

# THE JEWISH STAR

Independent and original reporting from the Orthodox communities of Long Island

VOL. 8, NO. 27

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## HOSPICE IN HALACHA

*A doctor's perspective*  
Page 3

## ABUSE BILL STILL ALIVE

*Assembly to hold special session in Sept.*  
Page 7

## IN THE DESERT

*The Kosher Bookworm on parsha*  
Page 9



### IN MY VIEW

## Purging Jewish History

BY ELIZABETH BERNEY

In George Orwell's classic, "1984," the ruling totalitarian regime ensures its power by re-writing history. Documents evidencing real past events are thrown down "memory holes," presumably to be incinerated.

Israel's enemies use the same revisionist propaganda tool. The PLO Charter declares that "claims of historical or religious ties of Jews with Palestine are incompatible with the facts of history," and that Palestinian Arabs' "material, spiritual, and historical connection with Palestine are indisputable facts." The still unchanged Fatah Constitution states that "the

Israeli existence in Palestine is a Zionist invasion..." The Hamas Charter likewise refers to Israel as a "Zionist invasion" and claims that "Palestine has been a Islamic Waqf throughout the generations." These historical fabrications are used to call for violently eradicating



"Alarming, from day one, the Obama administration has adopted what is essentially Arab Palestinian revisionist history."

Israel. Arab Palestinian revisionist history obliterates the most basic facts about Israel's Jewish history from ancient times onwards — including Jewish Biblical rulers, King Solomon's building of the first Temple (957 B.C.E.), the 50-year Babylonian exile and return of Jews to Israel to build the Second Temple (538 B.C.E.), the

See VIEW, Page 8

Elizabeth Berney is an attorney living in Great Neck, New York. She was the Republican candidate for Congress in New York's 5th Congressional District (northern Nassau County and northeast Queens) in 2008, and may run again in 2010.

### Happy Independence Day!



What better way to celebrate the red, white and blue this Fourth of July weekend than with a festive barbecue capped by a berry-filled pie for dessert. See **Slice of Life pie recipes** on page 11.

## Wanted: a loving home

*An increase in foster kids puts pressure on OHEL*

BY YAFFI SPODEK

The OHEL Children's and Family Services organization has recently experienced a significant increase in Jewish foster children, leading to a greater need for foster parents.

"These are Jewish children who have for a number of reasons been removed from ACS [Administration for Children's Services] in New York State and because they are Jewish children, have been directed to OHEL," explained Derek Saker, OHEL's director of communications. "The situation is very immediate as we are experiencing a shortage of Jewish foster homes."

Though many are unaware of the existence of this problem in the Jewish community, "tragically, some children need to be removed from their homes because their parents are inca-



An image from a past OHEL ad campaign to recruit foster parents pacitated and can't take care of them," said Saker.

In the month of June alone, OHEL placed five children in foster homes, including a two-year-old just this past shabbos.

"We take Jewish children of all affiliations and all different

See OHEL, Page 6

## Service cuts on track for LIRR

BY YAFFI SPODEK

Riders of the Long Island Rail Road should take advantage of the personal customer service while they still can. Beginning on Tuesday, Aug. 18, ticket stations will close at 20 LIRR stations — including Woodmere, Cedarhurst and Hewlett — in a move that is expected to save \$2.2 million.

These changes are part of a larger cost-reduction plan being implemented by the MTA and the LIRR. Other service cuts include the elimination of weekend service on the West Hemp-

stead branch, and the reduction of off-peak Port Washington branch service from half-hourly to hourly.

"Recent assistance from Albany allowed the MTA to reduce the size of the average fare increase from 26 percent to 10 percent," explained Salvatore Arena, assistant director of media relations for the LIRR.

"However, the financial package did not address all of the LIRR's funding needs. As a result, some cost-reductions must go forward and we had to make some difficult choices."

Tickets windows with low

ticket sales volume was pinpointed as an area in which staff could be reduced, without affecting a large amount of customers. The ticket stations in the Five Towns "are among the lowest ticket selling stations of the 51 towns where we have employees selling tickets," Arena told The Jewish Star.

Customers will now need to purchase tickets at machines that will be available around the clock seven days a week. "LIRR ticket machines currently have a 97.9 percent reliability/ avail-

See SERVICE, Page 7

### Celebrating America's scenery



BY JUDAH S. HARRIS

The arrival of July 4th tells us that summer is finally here, and there's no turning back. The sweaters you might have been keeping handy in case daily weather fluctuations

See SCENERY, Page 10

## Kulanu graduates with HAFTR

BY MALKA EISENBERG

In a show of unity and continuity, four Kulanu Torah Academy students joined with their HAFTR peers for a joint graduation ceremony at Cong. Beth Shalom on June 15, where HAFTR alumni parents and grandparents assisted in awarding diplomas.

"It was a very moving graduation," said HAFTR's Director of Development, Michelle Segelnick. "The connection with Kulanu, shared with HAFTR and Kulanu students, teaches HAFTR students that there are people out there that are not like themselves and to be sensitive. How great the Kulanu student feels in a mainstream program and that they are included! When Kulanu students get

high-fived by other kids it gives them a sense of belonging and inclusion that they would not get anywhere else."

Kulanu was founded in 2000 to assist parents of children with disabilities. It serves those with special needs in cultural, educational and social settings fostering inclusion, support and advocating for this population.

"As part of the inclusion programs, four Kulanu students participated along with their classmates from HAFTR in graduation ceremonies," said Dr. Beth Raskin, dean and executive director of Kulanu. "Jordan Schoenfeld received a standing ovation from the audience as he accepted congratulations from Rabbi Sholom Fried, coordinator of Kulanu's

See KULANU, Page 11

## FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BENCH Ilan Ramon's birthday gift

BY DAVID SEIDEMANN

You can't make this stuff up. Thirty-seven pages of an Israeli astronaut's diary fell 37 miles to earth and landed, of all places, in Palestine, Texas. Google it, if you don't believe me.

He was born June 20, 1954 and would have celebrated his 55th birthday last week. Would have, had Shuttle Columbia



David Seidemann

See ILAN RAMON, Page 5

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### Inside

That's Life ..... 2  
Opinion ..... 4

Calendar ..... 6  
Classified ..... 9

### Shabbat

Candlelighting: 8:11 p.m. ■ Shabbat ends: 9:19 p.m.  
Torah reading: Parshiot Chukat-Balak

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**That's Life**  
 Edited by Miriam L. Wallach

**Dear That's Life,**

It's no wonder so much of my life happens at Starbucks: I drink too much coffee. But do not panic: it is all decaf.

Pulling up to a Starbucks out of the area, I noticed a gentleman without legs wheeling himself up a slight incline to the front door in his wheelchair. Having just parked, I tried to make it to the door before he did so I could hold the door for him, but to no avail — I simply am not in the shape I used to be.

I still tried, however, to get the door for him and I can only imagine the scene inside the coffeehouse as the pregnant woman and the man with the disability fought over who would hold the door for whom. Finally, I lost. He just would not hear of it.

"So, chivalry is not dead?" I asked him. "Definitely not," he replied and even after I was safely in the store, although I could reach the handle of the door and return the favor, he would not hear of it. I held up my white flag and officially surrendered. He had won.

I ordered my drink and then told the barista I would pay for his drink as well, so she should please take his order and then tack it on to my bill. She smiled and took his order, after which she let the gentleman know that his drink was on me. He thanked me and I smiled, for, after all, it was the least I could do.

Drink in hand, I headed for the door when he stopped me. "Listen," he said. "You're having a girl." Completely taken aback, I said, "That's funny. Most people in the universe seem to disagree with you." Shaking his head, he said, "I am 35 and '0' — I have never been wrong."

Talk about confident, he then proceeded to name with absolute certainty what he knew would be the baby's astrological sign, confirming my due date — without any hint or actual verbal confirmation from me. But

how could I confirm anything? I was too busy being speechless.

Iced coffee and a strange encounter with a complete stranger — that sure is full service.

MLW

**Dear That's Life,**

Dare I say that I will be the only one to mention Michael Jackson's death in this newspaper?

No, I did not go to the Apollo Theatre and sign a memorial nor did I shed a single tear over the Gloved One's passing. But I was one of the millions of Americans who listened to the seemingly endless airing of his music on the day after his death simply because that was all that was on the radio. I cannot remember listening to "Billy Jean," collectively, as many times in the 80s as I did on Friday alone, nor did I ever think I would be texting lyrics of his songs back and forth to friends.

The impact of his death proved to be completely generational, however, at least in my family. I listened to this music when I was a kid and so did my friends. Before the weird factor was a factor, his music was just good. My kids, however, could not have cared less nor did they appreciate the worldwide mourning underway.

