



The Menorah

Notes from the Rabbi: Ethan Seidel

Trying Harder on Shabbat Mornings

I'm writing this article mid-December, a few days after a really lovely Shabbat morning service at TI. Lots of good singing, (led by Ethan Merlin and Stan Dorn), an excellent drash (Ann Kline helped us understand what it can mean to care for those with dementia) with some great congregational comments afterwards, and a yummy *Kiddush* on an Indian theme, cooked by the Thursday night cooking crew, (volunteers led by Rachel Seidel and Stephanie Rubin, and aided by staff member Roz Kram).

churlish of me to ask for more, when we already have many putting in a quite creditable effort. I would,



however, like to ask for more effort in a different area.

Lots of work goes into the making of our Shabbat morning services—I am thankful we have so many volunteers to make it all happen. We could use even more volunteers, to be sure, but it seems

One of the especially nice parts of last Shabbat's services was *Shacharit*. That's the part of the service right before the Torah service that includes the *Sh'ma*,

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President's Column: Susan Catler and Joel Cohen Two Important Values for Tifereth Israel

As a result of the Tifereth Israel Retreat, the Congregation will be working on two important values in the coming year--*lifnei seivah takum* (rise up before the elderly) and *mekabel kol adam b'seiver panim yafot* (greet everyone with a friendly face). The retreat, held the weekend of November 5-7 and coordinated by Rabbi Bob Saks, focused on *Mussar*, a Jewish ethical, educational and cultural movement that developed in 19th century Eastern Europe. The program culminated in the selection of these two values to integrate into our actions and programming in the next year.



face" asks us to be friendly to those we encounter, encouraging us to extend words of peace and greeting to those who cross our paths.

Second, how we plan to implement this charge. At an institutional level we are asking all of the entities within the Congregation to consider these values as

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Notes from the Rabbi (continued)

and the *Amidah*, and that lasts from 9:30 to a little after 10. In general, we get a very small turnout for *Shacharit*. We usually begin with just a minyan, and we finish with maybe 50 people, if we're lucky. Most Tl'ers don't arrive until the middle of the Torah service or later. We usually end (as we did last Shabbat) with a quite respectable 150+ folks in all. (And I'm not even counting the many who attended last week's Tot Shabbat service).

It's really too bad that so few are around for *Shacharit*. Last week's attendance at *Shacharit* was much better than average, partly because Ethan Merlin put out a plea on the listserve for more attendance. And I also gave a drash recently on this topic. My main point: what you get out of services is proportional to what you put into them.

If you come only for the last little piece of services, if you indulge yourself and sleep late, if you just roll out of bed and come when you feel like it, your experience will be

diminished. Conversely, if you make some sacrifice to get here earlier (akin to the sacrifice it takes to learn the liturgy), your experience--both your experience of community and your experience of the transcendent--will be enlarged.

Gandhi listed among his seven social sins the fallacious idea that there can exist worship without sacrifice. And in a similar vein, our sages have likened our prayers to the ancient sacrifices. So I'm taking it on myself to remind you of this reality. I'm not trying to guilt you, or make you feel bad that you're not a "good Jew"--whatever that means. I'm just saying: you'll get more out of this if you put more into it.

Jay Michaelson, who writes in the Forward, put it well at the end of his article in the October 27 issue (<http://www.forward.com/articles/132565/>). He was speaking of the fact that good services take some effort to appreciate. He wrote: "The recourse to Jewish tradition is often analogized to Isaac's digging in his ancestors' wells: He went to the old places because he guessed there must be water there. But even Isaac had to dig to find it."

Rabbi Seidel

The Menorah

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Thank You, Mort Simon

Mort Simon has stepped down as co-editor of *The Menorah*. At its December 13 meeting, the TI Board adopted the following resolution of appreciation:

"The Board of Directors of Tifereth Israel thanks Mort Simon for editing *The Menorah* for the past two and a half years. He has elevated the quality and presentation of the newsletter. The Board appreciates his knowledge of computer software and his willingness to train and support his fellow editors."

New Members

Jared Garelick

Adam Mausner and Anna Shapiro

Adam and Anna met a few years ago in New York at a friendly poker game. You could say that both walked away winners! Adam is originally from Long Island. Anna, born in Russia, moved with her family at age four to Nashville, where she grew up.

Professionally, their focus is both local and global. Anna, who has a Masters degree in city planning, works for the District government in housing and

community development, helping enforce regulations on affordable housing. Adam, whose Masters degree is in national security studies, does analysis on Iraq and Afghan military issues at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank.

Outside of work, Anna enjoys playing soccer, and Adam plays ultimate Frisbee as well as saxophone in a jazz-funk big band. Adam and Anna found TI the new-fashioned way: Google! In planning their recent wedding, they learned that Anna's rabbi from Nashville would be unable to travel to Washington for the event. They googled local synagogues, liked the description of TI on its website, and liked Rabbi Seidel when they met him. So Rabbi Seidel married them, in Meridian Hill Park, this past October.

