

# THE JEWISH STAR

Independent and original reporting from the Orthodox communities of Long Island

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### IN MY VIEW

## Iran is not a democracy

BY MICAH D. HALPERN

Americans have been duped, hoodwinked by mainstream media, fed false hope and provided with erroneous information.

I need to set the record straight. Iran is not a democracy.

Because the Iranians use the terms and adopt the trappings of democracy, does not make it a democracy. Because the American media would like Iran to be a democracy, does not make it a democracy. Because

the White House wishes for a democratically run Iran, does not mean Iran is a democracy.

The Iranians went out to vote, but their votes did not count. The only vote that counts in Iran is the vote of The Supreme Leader, the Grand Ayatollah Khomeini. And the Grand Ayatollah has declared that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad retains his position because of "divine involvement." Challenging that edict is tantamount to challenging Allah.

There is no questioning the

word of the Grand Ayatollah. According to Iranian law The Supreme Leader is the real and true leader. It is he who has the final say on all matters religious and political. The president is merely his mouthpiece.

So how could the Western press portray the charade perpetrated in Iran as a democratic election? The fix was in from the outset.

There was a reverse, almost a perverse, democratic model that evolved in Iran around this election. It seemed as if there were four actual candidates. In actuality, there were 400 wannabe candidates and only four made it through the vetting process conducted by the Supreme Council which is controlled by The Supreme Leader who

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



Image courtesy Joe Klein

Yetta, a Holocaust survivor briefly overcome with grief, during an interview in the documentary "Surviving Surviving," prepared as a class assignment by HAFTR eighth grader Joe Klein.

## Surviving surviving

First the Holocaust, then poverty

BY MALKA EISENBERG

Helen G. survived Auschwitz and Mengele's experiments on twins and grew up in an orphanage in the United States, but the agony of those years haunts her still. When poverty threatened to make her homeless and hungry, The Blue Card, a financial aid organization for Holocaust survivors, helped with her mortgage and food.

Helen's case is not an isolated one. One fourth of all Holocaust survivors, about

30,000 in the United States, live at or near the federal poverty level, said Elie Rubinstein, executive director of Blue Card, Inc. Although poverty has been a problem among survivors since the war's end, "the issue of needy Holocaust survivors is not often on the radar screen," said Rubinstein. "They are isolated and basically forgotten. In the Jewish community we don't talk about needy Holocaust sur-

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## Local shuls on high alert

Tightened security follows shooting at Holocaust museum

BY YAFFI SPODEK

Rabbi Anshel Perl of Chabad of Mineola was not surprised to receive a phone call from the local police department last Wednesday afternoon, reassuring him of extra security measures being taken to protect his building, just hours after an elderly gunman fatally shot a security guard at Washington D.C.'s Holocaust Memorial Museum.

"Security is paramount in general," Rabbi Perl said. "We have been toughening up security after what happened in Riverdale, and even before that, Chabad centers around the country were making proactive efforts since Mumbai."

Coincidentally, on that same Wednesday, Chabad of Mineola was holding a meeting to discuss "how we are going to revamp our whole security system," Rabbi Perl said. "Our building is going to be under watch 24/7."

Rabbi Perl is not alone in recog-

nizing the severity of the security threat, nor is he being overly cautious in addressing it.

"The risk is only going to increase over time, and is not going to go away," warned terrorism expert Micah Halpern. "You can't bury your head in the sand and assume it will."

Although James T. Von Brunn, the D.C. gunman, was a "lone wolf" working alone, Halpern said, shuls and other Jewish institutions, especially those in New York, remain vulnerable to attacks.

"Jewish synagogues, schools and camps are what we call soft targets — easy to attack because they don't move, as we saw in Riverdale last month," Halpern explained. "Terrorists, even lone wolves, try to find places that are easy to hit."

In the wake of last week's attack, the Nassau County Police Department is also stepping up surveillance and taking other precautionary measures.

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## Tuition by the nickel

Internet toolbar will help fund Jewish education

BY YAFFI SPODEK

An easy opportunity to help your school raise money may be only a mouse-click away thanks to a new fundraising venture from the Orthodox Union.

For every single click on the OU's Education Fund Toolbar — scheduled to launch in the next few weeks — a corporate sponsor will donate five cents to the OU Education Fund, which will be distributed to yeshivot and day schools around the country.

"Our goal is to send the toolbar to every Jewish home in America," said Rabbi Saul Zucker, director of the OU's recently developed department of day school and educational services. "The toolbar gets loaded onto your desktop and it costs the user nothing. When you access the Internet through the toolbar, for every click, our sponsors will donate a nickel to the OU education fund."

Though five cents may not seem like a substantial amount of money, other organizations using a similar arrangement have generated as much as \$600,000 a month in toolbar usage, Zucker noted. All of the money will be distributed to schools based on a specific formula for allocation, divided into three distinct categories.

Twenty percent of the money will be available as an

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Rabbi Saul Zucker

## Who won, anyway?

See select local election results online at www.thejewishstar.com

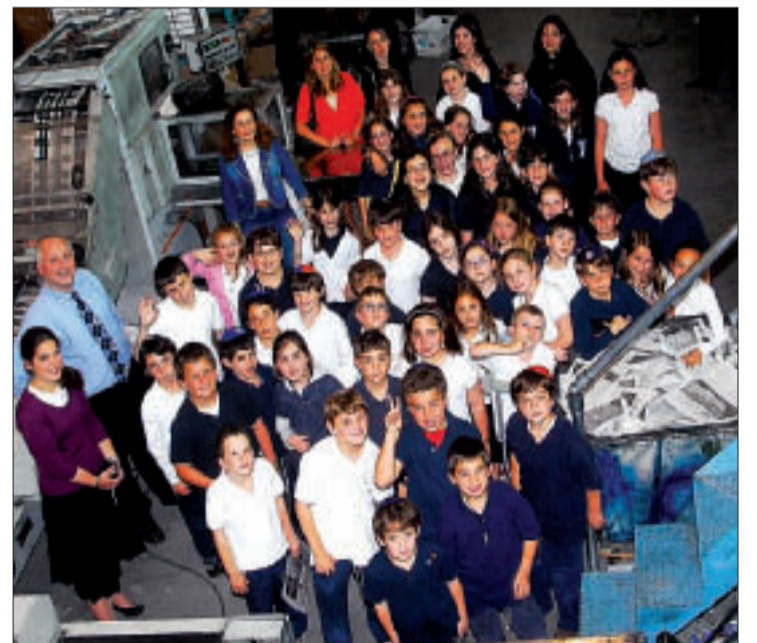


Photo by Andrew Vardakis

## HALB visits The Jewish Star

HALB's SPICE Enrichment Program visited the offices and printing plant of The Jewish Star to learn how the newspaper is produced each week. The enthusiastic and well-mannered group was led by program coordinator Bina Krieger (back row, left) and several parent chaperones.

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### Shabbat

Candlelighting: 8:10 p.m. ■ Shabbat ends: 9:21 p.m.  
Torah reading: Parshat Shlach

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# That's Life

Edited by Miriam L. Wallach

## Dear That's Life,

Ever think about giving out awards to people who live in the neighborhood for various things that they do? Of course, there are community service awards given out by local organizations commending people for their acts of kindness. Those are not the kind of awards I mean — I'm referring to the ones that have no kindness, necessarily, associated with them.

For example, to the genius (and I do mean that sincerely) who decided to start parking unmanned auxiliary police vehicles around the neighborhood in order to deter drivers from speeding, making illegal turns, etc., I would give the Creativity Award. Watching drivers slam on the brakes when they see the cruiser, not realizing there is no officer in it, makes me smile. If one could be parked on my corner, it would be greatly appreciated.