Yet another MJ song was playing when my daughter got into the car. She heard the voice on the radio and asked, "Is this Michelle Jackson?" Clearly, she was responding to what she heard. "That's MICHAEL Jackson," I told her, appreciating her innocent question. "Oh!" she said, as the song progressed. "I didn't realize Michael Jackson sang songs and played basketball." Thrown off for a second but then quickly regaining my footing, I replied, "No, sweetie, that's Michael Jordan."

Man, I am old.

MLW

P.S. Farrah, who?

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The Eliezer Project was founded in memory of Eliezer Ben Shlomo.

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](mailto: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.

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■ Wedding of David Yakubov (Austria) & Rachel Gerber Yakubov (Israel) — June 22, 2009

**Engagements**

■ Engagement of Chana Roiza Egert (Lakewood, NJ) & Yaakov Yisroel Lietner (Brooklyn, NY) — June 29, 2009

■ Engagement of Michelle Altabe (Far Rockaway, NY) & Zoli Honig (Lawrence, NY) — June 28, 2009

**Birth**

■ Birth of baby Giveli Shevy to Elozor & Hadassa Ebert (London, United Kingdom) — June 22, 2009



Nini Stein & Dani Ross



Michelle Altabe & Zoli Honig

To view entire galleries, please visit  
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OPINION

# Hospice in Halacha

*The overriding Jewish value of prolonging life*

BY LEON ZACHAROWICZ

The recent article about an ordained Orthodox rabbi employed by a hospice (Where every day counts; June 26, 2009) was a welcome addition to these pages, but, as such articles often do due to space constraints, it glossed over the very complex issues involved in 'end-of-life' care, issues which have major implications for Orthodox Jews.

Whether a 'terminal' patient should ever enter hospice is itself a halachic question, a question of Jewish law, given the fact that much of hospice care in many facilities reflects a philosophy that is foreign to Judaism and is much more in sync with Christian thought.

For example, in hospice care the professionals often make sure to tell the patient he/she is 'terminal,' which in Jewish law can be problematic due to concerns about the mental anguish such a prognosis can cause.

In Jewish law we are taught to violate virtually all commandments, including the holy day of Yom Kippur, to provide 'chayai sha'ah,' extra moments of life, for a member of our community — even if that person is comatose and without any 'quality of life.'

In contrast, much of the current philosophy of hospice care revolves around notions about 'quality of life' and deriving existential 'meaning' from the 'transition' from life to death that are not only foreign to but also at odds with fundamental Jewish values and laws.

In addition, there are major financial considerations that shape the policies of many hospice programs. A wise philanthropist once told me, "When people speak about ideals, look for the money trail." For-profit health programs are hiring peo-



ple of various ethnic backgrounds in a variation of what in business is called 'affinity marketing,' i.e. using people who are of the same ethnic and religious background to draw in customers. Buyer beware!

Finally, there are important medical and halachic considerations in the care of a person considered to be 'terminal.' Good palliative care can often go hand in hand with therapies that can prolong the life of a person — one of the highest values in Judaism, even if the life is prolonged by only a very short time.

For well over a year I have been honored to be helping to develop an end-of-life program being coordinated through the good offices of Agudath Israel that will, with G-d's help, provide guidance to community members on these complex issues. Lawyers, doctors, and rabbis are working hard, under the direction of Rabbi Dovid Zwiebel and others, to provide immediate assistance to families faced with end-of-life issues.

With G-d's help, families like the Golubchuk family of Canada, and the family of Motl Brody z"l of Borough Park, will no longer face uphill, costly, and lonely battles in their struggle to insure their religious values and beliefs are respected.

I would strongly counsel anyone faced with such issues to obtain an outside opinion from a recognized halachic authority, a scholar of Orthodox Jewish law, on any and all matters involving 'end of life' issues. This opinion can be prefaced by a review of the medical aspects of the case by an outside, independent medical professional without any 'vested interest' in the outcome or pleasing any particular healthcare system.

Those who wish to learn more about the end-of-life program or who have urgent situations can contact Agudath Israel of America at (212) 797-9000.

Those who wish to learn halachic issues involved in end-of-life care can contact the Jerusalem Center for Research on Medicine and Halacha (info@j-c-r.org or 011-972-2-5383558). Rabbi Yaakov Weiner shlita (y.weiner@j-c-r.org) is available for halachic issues and lectures around the world on such matters.

Locally, halachic authorities such as the renowned Rabbi Tzvi Flaum shlita can be consulted on a case-by-case basis (taryag@aol.com).

I would like to invite anyone interested in seriously learning about topics such as these in medical halacha to join us at the 12th annual International Yarchei Kallah on Medical Halacha in Jerusalem, August 5-11, 2009, or at any of myriad weekend Torah learning programs run by JCR around the United States.

Thanks again to The Jewish Star for bringing this issue to the attention of readers.

*Leon Zacharowicz, M.D., M.A., is a neurologist who specializes in pediatric neurology. He lives in Far Rockaway.*

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## OPINION

# Blessings for a long, healthy life

### Editorial

150 years for Bernie Madoff. If only modern medicine could keep him alive for that long. While so many of his victims remain in desperate financial straits, justice has been served to the extent possible; unlike Bernie's stolen billions, each day has been earned.

A legal affairs commentator on newsradio called the sentence a "cheap shot" by Judge Denny Chin. Since Madoff, 71, would have drawn what amounts to a life term in any event for running the world's largest known Ponzi scheme, Chin tacked on extra years to avoid being criticized for leniency, the pundit claimed.

That's nonsense. A cheap shot would have been the 12-year term Madoff's lawyer advocated for in a pre-sentencing letter to the judge. A cheap shot would have been anything approximating a run-of-the-mill sentence akin to those meted out for run-of-the-mill white-collar crimes.

Rather, the judge keyed in on the exquisite need to make an example of Madoff in this of all cases and meted out justice accordingly. Chin said as much in court and should be praised

for the outcome. Generally, he has been and, like the sentence he handed down, the plaudits are well earned.

There's so much more to do in this case however. Every effort must be made to make the victims whole, or at least provide some restitution. It seems fair overall to withhold funds from Madoff clients who withdrew money from their accounts, if it means those who didn't can get more back. At the same time we hope to hear that all of the victims receive refunds on taxes they paid on profits that never really existed and that were never withdrawn.

Hopefully it won't take 150 years to unwind the financial mess that Madoff created, but we truly do wish he could read all about from behind bars until the ripe old age of 221.

\*\*\*

Some other people we're starting to wish were behind bars all go by the title 'Senator.'

On Tuesday, the day we went to press, even a court order couldn't get the group of insufferable clowns who

make up the New York State Senate to focus on vital matters of state. Led, in part, by our own Dean Skelos — and we do not say that proudly this week — the whole lot of 'em continued to play childish games even as the clock ticked toward a number of serious deadlines.

Senate approval is required on a deal between Nassau County and most of its union employees to help close a budget gap and avert 700 layoffs. A financial aide to the county executive estimates that delay past July 1 will cost the county \$100,000 a day. That's a lot of money to lose to political narishkeit. For New York City, the Senate must ratify renewed mayoral control of the public schools, or else the law will require work to begin on resurrecting the old Board of Education bureaucracy. Imagine the waste that could entail.

A blog operated by the JTA news service spotlighted a Vermont rabbi this week that "offered his blessings to the Yiddish-y named Circus Smirkus." We've got a full-blown circus in Albany, full of clowns who don't seem to know that the show must go on. Maybe the good rabbi can swing by sometime.

### Letters

## Most thorough award

To the Editor:

Before entering our family business, I spent 20 years as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of New York and Deputy Counsel at one of the State's largest agencies. I have been interviewed and reported on by countless reporters from the New York Times, New York Law Journal, and many local papers. To say that you were the most thorough and accurate would be an understatement. Most articles have misstatements of fact and inaccurate or misleading quotes. Yours do not. Before being interviewed by you, I never met a reporter who went over quotes to make sure he or she got them right.

I specialized in constitutional law and have always been intrigued by the balance of power our founding fathers incorporated into our blueprint for government. A free press is an important component of our freedom but far too often the Fourth Estate is more concerned with circulation and advertising revenue than it is with carrying out the lofty goals of journalism. The pre-Passover assault by the Vaads could have easily passed under the radar but The Jewish Star was the only news organization willing to investigate the facile and unbelievable excuse for the Vaads' last minute conduct. Your reporting revealed a much deeper issue about the dark side of hashgacha politics and it was picked up by other papers and many internet sites.