When you meet them, give them a welcome to TI, and a mazel tov on their wedding.

President's Column (continued)

they plan their programs and activities for the coming year. We have also created a committee to look for ways to implement these values. Joel Cohen will chair the Mussar Committee. The initial members of the committee are Loretta Saks, Michelle Sumka, Alan Landay, Sylvia Horwitz, Ben Finkelstein, Sheri Blonder, Bev Lehrer, Joseph Martin, Aviva Blonder and Ariel Davis. Others who would like to be on the committee should contact Susan Catler. The first meeting will be this month.

What kind of institutional changes will be considered? The Board has already agreed to take on being the Greeters at Shabbat morning services. The Adult Education and Programming Committee is working on increasing the opportunities for our older members to participate in programs at TI and looking at additional programs that might be of interest. Our membership committee is working with a local senior community to arrange for bus service for residents to attend our Shabbat morning services. The Mussar Committee will be looking for new ways for us to greet each other and to respect our elders.

On a personal level, we hope that members of the Congregation will take up these values with enthusiasm. Why not decide to say hello to a new person, someone you have never spoken to before, each time you come to TI? How about getting to know our older members better—one of the best ways to begin to “rise up before the elderly” is to sit down and talk!

We will be keeping the membership posted on efforts on these two values as the year progresses. If you would like to learn more about *Mussar*, Rabbi Saks suggests the following four websites: www.mussarinstitute.org (Alan Morinis' approach.), www.phillymussar.org, www.madrega.com, and www.ayeka.org.il.

Funeral Practices Committee **Always On-Call**

Chaverim of the Funeral Practices Committee are on call to provide counsel and services to synagogue members and their dependents. Prior to contacting the funeral home, please contact one of the following chaverim, Rabbi Seidel, or the TI office (202-882-1605).

Shelly Heller h: 301-942-1836
w: 202-242-6698

Jeff Davidson h: 301-593-1335

David (Judy) Cohen h: 301-652-2872

Marcia Goldberg h: 301-589-0352

Lilmod U'ilamed (To Learn and to Teach)

Eitan Gutin

The Sunday of winter break, about 2 or 3 in the afternoon, is one of my favorite moments of the year. Why such a specific moment on a specific day? That is the moment, each year, when United Synagogue Youth (USY) opens its International Convention. Jewish music blasts from the speakers as anywhere from 800 to 1200 Jewish Teens stream into a hotel ballroom dancing, singing, and celebrating their Judaism at the top of their lungs.

For the past 16 years I have had the opportunity to be sitting in the back of the ballroom as Opening Session takes place, serving as part of the Convention's executive staff. The dancing gives way to 1200 Jews with their arms around each other as we sing *Shalom Rav* and *Lo Yisa Goy*. After the USY President (usually a first-year college student) officially opens the event we pray with what is probably (at that time) the largest Mincha Minyan in the world.

60th Anniversary Celebration

Last week USY began a very special convention in Orlando as the organization kicked off the celebration of its 60th year—a celebration that will culminate at the 61st USY Convention in Philadelphia next December. As a past president of the organization I would like to share with you what USY means to me, what it means to the Conservative movement, and how to involve your child(ren) here at Tifereth Israel.

When I entered USY in 9th grade I was a pretty awkward teenager; just like many other adolescents I did not have much of an idea of who I was or what I stood for. In USY I felt welcomed unconditionally in a way that I had never felt before. While there were cliques, just like anywhere

teenagers gather, no one clique was more important than another. At my very first event another kid turned to me and asked for help handing out books for singing and grace after meals. I was happy to help, and less than four years later I found myself addressing 1000 fellow teens at the annual convention as I ran for the presidency.

Important Lessons Learned

During those four short years as a USY member I learned important lessons in how to build a welcoming Jewish community. These I put to good use; first as a Hillel leader at Rutgers and since then as a Jewish professional. Whenever I get up to tell a story, teach a class, or lead a service, I am drawing on skills and lessons that I learned as a USYer. I give part of my winter break to the organization each year as a thank you for what it did for me.

When I speak with USY's teen leaders, a quality they all share is a devotion to Conservative Judaism. They believe in Conservative Judaism's message and want the movement to succeed. On a national level USYers are constantly pushing the movement to improve itself.

Critique of New Prayer Book

For example, when Conservative leaders were in the midst of editing the new *Sim Shalom* prayer book in 1996, samples were sent to key leadership including the teen leaders of USY. The USY leaders were deeply frustrated with the new edition, not for what it contained but for what it was missing—in this brand new siddur there was barely any attempt made to help people using it understand the prayers.