To the person who has been constructing, for what seems an eternity, what some have dubbed the Saddle Ridge Hotel, I would like to give the "What Were You Thinking?" Award. The building reminds me of the game from Sesame Street called "Which of These Things Do Not Belong Here?" To say it sticks out in the neighborhood is an understatement.

How work continues there six days a week while the permit clearly states that work may only take place Monday through Friday is also something I cannot figure out. (By the way, complaints about work taking place when it should not be may only be registered with the building department while the

work is going on, which obviously cannot happen on Shabbos. Brilliant.) Please do not expect a block party in your honor when construction is finally complete.

Driving through this neighborhood at very early hours of the morning, one rarely finds others on the road. There is, however, one exception: the newspaper delivery guy. It is he, or she, who seems to be driving erratically at 5 a.m., weaving back and forth from opposite sides of the street. Only when one realizes that the items being tossed out of the window are newspapers and the driver isn't really casing homes does a relative sense of calm prevail. The "Please Don't Hit Me" Award should be given to this individual along with a request: there are others who drive at the same time you do so please proceed with caution.

If I could, I would give sincere thanks, and possibly bestow the Nobel Peace Prize upon, the individuals who determined the future locations of the traffic cameras to be placed along Peninsula Boulevard, including its intersection

with Woodmere Boulevard. Having to look both ways before driving through that location truly highlights the threat posed to each person who traverses the area. And if someone could get the "Walk/Don't Walk" signal at that corner to work as well, that would be great.

And finally, the "That's My Money Until It's Your Money" Award would go to the gentleman who pocketed my change, assuming I was going to give it to him as a tip, but did not even have the courtesy to hand it back to me first. When I asked if there had been change, knowing full well there had been, he replied "Oh, yes," and then added, "um...thank you," while still not returning my change, or even pretending to reach into his pocket. Weird.

Please feel free to send in your award suggestions; they need not be given out only once a year but rather, as we see fit. That's the beauty of making up awards that don't really exist.

MLW

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 Esti Newman (Brooklyn, NY) & Eli Potash (Brooklyn, NY) — June 9, 2009
- Wedding of Megan Thomas (Far Rockaway, NY) & Avram Klein (Merrick, NY) — June 8, 2009

### Engagements

- Engagement of Yaakov Walden (Monsey, NY) & Rochel Segal (Brooklyn, NY) — June 16, 2009
- Engagement of Ary Nudell (Baltimore, MD) & Ahuva Rayman (Lakewood, NJ) — June 15, 2009
- Engagement of Yehuda Solomon (Beachwood, OH) & Rachel Schnur (Queens, NY) — June 14, 2009
- Engagement of Avrohom Denisov (Clifton, NJ) & Miriam Mamykina (Vilnius, Lithuania) — June 11, 2009

### Anniversary

- 27th Anniversary of Beth (Pitem) Faitelewicz & Morris Faitelewicz

### Bar Mitzvah

- Bar Mitzvah of Yossi Scheff (Brooklyn, NY) — June 15, 2009

### Birth

- Birth of a baby boy to Jason & Melissa Goldstoff (New York) — June 9, 2009



**Jamie Klein & Shmully Ash**



**Megan Thomas & Avram Klein**



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To view entire galleries, please visit [www.onlysimchas.com](http://www.onlysimchas.com)

# The benefits of living 'out of town'

OU fair offers view from afar of 22 up and coming Jewish communities

BY TOVA ROSS

For those who reside in the Five Towns, Brooklyn, Queens, or any other bastion of Jewish life, the living is pretty easy. There's an array of kosher groceries, bakeries, and restaurants, a choice of day schools and yeshivas, and if one decides his synagogue is just not for him anymore, he can walk up the street to the next one.

But these amenities come with an expensive price tag — the combined costs of real estate, yeshiva tuition and property taxes in these areas can be so astronomical that some families choose to look elsewhere to make their homes.

In addition to a lower cost of living, communities that are somewhat off the beaten path offer an attraction that can be very appealing to some residents of major metropolitan areas: small-town charm and a more relaxed pace of life.

On Sunday the Orthodox Union sponsored a job and home relocation fair, "Emerging Jewish Communities," for frustrated New Yorkers and those in surrounding areas. Representatives from 22 localities across the United States gathered at the Lander College for Women in Manhattan to show that a Jewish lifestyle is possible in places like Memphis, Denver, and New Orleans. And while the fair's attendees ranged in age, religious observance, and station in



Photo by Judah S. Harris

Free gifts from out of town.

life, the overwhelming majority was young parents who no doubt are searching for more affordable places to raise their children.

Tziporah Teller, 26, knew a move back to her childhood home in Atlanta was necessary after six years of living in Teaneck, where property taxes make buying a home truly an American dream. And while she acknowledged that moving to an out-of-town locale is often not the first choice for people with few family members or friends there, she also said, "Atlanta is such a warm and friendly place that in a sense, the community really becomes your family." She laughingly told of the two invitations the family already has lined up for Shabbat meals — three weeks before they officially arrive.

A smaller Jewish community also offers the chance to make an impact and witness real payoff for becoming involved in communal activities.

Rabbi Uri Topolosky, the dynamic young rav of Congregation Beth Israel in New Orleans, has been actively restoring the synagogue and greater Jewish community in the area in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. "New Orleans is such an exciting place to be right now — Jews have a chance to participate in a real opportunity of tikkun (repair) and be involved in rebuilding a community," he explained.

Scott Shulman, a recent Yeshiva University graduate, was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio. "The most important advantage to living in Columbus that I know of is the fact that younger couples can truly make a huge impact simply by being there," said Shulman. "While the Jewish community was established decades ago, and still boasts very dedicated community leaders, it needs new faces, new dedication, and new energy to truly make it a blossoming community for the Jewish future."

Hillel Goldstein of Long Beach, who attended the fair with his wife, said the idea of moving out of New York always appealed to him. "Despite the fact that I grew up on Long Island and lived in Queens for five years, I just don't have the typical New York mindset," he said.



Photos by Judah S. Harris

**Sign me up** Exchanging information at the OU Emerging Communities Fair in Manhattan last Sunday.

"I recently visited a friend in the Midwest and the Jewish community was so welcoming and made me feel so comfortable that I fell in love with it — all in one Shabbat. Since then, my wife and I have been back there a few times, as well as to the West Coast, and each time we just like the laid back feeling and sense of community we've experienced."

Goldstein also mentioned that he and his wife are looking for new jobs, and the fair's convenient location means that rather than flying out to different states for interviews, it can provide some good leads without necessitating frequent travel and the accompanying expenses.

Many people came to look for cities rife with job openings. David Zoller, representing Dallas, highlighted the numerous fields of prospective employment and Fortune 500 companies there. He also distrib-

uted lists of community members who are excited to serve as business contacts for interested parties.

The stagnant economy wasn't what prompted Lawrence resident Elliot Lazarus to attend the fair. "I've always had an interest in moving to a small, pleasant community outside of New York," he commented. "I think a lot of people live where they do by default, and don't take the time to look for a place where they and their families might lead happier lives."

The 22 cities represented at the fair certainly have made many families and individuals think about their options. And as they left the event, claiming their cars from high-priced lots, or maneuvering out of hard-earned yet tight parking spots to battle city traffic, they might have been daydreaming about a future with abundant parking and minimal traffic.

## LOCAL SHULS ON HIGH SECURITY ALERT

Continued from Page One

"Whenever we have these unfortunate incidents, we have protocol we put in place immediately," said Nassau County Police Commissioner Lawrence Mulvey. "We alert all radio patrol cars, make periodic visits to all our critical Jewish infrastructure, and commanding police officers of each precinct reach out and make phone calls of assurance to some of the key people. In this case, we also notified Glen Cove police to tighten security at our own Holocaust center in Glen Cove."

