather, it refers to more global Jewish traits such as modesty in lifestyle and dress, honesty in business and speech, and choosing Jewish values over Hollywood values.

The Seforno explains that "testing to determine what is in your heart" was in order for those feelings to be made known to angels. They ought to know that, in judgment, humans have greater merits than angels, as their knowledge of G-d comes from a lifetime spent struggling with questions of faith and meaning.

Angels don't have such challenges. Humans do. Angels are told what to do, and they do it. Humans have free will.

Netziv quotes the Talmud Avodah Zara 5b, which teaches that some people take 40 years to understand the teachings of their mentors. Depending on how you define teachings and mentors, this could refer to forty years of studying, which might begin at age 5, or forty years

See PARSHAT, Page 9

The Distinguished Scholar in Residence program of the Young Israel of Great Neck is proud to host the noted "Zoo Rabbi,"

Rabbi Natan Slifkin

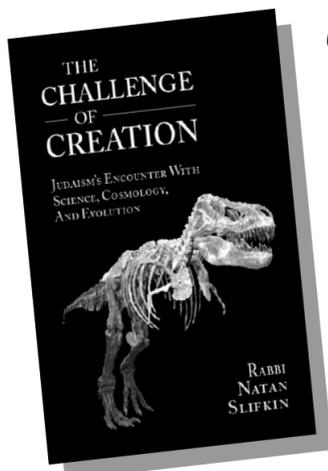
at the Young Israel on Thursday, Aug.13 at 8:00 p.m.
and for Shabbat, Parshat R'eh, Aug.15 —
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Rabbi Slifkin has achieved renown in his work understanding the complex relationship of the natural world and animals with Torah, taking eager participants on zoological tours and African safari.

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FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BENCH

Hope for the President

The only light more red than the one I passed through was the light on top of the NYPD patrol car that pulled me over. I had all sorts of defenses planned but then remembered the advice I have given clients many times over. Accept the ticket, allow the officer to perform his job, perhaps he'll remember how courteous you were, and negotiate later.

So if it was me instead of the Harvard Professor who was arrested while seeking entry to his own home, I would have politely explained that I lived here, followed the officer's commands and in all likelihood would not have let the affair escalate to the point where I was arrested for disorderly conduct.

No, it wasn't the officers who acted irresponsibly, it was Professor Henry Louis Gates. And no it wasn't the person who called the cops who spoke irresponsibly, it was President Obama. Without knowing any of the facts, President Obama labeled their actions "stupid." White officers arrest black people all day long and black officers arrest white people all day long and not a word from our President. But this case was different. Why? Because the arrestee was a friend of the President.

So three beers and one non-alcoholic drink later, all is well.



David Seidemann

(Biden drank a non-alcoholic beverage — probably a smart move on behalf of the administration, as his penchant for gaffes would only increase if plied with alcohol).

To his credit, President Obama backtracked and admitted he spoke too harshly and too

quickly. Indeed, he was guilty of the very rush to judgment of which he accused the police.

The greatest casualty (thankfully) of Obama's ill advised words was that his healthcare plan took a back seat for a week and the country now has more time to study a healthcare plan that could make you sick. Once again it becomes clear that the spoken word can either build upon or totally derail man's plans. Those three words uttered by Obama: "They [the officers] acted stupidly" shifted the entire focus of an administration, the press, and the nation from a discussion of healthcare to an analysis of race relations and prejudice, with the President's comments being as unfounded as any words a white man could utter about an African American.

The President has as much to learn it seems, as those who he thought needed a lesson. Who was it who said, "words matter?"

Then there is the other end of

the spectrum: the words of an 18 year old girl in New Jersey that resonated well and succeeded in changing the life of a despondent man and his family. The young lady's name is Tikvah, "hope" in Hebrew, which is exactly what she ultimately provided.

Two years ago she began to visit patients in a local hospital. She happened upon the room of a mentally disabled 50 year-old man who had suffered a stroke. A curse upon a curse. Sitting with the 50 year-old invalid was his 60 year-old sister who had never married and their 87 year-old father. Though born into the Jewish faith, they had no faith and did not observe any of the dictates of the Jewish religion.

The 87 year-old man cried to Tikvah that he had lost his wife, has a 60 year-old daughter who never married and a 50 year-old son more dead than alive.

"There is no G-d," he exclaimed.

Oh, but there is, insisted Tikvah. Look at nature. Look at how though G-d took your wife, your children are not alone. Look how your son, in his limited capacity, has a father to care for him and love him. Look how your daughter, who is alone, has a father who looks after her, upon whom she can rely in her loneliest of moments.

That discussion was the first of many weekly discussions that have taken place, every Friday afternoon

for the last two years.

