

THE JEWISH STAR

Independent and original reporting from the Orthodox communities of Long Island

VOL. 8, NO. 17

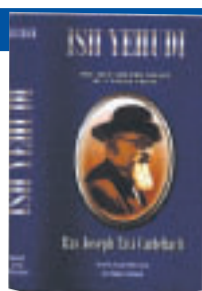
APRIL 24, 2009 | 30 NISSAN 5769

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STREIT'S FOLLOW UP



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IN MY VIEW

Thank you

A note to you from the parents of Zev Wolff

BY HELEN AND RANAN WOLFF

How lucky we are to be living in the Five Towns. When our son Zev was stricken with a childhood cancer called neuroblastoma, we asked for your help in raising \$3 million. The goal was to create a cure for our son, Zev, and other children who did not respond to the standard, currently available treatment. To help gather this money, a small charitable organization, Zev's Fund, was formed late in 2007. Due to the many who attended our Yom Ivun event at the Young Israel of Woodmere and others who gave in various fundraisers or donated individually, we have been able to raise nearly \$1.5 million dollars.

We cannot thank you enough for all you have done. Infinite thanks and blessings to everyone who has made a contribution. We would like to give a special thank you to Rabbi Hershel Billet for organizing a community-wide fundraising effort. We look forward to the day that Zev becomes an adult and can begin to reciprocate the chesed that he has received. The thought that thousands are praying every day for the recovery of our Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Sheindel gives us tremendous strength.

Zev is Baruch Hashem holding his own right now in his battle with neuroblastoma. He is attending school regularly this year, but still gets the cancer treatments he needs to keep the neuroblastoma at bay. He absolutely loves school,

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Photo courtesy www.rabenko.com

Zev Wolff sporting a wide grin in a recent photo.



Bircat HaChama heard 'round the world

Photo by Rabbi Avrohom Liss

Sunrise on Erev Pesach as seen from Agudas Yisroel of Long Island (top), one of many places where local residents observed the mitzvah of Bircat HaChama, including Cedarhurst Park, where hundreds gathered. Long Islanders were also among tens of thousands who said Bircat HaChama at the Kotel (below) and other places around Israel. Sunrise in Jerusalem (inset) as seen from the 20th floor of the Sheraton Jerusalem Plaza hotel.

BY BARUCH SPIER

At the Kotel, at a shtiebel in Tiberias, and on a balcony at Jerusalem's Inbal Hotel, a short blessing created lasting memories.

"Quite truthfully, this one stands out," said David Schreiber, describing his third Bircat HaChama experience.

On Erev Pesach, Schreiber and others from Long Island joined Jews all over Israel to recite the rare blessing over the sun. Schreiber, who left his Woodmere home to celebrate the holiday in

Israel, recited the blessing with hundreds of people in Tiberias. He was joined by his two sons and son-in-law as well as his five oldest grandchildren who live in the Alon Shvut neighborhood of Gush Etzion.

Schreiber decided to attend the Tiberias service after he found out that there would be no sunrise minyan at the nearby gravesite of Rabbi Meir Baal Haneis. Following the prayer, a son of the renowned Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l, spoke about the need for Israel to continue to place her faith in G-d.

Also from Woodmere, Roni Goldberg and his

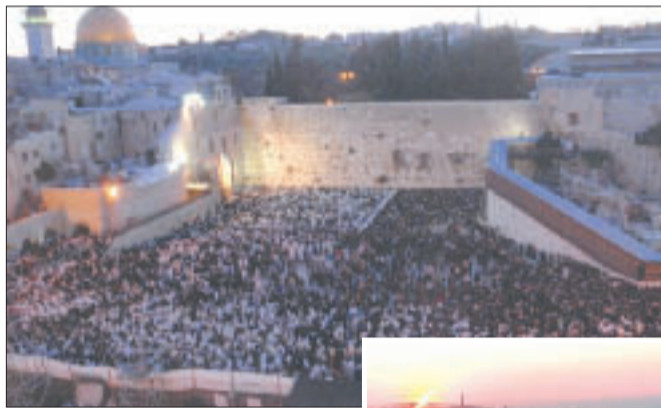


Photo by Yaki Tenenbaum

son Shlomi joined an estimated 50,000 people who recited Bircat HaChama at the Kotel.

"There was a sea of people," said Goldberg, describing the crowd. "There were people on the rooftops, people on the stairs; people were dancing everywhere."

Goldberg, who traveled to Israel for Pesach with his wife Yocheved and their four children,

See BIRCAT HACHAMA, Page 7



Photo by Claudio Papapietro

Borders Express on Central Ave. is pictured on Monday, April 20, 2009. The store is set to close on April 25.

Closing the book on a landmark in Cedarhurst

BY MICHAEL ORBACH

The Borders bookstore on Central Ave. survived two wars, three financial crises, and five U.S. presidents, but after 31 years it is closing its doors.

The store opened in 1978 as Walden Books, a subsidiary of K-Mart. It became Reader's Market, then Walden Books again until it was bought out by Borders. For most residents of the Five Towns, the bookstore was a rarity: a chain-store that managed nonetheless to become an integral part of the neighborhood and a necessary stop before the weekend.

Julie and Erica Sneider, a mother and daughter, waited for the cashier on the last Monday of the store's run.

"I came here for baby books before you were born," Julie said to her daughter who smiled shyly; Erica is now a doctor.

Customers browsed through the aisles in the early afternoon; everything was marked 40 percent off. Sales were brisk in the week after the closing was announced; a day earlier a line had

See CLOSING, Page 9

Students rally while Mahmoud rants

BY YAFFI SPODEK

Several HAFTR students joined a small crowd of activists at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza Monday afternoon to protest the United Nations' failure to address human rights abuses.

"The purpose of the demonstration was to protest the silence of the UN regarding human rights violations around the world and the UN's continued demonization of Israel," explained Avi Posnick of StandWithUs, an Israel advocacy organization which planned the rally together with New York Board of Rabbis, AMCHA, the David Project and the Orthodox Union.

Posnick, the East Coast community outreach director of StandWithUs and a Rambam alumnus, spoke at the rally, which also included remarks by Congressman Scott Garrett (R-New Jersey), Rabbi Joseph Potasnik of the New York Board of Rabbis, and Curtis

Sliwa, founder of the Guardian Angels and a talk show host on WABC-AM.

The rally was timed to coincide with the first day of the UN Human Rights Council's controversial Durban II conference in Geneva, Switzerland.

"We are also upset regarding the hypocrisy of the current conference in Geneva; a conference whose stated purpose is to fight racism and discrimination, yet it was planned and chaired by some of the biggest human rights violators in the world," Posnick told The Jewish Star. "The fact that [Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad was the main speaker at the conference and used the floor to call Zionism racism is utter hypocrisy and goes totally against the foundations and ideals of the UN."

In his speech Ahmadinejad called Israel a "most cruel and racist regime ... founded on a pretext of Jewish suf-

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Photo by HAFTR

HAFTR students protest in Manhattan on Monday. Pictured (L-R): Josh Blisko, Dani Resnick, Rabbi Zev Friedman, Avi Posnick, Gary Willig, and Henry Bernstein.

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Shabbat

Candlelighting: 7:25 p.m. ■ Shabbat ends: 8:29 p.m.
Torah reading: Parshiot Tazria-Metzora

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That's Life

Edited by Miriam L. Wallach

Dear That's Life,

You can take the girl out of the Five Towns...
As we sat at the beautiful Dead Sea over Chol HaMoed my daughter sighed and proclaimed, "I really miss Dave's Pizza."

DEBBIE SCHREIBER
Woodmere

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, Burger's 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.

