



# The Menorah

## Inside This Issue\*

<a href="#">New Members</a>	3
<a href="#">TI Rain Garden</a>	4
<a href="#">Board Minutes Summary</a>	5
<a href="#">Annual Retreat</a>	6
<a href="#">January Highlights</a>	6
<a href="#">Retreat Photos</a>	7
<a href="#">Library News</a>	8
<a href="#">Art Articulation</a>	8
<a href="#">Social Action</a>	9
<a href="#">Shelter Dinner Photos</a>	10
<a href="#">Kol Nashim</a>	11
<a href="#">Naves un Mekhayes</a>	12
<a href="#">Goettingen News</a>	13
<a href="#">Hanukkah Celebration</a>	13
<a href="#">Hanukkah Party Photos</a>	14
<a href="#">The "Jewish Question"</a>	15
<a href="#">What is a Jewish State?</a>	17
<a href="#">Tu B'Shevat Coins</a>	18
<a href="#">Friday Night Minyan Assignments</a>	21
<a href="#">Donations</a>	22

\* On-line readers can move directly to any page by clicking on the desired article title.

## President's Column: Jeff Davidson Up in a Cloud

I wrote this column as we just finished our annual reading of *Bereshit*. This year, in our Monday study group, we spent some time examining why our people are named after Judah, and not the *Tzaddik* (righteous man), Joseph. No simple answer would suffice and I was driven, in part, to read the new novel by Dara Horn, *A Guide for the Perplexed*.

Normally, I do not like to give out accolades to works of art as being the final word on a subject. However, I feel quite comfortable in saying that this is the finest novel incorporating, the story of Joseph and his brother Judah, software magnates, the Arab Spring and terrorism, Solomon Schechter, the Rambam, and the nature of memory that you will ever encounter.

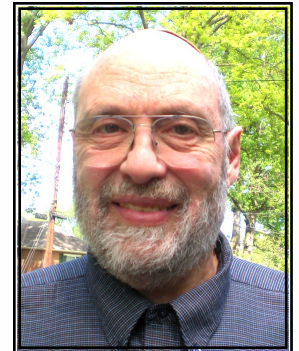
Dara Horn is a Harvard-trained author of three previous novels. Ironically, she was born in the same New Jersey town as Philip Roth's character, Brenda, from *Goodbye, Columbus*. Brenda had a nose job to fit in better at Radcliffe. Horn studied Yiddish literature.

### Storing Memories

Horn looks at questions of memory and the past. How and why do we relive the past? Are the divine and human responses to the past quintessentially different? Is the past, with all its facets, God's Genizah? Can we somehow store the elements of our lives in a Genizah of our own choosing? With the advent of new software, will this be possible?

Horn uses the device of a software program call *Genizah*, which stores and catalogs all one's memories and images. As a work of fiction, perhaps this is being

overridden by Google's *Glass*. Would Joseph's experience in the pit have been different if he could have relived it and the images had stayed fresh and unaltered by perception and the passage of time? Would forgiveness have been possible if the wound was always bleeding?



### Mixing Modernity and the Joseph Story

Horn examines these questions using a variety of literary and philosophical devices. It is a mark of her artistry that gender reversals and modern questions such as the competitive nature of very young children's academic accomplishments appear totally natural and equivalent to the *tsuris* of Joseph and his brothers.

For me personally, it is the nature of *Genizah*, the fictional software, that is the heart of the story. How does software affect our memories? Do we need an archive to store these memories? Does software affect our behavior?

### Upgrading TI's IT Systems

Although these thoughts may appear hackneyed, they have been important in the lives of American synagogues recently. The United Synagogue has just appointed a Rabbi to advise congregations on IT and

(Continued on page 2)



## President's Column (continued)

software questions. Here at TI, we have embarked on a major effort to change the basis of some of our operations.

A small group of volunteers, working with our professional staff, is switching our main software to a package called *Shul Cloud*. This package, which has been successfully implemented at many congregations, will enable us to keep our records in the cloud and greatly simplify many of our administrative operations.