The commissioner also noted that the Nassau County Police Department is one of the few agencies that has a fully operative "fusion center." That, Mulvey explained, is "a room of multi-agency law enforcement personnel that collaborate with one another, so every day at our Intel center, we have a sitting member of the FBI, police personnel, MTA, village representatives and others, allowing a seamless sharing of information, very much up to the real-time intelligence."

"We knew right away that this was a lone gunman not

affiliated in a plot," he told The Jewish Star. "Otherwise, we would have to take different types of measures, as we also have partners in a joint terrorism task force so we can incorporate their real-time intelligence."

"We've gotten calls of concern because of what happened," Mulvey added, "but no intel to suggest that there's a threat afoot."

He advises everyone to be aware of their surroundings, and to err on the side of caution. "Look for the unusual and don't hesitate the contact the

police, however slight it may be... We'd rather check it out than dismiss it and have it overlooked and be problematic."

Halpern emphasized the importance of Jewish leaders reaching out to their local police departments and enlisting their help when needed. However, he believes that people must also learn to fend for themselves and cannot rely solely on police protection.

"We have to just be vigilant and be aware as individuals," he cautioned. "We have to get involved and keep our eyes open."

He suggests that each shul train volunteers to patrol outside the building, and he also

recommends the installation of security cameras and basic video monitoring equipment "that people can see so that they know they are being watched." For holidays or other events that are widely attended, shuls should invest in outside security guards, he advised, and should also install a panic emergency call button.

"If you shore up your resistance, the enemy will try to find some other target," Halpern noted, "so our objective is to shore up our defenses."

Some local shuls in the Five Towns, such as Cong. Beth Sholom in Lawrence, do operate their own patrol groups and are in frequent contact with police

officials. On Thursday, the shul sent an e-mail advisory alert to its membership from the Jewish Community Relations Council, detailing Wednesday's attack and urging congregants to maintain a heightened level of vigilance and to report anything suspicious.

"I have received numerous phone calls in regards to this latest incident and what happened in Riverdale," said Jeffrey Rosenberg, co-chairman of the security committee at Beth Sholom. "We have increased the amount of security in the shul and taken other precautions that we prefer not to publicize. I am also in touch with the police department."



The Beth Sholom choir

### Chazzan-fest in Lawrence

Cantor Yitzchok Meir Helfgot headlined the 7th annual cantorial concert at Congregation Beth Sholom in Lawrence last week. Cantor Chaim Adler, Beth Sholom's own Cantor Joel Kaplan, and his assistant, Chazzan Sheni Ariel Bekhore, joined Helfgot. Daniel Gildar accompanied the cantors; The Beth Sholom choir, led by Cantor Eric Freeman, and accompanied by Mimi Levison, also performed. Photos by Visions Hy Goldberg.



Cantor Adler



Cantor Helfgot



Cantor Kaplan



Cantor Bekhore

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# THE JEWISH STAR

Independent and original reporting from the Orthodox communities of Long Island

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## OPINION

# Happiness may be the last day of fourth grade

### Editorial

Whoever has never seen the Simchas Beis Hashoeva in Jerusalem has never in his life seen true joy, says the Gemara in Sukkah (51a).

OK. Thanks for mentioning it. But, why choose now to bring up a topic that is clearly more appropriate to discuss in the fall? As of right now, after all, the next milestone of the Jewish calendar on the horizon is the month of Tammuz, and the Three Weeks.

The answer is because it suddenly occurred to us this afternoon that, in fact, the person who has never in his life seen true joy is he who has never read a text message from a son who has just spent his last day in fourth grade.

"School's out!!! I am so excited!" the message began.

Having lived through the ups and downs of the school year with the writer of the text, one could understand his otherworldly joy. The first glimpse of the message really was a transporting moment —

and not just because it was read behind the wheel (do not try this at home). In an instant the reader was himself transported back in time, to clear-as-a-school-bell flashbacks to his own last days of grade school, high school — even college.

The writer's lightness of spirit was self-evident. It virtually flowed through the BlackBerry, and through the reader's own body. Weighty issues and concerns being pondered simply ceased to exist, at least for a moment; thoughts of approaching deadlines lifted away. Time slowed. What was the rush, after all? There's a whole summer ahead!

Of course, summer is more summery for some of us than for others. Is there anyone more fortunate than he or she — the adult with dependents and bills and responsibilities who nonetheless has figured out a way to spend July and August at

a sleep-away camp? We know quite a few such people — camp directors, nurses, specialty counselors and the like — and count them among the smarter people we know. If only we could be so smart. Bears, skunks and poison ivy notwithstanding.

Then again not everything to do with summer, or even summer camp, is sweetness and light. As schools let out this week and the countdown to camp begins in earnest, a new worker class arises, charged with making sure every conceivable item that might be fleetingly useful in camp has been purchased, categorized, labeled and packed. We refer to 'The Parent,' whose only reward after all the hard work of prepping for camp might be 10 days to two weeks of relative quiet before ... visiting day.

One final thought from an unknown writer: Summer is the topsy-turvy season when the goldfish have to be boarded out while the family goes on a fishing trip.

### Letters

## Disregard for women

To the Editor:

I recently attended a Shabbos simcha in a local shul. I found it to be a most humiliating experience.

After davening it was announced that women are not allowed to go into the men's side. My friends and I felt that this announcement was in extremely poor taste due to the fact that we are all frum ladies and we know better.

After dismantling the shul seats the kiddush was set up. The men had the entire shul; the women were given one table and we were forced to stay behind this table and pushed into a corner.

Do these men call themselves frum? I, for one, think that this is totally improper and exhibits a

total disregard for the kavod [honor] of a Jewish woman.

I am writing this letter so the men in this "frum shul" should be informed as to how we women feel in these circumstances and perhaps they can learn not to repeat their abhorrent behavior.

Please use my name.

ANNE WALISEVER  
*Woodmere*

## Missing soldiers

To the editor:

The month of June means weddings, graduations, picnics and other celebrations. For three families in Israel, June 11 (and probably every other day) is a reminder that their sons are not home with them enjoying daily events and special celebrations that families observe together. Every Shabbat and every Yom Tov there is an empty chair at

their table.

Twenty-seven years ago, on June 11, 1982 a battle took place in the Bekaa Valley of northern Lebanon between an Israeli tank unit and a Syrian armored unit. Three Israeli soldiers, Corporal Yehuda Katz, Sergeant Zachary Baumel and First Sergeant Zvi Feldman were reported missing-in-action and are still unaccounted for.

As responsible people, as concerned citizens, as individuals with a sense of obligation to others, it is important that we remember these men and that we remind elected officials, synagogues and organizations of their situation.

We must pray for Zachariah

### Letters

Shlomo (ben Miriam) Baumel, Tzvi (ben Penina) Feldman, and Yehuda (ben Sarah) Katz.

In addition, Gilad (ben Aviva) Shalit, an Israeli soldier, was kidnapped in an action by Hamas terrorists who entered Israel illegally on June 25, 2006. He has been held by Hamas since that day and has not been seen by any Israeli or international humanitarian group, in violation of all recognized standards.

Ron (ben Batya) Arad has been missing since October 1986. Guy (ben Rina) disappeared from his army base on the Golan during the month of August 1997.

Let our prayers and our voices be heard for them. Let the world know that we care and that we shall not forget them. Synagogues and organizations should make these men honorary members. Their names and photos should be displayed in synagogues, centers and schools.

It is imperative that we support Israel's missing soldiers.