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IN THE JEWISH STAR

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■ Wedding of Jessica Brody (East Brunswick, NJ) & Meir Olcha (Warren, NJ) - March 29, 2009

Engagements

■ Engagement of Michelle Davidoff (Monsey, NY) & Lior Gabay (Rehovot, Israel) - April 7, 2009

■ Engagement of Dov Dalin (Sderot, Israel) & Aviva Weiss (Rehovot, Israel) - April 5, 2009

■ Engagement of Stephanie Ostrowsky (Washington, DC) & Gabe Taraday (Washington, DC) - April 4, 2009

Births

■ Birth of baby girl to Sara (Salb) and Tzvi Hertz (Lakewood, NJ) - April 16, 2009

■ Birth of baby boy to Kostia and Aliza Feldman (Cleveland, OH) - April 12, 2009

■ Birth of twins Chaim Yitzchack and Chana Menucha to Yocheved & Eli Guterman (Syracuse, N.Y.) - April 7, 2009

■ Birth of Baruch Binyamin to Nachum Yechiel and Sara Nechama (Caplan) Freund (Brooklyn, NY) - April 7, 2009

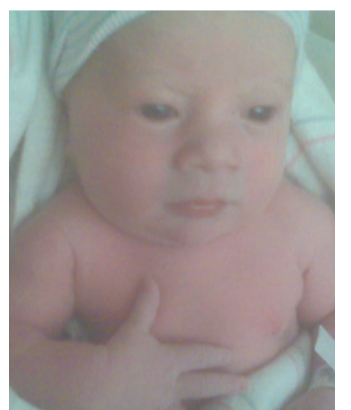
■ Birth of Miriam to A.Y. and Sarah (Modlinger) Mernick (Far Rockaway) - April 6, 2009



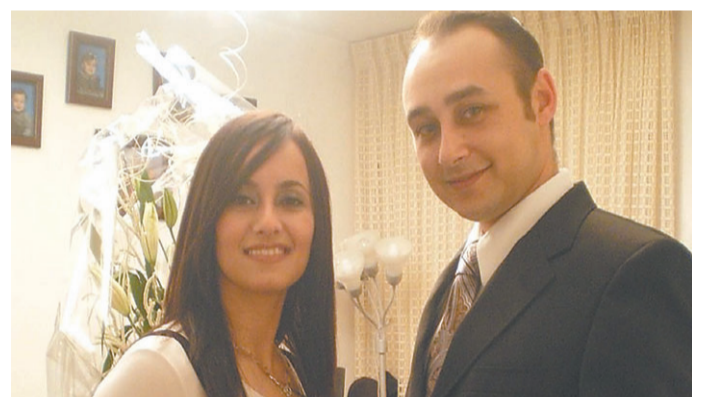
Chaim Yitzchack and Chana Menucha to Yocheved & Eli Guterman



Kostia and Aliza Feldman



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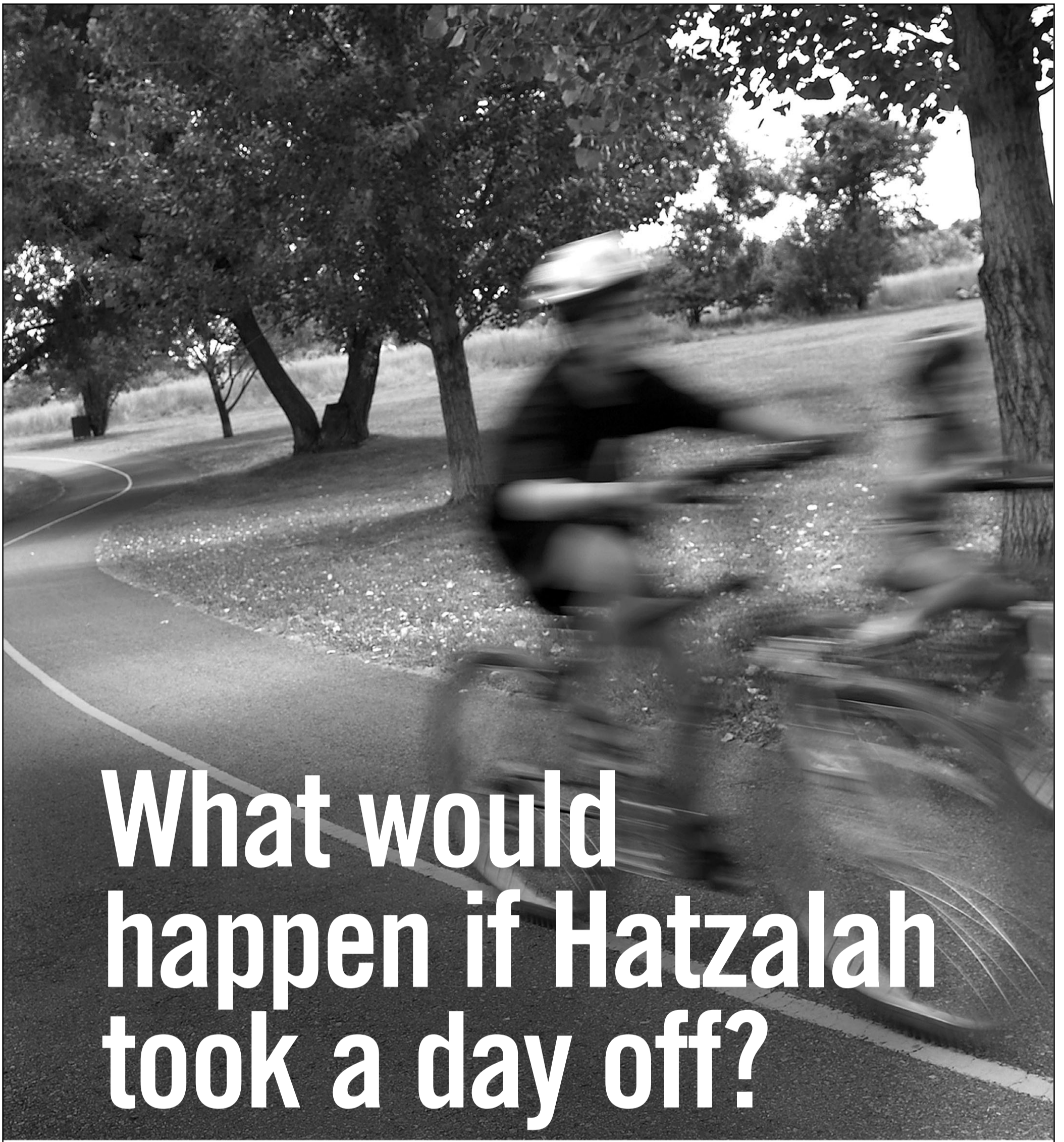
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OPINION

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Independent and original reporting from the Orthodox communities of Long Island

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Change needed at Vaad HaKashrus

Editorial

It would be a big problem if a portion of an observant Jewish community were to lose faith in, say, kosher food supervision and became less careful about kashruth as a result.

Yet, that's the kind of risk the Vaad HaKashrus of The Five Towns and Far Rockaway apparently decided to run when, with a month to Pesach, stores under its supervision were directed to turn away matzo and matzo products made by the iconic Streit's company.

There was no new or otherwise urgent information about Streit's kashruth or any belief that the fitness of its products for Passover was in any way compromised. In fact, the Vaad said that Streit's products could be used on Passover and there was no need to return or replace items already purchased.

As a result, some kosher consumers were confused and worried; others, quicker to sense "politics" at work, were infuriated. When people who keep kosher go out before Pesach to buy a product specifically because it's just been "banned," as some did, that's evidence of a serious failure of public relations, at best.

Yet the Vaad utterly failed to offer a compelling explanation for the sudden action it took with no prior warning to

the Streit's company or its respected Rav HaMachshir (kosher supervisor).

Compounding the perception problem, from the Vaad's point of view, was that some of its own members, rabbis of shuls in the Five Towns and Far Rockaway, as well as some rabbis in surrounding communities, did not (or could not), even in public, support the action taken in their names.

From the pulpit of the Young Israel of Woodmere, Rabbi Hershel Billet said, "The decision to remove Streit's from Five Towns stores was a mistake. It was not in the best interest of the kosher consumer who should have had the choice to purchase that product. And it was not done in a manner that was fair to the Streit's company and its hashgacha. All rabbis in the community who are members of the Vaad must share in the responsibility for decisions of the Vaad. When errors are made it is our responsibility to correct them." He took care to not pass the buck or push blame for the incident onto any individual.

Here's how any professional would have properly handled concerns about kashruth supervision at Streit's: After Pesach, or many months before, pri-

vately communicate with the company and its hashgacha, laying out issues and proposing solutions. Going public should have been the very, very last thing to happen, and only if no other resolution was possible. Instead, the matter was handled in the most unprofessional, hurtful, dictatorial manner possible — this, in a community full of professionals (many of whom, let's be candid, do not take dictation so well).

Why would someone responsible for kashruth standards do anything to sow doubt in the minds of kosher consumers whose continued "buy-in" to kashruth is essential?

Unfortunately, the question assumes a basic understanding of matters of public perception and public relations — people skills, in other words — that experience has led us to believe does not exist in the current professional leadership of the Vaad.

For that reason we have respectfully and regretfully concluded that, in addition to tightening their own volunteer oversight and inviting renewed input from handpicked lay leaders, the members of the Vaad should share responsibility for the Streit's fiasco by accepting the resignation of the current head of the Vaad of the Five Towns and Far Rockaway and find someone new.

Letters

National hechsher not needed

To the Editor:

I have been eating Streit's Matzo for more than 50 years only to find, as I did my last

minute shopping, that Streit's had been pulled from the shelves by the Vaads HaKashrus of Queens and the Five Towns.