These leaders complained to the *Sim Shalom* committee that when members of USY wanted to learn about the prayers they were forced to turn to prayer books produced by the Orthodox movement due to the lack of a user-friendly prayer book commentary from the Conservative movement. Imagine—a group of teen leaders writing to prominent adult leaders of Conservative Judaism telling them they had missed the mark!

How did the adults respond? They immediately began work on what became the *Or Hadash Siddur*, an incredible resource for anyone wishing to understand services on a deeper level. Every time I look up a prayer in the *Or Hadash* I am reminded of USY's influence on the Conservative movement.

Dedication to Chesed

USY and its junior group, Kadima, are at their best when guided by Conservative Judaism's dedication to *chesed* (acts of kindness), Torah study, prayer, and Israel. It was in USY that I developed my dedication to *chesed* through learning with the Mitzvah hero Danny Siegel (himself a former president).

USY brought me to Poland and Israel for a summer on USY Pilgrimage and heavily influenced my decision to spend a year there with Nativ. I started my development as a Tefillah educator and storyteller by helping my fellow teens put on *tefillin* and delivering *divrei Torah* at USY events.

USY was a primary factor in making me the involved Jew that I am today. As I work with our youth group leaders and volunteers in expanding TI's youth programs I hope to get every

(Continued on page 5)

Department of Lifelong Learning

Eitan Gutin

The Himmelfarb and Chai Schools

Hanukkah made December a fun and exciting month in the Himmelfarb and Chai Schools. On the first night our Dalet (4th grade) class lit candles for the staff of Holy Cross hospital after which they spent time visiting with patients. That same night the Chai school baked *sufganiyot* with Rabbi Seidel. On Shabbat Hannukah about 100 parents and children gathered for our first Family Service of the year, led by the children of TI

On Sunday, as part of a school-wide celebration of Hanukkah in the Himmelfarb School, our early childhood class decorated *hanukkiyot* and *dreidels* while the upper grades challenged their parents in who could portray the values of Hanukkah best. Check out the results of all these efforts on the bulletin boards in the school hallway. Also see the Tifereth Israel website for pictures of these wonderful programs.

The other big news in December was that we have embarked on a school-wide revision of the curriculum. While elements of the new curriculum are already being introduced into our classrooms, the full curriculum will have its debut in September 2011. See the Curriculum section of the TI website for more information and updates on the process.

Youth Groups

Parents, watch your email and mailboxes for upcoming events in

Machar, Bonim, and Kadima. All three groups are going to open 2011 in a big way, so stay tuned!

USY & Teens

USY will be going on its annual ski trip on January 22 and 23. The trip is open to 8th-12th graders and has various registration fees depending on what options are chosen. Applications are due into the TI office no later than January 5. Please contact Rebecca Risser (rebecca.risser@gmail.com) or me for more information.

Our annual Teen Shabbat will take place on January 29. On this Shabbat TI's teens will lead the main services on Shabbat morning. After lunch, I will teach a class on piercing/tattooing (see details below), a great learning experience for adults and teens alike.

Adult Education

January begins the second half of our program year. Here is just a sampling of study opportunities available this month:

Rescued Memories with **Cynthia Peterman**, January 9, 23, & 30, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Glimpse the lives of Jewish survivors of the Holocaust living today in 15 European countries. Through a unique interviewing technique, Centropa has amassed a database of more than 1250

interviews and 30 films. These will form the basis of our study of the richness of Jewish life before the Holocaust in places as diverse as Turkey, Hungary, Russia and Austria.

We will explore why Jews returned to Europe and how they survived the obstacles of post-Holocaust life, including Communism. Cynthia has been involved with the Centropa project since 2006, and has traveled three times to Europe on Centropa Seminars.

Social Action Shabbaton, January 15. MLK Weekend. This year's Social Action Shabbaton will focus on the Rosenwald Schools which were built for African American children in the South during the 1920's and 1930's. See the Social Action column, page 6, for more details.

Whose Body is it Anyway?: Body Piercing and Tattooing in Jewish Law with **Eitan Gutin**, January 29, after Shabbat lunch. This is an important session for teens, parents, and anyone who has ever had or will have a conversation with a child about what to do with his or her body.

We are told that our body is a gift from God, but what does that really mean? Does a tattoo really prevent someone from being buried in a Jewish cemetery? If piercing ears is fine, why not a nose, belly button, or tongue? Join me for answers to these questions and more.

Lilmod U'ilamed (continued)

single child and teen in the synagogue involved in Machar, Bonim, Kadima and USY. You never know—in a few years it could be your child or grandchild standing at a microphone in front of 1000 of his or her

peers, inspiring them to greater heights of learning, prayer, and service.