Ask yourself: what would I do if the missing soldier were my son, my husband, my brother, my nephew, my cousin, my neighbor, my friend, my grandson? Please do for these men what you would do for your loved one.

JUDITH SHAPIRO  
*Brooklyn*

### PARSHAT SHLACH

## An unfair responsibility?



Rabbi Avi Billet

Yehoshua.

What is "G-d's glory," what does it mean to "see it," and what role does it play in this episode?

In every other episode when "the Glory of G-d" (K'vod Hashem) made an appearance to the people, it was covered by

and do not fear the nation of the land, for they are our 'bread' [prey]! They have lost their protection — G-d is with us, so do not fear them."

As the rebelling crowd suggests stoning them in the next verse, "G-d's glory suddenly appeared at the Communion Tent before all the Israelites."

The enumerated chapter 14 continues, and yet the Torah as written has the equivalent of a new paragraph, as if the scribe, were he typing, hit the "return" key before continuing the narrative.

This suggests that the conversation between Moshe and G-d which follows, in which the former suggests G-d show restraint and remember His attributes of mercy, takes place after this divine appearance in front of the Communion Tent (Ohel Mo'ed).

In other words, as Rabbi Naf-tali Zvi Yehuda Berlin (Netziv) explains, the appearance of G-d's glory caused fear of G-d to penetrate the people and it stopped all attempts to stone Kalev and

a cloud or in conjunction with a holy fire (Vayikra 9). In Shmot 16:10, Netziv remarks that when the Glory of G-d appeared in a cloud, the Jewish nation "felt a divine revelation." They felt it, but did not see it.

When Moshe approached the top of Mt. Sinai in Shmot 24:16-18, he entered the cloud where the glory of God was also present.

In Shmot 40:34, Kli Yakar deliberately distinguishes between the cloud and the glory of G-d. He writes, "...Just as one could not look at the sun — the light of G-d could only be seen through the filter of the cloud. When the Mishkan (tabernacle) was erected Glory and cloud separated, because the light of G-d entered the Mishkan, where it is meant to settle, and the cloud remained on the outside... Therefore it says here that Moshe could not enter the Ohel Moed for the cloud rested upon it and the Glory of G-d filled the Mishkan... Now that they are separate because the cloud is on the outside and Glory is

See PARSHA, Page 8

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FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BENCH

# A Shas full of history

One half hour earlier and the SS soldiers would have snatched him. But 30 minutes before the soldiers stormed through the back door, Rabbi Dr. Joseph Saffra z"l ran out the front door. Some say he saw the angry crowds gathering on that November 9, 1938 night in Frankfurt, Germany. Others say that Rabbi Saffra received inside information from a local police chief upon whom he had performed dentistry work. For Rabbi Dr. Joseph Saffra was not just a rabbi, he was also an oral surgeon. They turned the entire house upside down that night, screaming "Where's the rabbi, where's the rabbi?" They returned every few days ransacking the home as those that remained trembled in fear. "Where's the rabbi?" they demanded each time.



David Seidemann

He fled that night, Kristallnacht, to Holland by train and then to America by boat. It wasn't until a year later that he was able to send for his wife, three daughters and a son who was barely a year old. The banks were closed when he fled and even if they had been open, they weren't giving money to Jews. Pressed for money with only minutes to spare, Rabbi Saffra was forced to sell his most prized possession, a set of Shas, the Talmud, the oral tradition, a compilation of the discourses and dis-

cussions of the Sages of yesterday.

A complete set of Shas was a rarity in Frankfurt, Germany in those days and Ernie Guttman wanted one. No one knows exactly how much Guttman paid Rabbi Saffra for the set of books, but it was sufficient to get the rabbi to Holland.

End of scene one of what turned out to be an amazing story involving my grandfather, Rabbi Joseph Saffra, the details of which were completely unknown to me until a few days ago.

Scene two. Rabbi Saffra sends for his wife and children and settles in New York. Though reunited with his family, his set of Talmud books, his second love, remained in the hands of another.

Scene three. Guttman and his family survive the Holocaust and move to America. His wife passes away. Guttman takes up residence in Baltimore, Maryland.

Scene four. Debbie Drebin of East New York, Brooklyn marries Rabbi Liff of Baltimore and they settle there. In 1988 Rabbi Liff passes away and his widow, Debbie Liff, is introduced to Ernie Guttman who had lost his first wife. In the summer of 1989 they marry.

Scene five. A young man named

Shmuel Tarshish from Chicago marries a young lady, Adina Zehnwirth from Queens. They settle in Baltimore.

As it turns out, Tarshish's great aunt is Debbie Drebin Liff Guttman and Tarshish takes his new bride to meet Tante Debbie and her husband Ernie. As they sit making small talk, Adina Zehnwirth Tarshish makes mention of the fact that her grandfather was from Frankfurt. Ernie's eyes lit up "I was a young yeshiva boy in Frankfurt, perhaps I knew your grandfather," he said. Adina Tarshish relayed that her grandfather was Rabbi Joseph Saffra and Ernie's mouth dropped. He got out of his seat, ran to his book shelf and showed Mr. and Mrs. Tarshish the set of Talmud that he, Mr. Guttman, had purchased from Adina's grandfather in November of 1938.

On the spot, Mr. Tarshish asked if they could purchase the set of Talmud with Rabbi Joseph Saffra's name in it, the set of books that set him free and saved his life, and ultimately the life of Rabbi Saffra's family. Right then and there Aliza and Shmuel offered to buy the set at any price, the set that set Adina Zehnwirth's mother free to come to America and give birth to her. Mr. Guttman declined, for the Talmud books were very precious to him as well.

For two years various Saffra grandchildren, of which there are many (me included), attempted in vain

to purchase their grandfather's Talmud set from Ernie Guttman. But as precious as they were to the Saffra grandchildren, Ernie Guttman held them dear as well.

Scene six. June 2001. Ernie Guttman passes away and once again attempts are made by the Saffra grandchildren to purchase the set of Talmud. In June of 2002 the children of Ernie Guttman contact Shmuel Tarshish and inform him that the Shas, the holy books that once adorned Rabbi Saffra's bookshelf in Frankfurt, are his for the taking, for free. "Your wife's grandfather sold them under duress, to save his life, and the lives of his family. They belong to you; come and retrieve them."

Shmuel and Adina pick up the holy books and bring them to their home in Baltimore. But the lingering question becomes: which one of the grandchildren should inherit them?

Scene seven. Yosef Ettlinger from Washington Heights, a great grandson of Joseph Saffra, and named for him, marries and moves to Israel. The young couple make periodic visits to Bnei Brak to visit elderly Tante Rosie who was Joseph Saffra's sister.

In April of 2003, Shmuel and Adina Tarshish travel to Israel for Passover and pay a visit to Tante Rosie in Bnei Brak. While visiting her, Tante Rosie mentions that she is completely mesmerized every time Yosef Ettlinger visits her because he walks, talks and carries himself exactly like her late

brother, Rabbi Dr. Joseph Saffra.

Tarshish returns to the United States and shares Tante Rosie's comments with my brothers Ben and Rabbi Jonathan Seidemann and with his wife's brothers, Rabbi Menachem and Rabbi

Shimon Zehnwirth. The unanimous decision is reached to give the set of Talmud to Rabbi Dr. Joseph Saffra's great grandson, my nephew, and Rabbi Saffra's namesake, Yosef Yehoshua Ettlinger.

I remember my late grandfather as a brilliant Torah sage who commanded respect wherever he went. I remember him speaking at my brother's Bar Mitzvah, his deep blue eyes, his short white beard and warm smile. He was known to know the entire Talmud without the text being open in front of him. His holy books are in good hands now; good hands and a great mind.