Is it a strange coincidence that both organizations are headed by individuals with professional ties to the OU? Is anyone going to be surprised when, next year, the OU comes in and offers a "national"

hechsher, taking a good portion of the money that now goes to Rabbi Soloveichik? One of the reasons that I have looked for the Streit's brand has been my small way of paying tribute to this legendary family.

Kashrus has its own equivalent of Newton's law. Items at rest stay at rest. Cheskas Kashrus says items that are

kosher remain kosher unless proven otherwise. Nothing in the Shulchan Aruch says anything about a need for a "national" hechsher. It does talk about interrogating witnesses and not accepting gossip.

The Streit and Soloveichik families both have reputations of integrity that have stood the test of time. The fact that no

one has done a personal inspection of Streit's speaks to the integrity of the Vaad HaKashrus of the Five Towns and Far Rockaway.

DAVID WILLIG
 Far Rockaway

Contradictions in Streit's story

To the Editor:

Re the banning of Streit's Matzo ("Streit's Matzo off preferred list in Five Towns," April 10): If your reportage is accurate, our Vaad HaKashrus and the Queens Vaad Harabonim have besmirched the reputation of an iconic company; caused the company untold losses; maligned its supervising rabbi; and harmed stores that ordered Streit's Matzo. Moreover, the blindsiding of Streit's right before the holiday was disgraceful.

The article is rife with contradictions. Rabbi Yosef Eisen, our local Vaad HaKashrus head, says that "we're not saying, chas v'shalom, that it's not kosher." Well, either Streit's is kosher and should be on store shelves, or it is not kosher. Which is it? Rabbi Yoel Schonfeld, of the Vaad Harabonim of Queens, states that he advised people who had already bought the matzo not to return it. Translation: Streit's Matzo is kosher. Then why was it pulled from Queens stores?

Rabbi Daniel Senter of the Kof-K claims that the lack of a national hashgacha is the concern with Streit's. Yet he admits that a very recent visit to Streit's disclosed no differences in the production from a system approved by the Kof-K itself.

Worst is an unnamed

source who insists that standards at Streit's have suffered since the passing of Rav Ahron Soloveichik and the assumption of supervision by his son Moshe. Why does an anonymous smear merit credence? And Rabbi Schonfeld's supporting statement that "we know nothing about Rav Moshe Soloveichik" is pathetic. Rav Moshe co-supervised Streit's with his father and then jointly with the Kof-K. Rabbi Schonfeld could have picked up the phone and called either Rav Moshe or reputable rabbanim who know him.

Rabbi Schonfeld expresses "regret if we caused any loss to anybody." Sorry, but that does not alleviate the damage you have done. The Streit family, the company and Rabbi Moshe Soloveichik deserve more than a lame line in a newspaper.

AVI GOLDSTEIN
 Far Rockaway

Union kosher?

To the Editor:

"Everyone seems to agree" that Streit's matzo was kosher for Pesach. But Streit's is learning what the construction industry learned years ago: you must play ball with the union local having jurisdiction in the area in which you work and not with the union local having jurisdiction in your home area.

The Queens and Far Rockaway vaads (loyal to the OU) claim jurisdiction over Pesach, long having bucked Kof-K and are now gunning for the non-affiliated Rabbi Soloveichik. I am not an expert on the fine points of kashruth, but I am

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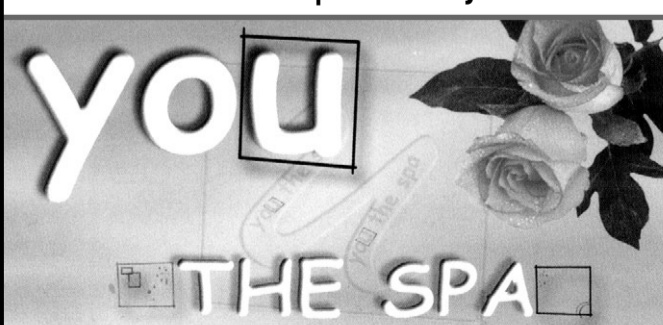
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OPINION

Kosher values

There is a story told about the horses that pulled the wagon of the Baal Shem Tov, the individual credited as the founder of Chassidus of the 18th century. According to this fable, these two horses were able to transport the Kabbalistic giant at speeds two to three times faster than any other pair of horses could. One day the horses started to discuss their strange and powerful abilities. After some dialogue they realized that they, like their owner, might also be special and decided that they could very well be angels of a sort. "If we are angels," they reasoned, "then there is no need for us to eat. We do not need to take part of any subsistence available to us in this world. After all, angels do not need food." So the two horses agreed to stop eating. After a period of time, they died of malnutrition.

In my experience recently, I have begun to wonder if we have not become somewhat like the two foolhardy horses of the myth. We believe that we are so much like angels, so above the reality, that we may have put ourselves on the road to self destruction. We have developed an approach to spirituality that is based on cognitive dissonance, where we have changed religious attitudes to accommodate behaviors, even if the behaviors

make little or no sense. This is especially troubling in the area of childhood sexual abuse in the Jewish community.

In November 2007 a study appeared in the American Journal of Psychiatry which, in essence, reported that there was a rate of childhood sexual abuse in Orthodox women somewhat comparable to the general population. Rather than working with the concept that a problem exists, representatives of the insular Hareidi community attacked nuances of the study and its authors as a way to devalue the findings. It was actually somewhat humorous watching how individuals with no training at all in research design and methodology attempted to discredit the study. While there were questions regarding the sample obtained in the study and its ability to be applied to a broader population, many of the critics chose to totally discredit the report. I, with advanced degrees in both psychology and research, was personally on the receiving end of a tirade of e-mails from a spokesperson for a religious organization in which I was called "dishonest" and



Dr. Michael J. Salamon

full of "imaginings" for allegedly being "a rape victim advocate" who supported the researchers and the study.

Since that time, several cases of sexual abuse in the Orthodox world have come to the fore and a few have even been publicly prosecuted. An Orthodox assemblyman, Dov Hikind, convened a conference in September 2008 to create an environment in which the topic could be addressed and those abused would find a way to come forward without fear of losing community and family support or even worse, become a target for retribution. For several months Hikind told reporters from the New York Times, The Jewish Star, The Forward and other papers that he had collected "1000 dossiers" of incidents of abuse by "over 60" individuals. In the last few days he scaled back his numbers. He also originally supported a strong bill that would extend the statute of limitations against perpetrators of these crimes. He has also recently voted for a less stringent bill. As a result, some have accused him of backpedaling on this very impor-

tant issue.

One of Mr. Hikind's accomplishments though, seems to be the development of a working group within the Brooklyn District Attorney's office created solely to fight sexual abuse in Hareidi neighborhoods. At this point the D.A.'s office is reportedly prosecuting 19 such cases. Not surprisingly, a spokesman for the Hareidi community called the D.A. corrupt and untrustworthy. The reason given was that the D.A. was lacking sincerity because he could have been prosecuting sexual abuse cases for the last two decades but chose not to do so. Furthermore Rabbi Meir Fund, a well respected member of the community known for his religious and Kabbalistic insights has been quoted as saying that "the secular authority deals with a different value system than ours."

If by that, he means that the authorities are in a better position to investigate, prosecute and follow up with criminals and perpetrators, then he is correct. That, however, is probably not what he means. It is more likely that he is suggesting that he is not supportive of the D.A.'s efforts. This attitude is not unlike the perspective taken by the horses of the Baal Shem Tov. The authorities are available. If you do not use their abilities, as the horses

dismissed food, only bad things will happen. Furthermore, it is clear that the authorities did not pursue cases in the past because people were instructed by these very same rabbis not to report them.

All the major Poskim (religious decisors) have determined that sexual abusers of children must be reported to the authorities. Several have even stated that there is no such thing as a statute of limitations within halacha in terms of reporting and prosecuting such cases. Yet, there are those in these very same communities who reject their decisions. For the sake of our survival, we must not let erroneous religious attitudes cause us to choose self-destructive behaviors.

Dr. Michael Salamon, a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, is the founder and director of the Adult Developmental Center in Hewlett, NY. He is the author of numerous articles and several psychological tests. His recent books include "The Shidduch Crisis: Causes and Cures" published by Urim Publications, and "Every Pot Has a Cover: A Proven Guide to Finding, Keeping and Enhancing the Ideal Relationship" published by Rowman & Littlefield.

IN MY VIEW

Continued from Page One

loves being with his friends and siblings, and loves doing the things that other kids do. For Zev, every day is a gift. He takes nothing for granted, nor do we.