While not as far reaching as

Watergate, the basic story is the same: abuse of power that is revealed by a free press and responded to by the people. While the local Vaads bit off more than they could chew attacking Streit's, without your investigative reporting I don't think we would have gotten the groundswell of support from customers and concerned Jews that we got. It became a national issue and we heard from many people outside the Long Island area.

Thank you for investigating "the powers that be" to get at the truth. In an age when most "journalists" seem content to hype the Swine Flu and unnecessarily scare the public, it is refreshing to see that someone is living up to the noble goals of your profession.

ALAN ADLER  
 Aron Streit & Co.

## Not well-known

To the Editor:

I've always understood kashrus to be an inyan ne'emonus (trust in the certifier). I would like to know where in halacha the requirement is to have a "nationally known" hashgacha, as you report that the Vaad HaRabonim of Queens and the Vaad HaKashrus of the Five Towns and Far Rockaway claim is necessary (Streit's Matzo to sport Kof-K in 2010; June 26, 2009).

Moreover, if there is a requirement for a nationally known hashgacha, then neither the hashgacha of the Vaad of Queens nor the hashgacha of the Vaad of the Five Towns is acceptable because neither of those community organizations is nationally known.

AARON BERNSTEIN  
 Lawrence

### PARSHIOT CHUKAT-BALAK

## From victim to aggressor

BY RABBI AVI BILLET

Imagine a group of strangers knock on your front door. They seem imposing. But they are nonetheless polite and assure you they mean no harm. For the sake of the parable, please accept their claim as truth.

"We need to get to the other side of your property," says their spokesman. "We don't intend to harm you, to break anything, or to destroy your property. But the easiest way to get to the other side is through your yard, house and backyard. Going around the neighborhood, with all the dead ends and blocked off streets, will be a detour we simply do not want to take."

Would you let them through? Perhaps, as the phrase goes, "A man's word is his bond." (See <http://tinyurl.com/manbond> for a debate over the source of this phrase) If they say they'll be civil and treat all nicely, they'll hold true to it. On the other hand, no group has the right to trespass their way through my private property. I am entitled to tell them, "No one goes through here."

From a different perspective, when Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran in 1967, it was internationally viewed as an act of war

against Israel as it effectively closed off access to the port of Eilat. Of course, in that case the waterways were not "owned" by either country, and peaceful maritime passage and trade is an international right for all nations.

It is hard to objectively say who is the aggressor when a nation requests permission to pass through the land. In Biblical times, the nation requesting passage usually had no gripe with those from whom they sought it.

But the nation living in peace usually did not see things that way. In Divrei Hayamim (Chronicles) II, 35:21, the King of Egypt requested passage from King Yoshiyahu, in order to fight against the people of Kar'k'mish along the Euphrates River. A study of the map indicates the grueling trip — through the Sinai desert, or on ship around the Sinai peninsula and through what is now Saudi Arabia and Jordan — they might avoid were they to travel along the Mediterranean coast of Israel.

We lament on Tisha B'Av over how Yoshiyahu would not hear of it, and he met Nekho, King of Egypt, in Megiddo to wage battle, where Yoshiyahu was killed.

In our Torah portion, 21:21, the Israelites make a similar request of the Amorites. It is

important to understand that Israel had no intention to fight with any nations dwelling east of the Jordan River. They were traveling north to set the stage for crossing the Jordan to enter the land from the east, and the land of King Sichon was in their path.

"Sichon, however, did not let Israel pass through his territories. Instead, Sichon mustered up all his people, and went out to confront Israel in the desert. When he came to Yahatz, he attacked Israel" (21:23).

Rashi says he attacked the Israelites because all the Canaanite nations were paying him taxes to hold the line against Israel. When they requested passage, his reaction was "The only reason I am still here is because I am being paid to stay here. And now you expect me to just withdraw and renege on my commitments?"

Rashi does not bring proof to his assertion, so I like to think that Sichon was also aggressive because he wanted to be aggressive. There is a difference between saying "No" and saying "No. And I want to attack you for making such a ridiculous request."

If he were to call up his army and station them along the border saying, "No one crosses this

line into our country," that would be a legitimate act of self-defense. A nation has the right to defend its borders. But once he takes his army to attack the Israelites for making a request, as justified as he may be in viewing their request as unreasonable, he is no longer holding the party line of defending borders. He becomes an aggressor.

The parallel to Israel's efforts to seek peace with the Palestinian leaders and terrorists over the last 15 (or 60) years is painfully obvious, so we'll conclude with a semi-homiletical message instead.

To bring such a parallel closer to home, family, friends, or neighbors may sometimes ask favors of us. When we can, it is nice to help, even when it is inconvenient. It is also OK to sometimes say "I am unable to help you today."

However, saying "I can't help you. And it drives me crazy that you always ask me to do you a favor, but you never do one in return" and telling others about this uneven exchange, not only reflects badly on the speaker. It turns the speaker into an aggressor, a negative trait which is unbecoming amongst good human beings.

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I'M THINKING

# The red herring of the Middle East

The term "red herring" came into being in 1807. A reporter named William Cobbett used it to explain an erroneous news piece he wrote for the Weekly Political Reporter, a British publication. Cobbett wrote that Napoleon had lost the war. Obviously, he was wrong.



Micah D. Halpern

the more central issues that the Arab world will not confront. The oppressive thugocracies of the Middle East are channeling the anger, frustration and hatred of the Arab people and directing it all on the settler movement. As long as attention is focused on the settlers, the people will not notice the inactivity and

inabilities of their leaders.

By way of apology the reporter explained his drastic mistake saying it was the "effect of a political red herring." He had been led astray by some distracting misinformation that he thought to be true but that was, undeniably, totally inaccurate.

The red herring, a very smelly fish, was waved under the noses of hounds trained to hunt fox. The hounds would be distracted by the smell, much as Cobbett was distracted by the incorrect information he was given.

The term took hold. Today a red herring is used to describe a side issue that detracts from the main issue.

Israeli settlements on the West Bank are the red herring of Palestinian/Israeli negotiations.

Settlements are a serious deal breaker issue for the entire Muslim world. The demand for "no settlements" is all inclusive. It means no natural growth. It means no building even within established boundaries. No new additions on homes, no synagogues, no mikvahs. It means no to all previous agreements allowing for growth and building. It means not a single nail is to be banged. No means no, and there are no exceptions.

Settlements are a distraction from the peace negotiations. The Obama administration, in an attempt to reach out and appease the Muslim world, has bought into this idea of no settlement building without realizing that it is a secondary issue in the peace negotiations.

The vast majority of the settler population is not extremist. The settler population is primarily composed of law abiding citizens who value democracy, love Israel and believe in a biblical mandate. They are Israelis willing to build suburban enclaves in areas that many others find difficult and offensive. They have affordable homes with substantial land, good educational systems and easy commutes to urban work areas. They have reinforced cars and busses to get them in and out, and sentries and security systems to keep those who hate them out because they are the red herring of the Middle East.

The vast majority of the settlers will agree with whatever painful decision Israel leadership takes. They will vehemently voice their disagreement and stage demonstrations, but they will abide by the decision. They are not murderers and they do not sanction the murder of innocent others.

The problem does not lie with the settlers. The problem lies with Arab, particularly Palestinian, leadership. The problem lies with the myths that the Arab world has created around the settler movement.

Settlements are not the ideal, but neither are they the font of all evil.

*Micah D. Halpern is a columnist, a social and political commentator and the author, most recently, of "THUGS." He maintains The Micah Report at www.micahhalpern.com.*

## ILAN RAMON'S BIRTHDAY GIFT

Continued from Page One

not disintegrated over Texas during re-entry in February 2003, minutes before landing. So what did Ilan Ramon, the first Israeli in space, receive for his 55th birthday?

On June 21, 2009, Ramon's son, Assaf, graduated from the Israeli Air Force Pilot Training course and received his wings and rank as an officer. Assaf, like his father, has decided to make the skies his home, defending Israel and bridging the gap between heaven and earth.

Col. Ilan Ramon was a self-described traditional Jew who, though not observant himself, felt kinship with all Jews of all types. He felt connected to Jews past and present and specifically requested that he be allowed to launch into space with a memento of the Holocaust. A barbed wire mezuzah flew with him.

I don't know if Ramon made Kiddush every Friday night here on earth, but on the Friday night he spent in orbit, he made Kiddush. Why? Because, in his words, he represented all Jews on that journey, those who are moved to recite the Kiddush on Friday nights, and those who are not.

Most of the 37 pages that defied science and didn't burn to a crisp were nevertheless illegible. A few pages, however, were able to be restored and read, among them Ramon's handwritten words of the Kiddush that he intoned a day or so prior to the Shuttle Columbia's break up.