There will always be Holocaust deniers, and those who wish to carry on the hatred by shooting inside a museum established to put such hate to rest. My grandfather's Talmud books in the hands of my nephew, not only refutes the denier, but sends a message to the present day hater that the hater's dream will never overpower our reality.

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.



## By request, yeshiva for college students at DRS

BY YAFFI SPODEK

In September, HALB's David Renov Stahl High School for Boys (DRS) will launch Yeshivat Lev HaTorah, a new learning program for post-high school students.

Lev HaTorah will feature a morning halacha seder and shiur as well as night seder, with afternoons free to enable students to attend college classes. Located on the HALB campus on Ibsen St. in Woodmere, the program — which will carry tuition of approximately \$6,000 per year — will be open to DRS graduates and others who have returned from study in Israel.

"The program is really for any kid who wants a serious learning atmosphere to complement his college studies," explained Rabbi Yisroel Kaminetsky, the menahel at DRS.

A post-high school program had been considered for several years, Rabbi Kaminetsky said, and the school decided to proceed now because of increased interest from alumni. "One of the main reasons we decided to go ahead with it now was because there was a core group of kids coming back from Israel who requested it and pushed it through," he said.

Rabbi Kaminetsky will head the program together with DRS assistant principal Rabbi Elly Storch. Rounding out the Lev HaTorah faculty is Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz serving as program director and maggid shiur for the morning seder, while Rabbi Yehuda Balsam will oversee the night seder portion of the learning; both will also continue in their roles as rebbeim at DRS.

"Rabbi Lebowitz and Rabbi Balsam are two people who have the pulse of the kids, who are brilliant talmidei chachomim [Torah scholars] but also can relate well and have great relationships with the kids," said Rabbi Kaminetsky. "This is what our yeshiva [DRS] has always been about: giving our boys a high level of learning and doing it in a warm and caring atmosphere."

A primary goal of Lev HaTorah is for the students to continue learning on a high level after their return from Israel, Rabbi Lebowitz explained. "These are boys who have been learning very, very well in Israel and we want them to continue to do so even if their college environment is not a yeshiva environment," he noted.

The positive influence of the Lev HaTorah students on

the DRS boys will be an added benefit; both groups will daven together daily and learn together several times a week.

"We are very excited about the possibility of having these boys as role models and as part of our yeshiva fabric," said Rabbi Kaminetsky.

What may distinguish Lev HaTorah from other post-high school learning programs is the fact that it is specifically designed to accommodate boys who are taking college courses.

"It's geared toward boys who are in college, rather than other yeshivas where you're in yeshiva and if you want to go to college, that's OK, too," Rabbi Lebowitz observed. "It's a little bit different in that regard."

Each year, close to 45 percent of DRS graduates choose to attend Yeshiva University after returning from Israel, according to Rabbi Kaminetsky. Lev HaTorah is hoping to target the remaining boys, over 50 percent, who don't choose YU "for various reasons," he said.

"I want to be very clear that we want our kids to continue to go to YU, but this program is for those kids who have

not been selecting YU," he told The Jewish Star. "At this point, most of the kids coming are enrolled in Queens, maybe a couple from Hofstra or Baruch or other city colleges."

"Our kids have gone to a variety of different places, and every kid has to find a program that's right for him," Rabbi Kaminetsky continued. "This is a way of identifying a need that we saw in the community, and really came to us from the kids... As they go through college, they still need someone to talk to and guide them."

The name Lev HaTorah is a play on words about HALB, which is known in Hebrew as Yeshivat Lev.

"We thought it would be appropriate to keep the name of HALB," Rabbi Kaminetsky elaborated, "with the idea there also being that a person's Torah learning should penetrate their heart, and that learning is crucial towards a person's growth in Torah."

To apply or receive more information, contact Rabbi Elly Storch at estorch@drshalb.org or call (516) 295-7700, ext. 103.

## IN MY VIEW

Continued from Page One

then monitored, judged, evaluated and decided upon the winner of this election.

The Western press was dazzled by the appearance of choice in this election and chose to pay little attention to the subtle, but all encompassing, maneuverings of The Grand Ayatollah. And the Western press paid little attention to the baggage that the four contenders brought with them to this election.

Mousavi, the only possible contender for Ahmadinejad's position, never had a chance. For decades, Mousavi has been the nemesis of the Ayatollah Khomeini. When Mousavi was prime minister, Khomeini was president and the two fought incessantly. Mousavi retained his PM position only because of his close ties with the man who founded the Revolution and held the position of The Supreme Leader, the Grand Ayatollah Khomeini.

Mousavi was popular. He was liked by the people. And because there were such

massive numbers of people supporting Mousavi, the international press adopted him as their poster boy for democracy and propelled his candidacy forward. They shaped him into a candidate who could be a true alternative to Ahmadinejad ignoring the fact that Ahmadinejad was always The Supreme Leader's man.

Being duped is never a good feeling. But just because the people of Iran and the Western world were duped this time, it does not mean that democracy will never find its way into Iranian politics. The possibility for political change exists.

Iran is ripe for a revolution. Demographically, 75 to 80 percent of the country is under 30 years old. But they are not there yet and it cannot happen on a Western inspired schedule. When it happens, this election will serve as inspiration. Until then, anyone who challenges Iranian leadership will suffer the ugly and truly pre-modern punishments of a prison system that Western democracies cannot even begin to fathom.

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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).

**Five Towns** - The Five Towns Shul Softball League for men is expanding from 8 teams to 12 teams. The games are played on Sunday mornings during the months of July and August. Any shul that would like to join should please contact Eli Dworetzky, the commissioner, as soon as possible, at tiredcpa@aol.com.

**Lido Beach** - Lido Beach Synagogue is having a Torah Time Pre-School/Hebrew School "Open House" on Sunday, June 21 from 10:00-11:30 a.m. The school is for children ages 2-10. The synagogue is located at 1 Fairway Road in Lido Beach. For more information, please call (516) 889-9650.

**Freeport** - Congregation Tifereth Zvi is pleased to announce its first Annual Father Son/Daughter Fishing Trip on Sunday June 21. The day begins with Sunday morning shiur at 5:45 a.m., Shacharis at 6:30 a.m., and the boat leaves the dock in Freeport at 8:00 a.m. We will have the boat until noon. The cost is \$35 per person (same for adult and child) and includes rod and bait. Drinks will be provided. Please e-mail office@tzminyan.org to reserve your spot. A minimum of 30 people needed to book the boat.

**Oceanside** - FECS and the Friedberg JCC will host a job fair for recent college graduates on Monday, June 22 at 11 a.m. at the JCC, 15 Neil Court in Oceanside. The workshop will focus on enhancing your chances for landing a great first job. Participants will learn from experts in the field about strategies for: selling yourself, personal pitch, networking, and writing resumes and cover letters. There is no fee but advanced registration is encouraged due to limited space. Please RSVP Rachel Bruckenstein at (516) 766-4341 ext. 131 or email rbruckenstein@friedbergjcc.org.

**Eisenhower Park** - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns Long Island Friends' Experience (LIFE) members are invited to attend an evening at the Big Apple Circus on Wednesday, June 24 from 6:00-8:45 p.m. at Eisenhower Park, Hempstead Turnpike, NY. Discount tickets for this event are \$20. Pre-registration is required. No transportation will be provided. For more information, please call (516) 569-6733.

**Cedarhurst** - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns is offering a Mahjong review class on Monday, June 29, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. The fee is \$20 and pre-registration is required. For more information and to register, please call Sheryl at (516) 569-6733, ext. 222.