It will make life simpler for our members, allowing them to easily reserve dinners or tickets to events. They can pay their bill at 3 a.m., or even make a generous donation any time they like. We will be in many ways like most other

modern business operations. Other synagogues have reported increased participation and even increased giving with the simplification of these business operations.

### System Now Being Tested and Installed

Jevera and the office staff are testing and installing the system now and will announce a schedule for implementation. Fear not. For those of you who do not want to use a computerized system like this for TI business, there will be an alternative available.

None of this would have been possible without the great help of some exceptionally devoted volunteers. While ShulCloud is not yet ready to launch, I would like to acknowledge those members who have been primarily responsible for the project's development and design:

**Carla Matusow**, who has been the lead person on the cloud project, **Vivian Seidner**, **Debbie Pomerance**, **Carl Bergman** and **Margie Odle**. Thank you all for your hard work and for sharing your expertise!

### The Menorah Tifereth Israel Congregation

7701 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20012  
Voice: 202-882-1605 FAX: 202-829-0635

info@tifereth-israel.org  
Office hours: M-Th 9-5; F 9-3  
(Often open in evenings and on Sundays.)  
*Appointments are recommended.*

**Rabbi:** Ethan Seidel, ext. 102  
**Rabbi Emeritus:** A. Nathan Abramowitz, ext. 106  
**President:** Jeff Davidson  
**Executive Director:** Jevera Temsky, ext. 103  
**Administrator:** Sheri Blonder, ext. 101  
**Lifelong Learning Director:** Eitan Gutin, ext. 105  
**Interim Bookkeeper:** Virginia Spatz, ext. 110  
**Kitchen Manager:** Roz Kram, ext. 101  
**Facilities Manager:** Steve Ross, ext. 114

*Tifereth Israel is a traditional egalitarian congregation affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism*

**Menorah Editor:** David (Judy) Cohen  
**Copy Editor:** Robert Rovinsky  
**Photography Editor:** Jeff Peterman

Menorah submissions:  
menorah@tifereth-israel.org

### Please Respect Staff's Shabbat

TI staff who are also synagogue members often attend Shabbat and holiday services. Please respect that they are there to *daven* and otherwise participate in the service or socialize at the *kiddush*, and do not discuss synagogue business at such times.

Of course, in cases of emergency, use your best judgment, but normally conversations about the shul can wait for office hours or communication through email or phone calls. Queries about comfort, such as the temperature, can be directed toward Steve Ross.

People who want to talk about TI business can find me at the *kiddush*. I would love to talk to you. Thank you very much for your consideration.

## New Members

### Jared Garelick

#### Judah Flum and Lisa Itkin

Judah, a Long Island native, and Lisa, who grew up in Rockland County, New York, have lived in Montgomery County for many years. Recently they moved from Germantown to Silver Spring. Along with a new home and new jobs, they selected a new synagogue: TI.

Judah is a program manager in direct sales at SiriusXM Radio. Lisa is a veteran music teacher in the Montgomery County schools, and is in her second year as the choir teacher at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. The family has two teenage sons, Alexander and Michael.

Besides teaching singing, Lisa enjoys singing herself, including in Zemer Chai, a local Jewish community chorus. Judah would like to get back to playing trumpet more, and also enjoys writing children's short stories.

#### Miriam Lederer and David Ogilvie

Miriam and David moved to Washington recently from California, where they met. Miriam, originally from Baltimore, is an attorney in the Bureau of Con-

sumer Protection at the Federal Trade Commission. She lived in Washington previously while she attended Georgetown Law School.

David, raised in St. Louis, has a PhD in math from the University of Chicago, and now applies his numerical skills for a hedge fund. Both have undergraduate degrees from Yale, where they graduated in the same year and yet never met until several years after college, three thousand miles from New Haven.

Miriam and David are enjoying walking their dog in their Capitol Hill neighborhood and exploring the city. They found TI through Dan and Alison Turner; Miriam met them while she lived here before she moved to California. That makes the Turners the TI Magnet Members of the month.

Welcome to this month's featured new members!

### Missing Sh'loshim Box

One of the ways we support bereaved TI members is by offering them a "Sh'loshim Box." This clear plastic bin contains a wide variety of books to help the family through the first 30 days of mourning.