Wherever Tikvah is in the United States, or out of the country, she calls this man. In one discussion, he mentioned that he remembered his Bubbie made chicken soup on Friday nights. Tikvah sent over chicken soup. One April, he mentioned that his Bubbie made a dish on Passover called matzo brei. Tikvah whipped up a dish of matzo brei and had it delivered to the man and his daughter.

Slowly, slowly, the kind acts, and the interest Tikvah showed to this man, his sick son, and single daughter yielded fruits. It took him a while but his belief and trust in Tikvah, an Orthodox Jewish girl, morphed into a belief in G-d the way Tikvah perceives. They see G-d's presence in their daily lives, through the tears, through the hardships.

At 87 its difficult to learn a whole new way of life. And no, he and his daughter are not (yet) Sabbath observant and do not (yet) maintain a kosher home. But two weeks ago, Tikvah received a phone call from the daughter informing her

that while she and her father still eat non-kosher, they no longer eat milk and meat together. So what, you say? I say, that change was more difficult for them than anything I do in the name of religion

What was the genesis of their newfound belief in G-d? Believing in one of G-d's creations. And not just any creation, but a creation that showed an interest in them; that did not look down upon them; a creation, a young girl, whose words were chosen carefully and with thought; words that unified and bridged a divide.

She would make a good President one day.

David Seidemann is a partner with the law firm of Seidemann & Mermelstein. He can be reached at (718) 692-1013 and at ds@lawofficesm.com.

IN MY VIEW

Continued from Page One

even hesitate.

The Torah states, you should love your friend as yourself, I am G-d. If you truly fulfill this, G-d promises then He is the third partner in your friendship.

What is a true friendship? Do you have a true friend? Do you have half a friend? Do you have someone in your life who would risk his freedom, his honor, his money if your son came to him?

A Jewish consciousness story!

Three Sephardic rabbis are accused of succumbing to compassion. Was there personal gain for any of them? I highly doubt it.

Did they succumb to a young man who was ostracized by others? Did they succumb to a young man who came to them again and again pleading that his children had no food on the table? Did they succumb to the suffering son of a trusted scholar? They did. They fulfilled the verse, Ve'avhava LeReacha Kamocho, even though they were duped, and my sense of judging favor-

ably tells me that Hashem is with them.

Was it wrong to be complicit in a potential federal felony? Undoubtedly it was. Does it mean we need to examine ways of helping? Certainly, and we need to re-examine much in the way we live.

The shocking news is the traitor among us. One begs to imagine the FBI threatened and cajoled, but to set up the 87 year old chief rabbi, to set up a relative, to set up the holy man who shared the dais with his own father for 30 years is unconscionable.

French Jews burned Maimonides' book and a short time later the Talmud was burned in France.

We have a problem and its beyond the scope of this article and well above my pay scale to solve it. But the problem is not a Syrian problem, not a Sephardic problem, not even an Orthodox problem. It's a Jewish problem. Let's come together to solve it. Let's give each other the benefit of the doubt and lets avoid pointing out scapegoats, because in the eyes of the world, we're all the scapegoats.

I'M THINKING

Israel's newest arrivals

For centuries people have risked their lives leaving their countries of birth to come to Israel. They leave behind family, property and belongings, bringing with them only their dream - to settle in the land of Israel.

Every day, another group of 500 to 600 people enters Israel following their dreams. The difference between these people and the thousands who have come before them is that these groups are not welcomed by the Jewish Agency or Nefesh b'Nefesh. They enter Israel by crossing over the Egyptian border and sneaking into Israel illegally.

They are Muslims and they come from Sudan and Eritrea. The logic is difficult to follow



Micah D. Halpern

but the disconnect from reality is clear. In the Muslim world children are fed a diet of hatred for Israel: hatred for Israelis, hatred for Zionists, along with their mother's milk. As they grow older the children are

introduced to vile, ugly, anti-Israel propaganda. As they grow still older they are encouraged to engage in anti-Israel activities. And yet, here they are by the thousands, Muslims unwilling to end their treacherous voyage until they have set foot over the Egyptian border and entered the Jewish homeland.

At home and in the other Muslim Arab countries they pass through, the former citizens of Sudan and Eritrea are in danger. Because none of them can ever return home,

they are legally classified as refugees. At home, they are being murdered by their ruling governments. In Israel, they are being asked not to live in the central part of the country.

Very few countries in the world have taken in the refugees of Darfur. Israel has. Few countries took in the boat people of Vietnam. Israel did. In the 1970's thousands of boat people were floating aimlessly, citizens of nowhere, no place offering to take them in, no one willing to save them. Israel, the Jewish State, was one of the only countries to open doors to the boat people, escapees from a far off culture.