**Manhattan** - American Friends of The Max and Ruth Schwartz Hesder Yeshiva Of Sderot will hold their Annual Awards Dinner on Tuesday, June 30 at The Puck Building, 295 Lafayette Street in New York City. Among the guests of honor will be Mrs. Ruth Simon of Lawrence. Please respond by June 22 to ensure program recognition. For more information, please call (212) 274-8900 or e-mail dinner@sderot.org.

**Oceanside** - The Friedberg JCC Baby Boomer Club is hosting a wine tasting on Wednesday, July 1 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Cost is \$10 per person and additional fees may apply. The club is for those born between '46 and '64 to meet for socializing and outings. The JCC is located at 15 Neil Court in Oceanside. For more information please call (516) 766-4341 or e-mail aschiller@friedbergjcc.org.

**Oceanside** - Friedberg JCC Lecture 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.

**Oceanside** - The Friedberg JCC is hosting "The Baseball Talmud" on Thursday, July 23 at 7:30 p.m. Join author and radio personality Howard Megdal as he discusses his new book, "The Baseball Talmud," 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.

### 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. YLIC is located at 8 Spruce Street in Cedarhurst. For more information, please call (516) 569-3324.

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

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

## Bnot Shulamith wins zoning for Inwood campus

Brooklyn school's future threatened by board lawyer

BY MAYER FERTIG

Bnot Shulamith of Long Island has won zoning approval to convert three buildings on Prospect Street in Inwood into a campus to house the entire school.

Currently the preschool, elementary and middle schools are housed in three separate locations in the Five Towns. The June 4 decision by the Town of Hempstead set the clock ticking on a contractual agreement to proceed to closing within 60 days. Failure to do so could mean the loss of a \$2.5 million down payment.

The purchase will require the sale of the Brooklyn campus that is currently home to Shulamith School for Girls; that sale faces a legal challenge from a group of parents. The battle would appear to be lost however, a necessary price for saving the Brooklyn school itself.

Jacob Abilevitz, the long-time president of a Brooklyn boys' yeshiva, Derech HaTorah, which is considered the philosophical sibling to Shulamith, has agreed to take personal responsibility for the Brooklyn school when it formally separates from Bnot Shulamith on Sept. 1.

He told a small group of parents Monday night that a lawyer for the school, Israel Vider, called him last week to say that the Brooklyn school's reopening in September depends on the timely completion of the Inwood deal.

"If they lose the \$2.5 million, Shulamith Brooklyn will not be able to open and I will not be able to do anything about it," Abilevitz warned.

Did he consider it a threat, Abilevitz was asked? "They never told me that, but I'm smart enough to understand what they're trying to do." Vider did not return several message left at his office before the paper's press deadline.

Complicating the transaction is the fact that some or all of the down payment the school received last year from the prospective buyer of the Brooklyn campus, Joshua Guttman, who has also served on the school's board, is gone. As The Jewish Star reported last September, escrow funds were released with his approval after the board voted to use the money — some \$1.5 million — to cover payroll taxes in arrears.

The understanding to separate the two schools has all of the proceeds of the Brooklyn sale going toward the Inwood purchase. That is a bitter outcome for parents who questioned why as much as \$20 million should be transferred from Brooklyn to the Five Towns, but Abilevitz said, "I asked parents if they wanted a school or if they wanted a building. Most said they wanted a school. My priority is the school."

Therefore, he plans to suggest that parents who are party to the lawsuit over the Brooklyn campus sign a letter directing that their names be removed from the suit. "Ten percent will never sign it," he predicted, but he believes that 90 percent will.

That "will send a message," he said. If the majority of the parents of the Brooklyn school agree to have the sale take place "they can't have any [complaints] to us that we prevented them" from buying the building in Inwood.

Parents "should use their common sense," he urged. "If you want the school to continue — I know you're losing a tremendous amount of money — but you take your chances," continuing a legal battle.

He urged parents to trust him that letting the money go would pay off in the end.

Abilevitz, who owns a pharmacy on Kings Highway in Flatbush and has a daughter in the school, has been reviewing Shulamith's financial records and said he believes that despite steep losses — one million dollars this year, he said — the Brooklyn school can be turned around. The red ink is due mostly to inefficiencies and poor tuition collection, he believes — "you can't run a school like that" — but he has an agreement with Guttman for the school to remain in the building, rent free, for three years, and for Shulamith to have the ability to "generate income by renting the shul, pool and auditorium."

Abilevitz is willing to pour hundreds of thousands of his own dollars into the Brooklyn school during the turnaround, he told the dozen or so parents at the meeting. All monies that had been paid in advance toward next year's tuition would become the property of the Brooklyn school, as would the fundraising lists, the school name, accreditation and, perhaps most important of all, its reputation earned over 80 years since it became the first yeshiva for Orthodox girls in the United States. "All the positives will stay," he said.

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For every click on the OU's Education Fund toolbar, a corporate sponsor will donate five cents to the OU Education Fund, money which will be distributed to yeshivot and day schools around the country.

### TUITION BY THE NICKEL

Continued from Page One

emergency fund for schools struggling financially. "For example, if a small community outside of New York had only one day school, if that school were to fail, it would be the failure of the whole community," Zucker explained.

Forty percent of the fund will be given to schools that meet certain criteria for exercising fiscal responsibility, "like a grant for schools that adhere to fiscal criteria," Zucker said.

The final forty percent of the money generated from the toolbar will go to day schools and yeshivot across the country in the form of tuition vouchers for parents. The amount given to each school will be determined based upon the percentage of users who brought in revenues for the specific school with which they are affiliated.

"When someone registers to use the toolbar, they will be asked to identify with a specific school," Zucker explained. "The toolbar uses internal accounting software, which will determine at the end of the quarter which percentage of the revenue was generated by users identified with each school. That percentage of the money will then go to the school, with the understanding that it will be used to lower tuition for their parents by whatever number of dollars it is."

A second project that is expected to be finalized soon is a group health insurance program for Yeshiva and day school faculty and staff. As previously reported, it is expected to save participating schools tens of thousands of dollars on premiums.

"We have now secured a broker," Zucker told The Jewish Star, "and as part of the plan, the company has agreed to do separate billing for each school, and each school will be paying its own premiums... In the next few weeks, we will present the plan to schools that have expressed interest."

The North Shore Hebrew Academy in Great Neck is one of several local schools that participated in an OU survey to formulate the insurance proposal based on actual numbers and ages of potential participants.

"It's a wonderful concept," said Arnie Flatow, the executive director of North Shore. "Instead of having each school deal with their own health plan and substantial annual increases, a national health care plan

for all day schools with thousands of participants could potentially have much lower premiums and save thousands of dollars."

Flatow said that North Shore would definitely consider signing on, provided the plan is as good as or better than the school's existing one, with lower rates.

"If it is a reasonable plan similar to what we have, then it makes sense to join it," he said. "We have given the OU the information and we are waiting to see what they'll come up with... It's a great idea and we welcome any concepts that we can collectively implement to help the day school community reduce costs."

Other schools also expressed positive expectations for the OU plan. "It [the health insurance plan] definitely sounds like something we should be looking into and I don't see why we wouldn't go forward with it," said Robert Shelly, Director of Operations and Development at the Hebrew Academy of Nassau County. "If we are able to create a global umbrella organization under which all yeshiva day schools fall, that is a good approach and a potentially great idea."

HANC provided the requested information to the OU as well, including details of their current policy and a summary of its benefits. "We are always looking for ways to reduce expenses and challenge the status quo," Shelly said.

On June 13, Congregation Anshei Chesed in Hewlett hosted a community forum entitled "Crisis in Jewish School Tuition: Are There Any Solutions?" The symposium was chaired by OU President Stephen Savitsky, and featured noted local experts including Asher Mansdorf, Jack Katz, Charlie Harari and Avi Lauer.