NASA had ordered kosher food for Ramon from a company in Illinois and that's what he took with him as he circled earth thousands of miles from where anyone could see him eat non-kosher if he had so desired. Before departing, he asked a rabbi how he should observe Shabbat in space where a week occurs every 10 and a half hours.

Why? Because he sincerely felt that as he rocketed into space he was representing all Jews, those whose life style mirrored his, and those whose practices differed.

He took a dollar from the Lubavitcher Rebbe with him and a microfiche copy of a Torah scroll that had survived the Holocaust. Why? Because he understood brotherhood and because he understood past, present and future.

Tons of metal and steel were never



Photo courtesy NASA TV

Col. Ilan Ramon a"h holds a kiddush cup during a televised news conference from space.

recovered, yet 37 pieces of paper were. Thirty-seven pieces of paper that should have vanished in thin air floated to earth, to Palestine, Texas; pages that recorded Col. Ramon's time in space, and a page that recorded his final Friday night Shabbat Kiddush. Can you imagine reciting Kiddush — the words "and the heavens and the earth and all of their hosts were completed" — while orbiting above the Earth's atmosphere, being able to gaze at the entire planet through one window of a space shuttle? Can you imagine paying tribute to the heavens while flying in the heavens?

Space has a certain serenity, they say, and Ramon sought and fought to achieve that peace here on earth. He was one of the pilots who participated in Israel's attack on Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981. He understood that mouths that spew hate rarely are accompanied by ears that are receptive to dialogue.

Close your eyes when you next recite the Friday night Kiddush. Picture yourself in space looking down at Earth and up even further into the heavens. Close your eyes and reckon with a world no human could create let alone manage.

And then when you return to work or play on Monday, open your eyes to the realization that everything you do



Fragments of Col. Ilan Ramon's flight diary that survived Columbia's destruction.

should encompass the feelings of all of humanity, those who think, believe and practice like you, and those who don't.

And if you do a good job then maybe, just maybe, your children will follow in your footsteps, and receive their wings to fly through life and soar to the heavens just like you.

Ilan Ramon's untimely death is one worth noting. His life, if not just the last 16 days of his life, should serve as a model for all of us. His birthday present last week was surely one that would make any father proud — a son who follows his father's ascent.

*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.*

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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](http://www.thejewishstar.com).

**Lawrence** - Kulanu Young Leadership Division presents a movie night on the lawn on Tuesday, July 7 at 8 p.m. at the home of Ariel and Baruch Glaubach, 15 Albro Lane in Lawrence. Hot dogs, popcorn, snacks and drinks will be served. The cost is \$54 per couple, with proceeds going directly to support Kulanu programs and services for children with disabilities. In case of rain, the event will take place on Wednesday, July 8. To join the Kulanu Young Leadership Division, please e-mail [movienight@kulanukidsorg](mailto:movienight@kulanukidsorg) or call (516) 569-3083.

**Woodmere** - The DRS Bait Medrash Zvi Elyahu will be open throughout the summer from 8-11 p.m., with Ma'ariv at 10 p.m. The entire community is invited to use the learning facility. The Bait Medrash will be open Monday through Thursday nights, but will be closed on Sunday nights for the summer.

**Oceanside** - The Friedberg JCC is hosting a Bereavement Support Group for recent widows and widowers, beginning on Wednesday July 8, from 5-6 p.m. and running for 8 weeks. The group will focus on the healing process and ways to cope with grief. A brief interview with the social worker is required prior to the first meeting to determine proper placement. The cost is \$120. For more information or to join, please call Rachel Bruckenstein, LMSW, at (516) 766-4341 ext. 131.

**Oceanside** - The Friedberg JCC is hosting an event called "Together Again: Great Teams of the Silver Screen" on Wednesday, July 8 at 2:00 p.m. Join film historian Phil Harwood look at romantic teams from the golden age of Hollywood to the present. The event costs \$6. For more information, please call Maddy Levi at (516) 634-4154 or e-mail [mlevi@friedbergjcc.org](mailto:mlevi@friedbergjcc.org).

**Cedarhurst** - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns Long Island Friends' Experience (LIFE) group is hosting a "Movie and Sing Along" evening on Monday, July 13 from 7-9:00 p.m. at the JCC, 207 Grove Ave. The fee is \$5. For information, call (516) 569-6733.

**East Hills** - The Sid Jacobson JCC is hosting an event, "The History of Islam and Jewish Life in Arab countries" on Tuesday July 14 from 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon. The cost is \$10 and free for SJJCC members. For more information, please call Donna Bernstein at (516) 484-1545 ext. 134

**Cedarhurst** - The Young Israel of Woodmere is hosting a lecture on Thursday, July 16 at 8:30 p.m. as part of their Dilemma, Discussion and Dessert series. Rabbi Aaron Glatt will speak on the topic of "Could a Churban Happen in our Lifetime?" at the home of Judy and Steven Stulberger, 559 Harbor Drive in Cedarhurst. For more information, call the shul at (516) 295-0950.

**East Hills** - The Sid Jacobson JCC is presenting a seminar entitled "Survivor's Survival Kit" on Tuesday, July 21 from 10:30 a.m. until 12 noon. Presented by Martha Kolodkin, this seminar shows how to minimize the stress on surviving family members after you're gone through the development of a Survivor's Survival Kit. The cost is \$10 and free for SJJCC members. For more information, please contact Donna at (516) 484-1545 ext. 134.

**Oceanside** - The Friedberg JCC is hosting a lecture on "The Baseball

## Summer in Long Beach

The Young Israel of Long Beach has organized several programs to service the large influx of families during the summer. Beginning on the Shabbos of July 4, Parshiot Chukat-Balak, there will be a 7 a.m. hashkama minyan, in addition to the regular minyan at 8:45, followed by a dvar torah and kiddush. On Sunday July 5, the YILB youth department will host a family barbecue, with a petting zoo, pony rides, a water slide and carnival booths. On Monday, July 6, a Simply Tsfat concert will take place at 7 p.m., kicking off the 2009 Annual Concert Series on the Boardwalk. On Sunday, July 12, a bike-a-thon will be held, starting at 10 a.m. from the Long Beach boardwalk. The YILB will hold their annual Yom Iyun on Sunday, July 26 at 120 Long Beach Blvd, on the topic of "Issues Confronting Jewish Youth Today: Three Perspectives." Featured speakers include Rabbi Yaakov Horowitz, Dr. David Pelcovitz and Dr. Norman Blumenthal. For more information about any of these events, visit the shul web site at [www.yilb.com](http://www.yilb.com).

Talmud" on Thursday, July 23 at 7:30 p.m. Join author and radio personality Howard Megdal as he discusses his new book, a historical narration of Major League Jewish Baseball in America. Cost is \$6. For more information, please call (516) 634-4154 or e-mail [mlevi@friedbergjcc.org](mailto:mlevi@friedbergjcc.org).

**Rockville Centre** - Mercy Medical Center will present a free one-hour lecture on "My Parents Are Aging. What Do I Need To Know?" on Wednesday, July 29 at 7:30 p.m. in the Mercy League Lounge on the hospital campus. Registration not required. The Lounge is located in the building opposite the hospital's Emergency Department. For more information, call (516) 62MERCY or visit [www.mercymedicalcenter.info](http://www.mercymedicalcenter.info).

**Lawrence** - EndTheMadness is hosting their 5th annual Lawrence shabbaton on the weekend of August 7-8 at Cong. Beth Sholom. 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 the home of local families, with other programming and a kumsitz after shabbos. For more information and to make a reservation, please contact Batya at [salk1111@aol.com](mailto:salk1111@aol.com).

**Oceanside** - The Friedberg JCC is hosting a parenting workshop, "Is it time to go back to school already?" on Wednesday, August 5 from 10-11 a.m. Come hear tips about helping your children make the transition from summer back to school. The event is free, and childcare is available for a small fee. Advance registration required. The JCC is located at 15 Neil Court in Oceanside. For more information, please call (516) 634-4192 or e-mail [khorowitz@friedbergjcc.org](mailto:khorowitz@friedbergjcc.org).

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Miriam Slomovits and Stuart Schreiber  
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Sandy and Murray Weiss

## OHEL

*Continued from Page One*

cultural backgrounds, and there is also a cross section of ages from infants to adolescents," said Shelly Berger, OHEL's director of foster care. "We try to have a diverse group of foster parents so that when we do get a child, we do our best to meet the child's needs and place them in a home where they would be most comfortable."