We had two Sh'loshim Boxes. Their lids had the list of books taped to it. The box labeled "A" is missing. Should more than one death occur in a month, a family will now miss this form of support.

If someone in your family died in the last year, please look around your home to see if the box is hiding somewhere. If you find it, please return it to the TI office as soon as possible. Many people will be grateful.

### 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.

In the event of a death, 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

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

**Marcia Goldberg** h: 301-589-0352

**Marcia Goggin** h: 301-593-8480  
w: 301-754-1963

## A Rain Garden for TI

### Rabbi Devorah (nee Diana) Lynn

*Look at My works. See how beautiful they are, how excellent! For your sake I created them all. See to it that you do not spoil or destroy My world—for if you do, there will be no one to repair it after you.* (Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7.13).

Tifereth Israel is planning to install landscaping and paving that will be both beautiful and helpful for the environment, which we're calling the TI Rain Garden. The Environmental Committee, spearheaded by landscape architect, **Carla Ellern**, is creating the TI Rain Garden at the Juniper Street entrance to TI and along the alley. The District Department of the Environment (DDOE) has granted TI over \$80,000 to complete this project, and the Anacostia Watershed Society is also providing support.

What is this installation and what is it good for?, you may ask. Our garden will have three major objectives.

#### Prevention of Runoff

The first objective is to prevent polluted runoff from our roof and driveway from entering the local waterways that include Rock Creek, the Potomac River and our beautiful Chesapeake Bay. A clever ad for conservation in a fish and seafood market reads, "Cut the fertilizers. Save the Chesapeake Crab. So we can eat them!" Well, that is not our issue (though rock fish are), but we do want to save the area waterways for the wildlife, beauty and recreation they provide for generations to come.

Rainwater runoff picks up toxins and pollutants such as oil, trash and chemicals like PCBs, PAHs, nitrates, zinc, copper and other heavy metals, pesticides, and excess nutrients from the roof, sidewalks, lawns and streets and sends them into the storm drains

and on to the area's waterways. The design calls for the use of permeable pavers, porous concrete and two types of gardens that together will mimic how nature manages rain and snow through infiltration, evaporation and use by vegetation.

#### Reduction of Flooding

The second objective is to reduce flooding and puddles from heavy downpours and rapid snow melt by channeling water to good use through the gardens. The permeable pavements allow rainwater to infiltrate into the ground rather than run off. The infiltration planter uses vegetation, soil and gravel to retain and filter pollutants from rainwater runoff.

A bioswale is a second garden that uses plants and porous soil in a slight depression to retain and use most of the rainwater from the surrounding impervious surfaces and overflow from the planter. The plantings use the water and the soil infiltrates the rain into groundwater while filtering out pollutants.

We will be planting *Juncus effusus* (Common Rush), *Carex pensylvanica* (Oak Sedge), *Cheloni lyonii*

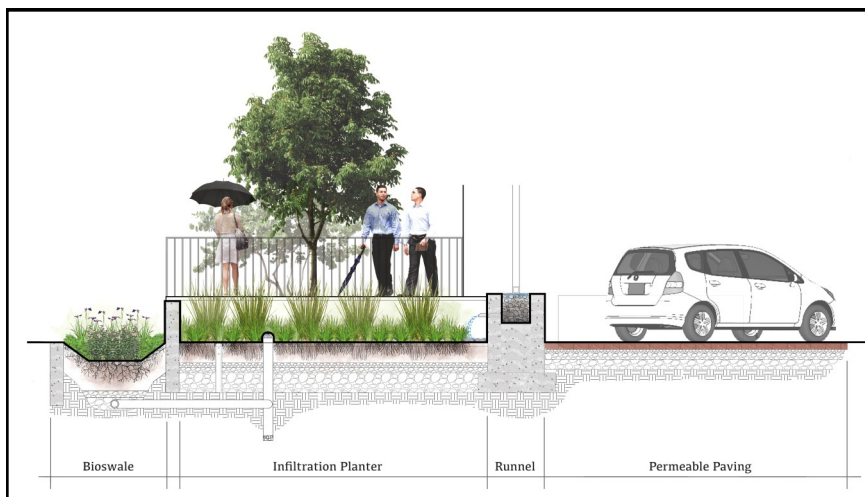
(Turtlehead), *Carex muskingumensis* (Palm Sedge), *Athyrium filix-femina* (Lady Fern) and *Iris versicolor* (Blue Flag), which are native plants and well adapted to rain garden conditions.