UPDATE

Thus far Zev's Fund has

raised enough money to fund the development of a drug known as Hu3F8. (We were joined in our fundraising efforts by a sister organization, Band of Parents.) The project is being overseen by Dr. Nai-Kong V. Cheung, head of the Neuroblastoma program at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center's Department of Pediatrics. Dr. Cheung is very excited about the prospects for this new drug and the speed with which his

laboratory has been able to develop the working prototype for the drug. The final stages, which include the manufacture and FDA approval, are due to be completed by next spring.

Zev's Fund has also given seed money to fund a clinical trial being set up by Dr. Giselle Sholler at University of Vermont. This trial will tailor treat-

ment to individual children based on the particular biology of their tumors.

REQUEST

Dr. Cheung has found promise in two other immunotherapy drugs. We have committed ourselves to help him fund these projects as well.

Please consider an initial or additional contribution to assist the development of these future treatments. Every amount large or small helps. We ask that you visit the website www.zevs-fund.org.

Every blessing to you and your families.

David Seidemann's column, "From the other side of the bench," will return next week.



Photo courtesy www.rabenko.com

If a book is ever written about philanthropy in the Five Towns, Zev Wolf may get his own chapter for capturing a community's collective heart.

Letters

Continued from Page Four

familiar with union jurisdictional disputes. I would be willing to bet that by paying for OU supervision, Streit's could be accepted by these two vaads, with no change in their production methods.

Now ask why the cost of kosher food is so high.

LEON SCHWARZBAUM
North Woodmere

Chilul Hashem

To the Editor:

The totally inappropriate and completely off-base halakhic announcement that caused Five Towns stores to ban the sale of Streit's Matzo clearly points out the need to remove the current administration of the Vaad Hakashrus, which must bear full responsibility for the resulting chilul Hashem.

HARVEY FINKEL
Lawrence

ABOUT LETTERS

The Jewish Star welcomes Letters to the Editor of no more than 250 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for style, content and space. Deadline is Monday at noon; we cannot guarantee placement. Letters must include the name of the writer, current address and daytime telephone number and may be mailed to The Jewish Star, 2 Endo Blvd., Garden City, NY 11530; faxed to (516) 569-4942; or e-mailed to letters@thejewishstar.com.

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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.

Manhattan- The Orthodox Union Job Board is hosting a Jewish Community Services Expo on Sunday, April 26. Whether you are gainfully employed but still need help in areas out of your control, or are unemployed and want to learn how to navigate the system, this expo is for you. The expo will begin at 12 noon and continue until 4:00 p.m., and will be held at Landers College for Women, 225 West 60th St. in Manhattan. 35 diverse organizations will appear under one roof and give you the information you need to empower your life -- Employment services, Unemployment information, Food programs, Vocational Training, Health Care, E-Learning/ Adult education, Job placement tools, Services for the aging, Family and psychological services, Medical services, Disability services, Services for the deaf and special needs, Services for children, and much more. A resume tune-up class will be featured. In 15 minutes you can update your resume and be ready to present it at a moment's notice. (Registration is required - first come first served.) Come to our open seminars and get your life motivated with a special presentation by Red Katz. To learn and hear Red please go to the OU Job Board archives at www.oujobs.org. This is a free event. To gain access to this Expo please register online at www.oujobs.org. You can also register by e-mail at jobs@ou.org. Please enclose your full name, city and state and we will register for you.

Oceanside - The Friedberg JCC, is hosting its 1st Annual "Try"athlon on Sunday April 26 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Distance in 20 minute intervals will be measured in running, biking, and swimming events. All activities take place at Friedberg JCC Health, Fitness and Aquatics Center, 15 Neil Court in Oceanside. Prizes will be awarded to winners. Light refreshments and T-shirt will be provided. The cost is \$20 and proceeds will benefit Friedberg JCC and Sunrise Day Camp. Space is limited, so advance registration is suggested. For more information, please call (516) 766-4341, ext. 130 or e-mail Aschiller@friedbergjcc.org.

West Hempstead- West Hempstead High School is hosting an M.V.P. All-star Day on Sunday, April 26, featuring five all-star games from five different divisions of yeshiva players from across the tri state area. The event will run from 10:30 a.m. until

4:00 p.m. West Hempstead High School (rear entrance) is located at 400 Nassau Blvd. (Exit 17N off Southern State Parkway).

Little Neck - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns invites its LIFE members to the "Spring Fling Luncheon", on Sunday, April 26 from 1-3 p.m., to be held at the Samuel Field Y, 58-20 Little Neck Parkway in Little Neck. Pre-registration is required. Bus transportation is limited. For more information and to register please call (516) 569-6733, ext. 204 or 211.

Cedarhurst - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns has scheduled "Dinner with Friends," a program for the bereaved, for Tuesday, April 28 at 7 p.m., to be held at the JCC, 207 Grove Ave in Cedarhurst. For more information please call(516) 569-6733, ext. 209. Pre-registration is required.

Oceanside - The Friedberg JCC is hosting a free HBO documentary series on Alzheimer's. "The Memory Loss Tapes" will be shown on Wednesday, April 29 from 7:30-9:30 p.m. This documentary takes an intimate look into the lives of seven individuals living with Alzheimer's, each in an advanced state of dementia across the full spectrum of the progression of the disease. The second documentary, "Caregivers," will be shown on Wednesday, May 6, from 8 to 9:30 p.m. This documentary is seen through the lens of five individuals caring for family members suffering from the disease, conveying the sacrifices and success of people who experience their loved ones' gradual descent into dementia. Both films will be followed by light refreshments and a question and answer session. The JCC is located at 15 Neil Court in Oceanside. For more information, please call (516) 766-4341 ext. 131 or e-mail: rbruckenstein@friedbergjcc.org.

Great Neck - The Sid Jacobson JCC is offering regents review classes on May 3, 10, 17, 31, and June 7 and 14. Intensive preparation for the June 2009 Regents will be given for six weeks during 90-minute review sessions. Top NYS licensed math educators with small classes of 12 students or less. Classes include Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Integrated Algebra, Geometry, Math B, Global Studies, US History and Spanish. Classes will be offered in Great Neck and Roslyn on Sunday mornings and weekday evenings. The cost is \$329, or \$269 for JCC members. For more information on class listings check jccreview.com or contact Julie Hollander at (516) 484-1545, ext. 117, or jhollander@sjcc.org.

Manhattan - The National Council of Young Israel (NCYI) will host its 97th Anniversary Dinner on Thursday evening, May 7 at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, 36 Battery Place in Manhattan. The theme of the dinner is "Honoring our Past, Impacting the Present." For more information or to make reservations, go to www.youngisrael.org/dinner, e-mail to dinner@youngisrael.org, or call (212) 929-1525, ext. 100.

Cedarhurst - The National Council of Jewish Women Peninsula Section will be holding a 5K Fitness Walk through Cedarhurst and Lawrence on Sunday, May 31. The purpose of the walk is to inspire members of the Five Towns community and surrounding areas to get into better shape this spring. To attain this goal, a fitness and motivational plan will be provided through the NCJW web site, ncjwfitnesswalk.com, to help community members get started and build their endurance over an eight-week period. There will also be weekly training walks beginning on April 7 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hewlett High School track. The sessions will be open to all registered participants, to prepare for the 5K (3 mile) walk. Walkers of all levels and abilities are encouraged to participate. To register for the event, contact the NCJW office at (516) 569-3660 or visit ncjwpeninsulasection.org.

Oceanside - The Women's Circle from the Chabad of Oceanside is looking for vendors to rent space at a flea market on Sunday, June 7. Space is \$40 per table with two chairs. For more information, please e-mail jbhakim@verizon.net.

ONGOING EVENTS

Cedarhurst - Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst and Bnei Akiva North America are happy to announce the launching of a new Bnei Akiva chapter in the Five Towns. The chapter will be open for 4th and 5th grade boys and girls of the entire community. Activities for boys and girls will be separate and will be led by our Bat Ami girls, Alona and Nofar. YILC is located at 8 Spruce Street in Cedarhurst. For more information, please call (516) 569-3324.

Cedarhurst - The Beis Medrash of Cedarhurst is introducing a Flexible Morning Learning Program, which will take place 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 can 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 more information, please contact Rabbi Moshe Kaufman at (718) 471-2780 or moshekaufman@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, e-mail nersarah@nersarahproject.com or visit www.nersarahproject.com.

Woodmere - The Young Israel of Woodmere hosts a Torah Conference Call (TCC) program every Monday through Thursday from 12:30 to 1:00 p.m., and Sundays from 10:00 to 10:30 a.m., sponsored by IDT. The schedule is as follows: Sundays, Rabbi Binny Freedman: tastings on the parsha; Mondays, Rabbi Zev Meir Friedman: contemporary hashkafic topics; Tuesdays, Rabbi Kalman Topp: halachic topics of daily life; Wednesdays, Rabbi Aaron Glatt, MD: Bentsching and halachos relating to bentsching; and Thursdays, Rabbi Yisrael Kamintsky: hashkafa from the parsha. To participate, dial (718) 732-6924 or (973) 409-3117. Enter the conference ID#: 516 295 0950 and enter the password: 613613#.