Though she cannot pinpoint the reason behind the current surge, Berger is appealing to the Jewish community for help. "Right now we seem to have suddenly gotten a lot of children in a short period of time," she told The Jewish Star. "When that happens, you start to feel that you want to be more proactive in replenishing and expanding your pool of foster parents."

A potential foster parent may be a young couple with no children of their own, or an older family with an established infrastructure and other children. "To decide to become a

foster parent is a process that can take several months," Berger noted. "But for those families who have been thinking about it, now is the moment for you to make the call to get the information. The need is there and a number of placements seem to be on the upswing."

Though foster care is designed to be a temporary situation, each case is unique. "Sometimes a foster child becomes an adopted child, but thankfully many do go back to their biological parents, and that is the ideal, provided it is a safe environment," said Saker.

"However," he continued, "the real factor here is the emotional sacrifice that one makes. The only thing more special than an OHEL foster child is an OHEL foster parent. It's not just that you're providing a loving home for a child, but your home is also immeasurably enriched... It can be a life-changing event for a family."

For more information on becoming a foster parent, call OHEL at (718) 851-6300.

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# Abuse bill on hold

BY MICHAEL ORBACH

In the latest twist over child sex abuse legislation, the New York State Assembly will meet in special session in September to vote on a controversial bill that was never brought to the floor.

The bill, dubbed the Child Victims Act by its sponsor, Assemblywoman Marge Markey (D-Queens), would extend the criminal and civil statutes for child sexual abuse cases as well as open up a year-long window for cases currently beyond the statute. With both houses being controlled by Democrats, activists had high hopes for the bill's passing this year.

According to Mike Armstrong, a spokesperson for Markey, the bill not being brought to the floor was to be expected, given the turmoil in the New York State Senate. Most importantly, Armstrong maintained, the bill has enough votes in the Assembly to pass.

"The Speaker has assured her [Markey] that he wants the bill to become law and he's committed to it being brought to the floor," Armstrong said. "When you dodge the bullet at one moment, you can regard it as a victory."

The adjournment led to claims of victory from opponents of the bill, who include organizations as diverse as the

Catholic Conference and the United Talmudic Academy of Williamsburg. Assemblyman Vito Lopez (D-Brooklyn) emerged as the most prominent opponent of the legislation by sponsoring a competing bill that does not include the year-long window.

Lopez argues that his bill, which also did not make it to the Assembly floor, has much broader support in the State Senate and Assembly.

"I have 66 sponsors in the Assembly, [Markey] has 42, which do you think should come to the floor?" Lopez told The Jewish Star. "[The Markey Bill] has no chance of passing in the Senate."

Supporters of the Markey bill offer a different take.

Marci Hamilton, a Yeshiva University Professor and author of "Justice Denied: What America Must Do To Protect its Children," described any victory as purely superficial.

"The problem is that the Catholic Conference is so good at manipulating the message that our ragtag army has to catch up," she said. "We're moving in the right direction. Not as fast as we'd like, but

we're getting there."

Both sides have recently ratcheted up their efforts. A group of survivors of sexual abuse gathered outside of Assemblyman Lopez's office in almost daily vigils to protest his sponsorship of the competing bill; last Wednesdays, survivors clashed with Lopez's supporters, who pelted them with loose change, according to one of the attendees.

Survivors for Justice, a collection of Jewish victims of sexual abuse and their advocates has been running 30-second radio advertisements in favor of the bill. The latest featured Gershon Silver, the grandson of Rabbi Eliezer Silver, one of the founders of Agudath Israel of America, who asked listeners to "heed the words of my saintly grandfather," and support the legislation.

Lonnie Soury, a spokesperson for Survivors for Justice, believes that the Markey bill is far from dead.

"It's shameful the amount of effort the church and some rabbinical authorities put into defeating this bill," she asserted. "They put a big effort in but they haven't killed it."

## SERVICE CUTS ON TRACK FOR LIRR

Continued from Page One

ability rate," Arena pointed out. He also noted that over 60 LIRR stations have been operating without clerks for several years, and, like the local Five Towns stations, are equipped with ticket machines.

For those who may be unfamiliar with buying tickets through the machine, the LIRR will offer customer education to assist travelers during the transition period. Riders are also encouraged to buy their tickets in advance through the LIRR's Mail&Ride service and the WebTicket service, which mails tickets within five business days, at no extra charge for postage. Most WebTickets are discounted by five percent off the station price, and monthly tickets by two percent.

Though each of the affected stations has two ticket machines, Arena acknowledged that they are not foolproof. "Passengers who buy higher-priced tickets onboard are entitled to a refund of the difference, if both ticket machines are out service at the same time," he said.



The Woodmere LIRR train station will lose its two ticket clerks in August, leaving riders to purchase tickets from automated machines.

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## KULANU GRADUATES

Continued from Page One

middle school program. Hakarat hatov is always accorded to HAFTR in its partnership with Kulanu to provide inclusion services... The students and faculty from both programs benefit from the relationship."

Jeffrey Schonfeld, Jordan's father, expressed his gratitude toward the two institutions. "We are so thankful to Kulanu and HAFTR for offering Jordan the opportunity to learn in an integrated setting," he said. "Jordan excelled beyond expectations in this unique program and we are grateful that he was chosen to receive an award recognizing his accomplishments."

The Kulanu High School program at HAFTR also graduated along with HAFTR High School on Wednesday, June 24. Some Kulanu students graduated with Regents and IEP (Individual Education Program) diplomas, while others will continue in a vocational program until the age of 21, said Raskin. The program, she noted, "is unique to New York State, unique to the community."

"We recognize Kulanu as part of our program at graduation and not a separate entity," emphasized Rabbi Dovid Kupchik, HAFTR middle school principal. "They walk down and sit with the HAFTR graduates. It was very meaningful and appropriate."

The Kulanu-HAFTR symbiosis is "excellent," said Kupchik. "It's a win-win situation. The HAFTR students are learning at an early age to be sensitive to kids with special needs and the Kulanu students benefit from being in a Yeshiva building and participating in many programs and classes and daily Tefilla (prayers). Both parties recognize the benefits and the need. HAFTR is a community school and is showing it."

Though this was Kulanu's sixth graduation with HAFTR, the yeshiva began a "new tradition" at the ceremony this year, noted Segelnick. "We gave the alumni parents and grandparents the opportunity to present their graduates with diplomas." She said that out of the 99 graduates, there were 34 alumni parents and 4 alumni grandparents. "That such a large group of alumni come back and send their children is an impressive statistic," she said. "It's definitely a vote of confidence."



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## IN MY VIEW: PURGING JEWISH HISTORY

*Continued from Page One*

Maccabean era and revolt, the destruction of the Second Temple (70 C.E.), the Bar Kochba revolt (135-132 C.E.), and the writing of the Mishnah, Jerusalem Talmud and other religious works in Israel (200-1000 C.E.). A portion of the Jewish people always remained in Israel throughout the millennia, and Jews constituted the majority of Jerusalem's population from the 1800s until today. Jews who returned to Israel from the diaspora and purchased swamps and desert wastelands from absentee Turkish owners and redeveloped the land; most Arabs moved in afterwards. Jews living in ancient communities such as Hebron for centuries were murdered in Arab

pogroms in the 1920s and 1930s. Although the Balfour Declaration (1917) and League of Nations San Remo conference (1920) promised a Jewish state in the British Mandate, 78 percent of the British Mandate in which a Jewish state was to be created was carved out and given to Jordan.

Alarming, from day one, the Obama administration has adopted what is essentially Arab Palestinian revisionist history: Islam and Islamic nations are glorified; Jewish history has been thrown down a "memory hole," and Jews are viewed as "invaders" of "Palestinian" Arab land. In Cairo, Obama ignored the historic connection of the Jewish people to Israel, instead claiming that the aspiration of Jews to have a home in Israel was "rooted" in the European Holocaust, and blamed the establishment of the State of Israel for the "dislocation," "suffering," and "humiliation" of Palestinians.

Obama's Cairo speech was part of an extremely disturbing pattern. When Obama took office, apparently a modern-day version of Orwell's history re-writers and expungers quietly revised the U.S. State Department's official descriptions of the countries of the world on the department's public website. The website now glorifies Muslim nations' thousands-of-years long histories, language, archeology, and contributions to science, culture and poetry — and has completely eliminated millennia of Israel's history, language and contributions to culture, science and the world.

The U.S. Department of State thus far has not responded to my requests (including a Freedom of Information Act request) for a copy of the 2008 pre-Obama State Department website descriptions of Israel and Muslim nations, which I sought in order to confirm the recent changes. However, there is little doubt that the Obama administration re-wrote the country descriptions. In September 2008 a State Dept. report referred to Israel as the historic homeland of the Jewish people — which the current administration and State Department website refuse to acknowledge. Moreover, the website now mirrors the Muslim glorification language found in numerous Obama speeches.