#### Beautification of TI's Entrance

The third objective, through the permeable pavements, new gardens and a reconfigured accessible ramp, is to beautify TI's most frequently used doorway, thus offering a lovely natural welcome to our members and the public, celebrating God's creation.

Our congregation has agreed with DDOE to raise matching funds of \$7,500 to pay for the plantings. If every family sponsors at least a \$25 planting we can easily reach our goal. And just in time for Tu B'Shevat, a registry of plants and corresponding contribution levels will be available on the website or through the office.

The committee has chosen a contractor to build the design that, with the cooperation of (Mother?) Nature, we hope will be completed by Earth Day.



## Summary of TI Board of Directors Meeting November 11, 2013

**Attending:** Susan Catler, Joel Cohen, Jeff Davidson, Joe Davidson, Wilhelmina Gottschalk, Joanne Hovis, Ariel Brandt Lautman, Stephanie Roodman Murdock, Ray Natter, Margie Odle, Cynthia Peterman, Debbie Pomerance, Andrew Reamer, Morris Rodenstein, Vivian Seidner, Ruth Shapiro, Daniel Turner, Chris Zeilinger.

**Excused:** Sharon Brown, Varda Fink.

**Absent:** Larry Baizer, Jeffrey Colman, Lisa Goldberg, Howard Riker, Mark Verschell.

**Staff:** Jevera Temsky, Eitan Gutin, Rabbi Ethan Seidel.

**Text Study:** Larry Baizer gave a drash on hunger and poverty.

**Minutes:** The minutes of October 7, 2013 were approved.

**President's Report:** 1. Jeff Davidson attended the Centennial meeting of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ) in Baltimore. Over 1200 people were registered. The meeting discussed current tensions, including rabbinical vs. lay control of Conservative Synagogues. Breakout sessions had discussions on a wide variety of subjects.

2. The photographs in the Cherner Auditorium exhibit must be removed. A juried show on Israel has been suggested. The Art Committee will review proposals. 3. Jeff wished Rabbi Seidel a good three-and-a-half-month sabbatical. 4. Jeff met with Sabir Raban, president of the mosque on New Hampshire Avenue, who would like to twin with us. They would like to ask us about how to take off for religious holidays, and how to deal with religious garb in the greater community. Cynthia will work with Sabir to set up these sessions.

5. A *sofer* will come to TI to inspect our Torahs. Other items can be checked during the *sofer's* visit. 6. Jeff testified at the Jewish Community Council about funerals and the proposed merger in this industry. 7. We need a person or two from Shepherd Park who can be back-up to check the synagogue if the alarm goes off.

**Executive Director's Report,** Jevera Temsky: Sheri Blonder, Susan Catler and Chris Zeilinger are reviewing all the synagogue's data bases to verify membership status and abatement status. Ray Natter and Jevera are looking into refinancing the mortgage. The Staff is looking into seeing if re-competing our insurance contracts will offer better plans and/or savings.

Jevera and the Shul Cloud committee went to another synagogue to explore how Shul Cloud is working for them. Shul Cloud will be tested by a small group before it goes to the full membership. Jevera had a first-quarter evaluation with Ray. Jevera did a first-quarter evaluation with each staff member. Job descriptions are being reviewed and revised. Jevera is making sure that each renter has a contract. There are now room set-up forms and room-scheduling forms.