Lauer, who is vice president for legal affairs and general counsel at Yeshiva University, spoke about the YU Institute for University Partnership of the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education, which has been working with 17 local yeshivot to help them save costs, increase non-tuition revenues and review educational methods. The Partnership is also working closely with three schools, HAFTR, TAG and Yeshiva Ketana, which were selected for free consultative services to be provided by former McKinsey consultant Harry

Bloom, now an employee of the YU Institute.

Other initiatives the OU hopes to implement include an energy conversion plan, in which schools are referred to energy companies specializing in conversion from electric to solar energy. According to Zucker, one school in Bergen County, NJ, already utilizing this resource, anticipates savings of \$80,000 a year in energy bills. "The OU has been very instrumental in lobbying for federal money to be given to private schools who do energy conversion for Greening America," Zucker added.

The Kehilla Fund, designed and partially sponsored by the OU, has also been launched in Bergen County, with an eventual plan to expand it to other communities nationwide. "It's a campaign to get every family in the community to sign up via a web site to have their credit card or checking card debited by a fixed amount of their choosing every month, allocated per capita based upon the number of students in the schools," Zucker explained. "We hope to collect approximately \$1 million to be distributed to day schools."

Zucker is also open to exploring more unconventional methods of fundraising, including one with a certain air of 'back to the future.' After speaking to a day school in Norfolk, Virginia, that generates close to \$300,000 a year by hosting bingo nights, Zucker is now in talks with a firm that helps coordinate bingo events for non-profits across the country.

"It is an option that sounds a little funny, but the money is real money," Zucker said. "We're going to host a meeting for interested schools either at the beginning or end of the summer."

Zucker, who joined the Orthodox Union last September, is excited about the proposed plans and looks forward to implementing them in time for the 2009-10 school year. In January, he convened a meeting and conference call with school administrators to introduce some of the initiatives, and is eagerly anticipating the coming weeks during which he will unveil the final proposals.

"The response so far has been very positive, and we are excited to move forward," he said. "We are going to continue to support and explore other cost-saving opportunities."





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**THE KOSHER BOOKWORM**

*Lessons learned from the religious left*

How to make this summer a worthwhile reading experience (part two)

With Father's Day on Sunday, I thought that it would be nice to note several books that are thematically linked to the day and might be of some intellectual, if not ideological interest to our readers. While some of these books may not reflect our views on many issues, both religious or political, nevertheless, just knowing what's out there is an important function of this column.



Alan Jay Gerber

The first book that I would like to bring to your attention is titled, "The Modern Men's Torah Commentary" (Jewish Light, 2009) edited by Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin.

According to the publisher, it

was compiled in response to the growing disengagement of men from the activities and religious services of non-Orthodox synagogues. This well meaning effort, the compilation of Divrei Torah by men representing all denominations as well as those with no formal denominational affiliation, is an attempt to reign in this growing trend of male disaffection with our religious faith and institutions and to highlight the relevance of our faith to their interests, both in terms of some religious belief as well as to serve as an enhancement of Jewish male self esteem.

Each essay attempts to

address issues such as what it means to be a father, son, husband, or even grandfather. Others touch upon career, health, and materialistic aspects of life. Each is well written reflecting the goal of the editor to reach out and try to bring men back to the synagogue and greater observance of our faith, as involved participants together with members of their families and community.

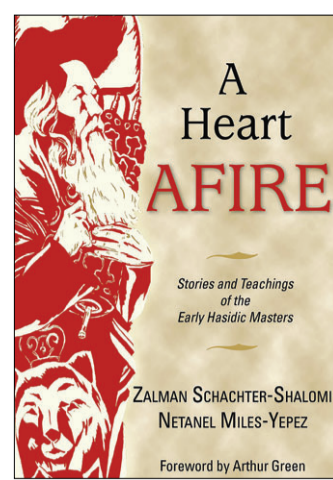
Most fascinating is the introduction that sets forth the reasoning and history behind this effort. Foremost was a study recently completed by Brandeis University's Prof. Sylvia B. Fishman, and Daniel Parmer, who noted that nationally, girls and women outnumber men in weekly non-Orthodox services.

They also note that in conversion classes among these groups, non-Jewish women predominate and also show a greater and more passionate interest in Judaism than their Jewish-born mates.

Another anecdotal impression noted in the Fishman Parmer study is what they call the "feminization of liberal Judaism," wherein according to Salkin "almost every venue of contemporary Jewish life, Jewish men demonstrate far less interest in Judaism than women do — from school age through adulthood." This situation is openly attributed to the increasing ritual and occupational equality in the Conservative and Reform ritual, rabbinic and cantorale. The answer to the question as to exactly why this is happening has yet to be forthcoming, without sarcasm or rancor.

My take? More intensified kiruv in this direction; there's a lot of good work to be done.

Another book that can be



seen as a bit off the beaten track is authored by one of America's more controversial Jewish writers and thinkers, Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi.

His latest book is titled, "A Heart Afire: Stories and Teachings of the Early Hasidic Masters" (Jewish Publication Society, 2009). What makes this book so interesting is the genuine nature of its content and message as it relates to the importance of the Hasidic movement both in Jewish history through its founders and in Jewish theology, through its ideology and Hashkafa.

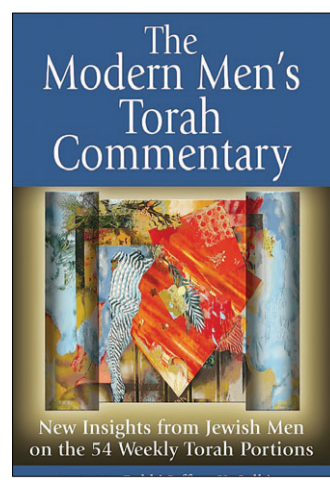
The author, a Chabad trained rabbi, has for over the last half century been the gate keeper to those new age Jews who saw no room for themselves within normative Jewish practice. In Reb Zalman they found their Jewish guru.

Whether it was the attraction to the decadent leftist political ideologies of Europe or the Village, or the numerous religious cults of the far east, these lost Jews could have been lost forever had it not been for the outreach of rabbis such as Schachter-Shalomi.

Yet, however "radical" his approach, his last two volumes speak to the genuine quality of our faith and given his reputation, should enable those who otherwise wouldn't lift up a book on yiddishkeit, to read and learn of our sacred tradition. In his writings, he was the literary mirror image of Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach zt"l, with whom he was very close.

The previous book of which this is a sequel is titled, "Wrapped in a Holy Flame: Teachings and Tales of the Hasidic Masters" (Jossey Bass, 2003). Taken together we are given a wide panorama of Hasidism, with detailed biographies of the leading players of the movement as well as relevant and inspirational stories of their lives for us to read and enjoy.

The genuine tone of his message, in my opinion, can best be demonstrated in the introduction to the first volume where he gives us his take on the ideological objections that he had against the works of those so-called premier interpreters of



Hasidic ideology of the previous generation, Martin Buber, and Gershom Scholem. Given the author's yichus (lineage) as a Belzer Hasid as well his learning in Chabad, his response to their treatment of the Hasidus mesorah (tradition) is most interesting, and in my opinion historically accurate.

This is what Schachter-Shalomi had to say:

"Martin Buber also felt that he wanted to bring Hasidism to the Western world, and he did make a great contribution in this regard, except that he got it largely from books and hadn't been involved in davenen and singing the Hasidic melodies. And, I believe, neither did Gershom Scholem get it quite right in his controversy with Buber over this issue. Scholem felt that the essence of a Hasidic master was found in his teaching, whereas Buber felt that the essence was in the tales. I, on the other hand, feel that neither the teachings nor the tales are quite enough to get the essence; one must also learn the melodies [niggunim] and modes of prayer of the masters, which are quite unique."