Long Beach - Long Beach Medical Center has a newly formed Gamblers Anonymous group. Meetings are held each Monday at 7:30 p.m. in Conference Room D at Long Beach Medical Center, 455 E. Bay Drive. For more information, please call (516) 897-1250.

Long Beach - Long Beach Medical Center's Counseling Center has free weekly Anxiety & Depression walk-in screenings every Wednesday from 2-3 p.m. Screenings will include an interview with a mental health professional. For more information, please call (516) 897-1270.

Hewlett - 1 in 9's Hewlett House is offering a wide array of ongoing classes and support groups at the Hewlett House is a community resource center for all cancer concerns, located at 86 East Rockaway Road. A new class, held on Tuesdays, from 10-11 a.m., is a "Mind Body Spiritual Healing Journey" for cancer patients looking to connect to their inner sanctuary. Please call (516) 374-3190 to register.

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PARSHAT TAZRIA

Bald, pure and loving It

BY RABBI AVI BILLET

In Vayikra 13:33 and 14:8-9 we see instances of how people on the road to reassuming a status of "taharah" — readiness to participate in holy activities — are required to shave hair off their body, including, in the latter case, all of one's hair (even eyebrows).

This is fascinating because the Torah elsewhere dictates that a kohen may not make a mark of baldness as a sign of mourning (Vayikra 21:5), and Rashi there makes a comparison to a similar commandment given to all Israelites in Devarim 14:1 saying no one may make any mark of baldness on any part of the head for the deceased.

How is baldness viewed in Jewish law?

In the context of speaking of how those with tzaraat may have certain kinds of hair loss, Vayikra 13:40-1 says when one is bald, whether it be on the back of the head or a receding hairline, one is "tahir," i.e. not considered to be afflicted with tzaraat.

On the other hand, the Talmud Kiddushin 36a learns from the verses cited above (Vayikra 21 and Devarim 14) that a Jewish male may not completely shave his head!

For those who sport the Kojak look, do not fret yet, for the Talmud here and in Makot 20a says the prohibition is when one shaves in this manner as a sign of mourning.

Perhaps one can suggest there is a difference between shaving when one needs to follow a prescribed ritual for ridding oneself of tzaraat, which is done under the guidance of a kohen (Jewish priest), and shaving for other

purposes. After all, the Torah is also clear that a man may not shave specific parts of the head — the "payot" (Vayikra 19:27), and yet the Torah allows the shaving of the head to monitor tzaraat.

The mishnah in Bechorot (7:2 or 43a) says that a bald kohen who has a line of hair going from ear to ear on the back of his head is permitted to serve in the Temple. A completely bald kohen, on the other hand, is considered to have a blemish which disqualifies him from service. Both of these refer to a natural baldness.

Commenting on this mishnah, Rabbi Ovadiah of Bartenura says, "It is more beautiful when a person has hair in the back and not in the front than if a person has hair around all of the head with a bald spot in the middle. Certainly one who has hair only in the front and not in the back is disqualified from service." In other words, receding hairlines are a mark of distinction and elegance.

This is not the space to discuss the rules of disqualifying kohanim from service or for addressing the positive or negative qualities of baldness. However, Jewish texts certainly encourage one to embrace natural hair loss. While some balding Orthodox men thank G-d every day for the custom of wearing a kippah, others turn to society for methods of coping with hair loss.

I can't speak from experience, or from personal tzaraat treatment (thankfully none of us can), but while natural baldness is in a sense glorified by the sources shared until now, the full-headed shave raises halakic questions in

the laws of shaving and removing the "payot" from the "corners" of one's face and head.

Instead of trying to sympathize or empathize or criticize, I will end with a story.

For 27 years Patrick Stewart was a known Shakespearean actor in England, "bald as an eagle" who performed with a sizable and noteworthy toupee. At age 47, he came to the United States having been cast for a role on a new television series. When he arrived, he apparently left his acting toupee somewhere and came to the first rehearsal without it. When his toupee arrived later and he started wearing it, he was told not to by the directors because his natural look was more authoritative and commanded more of a presence. This launched a new phase in his acting career as Captain Jean Luc Picard of the starship Enterprise in "Star Trek: The Next Generation" which included 176 television episodes and at least seven films. The internet movie database considers his "bald head" one of his trademarks.

"L'havdil," bald or not, Jewish men have a mitzvah of "payot," to let the hair on the sideburns grow at least as low as the cheekbone. Whether one embraces baldness or tries to hide a receding hairline with a full-headed shave (even though the Torah says in our parsha that balding is natural and not a mark of tzaraat), we must still remember and observe the other mitzvot related to care of the hair.

Avi Billet welcomes your comments and thoughts at avbillet@gmail.com.



Photo by Rabbi Avrohom Liss

Bug free, guaranteed

Yisroel Meir and Dovid Liss of Lawrence carefully examined Romaine lettuce to make certain it was insect-free before it was used as a bitter herb at their family's Seder that evening.

BIRCAT HACHAMA HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD

Continued from Page One

stood beneath the main stand for the services. He listened to the prayers and songs from blaring loudspeakers placed around the Kotel plaza. Shlomi, who recently finished studying at Yeshivat Torat Shraga in Israel, said he had never prayed with so many people before.

Yocheved Goldberg prayed with her three daughters from the balcony of their room at the Inbal Hotel. She enjoyed the view of the old city on her left as she said the blessing over the sun to her right.

Jakob Deutsch, a fifth grader at HALB, also had a view of the Kotel as he said the blessing with his father and two brothers from the roof of Yeshivat Netiv

Aryeh in the Old City of Jerusalem.

"From where we were, the sun shined right into our eyes," recalled Deutsch. He and his brothers were amazed by the amount of people and the helicopters hovering nearby.

Deutsch hopes to recite the next Bircat HaChama in Israel as well. He sighed in anticipation and said, "Now there is another 28 years."

Locally, several hundred people gathered in Cedarhurst Park to bless the sun at an early morning ceremony organized by Chabad.

"There is nothing we take for granted," said Rabbi Zalman Wolowik of Chabad of the Five Towns. "We thank Hashem for everything."

Rabbi Wolowik began to sing a wordless tune, a niggun. Small pamphlets with the sun and a pair of sunglasses on the cover containing a service for Bircat HaChama were donated in memory of his young son, Levi Yitzchok Wolowik, who passed away less than two months ago.

After a short time the sun appeared, first as a small yellow ball wreathed in gray; then emerging as a blinding light, casting illumination on the crowd below. The blessing was made; families took pictures and lollipops were given to the children.

Additional reporting by Michael Orbach

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Benjamin Brafman reflects on Robert Morgenthau

BY MICHAEL ORBACH

The race is on to succeed Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, and the winner will be lucky to hold the job for a fraction of the time that Morgenthau has been in office. He was first elected in 1974.

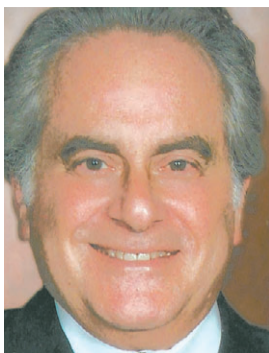
Attorney Ben Brafman, who worked for Morgenthau for four years beginning in 1976, recently reflected on his old boss who decided to not seek a tenth term.

"I gave him moments of nachas in my professional career," Brafman said, "even when my work resulted in

his high profile defeats."

Brafman, a resident of Lawrence and the recipient of nearly every award for attorneys in the criminal bar, is arguably the best criminal defense attorney in New York. However, like many, his career really only began after serving under Morgenthau as a junior D.A.

Brafman worked in the Rackets Bureau trying white-collar criminals,



Benjamin Brafman

police corruption in the Ninth Precinct and even prosecuting cases against organized crime. According to Brafman, the only sign of aging he's detected in the 89-year-old district attorney is that in their last meeting Morgenthau was wearing a tie he owned when Brafman served under him.

"People see him as an old man and I always viewed him as a senior citizen when I went to work for him

35 years ago," Brafman said, laughing over the phone.

The greatest things Brafman said he learned from Morgenthau is that there is no substitute for hard work and that total preparation is an absolute requirement to be a good trial lawyer. However, it was Morgenthau's integrity that affected him most.

"Your integrity was more important than any other quality as a prosecutor or a



Robert Morgenthau

criminal defense lawyer," Brafman explained. "That's what I think part of Bob's strength was: he called it as he saw it, without worrying what the newspapers thought."