**Preview of Retreat:** Cynthia Peterman announced that the retreat is December 13-15. The theme is Relational Judaism.

**Review of Capital Campaign and Motion to Accept Funds:** Dan Turner proposed a quiet campaign to raise money for upgrades. A motion was passed to create a TI Upgrade Fund that would have a number of sub-funds. Initially they will be Downstairs Bathrooms, Himmelfarb 2.0, Memorial Plaques, Rain Garden/Ramp, and 16<sup>th</sup> Street Signage, but

other sub-funds could be added. A motion was passed that \$2500 be put into a fundraising budget as a line item in the budget. The Development Director will determine how the funds are spent.

He listed the following proposals for future efforts to be presented at future board meetings: December -- a gift policy; January -- a naming policy to govern how long naming rights can be retained; February -- a strategy for creating and filling a TI endowment; March through Spring Fling -- work on the Spring Fling; April -- annual appeal strategy.

**Social Action Committee:** Larry Baizer, Current V.P. for Social Action and former leaders, Martin Kessel and Eugene Herman, reviewed the long and varied history of social action at TI. The Board reacted to the presentation by making a number of suggestions, including the importance of recruiting a new generation of social action leaders, the need to advertise events digitally and at earlier intervals, and expanding events to include more family-friendly events that kids can participate in. We may be able to do more through planning environmental events or by including Segulah.

Jeff commended the Social Action Committee for their hard work and impact on the community.

### TI Office Hours

TI has established uniform office hours for all staff. The office is now open Monday-Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The office will be open other hours only by appointment.

## TI Retreat Generates Ideas for Greater Inclusion

Jessica Weissman

Tifereth Israel's Annual Retreat took place December 13-15, 2013 at the Pearlstone Retreat Center. We *davened* together, relaxed together, ate together, entertained each other with skits, and deepened our connections to one another.

We also played out and discussed scenarios illustrating how people might feel isolated at TI, and thought about ways to make our shul an even more welcoming place that it already is.

We discussed ways to make Shabbat services more welcoming to people without deep Jewish knowledge,

including an adult education class on Basic Shabbat Services, and other ideas to be presented to the Ritual Committee for consideration and approval.

We came up with many ideas for making newcomers and visitors feel included and welcome at the Kiddush luncheon, ranging from instituting a visitor welcome table to...well, some pretty creative ideas. Attendees volunteered to investigate some of these. Stay tuned for the results.

We brainstormed ways of re-thinking the retreat and making it more affordable -- investigating other

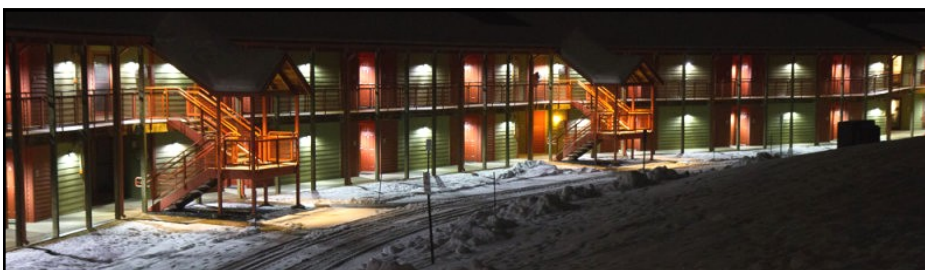
venues and other times of year. Before the Pearlstone Center opened, we brought our own prepared kosher food, and congregants shared responsibility for snacks. A committee formed to screen possible retreat venues that will permit us to return to that model. If you'd like to help out, please contact Jessica Weissman. We will be making contact calls in mid-January.

The 2013 retreat succeeded in its goals of creating closer and deeper connections among TI'ers. I'm already looking forward to the next retreat, and hoping to see you there.

### January Highlights at Tifereth Israel

January 6, 13, 20, 27	Monday Learn & Lunch <i>Parashat HaShavuah</i> , 11 a.m.; Lunch 12 noon
January 6, 13, 27	Book of Proverbs, Barbara White, 7:30 p.m., (first three of six sessions)
January 8	Mitzvah Knitting, 7-8:30 p.m.
January 11	Game Night, 7:30 p.m.
January 12	Movie Night, <i>The Band's Visit</i> , 7:30 p.m.
January 15	Family Tu B'Shevat Seder, 6 p.m.; Community Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; Full Tu B'Shevat Seder, 7:30 p.m.
January 18	Social Action Shabbaton, Hadar Susskind featured speaker
January 21	Kol Nashim Book Club, home of Jessica Weissman and Louise Kelley
January 26	Devorah Lynn, <i>The Amidah: a Standing Pose of Mindfulness</i> , 10:15 a.m.