Israel accepts refugees, even illegal refugees, because that is part of the Israeli mission. Israel accepts those who have no home because, throughout history and in countries throughout the

world, Jews have been sent out from their communities. Certainly, along with these illegal arrivals come legal and bureaucratic entanglements. Israel was set up to receive Jewish refugees from around the world, not intended to be a magnet for Muslims fleeing Muslim oppression. But the Jewish state is sensitive to the concept of people fleeing from persecution and that explains why Israel has a tradition of taking in people in need.

Today's refugees from Sudan and Eritrea have figured it out. They have figured out that Israel is not the enemy. They have figured out that Israel is the savior.

Micah D. Halpern is a columnist and a social and political commentator. Read his latest book THUGS. He maintains The Micah Report at www.micahhalpern.com.

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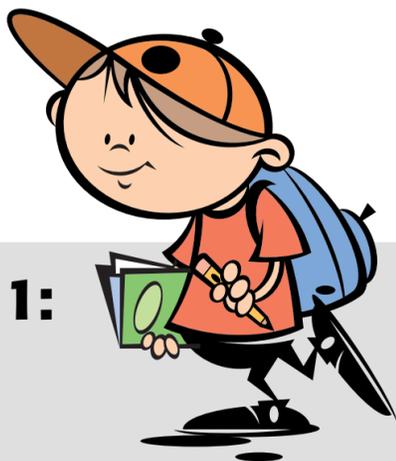
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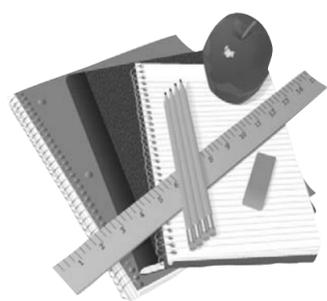
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ON THE Calendar

For a complete listing of upcoming community events, including items that didn't make it into the print edition, go to www.thejewishstar.com.

Cedarhurst - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns continues its seminars for Job Seekers. Please join us for the 2 remaining workshops. Thursday, August 6: Effective Job Search Methods. Learn the most effective job search technique. Discover how to access the hidden job market through networking. Discuss various networking techniques and the best way to spend your time when job hunting. Thursday, August 13: Strong Interviewing & Negotiations. Follow a step-by-step guide to navigating the interview process, from researching the company before you arrive to writing a standout thank you note once you leave. Discuss the when and how to negotiate your compensation package. All sessions will be held at the JCC of the Greater Five Towns, 207 Grove Avenue, Cedarhurst, beginning at 10 AM.

Lawrence - EndTheMadness is holding its 5th annual Lawrence Shabbaton this Shabbos, August 7-8 at Cong. Beth Shalom. The age range is for singles between 25 and 35. The cost is \$35 per person, to be paid in advance. Space is limited to 48 participants. Meals will be held at homes of local families, with other programming and a kumitz after Shabbos. For more information and to make a reservation, please contact Batya at salk1111@aol.com.

Cedarhurst - The JCC of the Greater

Five Towns will hold a Dinner with Friends and Entertainment with Irwin Pfeffer, the noted lecturer and humorist. For singles 55+, Tuesday, August 11th at 7:00 p.m. at 207 Grove Avenue Cedarhurst. \$18 to reserve. For more information call Lisa Stern, 516-569-6733.

Great Neck - Young Israel of Great Neck is proud to host Rabbi Natan Slifkin, the noted "Zoo Rabbi," at the Young Israel as a Distinguished Scholar in Residence on Thursday evening Aug. 13, at 8 PM and for Shabbat, Parshat R'eh, Aug. 15, morning drasha, before Mincha and Shalosh Seudot. Rabbi Slifkin has achieved renown for his work in understanding the complex relationship of the natural world and animals with Torah, taking eager participants on zoological tours and African safari. He has taken on the challenges of Creation and evolution confronting Torah-true Jews within a Torah model, though not without controversy. Check out www.zootorah.com. Come and be both enlightened and entertained! Young Israel of Great Neck, 236 Middle Neck Road, Great Neck (516) 829-6040.