In 1980 Brafman left the Manhattan District Attorney's office and borrowed \$15,000 from his maternal grandfather to open his own practice, Brafman and Associates.



Local jump rope team will advance to nationals

BY YAFFI SPODEK

The Rock it Ropers of Woodmere, the only Shomer Shabbos jump rope team in the country, will advance to the national rounds of the USA Jump Rope (USAJR) tournament in Galveston, Texas in June.

The results of the regional qualifying tournament were revealed in early April and 14 of the Rock it Ropers' 32 jumpers are now moving to the next level of the competition.

"The scores from our sub-regional tournament were phenomenal," said Coach Lucie Buissereth, known as Lucie B. "We were certainly the envy of all the coaches ... I am so proud of each and every team member. All the hard work and grueling training sessions were worth it. Our girls and two ladies are in phenomenal shape and did so well."

The Rock it Ropers came home from the regional competition with 45 ribbon awards, the most out of any of the other

nine teams in the region. Team members who qualified for the nationals include Gabriella Dubin, Monique Welsh, Carolyn Lieberman, Suri Fineberg, Tamara Weinberg, Ahuva Ross, Leora Jacobowitz, Julianna Gersbbaum, Meron Ippolitto, Ariela Huberfeld, Julia Katz, Tamar Eisenberg and Yonina Weinberg. Lucie B. and her coaching partner, Dion Tulloch, also qualified to compete alongside the Rock it Ropers in June.

Carolyn Lieberman, a mother of four in Woodmere, came in second overall in the entire region, right behind Lucie B., in the age 30-49 category.

"I am very excited about how I did," Lieberman, an accountant, told The Jewish Star. "I just started training in November 2007, and now I am really in shape. This was a really exciting goal to reach, and I am really looking forward to competing in June."

The Rock it Ropers have come a long way since they began competing professionally two years ago. While other teams met on a Saturday to

compete in the qualifying tournament, Lucie B. successfully petitioned USAJR officials to allow her team to compete on a Sunday to accommodate their religious observances. Last year, only four of the team members qualified for nationals, and Lucie B. is thrilled with this year's results.

"The nationals is considered the 'mother' of all jump rope tournaments in the U.S.," she explained. "This is the big leagues where the best of the best jumpers from every state and region battle it out for the title of champion."

The Rock it Ropers also won a gold first place award for team presentation, style and banner, earning them the honor of being the first team from their region to walk out at nationals.

"Usually there are more than 2,000 jumpers and a huge audience," said Lucie B. "USA Jump Rope does expect a huge turnout this year, as this is the first time nationals are being held in Texas."

Going home again

BY MIRIAM BRADMAN ABRAHAMS

Visiting Israel is going home for many of us. It's really a second home, a place we look forward to being and feeling comfortable. We tend to revisit sights we enjoy, spend time with family and take in the unique atmosphere. On a recent week-long trip to visit my son in Israel, I stayed at my friend's apartment in Tel Aviv, which is celebrating its centennial this month.

I spent the days walking along the city's streets on familiar and new routes; from the hectic Arlozorov train station to the Azrieli towers where I rose to the awesome observation deck on the 49th floor, and from breezy Namal Tel Aviv, the port on the northern end of the city's coastline to Neve Zedek's quaint streets near Jaffa at the southern end of the city. I circled upscale Kikar Hamedina, down to Rechov Weizman past Ichilov hospital to the Tel Aviv Museum. I strolled from Rabin Square to Sderot Ben Gurion to Dizengoff's Bauhaus center, down to the Kikar's flea market then on to Nahalat Binyamin's colorful artist shuk and Shenkin's interesting vibe.

I'm ready to offer my own version of walking tours of the 100 year old city. I relished having my son accompany me for some walks, while enjoying some on my own. The boulevards were filled with people riding bikes, pushing strollers, walking dogs, eating a falafel or having a coffee and chatting on their pelefones. On Erev Shabbat, Dizengoff was packed with café goers and shoppers and we people watched.

Ideas percolated in my head as I walked, that I am a part of this people; though my



The author enjoys the rich culture of Tel Aviv during a recent trip to Israel.

physical home is so far away, my enjoyment from catching snippets of conversations in a "foreign language" that I totally get or being handed a regular menu instead of the English one signifying that I was mistaken as "one of them", and knowing in my heart that this is where I really belong.

I love taking the train in Israel, from Tel Aviv north to Nahariya and south to Beersheva, with our family living at both ends of the line. Boarding as the only civilian in a car full of Israeli soldiers is a totally surreal experience. They are laughing and talking loudly to each other or on their cells or fall asleep immediately. Some boys barely have facial hair, and some of the girls giggle together at the swaggering boy soldiers, while others are more serious and aloof. Some carry guns, some huge duffel bags, a few wear kipot, many are bare headed, some of their uniforms are rumpled while others are crisply ironed. But they all stand in defense of our country and while I feel great pride in them, as a mom I cannot imagine what it would be like if my own sons were wearing that uniform. You know the mixed feelings I'm talking about.

As I walk I scan for details

I've missed in the past and begin to notice memorial plaques everywhere, along the tayelet by the beach, on the boulevards, and in the squares. They honor Israelis who have been killed by acts of terror, whether in a café or disco, during wars and political strife. Renowned are the Altalena memorial, Rabin Square renamed for murdered prime minister Yitzchak Rabin, a memorial to the victims of the Number 5 bus bombing on Dizengoff during the First Intifada and the Dolphinarium memorial for the teens murdered by suicide bomber in the Second Intifada. The one next door to my friend's apartment building honors the 11 Israeli team members who were victims of the Munich Olympics, naming each athlete and coach along with his sport. A ceremony takes place there each year to preserve their memories.

The cosmopolitan city of Tel Aviv is beloved to me as a Jewish New Yorker, vibrant with fun and culture to be enjoyed by natives and visitors alike. But this city, like the entire country, rightfully continues to honor its tragic legacy as well. With Yom HaShoah just past and Yom HaZikaron approaching, may our people's suffering become ancient history.

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CLOSING THE BOOK ON A LANDMARK IN CEDARHURST

Continued from Page One

stretched around the store. By noon on Monday some shelves were already empty.

The staff had known that there were negotiations between Basser Kaufman, the landlord, and Borders, but were told that the store would close at the end of April. As at most businesses on Central Ave., sales had been down through the year, though not exceptionally. According to Steven Kaufman of Basser Kaufman, Borders asked for and received a rent reduction, but after three months Borders changed its mind and refused to honor the agreement.

"We gave them the exact rent they wanted," Kaufman said. "The company is in trouble. You can check on Google. They're in the superstore and airport kiosk business. They're not interested in stores on main streets."

Kaufman said the store did over a million dollars in business every year and was profitable.

"We're a community of readers," he said.

Mary Davis, a spokesperson for Borders, said that the closing was part of Borders' previously announced plan to "rightsize their Walden Books spe-

cialty retail segment" which shut stores that did not meet their profit objective.

"No retailer can afford to operate stores that don't perform, especially in this economic climate," said Davis.

The store's first and only manager, Brad Ruter, recounted that when the store first opened, Central Ave. was known as the South Shore Miracle Mile and was home to three other bookstores. With Borders closing, the nearest bookstore is miles away.

"We've had families grow up here," Ruter lamented. "Kids worked here through high school. We've launched a lot of young careers."

Ruter singled out Sheila Waters and Sarajane Giddings, who have both worked in the store for 20 years. Giddings now works part-time while running Speaking Of, which organizes book clubs. She founded the company after a customer invited her to a book club. Her eyes watered when she recounted her favorite memories of the store, including the friendships she made over the years.

"One woman told me I was her closest friend," Giddings said. "It's like my home."

The mood in the bookstore was somber, but the sadness was mixed with gratitude for the store's long run

and for the community that supported it.

Kellie O'Rourke, an employee for the last year and a half, explained the sentiment.

"I guess the basic feeling is none of us were here for the money," she said. "We're a different kind of store."

In a notebook on the bestseller table, customers wrote their recommendations. "The Sistine Secrets" by Benjamin Blech was recommended in one customer's messy scrawl, "for art historians."

The store functioned as a meeting place where members of a diverse community interacted with one another; a thriller by Stephen King sat next to an esoteric short story collection by Max Apple and a line of Christian fiction books shared space with the collected works of Sholom Aleichem.

Moshe Rube, who is in his first year of post-high school study at the Yeshiva of Far Rockaway, said the last book he purchased was a Calvin and Hobbes collection. Kathleen Rooney, who works in a nearby law office, browsed through new releases and said she felt she would now be hard-pressed to find a store where she can buy books.