# Annual Retreat, December 13-15, 2013



## Library News

Michele Sumka

We have some new books you may be interested in, which you can find on the shelf outside the Emsellem Room labeled New Acquisitions:

Yossi Klein Halevi's *Like Dreamers: The Story of the Israeli Paratroopers Who Reunited Jerusalem and Divided a Nation*. Halevi follows the lives of seven of the paratroopers who liberated the Kotel in 1967. Everyone I know who's read it has described it as the best book they've read about what has happened in Israel as a result of the '67 war. [See Bernie Shleien's review of this book in the December issue of *The Menorah*, page 11].

*Jewish Jocks: An Unorthodox Hall of Fame* by Franklin Foer and Mark

Tracy is a collection of essays about famous, infamous and lesser-known Jewish athletes, coaches, broadcasters, trainers, and team owners. Each essay is written by a different author.

In *Unorthodox: The Scandalous Rejection of My Hasidic Roots*, author Deborah Feldman writes about her upbringing in the insular world of Satmar Hasidim and her successful escape from the community. One of the incidents she writes about from hearsay has been disproven, but most of what is in the book are stories from her own life.

According to JewishJournal.com, "Unlike so many other authors who have left Orthodoxy and written about

it, [Feldman's] heart is not hardened by hatred, and her spirit is wounded but intact. . . . She is a sensitive and talented writer."

We also have a Middle School/Young Adult novel, *The Whole Story of Half a Girl* by Veera Hiranandani. It is a well-written story of a girl who has to change schools when her father, who is a Hindu Indian, loses his job. The fact that she is of mixed parentage, with a Jewish-American mother, never mattered before in her private school, but in public school she faces challenges of establishing her identity amidst the cliquishness of American youth culture.

This book is shelved with other Young Adult novels.

## Art Articulation

Audrey Smith

Now that the holidays are over, I hope you will take some time to look at the art at Tifereth Israel. Opposite the entrance to the Sanctuary, we welcome back the large encaustic painting on copper, "Torah" by **William Schulman**. The artist, born in Canada in 1929, emigrated to the States in 1950.

Schulman taught high school in Milwaukee, and then became a professor at the University of Wisconsin from 1966-92. In his emeritus status, he published 97 *Views of Lake Menominee*, a volume of visual history and poetry. His son, Jim, graciously paid for the restoration of "Torah" after it was damaged in a fall.

On the adjoining wall we have augmented **Fylis Peckham's** photograph taken in Israel, featuring

a dramatic stone arch, with a mystery print. It echos the arch and I interpret it as the exodus from Egypt - appropriate to our current Torah portion. What are your ideas on the picture and/or the artist?

Hanging pictures is just one of the functions of the Art Committee. I hope you get a little feeling of awe when the Ark opens and shows our crowning achievement. The exhibitions on the walls of the Cherner Auditorium are there for you to enjoy during kiddush luncheons. The current collection of members' photographs has been especially well received: be sure you see it again before it's replaced by a new show. We also have some other interesting projects in progress.

The Art Committee is small and has been together for a long

time. **Cyndy Weitz, Laura Schiavo, Bernie Shleien** and I would welcome some new members with an interest in our work. As committees go, it doesn't require a great deal of time or effort and you can see the rewards of your work all around you.

### Upcoming Youth Events

**Kadima:** Regional Saturday Night Live at B'nai Israel, Saturday, January 4.

**USY:** Regional Ski/Snowboarding/Waterpark Trip, Sunday, January 19.

Regional Formal, Saturday, February 1.



## Social Action at TI: Stephen Nelson Shabbaton Spotlights Political Advocacy

Every January, on Martin Luther King Holiday weekend, Tifereth Israel's Social Action Committee holds its annual Shabbaton. An important figure in social action and policy delivers a *drash* at services and, in most years, is featured in a discussion group held after lunch.