For more information about any of our youth groups, please contact me

by email or phone at Eitan@Tifereth-Israel.org, (202) 882-1605 x105. If you would like to serve on TI's newly-formed youth programs committee, please contact Hilary Sachs at TILL@Tifereth-Israel.org.

Social Action at Tifereth Israel

Claudine Schweiber

Martin Luther King Shabbaton

Each year we honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King and his commitment to improving the welfare of others by hosting a Shabbat service and afternoon panel that reflects those ideals.

This year, at the Shabbaton on **January 15**, we honor the memory of TI member and civil rights activist Marvin Caplan, by presenting a lesser known story of Jewish involvement with the African-American community: *Julius Rosenwald and the Jewish Commitment to African-American Education*

Julius Rosenwald (1862-1932), part owner and president of Sears Roebuck & Co, funded several thousand schools for African-American children in the South in the early 20th century. One report estimated that from 1917-1932 more than 5,000 Rosenwald schools were built in fifteen states!!

The Rosenwald story will be the subject of the drash by **Stephanie Deutsch** who is writing a book about the strong friendship of Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington. Rosenwald served on the Board of the Tuskegee Institute as well as contributed to the school.

In the afternoon, the panel will be led by film maker **Aviva Kempner** (*Partisans of Vilna, Yoo-Hoo Mrs. Goldberg*) who is working on a movie about Rosenwald and this amazing story.

Rosenwald Schools

During the 1920's one in five African-American schools in the rural South was a Rosenwald school. These

were mostly one-room or two-room buildings.

The Rosenwald Fund usually donated about \$600 per school. The local African-American community raised additional funds, secured land, provided construction labor, and bought supplies, fuel, and, sometimes, buses. The Fund also required the local government to contribute to the building projects and the state to maintain the new schools.

Some Rosenwald schools replaced freedmen's schools built for ex-slaves during Reconstruction. Elsewhere, Rosenwald schools were the first educational institutions open to blacks.

A 1934 report on African-American education in Texas noted, "Every Negro school visited...except the Rosenwald schools, was housed in crude, unpainted box shacks with no foundation...no desks, blackboard, no window shades, no library and no equipment."

We Care

 & Take Action

Rosenwald schools were a sign of progress and a source of pride in African-American communities. Most Rosenwald schools have been torn down, but a few still stand. In some states, historic preservation efforts are under way to recognize, restore, and save the old schools. One of the remaining schools is Highland Park High School in Prince George's County, Maryland, built in 1928.

The son of German Jewish immigrants, Julius Rosenwald believed that Jews had a special understanding of the plight of African-Americans. He wrote that "The horrors that are due to race prejudice come home to the Jew more forcefully than to others of the white race, on account of the centuries of persecution which they have suffered and still suffer."



A Rosenwald School in Prince Georges County

Kol Nashim

Paula Flicker

Sunday Brunch and Lecture

Maxine Grossman donated a lecture to TI for the 2010 Spring Fling auction. The winning bidder then donated the lecture to Kol Nashim.

On **February 6**, Maxine Grossman, Assistant Professor, Jewish Studies Program, University of Maryland, will present *Women in the Biblical Tradition: What exactly is women's role?* from 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. in the TI Library.

Dr. Grossman provides the following summary of her talk: What kinds of "role models" do we find among the women in the biblical tradition? How do the heroines of the Hebrew Bible compare with those of the Christian New Testament? And what should we take away from a study of those roles? In this talk we will go beyond what we learned in Hebrew school and ask what is a Jewish Hero and how are they role models for women of today.

It will be a real treat to hear and talk with Maxine, a professor described

by her students as "a wonderful teacher." Don't miss this special event!

Mitzvah Knitting

Mitzvah knitting continues. In December, the Mitzvah Knitting and Crochet Group contributed scarves to the Orphan Foundation of America's (OFA) Red Scarf Project. The scarves will be sent in a Valentine's Day Care Package to OFA students enrolled in college or trade school.

Now we are knitting scarves for distribution on Martha's Van. Upcoming knitting/crochet dates are **January 3** and **February 7**, 7-9 p.m. Come join us for knitting, crocheting, or just some good conversation. Contact **Ellen Zwibak** if you have any questions.

TI at the Museum of Natural History

Some of you may have seen the TI Hyperbolic Crochet Coral Reef on display in the office at the High



Holidays. Those pieces are now part of the Smithsonian Community Reef, which is a satellite of the worldwide Hyperbolic Crochet Coral Reef.

Not only are the names of the individuals who contributed listed at the museum, the TI Mitzvah Knitting and Crocheting Group is listed as a participating organization, thanks to **Andrea Kline**. In addition, Andrea and **Ellen Zwibak** are serving as docents for the exhibit.

On December 4, the Smithsonian held a reception for contributors to the project attended by **Andrea Kline**, **Lynn Golub-Rofrano** and **Paula Flicker**. We learned that there were about 811 contributors, ages 3-101, from 25 states.