Cedarhurst - Chabad of the Five Towns will hold a birthday Shabbat on August 15th for children who celebrate their birthday in Elul. Celebrate their special day with friends, family and cake. At Chabad. For more info: 516-295-2478 or www.chabad5towns.com

Cedarhurst - Chabad of the Five Towns' Friendship Circle Summer Camp begins August 24th and runs to

the 27th. Friendship Circle Summer Camp is an opportunity for children with special needs ages 4 and up to socialize, go on day trips, do arts and crafts and much more. Fee is \$40 per day or \$150 for all four days. From 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Drop off and pick up at Chabad. To sign up call 516-295-2478 *13 or email Batsheva@Chabad5towns.com

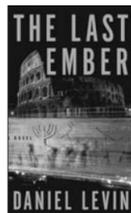
ONGOING EVENTS

Cedarhurst - The Beis Medrash of Cedarhurst holds a Flexible Morning Learning Program every Monday through Thursday from 10:30 a.m. until 12:45 p.m. There are shiurim and chavrusas in Chumash, Gemara, Halacha and Chovos Halevavos. Learners may come and go as they please. The Beis Medrash of Cedarhurst is located at 504 W. Broadway (off the corner of W. Broadway and Cedarhurst Ave.) For information, please contact Rabbi Moshe Kaufman at (718) 471-2780 or [moshekaufman@gmail.com](mailto:moshhekaufman@gmail.com).

Cedarhurst - The "Sunday Night Torah Lecture Series" in memory of Shari Siman-Tov z"l is held weekly at 8:00 p.m. at Congregation Shaare Emunah, the Sephardic Congregation of the Five Towns, 539 Oakland Avenue (Corner Oakland Ave. & Peninsula Blvd). Men and women are invited. Ner Sarah is a network of Torah and chesed projects in memory of Shari Siman-Tov z"l. For more information, please e-mail nersarah@nersarahproject.com or visit www.nersarahproject.com.

This Shabbos afternoon at Cong. Beth Shalom

An Ancient Spy, A Modern Conspiracy: Historical Revisionism on the Temple Mount is the name of a talk that will be given by author Daniel Levin this Shabbat afternoon at 7:45 p.m. at Cong. Beth Shalom in Lawrence, following



Mincha at 7:30 p.m. Levin's new novel, The Last Ember, looks at the all-too-real excavations under the Temple Mount that are apparently intended to erase all trace of Jewish archaeology at Judaism's holiest site.



SPORTS

Inter-shul baseball

| RESULTS | | | | STANDINGS | | W | L |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------|------------------|--------------------------------|---------|---|---|
| WEEK 6 - AUGUST 2 | | | | | | | |
| CHABAD | 7 | V | YIH | 5 | YINW | 5 | 1 |
| B.S. | 13 | V | RED | 4 | CHABAD | 4 | 2 |
| YINW | 11 | V | B.T. | 10 | SHTEEBL | 4 | 2 |
| SHTEEBL | WIN | V | ISLAND (FORFEIT) | | YIH | 2 | 4 |
| | | | | | B.T. | 2 | 4 |
| | | | | | ISLAND | 1 | 5 |
| | | | | | RED | 0 | 6 |
| SCHEDULE FOR WEEK 3 - JULY 12 | | | | | | | |
| FIELD 1 | FIELD 2 | | | | | | |
| 9AM | | | | TOP 4 TEAMS MAKES THE PLAYOFFS | | | |
| RED | V | B.T. | CHABAD | V | SHTEEBL | | |
| 10:30 | | | | | | | |
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The Shabbos RV

How two parents put the Day of Rest on wheels

BY MICHAEL ORBACH

Josh and Rachel Itzkowitz want to give parents of hospitalized children a restful Shabbos experience.

Nessa, the youngest of their eight children, was born with a severe congenital heart defect called Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome. Years ago, children born with the condition would live just a few days. Thanks to medical advances, and after two surgeries so far (a third is planned for September), Nessa is thriving, Baruch Hashem. But the Itzkowitzs have spent their fair share of time in Columbia Presbyterian Children's Hospital.

"No one should know what it means to live in a hospital," said Josh, who calculated that he spent at least three months in the hospital over the last two years.

While the care in Columbia Presbyterian and the services offered by volunteers of the Satar Bikur Cholim were "excellent," he repeatedly stressed, Itzkowitz found that while in the hospital something important was lacking: Shabbos. Last April, when the couple decided they wanted to give something back to fellow parents of sick children, they knew just what to do.

"We said, 'How could we give them back the dignity that they don't have walking around their hallways,'" Josh recalled. "We could give them a place of respite." From there came the idea for Revach, which means respite in Hebrew. The goal of Revach was to provide a full Shabbos experience for parents and families in hospitals. The



Photo by Josh Itzkowitz

Revach's Shabbos RV at rest in the driveway of the Bris Avrohom Center in Hillside, N.J., also home to a Hatzalah ambulance.

Itzkowitz's dipped into their children's college funds and bought and retrofitted a recreational vehicle (RV) that could be parked outside a hospital. The RV sleeps six and has its own dining room, kitchen and oven.

"You take for granted that when you have space that belong to you ... you live in a house that you can lock your door. In a hospital you don't have that. Even the couch that opens to a bed, you can't sleep for more than half an hour. I don't see us leaving the baby alone, but why couldn't I say sleep for three or fours, or have a Friday night Seuda (festive meal) for half an hour."