Rachel Fine, the owner of Kuri-



Photo by Claudio Papapietro/Herald

Borders Express on Central Avenue in Cedarhurst, pictured on Monday, April 20, 2009. The store is set to close on April 25.

ous Kids, a neighbor of Borders for the last 11 years, called the closing especially grim since "in this neighborhood, everyone reads."

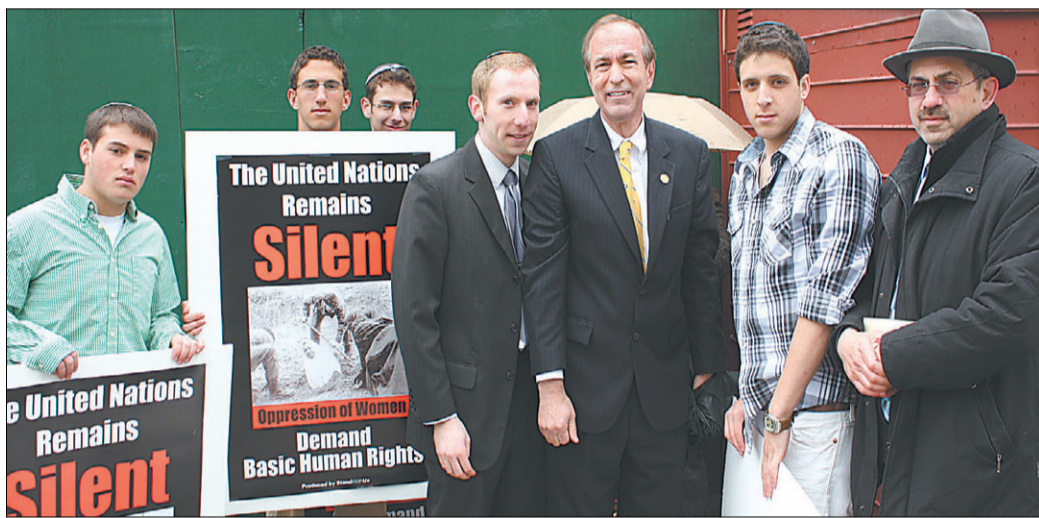
"It's a sign of the times," she said, sighing.

Other merchants were equally saddened. "The stores that made Cedarhurst what it was are disappearing," said Nita Klinkowitz, who owns

Banim on Cedarhurst Ave. "It was always a wonderful neighborhood to live and grow up in."

Behind the cash register, Giddings passed out bags emblazoned with the old Reader's Market logo.

"Too bad we didn't start a diary," Giddings said. "We've had so many interesting, wonderful customers. We should have written our own book."



Photos by HAFTR

Rabbi Zev Friedman and HAFTR students with Congressman Scott Garrett at the rally.

STUDENTS RALLY WHILE MAHMOUD RANTS

Continued from Page One

fering," but his words did not go unchallenged.

As he began to talk about Israel, 23 delegates, including those from Jordan and the European Union, stood and walked out in protest. The United States and seven other nations were not present having already boycotted the event over anti-Israel language in the conference's main document. The other boycotting countries are Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand and Poland.

Following the New York rally Rabbi Zev Friedman, Rosh HaYeshiva of HAFTR, found the dissent encouraging.

"The tide may be turning. People are recognizing that this is not a human rights conference. It basically is a farce. It's becoming the United Nations,



Congressman Scott Garrett with HAFTR contingent in foreground

united against Israel. But it has deviated from its mission of promoting world peace."

Three French students, identified by The Jerusalem Post as Rafael Haddad, Jonathan Hayoun and Jeremy Cohen, also interrupted Ahmadinejad. As he began to speak they slipped on clown wigs and shouted "Racist!" at him. They were

escorted from the conference by United Nations security officers.

Demonstrations were being held in Geneva for the duration of the conference. StandWithUs planned to post up to the minute live updates of the events using Twitter, the social networking platform, which can be accessed at twitter.com/standwithus.



Local boy scout earns Eagle designation

Boy Scout David Rosen of Troop 613 (in uniform) at the Young Israel of West Hempstead led a renovation of part of a nature trail at the Tanglewood Preserve this past Sunday. He took on the project to earn his Eagle Scout designation, the first member of his troop to do so.

Local businesses that contributed goods and services included Zenie Landscaping in Lynbrook; American Recreational Products in Bohemia; Premier Rubber Company in Farmingdale; Fischetti Landscaping, Home Depot, Westminster Nursery,

Hunki's Kosher Pizza, and EJ's Too in West Hempstead; Long Island Compost and Hicks Nursery in Westbury; and Garden World and Eberhard-Voellm Nurseries in Franklin Square.

Rosen recruited volunteers for the project by attending monthly meetings of other area Boy Scout troops, including Troop 214 in Rockville Center, Troop 182 in Baldwin, Troop 303 in Oceanside, Troop 116 in Hewlett, and Troop 121 in East Rockaway in addition to his own troop meetings.

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THE KOSHER BOOKWORM

“Ish Yehudi: The Life and Legacy of a Torah Great, Rabbi Joseph Tzvi Carlebach,” by his son Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach

“Honor your mother and father.”

This commandment from G-d is given to us as a Divine mandate for all time. Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, the author of the book under review, delivers a heartfelt tribute to

his martyred father and mother with the focus upon his father, Rabbi Joseph Tzvi Carlebach, and his illustrious career as a rabbi and teacher in pre-war Germany, together with his wife, daughters and his Hamburg congregation, in the

forests near Riga in the spring of 1942.

Titled “Ish Yehudi” (Shearith Joseph Publications, 2008), Rabbi Carlebach details with loving care and riveting



Alan Jay Gerber

style the life’s work of his distinguished father and mentor.

From the end of the 19th century to Kristallnacht in November of 1938, German Orthodox

Jewry formed a vibrant community. The ideology of Torah Im Derech Eretz, as set forth by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, set the tone for every institution that served the spiritual needs of that community until the rise

of the Nazi regime. Rabbi Joseph Tzvi Carlebach was to play a pivotal role as a prime spiritual leader in perpetuating the Hirsch legacy and in seeing to it that each and every Jewish person brought into his care was served with dignity as prescribed by our religious tradition.

consider the following testimony. Many years later, after World War II, Rabbi Reuvein Grozovsky, zt”l, was said to have told Rabbi Eliezer Finkel of Mir-Yerushalayim that “I can bear witness that if not for the intervention of this young man’s father, the Gaon, Rav Joseph Tzvi Carlebach, May Hashem avenge his blood, Slobodka Yeshiva would have ceased to exist. And not only Slobodka, but all the great Torah institutions of Lithuania, were saved through his intervention, and his strenuous efforts to provide for their sustenance.”

The son, Shlomo, delves into great detail in this 316-page biography, describing the lineage of the Carlebach rabbinical dynasty as well as the various activities, both communal and educational, that these leaders were engaged in. Among the more fascinating episodes in Rabbi Carlebach’s career was that of his efforts as a German military officer during World War I in bringing the Torah Im Derech Eretz ideology to Lithuanian yeshivot ravaged by war.

Using his German military position, he, together with his brother Dr. Emanuel Carlebach and brother-in-law Dr. Leopold Rosenak, both high ranking German military rabbis (chaplains), initiated numerous educational programs and initiatives in German-occupied Lithuania and Poland that helped sustain the educational institutions under their control. These initiatives helped uphold

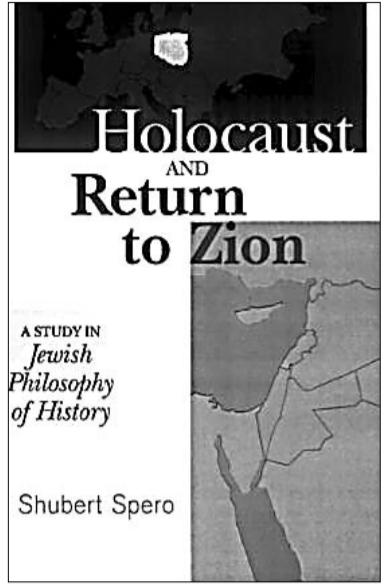
the basic integrity of these yeshivot under some of the most trying conditions, that being the German military occupation. Nevertheless, it was that very occupation that served as their salvation. Just as the German military occupation served as their salvation, the intervention of this young man’s father, the Gaon, Rav Joseph Tzvi Carlebach, May Hashem avenge his blood, Slobodka Yeshiva would have ceased to exist. And not only Slobodka, but all the great Torah institutions of Lithuania, were saved through his intervention, and his strenuous efforts to provide for their sustenance.”

When one considers the great rabbinic luminaries who were yet to rise from the batei midrash of these yeshivot during the inter-war years and come to America, the legacy of these “German military” rabbis only looms that much larger.