The Smithsonian Community Reef will be on exhibit through April 24, 2011.



Paula Flicker, Andrea Kline and Lynn Golub-Rofrano at Smithsonian Reception

Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers

Barbara Raimondo

Smart Girls

Lianna Levine Reisner, husband **Elnatan**, and eight-week-old daughter **Maayan** traveled to Belgium and England for two weeks so that Lianna could attend classes as part of her masters program in organizational development. Maayan became the class mascot, and, believe it or not, received the highest grade in the class! Lianna is happy to have the tutoring help.

Other smart TI girls are **Neshama Rovinsky**, who made the ninth grade Honor Roll at the George School, was elected student representative from her class, and joined the Cheerleading squad, and **Neilah Rovinsky**, who made the Principal's Honor Roll at Deal Middle school (all A's) and took her first aliyah as a Bat Mitzvah.

More smart girls are **Myrna Goldman** and her sister Harriet Ainbinder, who took a three-week trip to Spain and Portugal in November. They started on their own in Barcelona, went on a pre-tour extension to Bilbao, and then joined the main tour starting in Madrid, traveling to Toledo, Cordoba, Granada, Torremolinos, Malaga, Ronda, Seville, Lisbon, and Porto. That's a lot of vowels! They attended synagogue in Torremolinos and Porto and got to speak Spanish and Portuguese quite a bit.

Thanksgiving Adventures

If Myrna and her sister had been lucky they might have run into **Cynthia**, **Jeff**, and **Tania Peterman**, who went back to Portugal during Thanksgiving week for a special visit. The trip was both wonderful and meaningful. En route they stopped in London to visit the rest of the Petermans and ate their

Thanksgiving turkey there. In keeping with English Thanksgiving tradition, they also had a pint!

Alan Landay stayed a little closer to home for Thanksgiving, as in, he stayed home. But not without his sister, Becky, her husband, George, and their son Zeke, who drove up from Tennessee. Becky's adult daughter, Dyanna, came down from New York. Alan's cousin, Jeff, his wife, Evelyn, and mother Char (his aunt) also came; they already live in the center of the universe, that is the Washington metropolitan area.

Shameless advertising alert: Alan got the turkey from KOL foods. The meal was delicious and everyone had a great time. Alan and his guests also did some sightseeing, including a trip to Ben's Chili Bowl. Guess there were no leftovers.

You Can Go Home Again

Speaking of home, last month, **Kobi Lifshitz** and his sister traveled to Bialystok, Poland, on a trip to explore their family's roots. They were able to locate numerous original family documents and were stunned to discover that the house in which their father grew up is still standing.

Meri Rosenberg recently moved to 4500 Connecticut Ave., NW, #307. She has a bright, cheerful apartment. Come visit!

If you're not watching "Skating with the Stars" you're missing the credits, which include "Executive in Charge of Production **Carol Axler Turner**." Carol, daughter of **Les** and **Judith Turner**, has been EIP (that's Hollywood talk) on the show since the beginning. You can catch this BBC production on ABC on Mondays at 8:00 p.m.

If you are unhappy with our nation's taxation system, blame **Beth Davidson**, daughter of **Joe** and **Kathy**, who has an internship this spring at the Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation. This is a nonpartisan committee that examines technical aspects of tax law. Hmm, that would pretty much be the whole tax code, eh? The internship is part of her tax law program at Georgetown.

Ann Kline has completed her masters degree in pastoral and spiritual care at Loyola University. Ann is a chaplain at the Jewish Social Service Agency's hospice.

Special Events

Elizabeth Richman and her mother-in-law, Rabbi Ellen Dreyfus, led the candle lighting ceremony at a Congressional Hanukkah party at the Library of Congress. It's probably the first time in American history that such a thing has been done by rabbis who are mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Quick trivia question: Who is (most likely) the first person in American history to be both the husband and the son of rabbis who have lit the *hanukkiyah* at the Library of Congress? Why, that would be **Ben Dreyfus!**

Several TI members went to Birmingham, Alabama, December 4 for the bat mitzvah of **Olivia Mannon**, the younger daughter of former TI members, the Mannon family. **John** and **Lynne List**, **Elliot Rosen**, and the **Nesse/Lewis** were in attendance to make sure that proprieties were observed. The all-girls leyning team of **Roz Mannon**, **Ellie Mannon**, **Olivia Mannon**, **Gabriella Nesse**, and **Janet Nesse** did the TI alumnae proud. The chazzan there, Daniel Gale, was a

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Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers (continued)

classmate of our own Rabbi Seidel at Oberlin College back in the day. Guests also toured the city, including the Birmingham Civil Rights Museum.