"We can light candles and enjoy Shabbos. You can't do that in a hospital."

The Itzkowitzs consulted numerous rabbis about halachic questions about the RV's operation on Shabbos, including how to pump water and how to lock and unlock the door to the RV if there

is no eruv outside the hospital (the answer was with a combination lock), and there were numerous technical details to work out.

"How much does a cup of coffee cost?" Josh asked rhetorically. "Apparently, thousands of dollars."

Josh and Rachel Itzkowitz are also active members of Hatzalah of Union County, covering Elizabeth and Hillside, N.J. and surrounding areas — he is a first responder; she is a dispatcher nearly every day.

They have paid back the money they borrowed from their kid's college funds but hope to fundraise to purchase more vehicles and expand the organization's services to more rural hospitals.

The Revach Project can be contacted at 908-436-9310 and Josh is willing to drive the RV anywhere, so long as he can make it back to his home in Hillside in time for Shabbos.

RACING THE CLOCK AFTER A HEART ATTACK

Continued from Page One

the one that seems to make it. We're called when there is an emergency so we generally don't have the luxury of a longer trip."

In the case of a dire emergency such as cardiac arrest, protocol requires a patient to be transported to the very nearest hospital.

For balloon angioplasty patients, "There's a huge push to improve times," said Freeman.

The average time in South Nassau was 67 minutes in the last quarter, he said.

"Ninety minutes is the cut off point," agreed Dr. Stephen Green, chief of cardiology at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset. "The sooner the patient is treated, the less the mortality. Ninety minutes is a reasonable window to mobilize staff to do the procedure, diagnose acute myocardial infarction, get approval from family, get informed consent, and ask questions."

Huntington, South Side and South Nassau hospitals can do balloon angioplasty, and North Shore provides quality oversight.

"We track how well they are doing and if any emergencies don't work out well they are transferred to North Shore or LLJ," said Green.

North Shore, designated a "tertiary hospital," can perform

open-heart surgery and all related procedures, including angioplasty.

"Ninety minutes goes very fast," Green noted.

"Door-to-balloon in 90 minutes is the Medicare standard that all hospitals have to meet," explained Donna Moravick, a nurse practitioner and vice president of cardiovascular services of the North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health System. It is infrequent that North Shore-LLJ does not meet the 90-minute time window, she said.

Community hospitals that are not equipped with catheterization labs cannot perform angioplasty. Instead, they process and stabilize such patients and transfer them elsewhere for further treatment.

Mercy Medical Center in Rockville Centre and Peninsula Hospital in Far Rockaway both transfer their heart attack patients.

"Obviously, [a patient] will not make it [to a catheterization lab] in the 90-minute window," said Dr. Peter Galvin, Peninsula's chief medical officer.

Dr. Sergio Sokol, chief of cardiology at St. John's Episcopal Hospital in Far Rockaway, said via email that his hospital stabilizes cardiac patients within 15-30 minutes of their arrival, and that the hospital's six month survival rate for angina and heart

attack is equal to those treated at hospitals that do perform emergency angioplasty.

Symptoms of a heart attack will vary case by case, according to North Shore's Dr. Green. "Everyone is different and has different sensations."

"The patient will feel discomfort, not super painful, pressure, a heaviness, usually in the middle of the chest," he described. "It can radiate but it may not, lasting a half hour or longer. It can go to the left arm, neck or back. They may have breathing problems at the same time, may break out into a sweat or have an upset stomach. It shouldn't go away in two minutes; two minutes is angina, not a heart attack. It's consistent for 20 minutes or more. They should seek care."

Female patients may experience very different, even minimal signs of a heart attack, according to a recent study published in the medical journal *Circulation*. Researchers studying early female heart attack symptoms found that during a heart attack, 43% of the 515 women studied had no acute chest pain, which is considered to be a hallmark symptom of heart attack in men.

"Patients must realize that they have to call [for help] as soon as they suspect that they have a heart attack," stressed Dr. Green.

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A Camp Simcha Special counselor with a camper.

Photo courtesy Chai Lifeline

SUMMER AT CAMP SIMCHA SPECIAL

Continued from Page One

camp with separate twelve-day sessions for boys and girls with serious illnesses, is no ordinary summer camp.

"It really is essentially a huge hospital disguised as a camp," explained Dr. Van Amerongen, the medical director of Camp Simcha Special, last Thursday. The interview was interrupted by a steady stream of requests, radio calls, and minor emergencies. The

profile book of his hundred campers, he says, is roughly the size of "the Manhattan phonebook."