For instance: "Iran has always reasserted its national identity and has developed as a distinct political and cultural entity," and, "Saudi Arabia is known as the birthplace of Islam." Ancient cultures which lived in Saudi territory over a 5,000-year period, and the Saud family's rise and fall several times from 1750 onwards are described.

By contrast, the official U.S. State Department description of Israel's history starts just a little over 100 years ago, with efforts "initiated" by Theodore Herzl for a sovereign homeland for Jews "in Palestine." The State Department gives absolutely no indication that a single Jew ever lived in Israel prior to recent decades, or that Jews remained in Israel throughout the millennia. None of the numerous archeological sites left by Israel's ancient Jewish inhabitants are mentioned.

Instead, the State Department leaves the false impression that the region was a Palestinian entity and then suddenly Herzl came up with the idea of inserting a Jewish state. Simply put, the State Department blackout of Israel's history assists the fraudulent Palestinian narrative.

In addition, in contrast with glowing descriptions of Muslim countries' cultures

and languages, the State Department's official description of Israel never mentions the ancient Hebrew language or Israel's historical (or recent) cultural, religious, poetic, artistic and scientific contributions to the world. Unlike their rare Arab counterparts, Israel's prominent Nobel laureates are never mentioned.

The State Department description of the "people of Israel" also promotes the false claim that Jews are usurpers of the land who all originate from outside of Israel:

"The three broad Jewish groupings [in Israel] are the Ashkenazim, or Jews who trace their ancestry to western, central, and eastern Europe; the Sephardim, who trace their origin to Spain, Portugal, southern Europe, and North Africa; and Eastern or Oriental Jews, who descend from ancient communities in Islamic lands."

The real "origin" and "ancestry" of Sephardim, Ashkenazim and Eastern Jews — namely, dispersed Jews who had lived in Israel in past eras — is not mentioned. The State Department also neglects to mention that today's "people of Israel" includes Jews whose ancestors lived in Israel through thousands of years of turmoil and persecution.

Moreover, the State Department's mention that Israel's people includes Jews who "originated" in Arab lands does not explain that 870,000 Jews came to Israel as refugees from Arab lands; having fled for their lives in the face of Arab persecution, including Iraqi laws which made "Zionism" punishable by death; burnings of synagogues and hundreds of Jewish homes in Syria; pogroms in Baghdad, Morocco and Yemen; and expulsions of Jews from Egypt, Yemen and Libya.

By contrast, the State Department frequently describes people in Muslim lands as "Palestinian refugees" and greatly exaggerates the number of individuals who might conceivably qualify for Palestinian refugee status. Jordan's people are claimed to include "approximately 1.7 million registered Palestinian refugees;" Syria's people "some 500,000 Palestinian... refugees;" and Lebanon "about 400,000 Palestinian refugees, some in Lebanon since 1948."

In fact, there were only approximately 600,000 Arabs living in Israel prior to 1948 — and many of them remained in Israel as Israeli citizens.

The U.S. State Department country histories also speak of "Palestinian nationalists" long before "Palestinian nationalism" existed. The State Department's history of Jordan states that: "Transjordan was one of the Arab states which moved to assist Palestinian nationalists opposed to the creation of Israel in May 1948, and took part in the warfare between the Arab states and the newly founded State of Israel."

However, the Palestinian Liberation Organization was first created in 1964, and first called for the creation of a Palestinian state in 1974. Prior to 1974, the stated Arab goal was simply to destroy Israel; after 1974 the goal changed to destroying Israel and replacing Israel with a Palestinian state.

Orwell noted: "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past."

It's time to let President Obama know that his administration's efforts to control the future by distorting and blacking out Israel's and the Jewish people's past are unacceptable.

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THE KOSHER BOOKWORM

# From the fourth book of the Torah to the Fourth of July

From Sefer Bamidbar to the Founding Fathers

In Hebrew it is called Bamidbar. Translated, that would mean desert, but we know this fourth book of the Torah in English as the Book of Numbers. As "desert" we would think that this was a geography book. As "Numbers" we would assume it is a math text. But, alas, it deals with neither.



Alan Jay Gerber

This fourth book of the Torah deals with the Jewish people's ordeals, conflicts and mishaps on their journey in the Sinai desert on their way to Israel. So was their goal, a goal that even conspired to deny the very nation who served in servitude in Egypt. This is the saga of the Book of Numbers, Sefer Bamidbar, that is read in synagogues, worldwide, at this time of year.

Recently, two new translations of Sefer Bamidbar have been published, each a part of an ongoing series that, when taken together and completed, will represent some of the finest in Torah scholarship in the English language.

The first is "Onkelos on the Torah: Bemidbar" (Gefen, 2009) with translation, commentary and appendix by Rabbi Dr. Israel Drazin and Rabbi Stanley M. Wagner.

The second book is the second, revised edition of "Torah: Chumash Bemidbar" (Kehot Publishing Society, 2009) by editor in chief Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Wisniewsky.

This coming week we will read the double parshiot of Chukat, dealing with the Parah Adumah (red heifer), and Balak, dealing with the episode of the pagan prophet Bil'am and the talking donkey. Each of these volumes treat every episode of this sefer in mutually exclusive methodologies. I will briefly cite several examples to help whet your appetite.

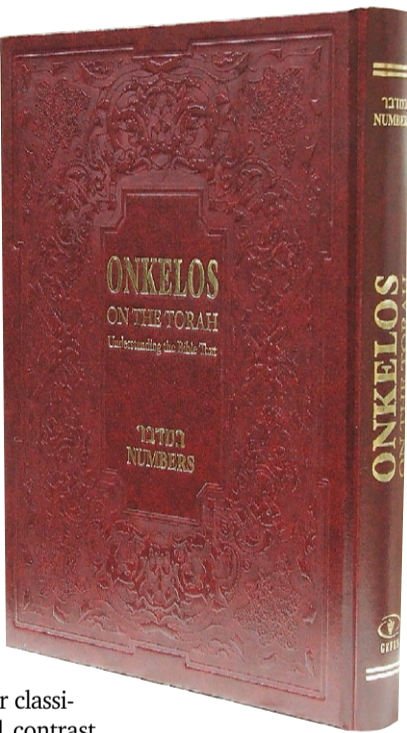
The Onkelos volume is more than just a dry translation of an obscure ancient tongue. The authors have also sought to bring together in their commentary the referencing of other classical commentators and contrast their takes on the basic texts with that of Onkelos, and to thereby arrive at a clearer understanding of that text. Also, after each section, the authors include a "Beyond the Text" section detailing a series of challenges in the form of questions for the reader to ponder as he/she studies, in depth, the texts and commentaries. These questions are not the type you would hear in your regular beis medresh. They go laser sharp into the deeper meaning of the events being learned and attempt to quantify the text's content with that of other texts in terms of the verbiage and lingo used, as well as trying to ascertain any parallelisms between what is found here to other texts in the Tanach.

The extensive appendix found at the end of the book includes a further detailed extension of the commentary wherein we are allowed to delve even further into the many incidents, trials and tribulations found in the text. One example is the opinion of the Rambam in his "Guide to the Perplexed" wherein he teaches that the entire episode in the Garden of Eden should be understood as a parable. Likewise, the Rambam explains the incident of the donkey speaking to Bil'am as a

prophetic vision. Other sources are brought in to give further contrasting takes on this whole episode. Among them are Saadia Gaon, and the ibn Ezra, who view such incidences as parables or figures of speech.

By contrast, the chumash from Kehot seeks to blend together Rashi's commentaries with the interpolations as expounded upon by the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, of blessed memory. These commentaries are written in exquisite English translations whose clarity is deeply appreciated. Even the most complex concepts in mystical teachings are treated with great linguistic care. Also designed to help the learner are numerous charts, new to this edition, that help explain the chronology of events, together with maps and diagrams as well as charts that further enhance the understanding of this sacred writ.

As noted in my previous reviews of this particular Chabad-sponsored chumash series, the overviews of each parsha are among the best that I have ever learned in the English language. They are not just summaries of the basic texts. They are substantive learning experiences that, if published alone, would be immediately heralded as classics in their field. Just for this alone, I urge you to check out this whole series. To date, the books of Bereishis, Shemos and Bamidbar are in print.



Bamidbar is the summer Biblical classic of our faith and thus sometimes finds itself orphaned and wanting in terms of subject matter for some vacationing rabbis and yeshiva rebbes here at home. For those of us staying put for most of this summer, the chumashim reviewed should be considered for your learning pleasure.