On **Francie** and **Josh Kranzberg's** 25th wedding anniversary, December 1, Francie surprised Josh by bringing a gigantic sandwich with all the fixin's and a decorated layer cake to his office to celebrate with his co-workers. Francie has surprised Josh before, so he should have expected something, since this time he actually remembered it was their anniversary! So having her turn up at work was just the "icing on the cake!" Plus, it was a great excuse to delay answering those pesky e-mails from his boss!

Bruce and **Laurie Berger** are delighted to announce the engagement of their daughter, **Jean**,

to Eyal Haim. Eyal hails from Rishon L'tzion in Israel and has lived and worked in the US since 2004. A November wedding is in the works, and in 25 years, we will be reading about them in this very column.

Rona Fields' grandson is serving in the Israeli Defense Forces' Golani Brigade. She and her family are very proud of him and his commitment to Israel and the survival of the Jewish people.

Carolivia Herron's mother Georgia Carol Johnson Herron had a minor heart attack, and Carolivia asks for your prayers.

Sad News

William Greene, father of **Janice Mehler**, died after a long illness. The funeral was in Buffalo. Our

condolences to the family and other loved ones.

And now for the meaning of last month's word, *afflatitious*: the adjective form of *afflatus*: "a divine imparting of knowledge or power" (Merriam-Webster Online).

Thanks to all who sent me news, sent me to others who sent me news, or otherwise helped sniff it out. Please send information for next time to baraimondo@gmail.com with "Nayes un Mekhayes" in the heading, or to P.O. Box 466, Washington Grove, MD 20880.

This brings to a close a wisenheimer edition of Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers.

Upcoming Friday Night Minyan Assignments

January 7

Louise Sidman
Richard & Marjorie Siegel
David Silber & Eileen Rose
Morton Simon
David & Rona Siskind
Audrey Smith
Aaron & Reva Snow
R. Claire Snyder-Hall
Dan & Elizabeth Sokolov

January 14

Frank Solomon
Louis & Madge Lee Spector
Phil & Dianne Spellberg
Masha Spiegel
Gregory Stackel & Genevieve Sapir
Jeffrey & Julie Steinberg
Lois Steinberg
Mitchell & Amy Stoltz
Jack Stone & Wilma Brier
Howard & Michele Sumka

January 21

Edwin Stromberg & Rose Ellen Halper
Jonathan Strum
Noam Stopak & Shelley Sturman
Marc Suddleson & Molly Surden

Kassahun Teffera & Melke Mengiste
Jevera Temsky
Neil & Rachel Tickner
Michael Tilchin & Linda Greer
David Tobenkin
Peter & Rhoda Trooboff

January 28

Paula Tucker
Lester & Judith Turner
Daniel & Allison Turner
Ruth & Michael Unterweger
Emanuel & Marilyn Vegh
Mark Verschell & Elizabeth Leff
Rachel Vile & Michael Gotthelf
Susan Vitale
Nancy Voisin
David Wachtel & Jennifer Goldstein

February 4

Samuel & Heinke Waldbaum
Harry Waldman & Susan Morse
Marc Warshawsky & Vivian Seidner
Matthew Watson
Deborah Weilerstein
Marc & Deborah Weinberger
Jon Weintraub

Michael Weiss & Phyllis Stanger
Jessica Weissman

February 11

Dov Weitman & Sylvia Horwitz
Alan & Cynthia Weitz
Howard & Barbara White
Howard Wial
Louise Wiener
Jonathan Wilkenfeld
Peter Winch
Adam & Dorothea Wolfson
Marion Zatz
Christopher Zeilinger

February 18

Yohannes Zeleke
Michael Zucker
James & Diana Zurer
Ellen Zwibak
Luis & Karen Acosta
Andrew Afflerbach & Joanne Hovis
Miriam Alpern
Jon Alterman & Katherine Lariviere
Timothy Anderegg & Lisa Fogel-
Anderegg
David & Felice Anderson
Jerry & Charlotte Anker

Donations Requested In January

Donate Books for Students

Tifereth Israel is participating in a Shepherd Park Community book drive during the month of January. Books will be collected for Capital BookShare, a non-profit volunteer organization that seeks to ensure that all children have access to good books in their schools.

Towards this end, Capital BookShare collects new and gently-used books for students in grades K-8 and provides them to teachers in under-resourced schools to enrich their students' lives. At this time, books are being provided primarily to schools in DC's Ward 7 and 8.

To find out more about Capital BookShare visit capitalbookshare.org. Books should be placed in the wicker basket in the Juniper Street lobby.

Turn in Snider's Receipts

Do you shop at Snider's? If you do, please drop off your receipts in the envelope on the bulletin board outside the TI office. Snider's will give one percent of the amount purchased to a school. We collect the receipts for our neighborhood school, Shepherd Elementary. They need to be processed in January, so find those 2010 receipts (and 2011,

too) and turn them in today. Please do not cut off the date—we need to be sure that all the receipts are from the current year and can't use receipts without dates.