"You don't want to drop it on your foot," Van Amerongen said with a laugh.

Van Amerongen, a resident of the Five Towns, heads the pediatric emergency department of Methodist Hospital in Brooklyn. At Camp Simcha Special he leads a sixteen member medical team that includes two other physicians: Dr. Zev Carey, also of the Five Towns, and Dr. Michael Rosen of Passaic; six nurses, three paramedics, two emergency medical technicians, a respiratory therapist and an on-site pharmacist.

Between its two sessions, the camp in Glen Spey, N.Y. is home to over two hundred children from all over the world and at least six hundred staff members.

Camp Simcha Special began eight years ago as an outgrowth of Chai Lifeline's year-round program that serves 3000 clients annually. The facility, which is also used for the regular Camp Simcha program for children with cancer and Chai Lifeline's mid-year retreats, is a 160 acre state-of-the-art campus that is completely wheelchair accessible from the swimming pool to the rope courses. The campus is a camper's dream: an IMAX theater in the social hall, archery, ceramics, two boats, and soda machines that dispense free beverages.

A sign on the entrance of the camp reads: "Welcome to the happiest place on earth," and while it is a memorable experience for the campers, it seems that even for the medical staff, gratitude for the experience runs both ways.

"When I'm in an emergency room it's usually a crisis situation," Van Amerongen related. "[The kids] are usually very sick; They're very afraid, I never really appreciated how much of a child they really are. Here, you see they're just kids. They're jumping like crazy and singing like crazy. You realize they're kids like my kids. They have certain limitations and certainly a lot of

challenges, but in their hearts they're kids and just want to have a fun time."

The summer experience has also left a particularly strong impression on his daughters; the youngest, Jennifer, asked to be housed with campers this summer and not in the staff housing.

"My girls have grown up here and learned a lot of important lessons. Not everyone looks like them and kids who are their age may not be able to do what they do," Van Amerongen explained. "My seven year old isn't afraid of children in wheelchairs or on ventilators, because they're children just like her."

Rabbi Simcha Scholar, executive vice president of Chai Lifeline, explained the goal of the program extends beyond the summer.

"It's building these children up, to develop them into citizens. They shouldn't remain campers their whole lives, that's not our job. Our job is to build the self-esteem and skills of every child for them to graduate and go on with their lives."

Rabbi Scholar described the camp as a Torah environment that accepts all Jews from, "Williamsburg Chasidim to Litvaks; kids with long peyes and kids who don't know what Shabbos is."

"Everyone gets together, every Jew is equal, [it's] a laboratory of Ahavas Yisrael [love for fellow Jews]. All of this is only possible because we have the right medical team," Scholar asserted.

The boy's session of Camp Simcha Special ended this past Monday.

"I do have a little bit of relief that we got through another summer without a problem," Van Amerongen said, "It's a lot of stress, but we're sad because camp is over. We miss all these magical moments. You walk around camp and you just see magical moments. You try to keep those memories alive over the course of the year and that spurs us on to come back the next year."

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Port, as you may have figured out, must be from Portugal in order to bear the name.

Also required are specific grape blends and rules governing aging and location.

Legal issues aside, many other dessert red wines try to pass as Port while not paying nearly enough attention to the style and quality they pretend to possess. Frankly, I find it a little insulting.

A few, however, do a surprisingly fine job. Asif, a boutique Israeli winery, is one of those. Keep in mind, so long as the wine is not called Port it is not bound by the aforementioned rules. I give the wine-makers credit for not pretend-

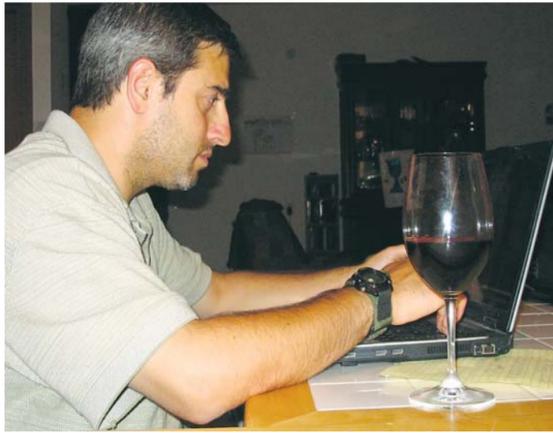


ing to be selling a Port wine. Instead, they have taken their own blend of grapes from barrels aged as they saw fit and produced a really good dessert red wine.

Upon opening, there is an immense amount of bittersweet chocolate with intense deep cherry. I like this. When I taste it, I find the wine to be very smooth for the alcohol content — 18 percent. (That's right, 18 percent.