These two volumes should help, in no small measure, to make up for this sermonic deficit. Buy 'em, read 'em and learn from some exceptionally talented rabbis and scholars.

## FOURTH OF JULY PICKS

Inasmuch as this weekend is centered around our nation's birthday and that my personal passion is the teaching of American history, it will now be my pleasure to suggest to you my picks for this year's Fourth of July readings.

The first is titled, "We Hold These Truths..." by Paul Aron. This book of 242 pages deals in 24 short chapters with brief bios and examples of historical experiences with the wit and wisdom of our nation's founding fathers. The author deserves to be commended for his choice of historical events of a group of people whose lives were filled

with events and achievements in leadership that we rarely witness from our leaders today. The book, it should be noted, is published in association with The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, in Virginia.

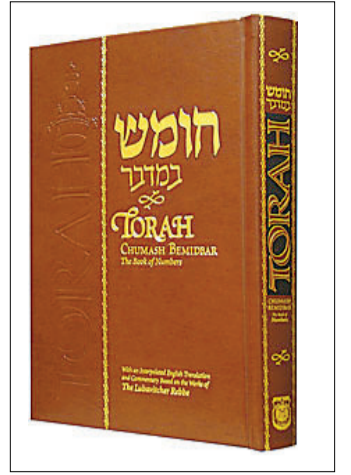
The next book is titled "Signing Their Lives Away: the Fame and Misfortune of the Men Who Signed The Declaration of Independence" by Denise Kierman and Joseph D'Agness. This is a lighthearted work about serious history, that of the

signers, detailing their bios but also some rather obscure and at times bizarre and humorous facets of their life's experiences.

One can only appreciate this group of founders in terms of the fact that each and every one of them, in signing the declaration, earned for himself a death sentence from the British Crown. Thankfully, none was ever to face such a fate, but most did lose their property and many suffered for that for the rest of their lives.

Of one thing I am certain: when taken together you will learn more from these two books than you ever learned in school about those who made possible the lives we all live on these blessed shores.

Have a good Shabbos and a safe and joyous holiday weekend from The Kosher Bookworm.



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# Celebrating America's scenery

Continued from Page One

failed to acknowledge the calendar can now be pushed back further into the closet or relocated to lower drawers of a bedroom dresser.

But more significantly, America's birthday, which this year is the 233rd, is a time to celebrate America — with our families, our local communities, and with others who share with us this special place.

This is a date we need to circle on the calendar as a time to think about some of the variety of experiences that our great country offers all the people who live here, citizens and visitors alike. Summer, in general, is a time to get out, to travel somewhere different, to meet the neighbors, and to try to

avoid the traffic jams and tourist traps while doing so.

Over a couple of decades, I've traveled to different places in our country. Some for work, recruiting students for Yeshiva University in the mid to late-80s, and lots just for my own need to explore (we all need a change of scenery from time to time, some more than others).

There are a handful of people I know, and you probably know similar types, who can put 30 or 40 pushpins into a wall map of the United States, and maybe they can do the same with world destinations as well. These adventurers have been there, and they can talk about it, even show you their photos.

I'm not so experienced. I've traveled, and been to lots of places you probably haven't, but quantity is not one of my

dreams. For sure there are places in this country that I do want to get to, and that I must get to; others I want to return to, and spend more time at, share with family, or just see what I can do differently as an older, more experienced photographer.

On these pages are more than a handful of places that I've experienced. You might not recognize all of the locations, but you'll definitely recognize some. Or at the least, the types of moments and places that I have explored and brought back with me in color and black & white, to prove I was actually there, and that I did OK in capturing some sense of the place that was introduced to me.

Let pictures be my pushpins.

Photos by Judah S. Harris



California is not only about the Pacific Ocean, but the sea, or better put, "The Beach," is a defining part of this huge state, home to the forces of nature and a variety of marine and animal life. A seagull soars over the edge of the Pacific Ocean in California.



A peaceful spot for rowboating can be found near this sunlit clearing in Spring Glen, NY.



A fisherman at work in Maine.

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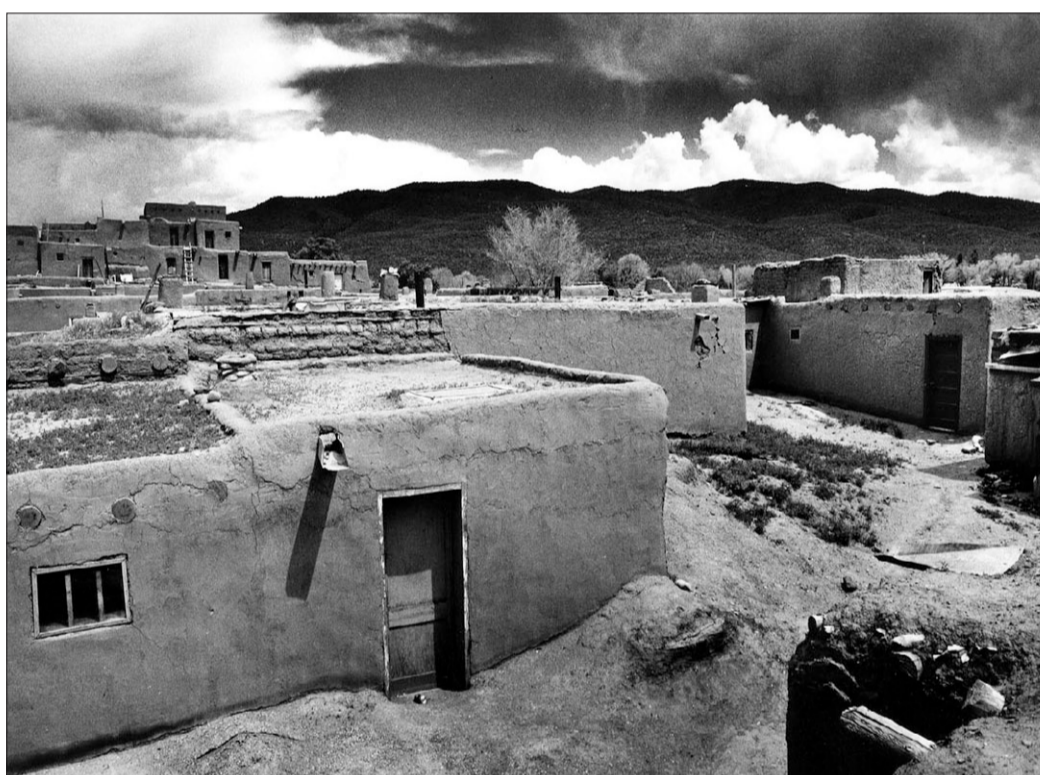
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Washington Heights (above) and Washington, D.C. at right.



Block Island, Rhode Island



Similar to Cape Cod, but less celebrated, Block Island, is a ferry ride away from the Rhode Island mainland or Montauk, Long Island.



Photos by Judah S. Harris

## Wide open space

A vast uninhabited openness characterizes New Mexico. Threatening clouds (above); a fence stretches to the horizon (below). Elsewhere, for miles and miles, there is little else but distinct rock mountain formations, the backdrop for many films over the decades.



### SLICE OF LIFE

# Pie for the Fourth of July

BY EILEEN GOLTZ

My bestest friend Janice and I were walking (the only form of exercise besides eating that we're not allergic to) the other day, contemplating, in our infinite wisdom, exactly what we thought the official food of the Fourth of July should be. While burgers, hot dogs, lemonade and ice cream all made our top 10 list, the one food that had both of us salivating and nodding our heads in agreement was the pie. Or more specifically for the Fourth, a FRESH fruit/berry pie.

Making a crust for a pie is both easy and complicated at the same time. The ingredients are simple, flour, shorting, salt, (sometimes sugar) and water while the technique is what takes practice. The biggest problems most people have when they first attempt to make a pie crust is the tendency to overwork the dough and to use shorting that is too warm.

Once you get the crust down, the fresh summer fruit filling combinations are astronomical. Don't worry, most fruit pie fillings are quite forgiving. If you are making a mixed fruit pie, feel free to vary the combinations of fruit. If your taste buds crave a pie sweeter than a specific recipe, add a bit more sugar. Just know that the filling could become a tad more runny or gummy. Personally, I don't worry so much about a little extra juice or goo, just as long as I get to eat it.

I'm lucky to have access to excellent pie bakers who are all very happy to share their expertise and recipes. They say it's the crust that sets the tone for the whole pie experience and it's the fruit filling that's, pardon the pun, the frosting on the cake.