Donation Coordinator Needed

For many years Judy Rodenstein has served as our able coordinator of donations. She has now stepped down and we need a new coordinator. The job entails working with the Social Action Committee, deciding what we should collect and when, and making arrangements for publicity and delivery of the collected items. If you are interested, please contact Susan Catler.

January/Early February Highlights at Tifereth Israel

January 3, February 7; 7-9 p.m.	Mitzvah Knitting
January 9, 23, 30; 10:30-11:30 a.m.	Rescued Memories Course
January 15	Social Action Shabbaton
January 22-23	USY Ski Trip
January 29	Teen Shabbat
January 29, after Services	Whose Body Is It? Lecture
February 6, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m	Kol Nashim Lecture on Women in the Biblical Tradition

A Literary Lens on Israel: from the Classics to Modern Times

Mollie Berch

Adapted from an article previously published in the Beth El newsletter

One of the most interesting ways to learn about Israelis is to read a variety of books--old classics, new ones destined to be classics, history, biography, and fiction. Here are some of the books I have read and am using in my latest courses.

In the realm of old fiction is **Dvora Baron's**, *The First Day and Other Stories* (republished in 2001). Her father, a shtetl rabbi in Eastern Europe, encouraged her to study traditional texts and modern Hebrew literature of the *Haskalah*--the Jewish Enlightenment.

Baron moved to Palestine when she was 23 and became literary editor of an important Zionist Labor newspaper. She offers a sensitive but passionate view of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. In her stories, women have little control over their own lives and seem eternally waiting for help to change them. She won major literary prizes.

Baron later became a recluse, dying in 1956, not having left her Tel Aviv apartment for 35 years. Interest in her stories has recently revived due to the growth of feminist studies and new enthusiasm among Ashkenazi Israelis to learn more about their European ancestry.

The foremost storyteller in Israel today is **Savyon Liebrecht**, who has lived almost her entire life in Israel. Her Holocaust survivor parents would not speak of their experiences. *Apples From The Desert* (translated in 1998) and *A Good Place for the Night* (translated in 2005), contain stories set in the 1970s and 1980s about Israelis divided by generational, gender, religious and ethnic differences. *Apples* begins with a heartwarming story of an old-fashioned mother who visits a

secular kibbutz to force her daughter to return home. She discovers her daughter is blossoming like an apple in the desert and starts to question her own loveless marriage.

Liebrecht writes of a different kibbutz experience in *A Good Place for the Night* where a newcomer from a Holocaust background is treated in an incredibly inhumane way.

Many of her stories involve cultural differences between Ashkenazim and Sephardim, and between the older survivor generation and the younger generation who prefer to forget. Written in a feminist voice, her stories leave the reader wondering where Israel is heading. Liebrecht says she is pessimistic about Israel but tries to leave her stories open-ended for her readers.

A new biography, *Harry S. Truman and the Founding of Israel*, by **Ronald Radosh** and **Allis Radosh** (2009), is filled with suspense. The authors cover the legacy left by Franklin Roosevelt, problems with the allies and the State Department, partition plans and finally the recognition of the State of Israel.

They conclude that Israel might not have survived the first years without Truman, and he will always have a place of honor in the history of the Jewish people. An especially good chapter is on Truman's reaction to information on the condition of Jews in the displaced persons camps.

Zelda Popkin's *Quiet Street* (1951) deserves a fresh look. The first major American novel about Israel's War for Independence, this exciting story was not a commercial success, perhaps because it was written by a woman and was overshadowed by Leon Uris's more idealized version.

Quiet Street is told from the perspective of Jerusalem's residents, especially an Israeli-American homemaker living in Rehavia. Taking place between February and July of 1948, it deals with the war's price of many lives, the ever-present overwhelming fear, children's reaction to this fear, and the rationing even of water. Not a story of the typical freedom fighter, it won a Jewish Book Council Award in 1952.

A. B. Yehoshua's novel, *Mr. Mani*, traces six generations of an Israeli family from 1848 to 1982. In a series of "conversations", Yehoshua writes Zionist history from a Sephardic perspective. His novel *Journey to the End of the Millennium* (1998) is a page-turner on the split between Ashkenazi and Sephardi cultures 1000 years ago.

Rabbi Haim Sabato is the author of several books about the experiences of religious Jews who came from Egypt to Israel in the 1950s, were placed in transit camps and had difficulties being accepted by their neighbors. His newest book, *From The Four Winds* (2010), is somewhat autobiographical. A previous book, *Adjusting Sights*, won prizes including Israel's Sapir Award.