That means no driving for the night.) The smoothness is a much-sought-after quality in a high alcohol wine and one of the true indicators that it was done right. There is also a surprising amount of tannins that indicate further potential for improvement over time. On the finish the cherry really takes over and stays with you; it maintained an almost chewy sensation for about 45 seconds after the wine was out of my mouth.

The upside to this wine is that, right now, it is very affordable. There are two downsides, however. The first is that I can't find it in the U.S., so I



Adam Neustadter

can't tell you whether it's worth the money you would have to lay out. The other is that it only comes in a 500 ml bottle. If I had to guess, I would put a price on the bottle of about \$30-\$37.50, given what other wines of this quality are going for and taking into account the small bottle. In Israel it goes for about 70 shekel. As for what that is worth in dollars on the day you read this, you'll have to figure that out for yourself. Asif Dessert Red 2005 is available for sale online at www.ideas.co.il (click on wines, then dessert wines). A Google search

this week revealed no other online sellers currently. There is a shipping charge but that still keeps the price below where I believe it should be.

Just goes to show you. You don't have to copy to be better than an original. You just have to be better than the original.

Adam Neustadter is an export consultant to Israeli wineries. He has taught about wine and was a sales executive for the Royal Wine Corporation for 15 years until his aliyah in 2006. He and his family live in Chashmonaim.

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ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER SUIT

Continued from Page One

of [the Elders of] Zion and have pulled out individual pages and applied it to the Lawrence school district."

The lawsuit claims that the closing and potential sale of the Number Six School is motivated by a desire to lower property taxes in order to finance yeshiva tuition.

"Orthodox families tend to be large, and yeshiva tuition tends to be expensive," the lawsuit says. The document claims the school closing would be the "latest device used to direct public funds toward Orthodox interests."

Additionally, it claims that the consolidation plan and the actions of the Lawrence school board serve as a "disapproval of their [public school students] religious choices."

An advertisement that appeared in the Five Towns Jewish Times in 2006 was among the evidence submitted by the parents. The ad was signed by 23 Orthodox rabbis in support of Orthodox candidates in that year's election, in which the Orthodox community won a majority on the board.

The lawsuit names the board and its trustees, both individually and in their official capacities.

By Michael Hatten's own count, this suit represents the third time the former board member has been sued for being a member of the Lawrence school board.

"This level of nastiness shouldn't be dignified with a response," he said.

School Board President Murray Forman said the result of the lawsuit and the need to defend against it would be to waste district funds that would have been better spent in the classroom.

Superintendent John Fitzsimons declined to comment but an attorney for the district, Albert D'Agostino, told The Jewish Star Tuesday afternoon that "The plaintiff's request [for an injunction to block the plan] was denied by their apparent lack of likelihood of success on their merits."

"The judge does not think too highly of the lawsuit and their chances of winning," said D'Agostino.

Agostisi, the lawyer for the parents, was adamant that his clients are not anti-Semitic.

"They don't care if [the board is] little green men from Mars, so long as they put the interest of the children first."

Mansdorf disagreed: "They are blatant bigots, by every definition of the word."

PARSHAT EIKEV

Continued from Page Four

under the guidance of someone you choose as your teacher, which might mean your high school teacher, rosh yeshiva and shul rabbi combined.

All this suggests that the choices we make in our lives are supposed to be a struggle and are supposed to jump in different directions, because we are meant to be struggling with our Judaism and finding what works for us. If the Babylonian Talmud is correct in the assertion that we don't "truly" understand until after 40 years, then many people don't arrive at true understanding until they reach the age range of 45-65.

While each person has a different path to travel, hopefully all roads lead to the same place. The goal we can share until we get to that place, however, is to view the struggle as an important part of our personal development. As long as we do not remain stagnant, and we continue to allow ourselves the opportunity to explore, to find the form of religious expression that works for us within a framework that has a source and a basis, we are on the right path.

This applies whether you were born into Judaism, came back to it, or picked it up along the way; whether you carry a key in your pocket because you do or you do not trust the eruv.

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THE KOSHER BOOKWORM

Why a teacher is reviewing a book by a writer named Student

Our review this week is of a book by an author named Gil Student. As unlikely a name as this may be, the mate-



Alan Jay Gerber

rial contained in his work is even more intriguing. "Posts Along The Way, Volume One: Shul" is, according to Rabbi Gil Student, an

adaptation of Torah teachings from his popular blog, HirhurimMusings.com, which expresses opinions on Jewish law and practice and welcomes studied and informed replies. The book contains a

vast array of discussions and questions concerning nearly every conceivable major contemporary issue dealing with the shul.

Unlike many others, the Hirhurim blog reflects a

responsible take on its subject matter. Absent is the rancor and slander that daily inhabit other blogs claiming to represent traditional Judaism.