In other words, my dear readers, Buber and Scholem, simply put, did not observe our faith. In reality, both should have no standing as interpreters of our faith and their writings could be ignored.

Reb Zalman goes right to the heart of the matter as no one else had done before. He pointed to the ultimate irony in Jewish studies of the previous generation. Those who attempted to write the story of Hasidus were themselves devoid of the ruach and frumkeit not only of Hasidus, but of all yiddishkeit. That is unacceptable. For this observation alone, Rabbi Schachter-Shalomi deserves our attention. He may not be our ideal, but at least he's one of us. You will not only enjoy his stories, you will hopefully learn as much from them as I did.

Next week The Kosher Book Worm will tackle "An Accidental Zionist" and explain the meaning of "A Daily Dose of Kindness," one man's response to terror.

**PARSHAT SHLACH**

Continued from Page Four

alone in the Mishkan, it prevails upon Moshe not to enter."

In our story in Bamidbar 14, for the first time we see the Glory of G-d making a public appearance without the filter of the cloud. Apparently, this is a deadly apparition. (See 16:19 and 17:7 after which G-d wants to destroy the perpetrators right away. Rabbenu Bachya points out in 20:6 that G-d did not appear to the "eyes" of the people.)

Imagine the scene: Yehoshua and Kalev are arguing to defend G-d, with their backs to the Ohel Mo'ed. On the other side, the people are staring at these two individuals who virtually stand alone in their defense of this land everyone else fears attempting to conquer. As the mob crescendos, they get a blip of a vision projected onto the 'screen' behind Yehoshua and Kalev, who miss the vision because they can't afford to turn their backs on those looking to harm them.

Much like those whose punishment from Shmot 24:10-11 was delayed until later (see Rashi there, and Chizkuni on Vayikra 10:2 and Bamidbar 11:1), the unfiltered vision of the Glory of G-d was G-d's way of sentencing an entire generation to death in one fell swoop.

And now the continuation of

Bamidbar Chapter 14 makes a lot sense. However we are to understand, G-d was fed-up and frustrated by the clear ingratitude of the people. He wanted to wipe them out and make a new nation through Moshe. But their cries of fear and doubt were insufficient to sentence them to death — and besides, Yehoshua and Kalev were worthy to enter the Promised Land. So, in the one moment when it would be possible, G-d brushed back the mob, sentenced them all to death, and spared Yehoshua and Kalev of seeing the vision that might have killed them too.

Moshe's subsequent conversation staved off the death sentence for a period of time, 38 more years in the desert, but it could not commute it. Some sins against the divine can not go unpunished, even if the punishment comes months or years after the offense. (Shmot 33:20)

Was it fair of G-d to put the people in such a predicament? Maybe, maybe not. But, as I once heard a teacher explain to a student who complained of "the bad grade you gave me," "I did not give you the grade. That was the grade you earned."

It is worth the lesson to think how we alone are, and always will be, responsible and culpable for our actions.

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# SURVIVING SURVIVING: FIRST HOLOCAUST, THEN POVERTY

Continued from Page One

vivors.”

When Joe Klein, a HAFTR eighth grader, heard of the problem, he convinced his Language Arts teacher to allow him to make it his thesis project, but in a video format.

“First I said there’s no such thing,” recalled Ms. Adrienne Marks, Klein’s teacher. Poverty in Holocaust survivors “was too horrific for me to believe.” After Joe’s father called Marks, she agreed, “if in fact it is true and we can help even a handful of people.”

At the end of eighth grade, each HAFTR student is required to submit a research paper on a secular topic that also touches on Judaism, Marks explained, with topics as diverse as the Warsaw ghetto and Jewish pirates. HAFTR head of school Rabbi David Leibtag originated the concept 10 years ago as middle school principal.

Joe researched survivor agencies through the internet, and made contacts, writing questions, often on his own. His father, Harold Klein, the owner of a corporate video company, worked with him, going to all the “shoots” and discussing the interviews with him. The youngest of four brothers, Joe followed in the footsteps of two of them, producing a video report for his thesis.

“I want to help these heroes before they reach 120,” he said. “You don’t have to spend \$4 on coffee — that’s lunch for these people.”

After viewing Joe’s video, called “Surviving Surviving,” the eighth grade classes collected \$610 for the survivors.

“The wider society doesn’t realize that they are living in poverty,” pointed out Akira Ohio, a social worker who has worked with survivors. “They think of them as Bubbie and Zaidy, not as a person on food stamps. They think they are now in America and safe but don’t realize they are facing aging issues without money.”

Poverty stems from a lack of family, either lost in the Holocaust or from not marrying, not having children, or children who pre-deceased the

parents, noted Ohio, now a director of the Supportive Services Program at senior housing developments in New York City.

Many survivors live on a fixed income, don’t have assets, were not eligible for claims conference benefits (Holocaust reparations) and, when they came to the United States after the war were only able to get modestly paying jobs, often with no benefits or minimal, if any, pension, said Rubinstein.

“The problem is more now, every year the amount we give goes up,” stressed Rubinstein. “It’s a paradox.”

He noted that there are fewer survivors now since many are dying and yet the expenses are increasing. Twenty years ago they were younger, had fewer health problems, had jobs and insurance. Now they are aged 67 and older and need financial help. One 107-year-old survivor needs home care 24/7, he noted, and “often the government will pay half, but you can’t live alone at 107.”

The public is less aware of the problem, assuming that there are no survivors left or that there are no “poor Jews,” said Elihu Kover, vice president for Nazi Victim Services at Self-help community services, an organization that helps elderly people and others in need, founded in 1936 by refugees fleeing Nazi persecution. He noted that 51 percent of survivors are “considered impoverished” statistically and that they are “serving three times more [people] than 10 years ago. It’s a hidden population.”

Blue Card is strictly a financial aid organization for destitute Holocaust survivors and assists through referrals by other social services programs. This keeps overhead low, said Rubinstein, and keeps the survivors connected to the Jewish community in their area. Other organizations that help survivors include the Nazi victims program of Selfhelp, Bikur Cholim of Boro Park, involuntary, Jewish Family Services, JASA and the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty in New York.

“We can’t save these people from trauma,” said Ohio. “There’s a lot of mental illness

in survivors. The reverberations from the Holocaust are still in their daily decisions. They mistrust the mailman, the grocery store clerk, thinking they are Nazis. Their fear makes it hard to get out in the world and be productive, but there are concrete ways to help them, such as with home care and letting them tell their stories to

younger people. They are very concerned that their voices will disappear once they die. It is so traumatic; they never get over it. Maybe they have something to teach us.”

“It’s a tremendous mitzvah to help these people,” added Harold Klein.

View the video online at [www.vimeo.com/5064899](http://www.vimeo.com/5064899).



Image courtesy Joe Klein  
Joe Klein in an image from his documentary on survivors in poverty.

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Image courtesy Joe Klein  
Joe Klein walks with Magda, whom he interviewed for his documentary exposing the poverty-stricken conditions in which many survivors live.

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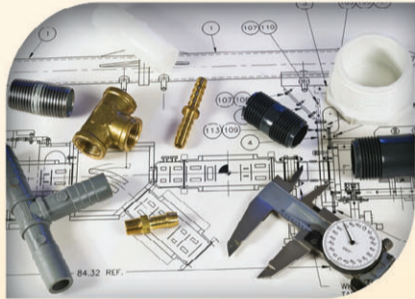
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