The Arab in Israeli Literature, by **Gila Ramras-Rauch** (1989), not only covers well-known Israelis who write about Arabs, but also presents the point of view of Arabs who are Jewish and live in Israel. One recent book in particular is *Baghdad, Yesterday: The Making of an Arab Jew*, by **Sasson Somekh** (2007).

The revised 1998 edition of **Tom Segev's** *1949: The First Israelis* (1986) has an excellent forward

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A Literary Lens on Israel (continued)

covering relations in Israel since the first edition between Arabs and Jews, veterans and newcomers, Orthodox and secular, and the search for a national identity. This controversial best seller in Israel concentrates on how 1949 was so different from 1948.

The Plough Woman: Memoirs of the Pioneer Women of Palestine, published in 1932 by Pioneer Women's Organization and edited by **Rachel Katznelson-Rubashov**, is a rich treasury of testimonies of women who came to Palestine to work the land even though many had never done this kind of work in Europe. It features women's role in the collectives and in bringing up children --a very human document.

Carole S. Kessner, a talented long-time protégé of Marie Syrkin, has written a mesmerizing biography, *Marie Syrkin: Values Beyond the Self* (2008). She portrays Syrkin, the author of *Blessed Is the Match: The Story of Jewish Resistance*. (1947), as the Labor Zionist who committed herself to telling the world why the Jewish homeland was so important. She also covers Syrkin's involvement with the Stalinist purges, debates over the British Mandate, and battles over Arab refugees. Kessner is a great writer.

Anita Diamont's newest novel, *Day After Night* (2010), is the true, gripping story of four women Holocaust survivors who arrive at a British internment camp for "illegal immigrants" in 1945. Diamont focuses on how they tried to continue with their lives and cope with their memories. The chapter on the escape from the camp, led by the Palmach who rescued about 200 people, is spellbinding.

The Much Too Promised Land: America's Elusive Search for Arab-Israeli Peace, by **Aaron David Miller**

(2008), is a readable, insider's account of the peace process during the administrations of Carter, Ford, George H. W. Bush and Clinton, and how we might still solve the issues.

Young adults will enjoy **Jennifer Miller's** *Inheriting the Holy Land* (2005), a personal story involving the young generation of Israelis and Palestinians.

A new beautiful young adult book is *The Bat-Chen Diaries: Selected Writings* by **Bat-Chen Shahak** (2008), published after she was killed on her 15th birthday with two of her friends in a terrorist bombing on Purim 2006. The poems, which start from the third grade, have been translated into five languages.

A new biography, *Our Exodus: Leon Uris and the Americanization of Israel's Founding Story*, by **MM Silver** (2010), focuses on an old classic best seller. The 1958 novel and 1960 movie *Exodus* need to be revisited. Filled with stereotypes and inaccurate history, the novel is less about Israel than the world of the Holocaust--accusing Diaspora Jews of not doing enough. Selling over one million copies, it helped Jews cope with the huge tragedy, shaped Jewish identity in America, and gave Jews in Russia some hope.

An unusual classic, *Israel*, by **Ludwig Lewisohn** (1925), seems strange to read today. Lewisohn, an assimilated Jew known especially for the novel *The Island Within*, wrote the first half of *Israel* to convince Jews that assimilation does not work—"once a Jew, always a Jew"—and was the cause of modern anti-Semitism. He pleaded with American Jews to tax themselves to save the world's Jews.

He praises accomplishments in Palestine, calls for a dual English-Hebrew curriculum, and appeals for

Jews to refuse to go to war. The book was an immediate commercial success in the US and in Palestine.

Melvin Urofsky's 2009 biography, *Louis D. Brandeis: A Life*, explores Brandeis' influence on Zionism from 1914 onward and how this assimilated American Jew became a leader of American Zionism, stemming from his reading of American democratic ideals. Brandeis held that American Jews did not have to make aliyah to be genuine Zionists and that there was no conflict between Zionism and loyalty to America.

Arthur Koestler's 1946 novel about Zionism, *Thieves in the Night*, was an immediate best seller. It appeared right after the Irgun bombing of the King David Hotel, which was a tremendous blow to the Zionist cause. The story takes place, from 1937 to 1949, on a typical Jewish commune in Palestine, when many Jews turned from talk to terrorism. It presents various sides of the Arab and British points of view.

The main character, the half-English, half-Jewish Joseph, is somewhat autobiographical. Koestler dramatizes the tension of a Jewish intellectual fighting for a national state in Palestine. The novel portrays Arab villagers and Joseph's progress toward terrorism as he wrestles with his conscience about means and ends. The book was dedicated to Irgun leader Ze'ev Jabotinsky and was the high point of Koestler's involvement with Zionism

Michael Scammell's new biography, *Koestler: The Literary and Political Odyssey of a Twentieth-Century Skeptic* (2009), discusses this novel in detail, since Joseph incorporated many of Koestler's ideas on Zionism, Judaism and terrorism.

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