The chapters detailing these activities, when placed into perspective concerning the behavior of the German military during World War II, only further demonstrates in glaring detail the perfidy of the German nation in its demonic mission of genocide of the Jewish people. It is hard to imagine a

more glaring contrast in the behavior of one civilized nation within the span of just one generation and of the evil forces that impelled and inspired such an evil national demeanor. What is more ironic is that this same Rabbi Carlebach, by then the chief rabbi of Hamburg, was murdered in cold blood by the same military force that he had served

See BOOKWORM, Page 11



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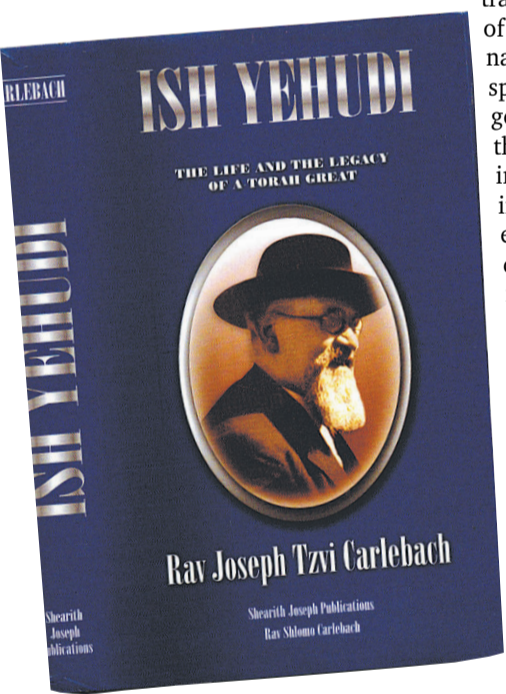
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Majority rules

Consensus: a game where your opinion counts

BY YAFFI SPODEK

The season of long Shabbat afternoons is upon us. Though the weekly time warp can be draining

both for children and the adults who must entertain them, a fun, interactive game to play with friends is a productive way to combat the boredom.

Consensus, a newly developed board game, aims to do just that and more, billing itself as a game "that takes a minute to learn and requires no prior knowledge of anything whatsoever."

"This game is not about strategy and not about trivia," explains creator Marshall Chrein, a HAFTR graduate who grew up in Lawrence. "It is strictly a game about opinions, where you learn how family and friends think about all sorts of things. It is a social game and a family game."

Consensus works like this: a maximum of eight players choose between 10 noun cards — varying in topic from celebrities to foods to life cycle events — and choose which one they believe is the most appropriate fit for a randomly selected adjective card. Whichever noun receives the most votes is deemed the consensus for that round and the players who chose it get to move forward in the game. The winner is ultimately crowned "the greatest mind."

Consensus brings to mind a similar board game called Apples to Apples; in both, players are asked to categorize randomly selected nouns under a single adjective, often producing humorous results.

By way of its design, Consensus is a completely interactive game which leaves no room for bias; all players are choosing from the same group of noun cards and the winner is simply determined by majority, whereas in Apples to Apples, each player is dealt a private hand of nouns which they then pair up to the adjective, and which are later

judged on their merit by a fellow player. Consensus also seems better suited for a more mature audience (perhaps even older than the age 12 and up recom-

first foray into the world of board games.

"I've always loved games, and I grew up in a family where everybody always played games," noted Chrein, who is the CEO of Mindlogic, Inc., the company he founded to produce Consensus. "Professionally, I own an attorney placement firm or headhunting company, and I've been doing it for 10 years, but I kind of lost my pizzazz for it. I was looking for a physical product that belonged to me that I could call my own."

And so, Consensus was born. At first, Chrein only marketed rough prototypes of the game to family and friends, which he would bring along when he went away for weekends and holidays. After he received positive feedback from those who played, he decided to turn Consensus into a real board game.

The game, which is manufactured in China, is now available nationally, mostly in specialty stores and in mall kiosks. Barnes & Noble is to begin carrying it in June. A movie edition of Consensus was recently released, and Chrein has plans to produce a music and a juniors edition in the coming months.

"My true love is the board game business," Chrein said, "and that is where I want to spend most of my time."

Another unique feature of Consensus is that it can be played on Facebook; both the original and the movie edition are Facebook applications, "one of the first times, if not the first time that a real board game can be played on Facebook in an extremely socially interactive capacity," Chrein added.

The game can be purchased locally in Cedarhurst at La Toys Etcetera and at Sakoff's. For more information about the game and tips on how to organize a Consensus tournament, visit www.consensusgame.com.

menda- tion), while Apples to Apples can be enjoyed by young children as well, based on the content of each of the games' cards. A flaw inherent in both games is that more than one person can be declared the winner.

Consensus has proven to be a successful icebreaker, particularly at singles gatherings, where the players may not have known each other from before. Several months ago, Consensus was the featured activity at a YUConnects event which attracted 100 people who played 12 games simultaneously in a speed-dating forum. Three men and three women at each table played the game for 10 minutes, after which the men moved on to the next table, allowing everyone to meet.

"It is probably the ideal game where people can get to know each other on more than just a superficial level," Chrein said, explaining the value of Consensus for singles. "Since there are real issues that people discuss, you can remember people based on their opinions on the issues. There is no stigma of 'I am speed dating' because you're playing a game. Incidentally, you can meet a ton of people and learn things about them that you probably wouldn't learn from going on dates. Nobody is holding back and they're not afraid to express their opinions because it's a game."

The creation of Consensus in August 2008 was Chrein's



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KOSHER BOOKWORM

Continued from Page Ten

with distinction just two decades earlier. Another inspiring facet as described by his son, Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, is found in the closing chapters of this book, detailing the roundups, deportations and killings that were to come. Leadership, the raw exercise of the spiritual role model's power to inspire and lead, was to become Rabbi Joseph Tzvi Carlebach's lasting legacy.

Rabbi Carlebach, due to his distinguished reputation, had ample opportunity to leave Germany and escape the Holocaust, as did other Jewish leaders. However, he refused to leave his congregation and his communal responsibilities as chief rabbi. He was joined by very few other brave leaders who were in a similar position and chose to stay with their students, among them Rabbi Ben-Zion Halberstam of Bobov, Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman of Beranovitch, who were both martyred with these followers and students and the distinguished aged Jewish theologian, Rabbi Dr. Leo Baeck of Berlin who miraculously survived torture by his Nazi captors.

All of them could have avoided their evil fates; yet, of their own free will they chose to stay. HY"D. For this we are to be eternally grateful.

During those last months between the deportations to Riga and Jungfernhof and to the ultimate fate, "Al Kiddush Hashem," the author details the absolutely super human behavior that Rabbi Carlebach demonstrated in nurturing the morale of his congregants, consoling them, especially the little children, teaching them, conducting services and attending to the needs of the ill and dead. His personal conduct under some of the most horrendous conditions is heart breaking. This chapter is a must read by all to fully appreciate the humanity of this man.

These last months were to serve for so distinguished a rabbi as his lasting legacy, a legacy that serves as the capstone of this eloquent trib-

ute by a surviving son, who in his own right suffered the slings and whips of the Holocaust. Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach was to survive and ultimately join his surviving siblings and relatives, including his famous namesake cousin, Reb Shlomo Carlebach, zt"l, here in America. Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach was to devote his life's work to Jewish education, and harbotzas Torah, as a mesivta rav and mashgiach at Chaim Berlin, and as a Torah teacher and mashpiah at several Bais Yaakov schools. Rav Carlebach was a pioneer 30 years ago in the use of tape recordings of Torah shiurim according to the weekly parsha as well as mussar and holiday themes.

According to Rav Carlebach a companion volume to this biography will iy"H will be forthcoming. It will contain selected and previously unpublished writings of Rabbi Joseph Tzvi Carlebach, in English translation. This will certainly be a most important addition to the growing literature in English of the Torah Im Derech Eretz tradition and mesorah.

A further word: Another important book on Holocaust studies is one by Rabbi Shubert Spero, entitled, "Holocaust and Return to Zion, (Ktav, 2000). This book, accurately subtitled "a study in Jewish philosophy of history" is perhaps one of the most eloquent and sophisticated presentations of traditional Jewish thought and theology concerning the intricate relationships one can make between the various episodes of persecution and terror throughout Jewish history and the rise of a Jewish republic in the Holy Land by the mid-20th century. These 10 chapters contain a wide panorama of observations, comments and teachings that weave together theology and history in an uncanny manner without the emotionalism a less capable mind would produce.

Rabbi Spero does the rabbinic proud in this volume and gives a Torah based view of our history a sound basis for discussion and ultimately for belief in our G-d directed destiny.

Next week, Yom Ha'atzmaut.

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