Within the book's 261 pages are to be found topics normally found in halachic or rabbinic journals. It is divided into four main sections. The first, Praying

and Prayers, consists of twenty-one entries that include extensive discussions on Jewish prayer such as Jewish liturgical practice, prayer texts and variant practices, the use of Hebrew, Carlebach minyanim, the appropriate timing for prayer, proper times for the attendance of children at services, meditations as additions to the main service and, that all time favorite, talking during davening.

Another section deals with issues of rabbis and cantors, including can a ba'al Teshuvah (returnee to observance), a convert or a woman become a rabbi? The give and take is quite open, with each side given its due. Some of the conclusions will surprise you; other may anger you.

The largest section is titled Women's Roles; not surprisingly, this is the "hottest" item in a book of hot button issues.

The centerpiece of the section deals with women's prayer groups; the positions of a number of great rabbinic luminaries are given their due, among them Rav Joseph Soloveitchik zt"l, Rav Eliezer Berkovitz zt"l, Rav Hershel Schachter, Rav J. David Bleich and Rav Yehuda Henkin. Each set of opinions, taken together, represent a balanced point of view on this most emotional of issues.

Other issues related to women include a discussion about calling women to the Torah. At appropriate moments Rabbi Student adeptly files his own take which serves to remind the reader that this is a book of the author's creation.

Student's opinions are sure to set you thinking about issues you might not have previously considered important to you. Others cited for their p'sak serve to frame the discussion with Da'as Torah that informs Rabbi Student's opinions throughout.

The last section, titled Shuls, deals with the sensitive issue of the mechitzah. The pros and cons presented, and Rabbi Student's take, serve to conclude the discussion.

One fascinating section deals with the history of the style of congregational singing found in Young Israel shuls. The author delineates a series of short takes on what went into the adoption by the Young Israel movement, 100-years ago, the style of prayer that avoids phrase repetition and responsive readings, and adopt a rather "untraditional" musical mode, one not found in the shtetlekh of the past.

Not noted by the author in his critique is the fact that the musical nusach that is the signature of the Young Israel movement did indeed have its origin in the shtetlekh, specifically the Shinover Shtetlekh on the Lower East Side.

Taken together with the outlying of the commercial aspects found in many other Orthodox shuls today, it is no

wonder that the Young Israel movement, together with the OU's NCSY, has survived for close to a century as the prime youth movement in Orthodoxy in the United States today.

At one time in the near past this would have not been

thought possible.

This volume consists of 223 detailed and very informed scholarly footnotes to help the reader in his or her further studies; a source index of three pages and a subject index of sixteen pages.

Rabbi Student grew up in Teaneck, N.J. He attended the Solomon Schechter of Bergen County elementary school, Frisch High School, and Yeshiva University. He learned in Rav Mayer Twersky's shiur for five years, the last in the yeshiva's Kollel. Beginning as an actuary he later moved into finance in the bond industry. In 2002, Rabbi Student published his first work, "Can the Rebbe be Moshiach?" that brought forth detailed proofs from the Talmud, Midrash and Rambam that the late Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l could not be the long awaited messiah.

In 2004 Student started a publishing house called Yashar Books, publishing works of contemporary Orthodox Jewish scholarship. His publishing experience led him recently to assume the position of managing editor of the Orthodox Union's newly established OU Press. More on that in future editions of The Kosher Bookworm.

Student's blog has proven for all to see the value of the Internet and blogs in the dissemination of Torah studies. He has proved that responsible journalism can be accomplished without the use of sensationalism and yellow journalism. Rabbi Gil Student is to be commended for this, his first volume of his blog's work.

THE KOSHER BOOKSHELF

I would like to bring to your attention, briefly, several books and one recording, recently received, which may be subjects for future review.

Journalist and author Yaakov Astor has recently finished the second volume in his "The Hidden Hand" series, (Judaica Press, 2009) dealing with the history of the Holocaust from a theological point of view. The author's style is easy to read and understand. Each chapter is fully footnoted; a glossary and bibliography is at the end of the book.

Another book is "A Tale of Two Worlds: the biographies of Rabbi Dovid and Basya Bender" (Artsroll, 2009) by Devorah Glikzman. This 656 page volume will make for especial reading for those on the South Shore who revere the legacy of the Bender family and their lives in Jewish education that lives to this day at Yeshiva Darchei Torah in Far Rockaway.

Lastly, a unique two CD set titled "Tefila L'Dovid" features a weekday morning service with Hallel by one of the greatest cantors in Jewish history, Chazzan Dovid Kusevitsky, z"l. Recorded live in 1973 in Tel Aviv, it is newly released by Cantor Robert Vegh and distributed by Aderet.



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