The Fourth of July is one of those amazingly wonderful holidays that don't require you to do anything more than show up and celebrate. So choose to attend parades or fireworks or barbeque or all of the above and rejoice in the freedom to do so. But, while you're celebrating with family and friends take a moment to consider that there are American men and women out there in this crazy world of ours fighting to protect

that freedom. This is the perfect day to thank them, honor them and pray for their safe return.

#### Pie Crust Tips:

- Always chill pastry dough before rolling and cutting, and always chill it again afterwards, before baking, to relax the gluten.
- For a two-crust pie, brush a little water around the edge of the bottom crust before placing the top crust. This creates a good seal once the two are crimped together.
- Left over dough can and should be used. Cut out rounds of leftover pie dough. Turn a muffin pan upside down. Press dough rounds onto bottoms of muffin cups. Bake, placing the upside down pan on a cookie sheet at 425 for 7 to 8 minutes or until lightly brown. Invert pan onto a wire rack. Use tart shells for pudding and other desserts or fill with creamed sauces.
- Use waxed paper to measure your pie dough. The standard pie pan is 9 inches in diameter so you'll need a 12-inch circle of dough. Since wax paper comes in a 12-inch width, simply tear off a piece 12 inches long, then roll your circle of dough so it touches the center of all four sides of the square.

#### EZ PIE CRUST

(pareve or dairy)

- 3 1/2 cups flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup solid shortening (margarine, butter, Crisco, or a combination)
- 3/4 cup cool water (more or less) not cold

Combine the flour and salt into the bowl of a food processor. Cut the shortening into 8 pieces. Put shortening into the processor. Pulse until the mixture looks like small peas, with the shortening being totally incorporated into the flour. Pour half the water in and process for about 20 seconds. Continue adding the water until it comes together in a soft ball of dough. You may need more or less water depending on the humidity. Do NOT OVER PROCESS the dough. Work

See SLICE OF LIFE, Page 12



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- 9:30 AM Morning Seder
- 12:00 PM Shiur/R' Lebowitz
- 1:00 PM Time to Attend College
- 8-10 PM Night Seder/R' Balsam
- 10:00 PM Maariv
- 10:15 PM Gym Availability



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## SLICE OF LIFE: PIE RECIPES

*Continued from Page One*

the dough as little as you have to, just enough to keep it formed in a ball.

Divide the dough into 3 or 4 equal portions. Cover the dough and refrigerate it 30 minutes or overnight.

Take a handful of flour and sprinkle it over a flat dry surface. Put a ball of the dough in the middle of the flour. Coat your rolling pin with flour. Start rolling the dough with the pin, turning the dough to get a round shape. This may take several passes over the dough, turning this way and that. Flip the dough over carefully, adding flour to your surface as needed. Finish rolling on this side to make a circle that is 4" bigger than your pan. Fold the dough in half; place it in the pie pan unfolding to fit. Trim it if necessary. You want to have enough to fold the edges under for a rim pressing the edge. If you are making a one crust pie like a pumpkin or pecan you can crimp the edges or press it down. Just make sure that the edge is slightly higher than the pie pan so that the filling doesn't run out. Makes enough dough for 2 - 9 inch crusts with a little dough left over.

**CRISCO® PIE CRUST**  
*(pareve)*

#### Single Crust

- 1 1/3 level cups flour
- 1/2 level teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup Crisco®
- 3 tablespoons cold water

#### Double Crust

- 2 level cups flour
- 1 level teaspoon salt
- ? cup Crisco®
- 5 tablespoons cold water

■ 9-inch Deep Dish Double Crust or Two 10-inch Double Crust  
■ 2 2/3 cups flour  
■ 1 teaspoon salt  
■ 1 cup Crisco®  
■ 7 to 8 tablespoons cold water

Spoon flour into measuring cup and level. Mix flour and salt in medium bowl. Cut in Crisco using pastry blender (or 2 knives) until all flour is blended in to form pea-size chunks. Sprinkle with water, one tablespoon at a time. Toss lightly with fork until dough will form ball. Divide dough in half, if making double crust. Press between hands to form one or two 5 to 6-inch pancakes.

Flour dough lightly. Roll into circle between sheets of waxed paper on dampened countertop. Peel off top sheet. For single crust, trim one inch larger than inverted 9-inch pie plate. Flip into pie plate. Remove other sheet and press pastry to fit. Fold edge under and press to form a crust higher than the pan.

For a double crust, flour each half of dough lightly. Roll into circles between sheets of waxed paper on dampened countertop. Peel off top sheet for bottom crust. Transfer bottom crust to pie plate. Remove other sheet and press pastry to fit. Trim edge even with pie plate. Add desired filling to unbaked pie crust. Remove top sheet from top crust. Lift top crust onto filled pie. Remove other sheet. Trim to 1/2-inch beyond edge of pie plate. Fold top edge under bottom crust. Press edges together and crimp or flute. Cut slits in top crust to allow steam to escape. Bake according to specific recipe instructions.

For single baked pie shell, heat oven to 425. Thoroughly prick bottom and sides with fork multiple times to prevent shrinking. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes or until lightly browned. For recipe calling for unbaked pie shell, follow baking directions given in that recipe. *Modified from Crisco web site*

**MIXED UP STREUSEL BERRY PIE**  
*(dairy or pareve)*

#### Crust

- 2 1/4 cups flour
- 1 tablespoon sugar

- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 7 tablespoons chilled unsalted butter or margarine, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1/3 cup chilled solid vegetable shortening, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 6 tablespoons (about) ice water

#### Topping

- 6 tablespoons (packed) golden brown sugar
- 6 tablespoons whole almonds
- 6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) chilled unsalted butter or margarine, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 4 1/2 tablespoons old-fashioned oats
- 4 1/2 tablespoons all purpose flour

#### Filling

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup quick-cooking tapioca
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 5 cups assorted fresh berries (such as raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries; about 8 ounces of each)

In a food processor combine the flour, sugar, and salt. Process until combined. Add butter and shortening; using on/off turns, cut in until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add 5 tablespoons ice water and process until moist clumps form, adding more water by teaspoonfuls if mixture is dry. Gather dough into ball; flatten into disk. Wrap in plastic and chill at least 1 hour.

#### For topping:

Combine all ingredients in processor. Process until moist clumps form. (Dough and topping can be made 1 day ahead. Cover topping and chill; keep dough chilled. Soften dough slightly at room temperature before rolling out.)

#### For filling:

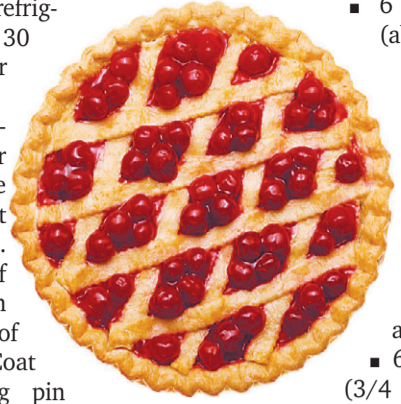
Mix sugar, tapioca, and lemon juice in large bowl. Add berries and toss gently to combine. Let stand until tapioca softens slightly, stirring occasionally, about 45 minutes. Pre-heat oven to 400. Roll out the dough on lightly floured surface to 15-inch round. Transfer to 9-inch-diameter glass pie dish. Trim dough overhang to 1 inch. Fold overhang under and crimp decoratively, forming high-standing rim. Freeze crust 20 minutes. Spoon filling into crust. Crumble topping evenly over filling. Bake pie until crust and topping are golden brown and filling is bubbling, covering loosely with sheet of foil if topping browns too quickly, about 55 minutes. Transfer pie to rack and cool at least 3 hours. (Can be made 8 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature.) Cut pie into wedges and serve. *Submitted by Alice Pincer NY NY modified from epicurious.com*

**STRAWBERRY MARGARITA PIE (dairy)**

- 1 ready made graham cracker crust
- 1 lb strawberries, halved (3 1/2 cups)
- 1 tablespoon finely grated fresh lime zest (from 3 limes)
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice (from 2 limes)
- 1 (14-oz) can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 tablespoons tequila
- 2 tablespoons triple sec, Cointreau, or other orange-flavored liqueur
- 1 1/2 cups chilled heavy cream
- Garnish: small strawberries

Purée strawberries, zest, lime juice, condensed milk, tequila, and liqueur in a food processor or blender until just smooth, and then transfer to a large bowl.

In the bowl of an electric mixer beat the cream until it just holds stiff peaks. Fold one third of cream into strawberry mixture, and then fold in remainder in 2 batches. Pour the filling into crust, mounding it slightly in the center, and freeze, uncovered, until firm, about 4 hours. Remove from freezer and let soften in refrigerator, about 40 minutes, before serving (pie should be semi soft). Serves 8



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