At this year's Social Action Shabbaton, on Saturday, **January 18**, our speaker is **Hadar Susskind**, a key officer of **Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice**. His *drash* will be on Living our Legacy: Jewish Social Justice Advocacy.

Bend the Arc mobilizes Jewish resources in partnership with other communities to create positive social impact in the United States. Its mission is to deeply engage Jews in sustained action that manifests the Jewish tradition of working to heal and repair the world, and to create a powerful, widely-recognized Jewish voice championing equality and justice for disenfranchised residents of the United States.

Susskind serves as both Director of Bend the Arc Jewish Action and Director of the organization's



**Hadar Susskind**

Political Action Committee. His work is focused on building a strong political operation that will ensure that the voices of progressive American Jews are sufficiently heard in the halls of power in Washington, DC.

### A Strong Resume in Advocacy

Susskind has been widely acknowledged as one of the Jewish community's leading progressive advocacy voices and brings more than a dozen years of experience working on both domestic and foreign policy. He has built strong relationships with members of Congress, administration officials, and progressive partners and allies from across the spectrum of American political life.

Before joining Bend the Arc, he was Vice President of the Tides Foundation. He previously served as Vice President for Policy and Strategy at J Street and Vice President and Washington Director for the Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA). He also held positions at a number of other Jewish organizations, including the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) and the Israel Policy Forum.

Susskind has also served on the White House Office of Faith Based and Neighborhood Initiatives Task Force on the Environment, and the Boards of Directors of the Coalition on Human



Needs and Ameinu. In 2008 he was recognized by the *Forward* newspaper as one of the Fifty Most Influential Jews in America.

He is a graduate of the University of Maryland and holds the rank of Sergeant First Class in the Israel Defense Forces. He lives in Maryland with his wife and two children.

### Richman Will Join Discussion

Joining Susskind at the Shabbaton's post-lunch discussion on the relevancy of Jewish involvement in important social issues, will be **Rabbi Elizabeth Richman**, a TI member who is Program Director and Rabbi in Residence at **Jews United for Justice**.

She also serves on the national board of Interfaith Worker Justice and recently stepped down from the Rabbinical Assembly's Social Justice Commission. She was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary, where she was a Wexner Graduate Fellow. (A full profile of Richman appeared in the September 2012 edition of the Menorah.)

In recent years, as has been widely reported, the gap between rich and poor in this country has continued to grow. At the same time, gains made in the last 50 years in civil rights are being threatened, as has been seen in some states' efforts to suppress voting rights. At this year's Shabbaton, we will learn about what all of us can do to reverse some of these trends.

# Preparing & Serving Dinners to Shelter Residents, December 25



## Kol Nashim

### Loretta Vitale Saks



As you'll read below, Kol Nashim schedules ongoing as well as one-time events. We provide social, educational and mitzvah programming for TI. When you join Kol Nashim with your annual donation of \$25, you are supporting the voice of women at TI in all our various activities.

The 9-member KN board welcomes participation at all levels, from helping with a single event to serving on the board. Join KN at our Mimosas and Mingling brunch (see below) and receive *four months of free KN membership* (your membership will run through June 2015).

#### Women Rabbis of TI

Kol Nashim is delighted to sponsor a series of Sunday morning sessions this winter and spring given by the women Rabbis of TI. Our series, which began with **Avis Miller's** well-received talk about Hanukkah songs, continues with **Devorah Lynn** on January 26, at 10:15 a.m. in the Mollie L. Berch Library.

Devorah will speak on *Embodying Judaism -- The Amidah as a Standing Pose of Mindfulness*. Are the morning prayers getting too cerebral for you? Are they all in your head, not heart or soul? How can the *Amidah* be used as a morning tune-up?

Come hear Devorah discuss enhancing the *Amidah* with techniques of mindfulness as taught in yoga, using the chakras or energy centers.

The series will continue with **Jane Berman** speaking on *Shema Yisrael: The Art of Listening* on March 23, and **Sarah Meytin**, topic to be announced, on June 1.

#### Game Night

Kol Nashim and TI's Men's Club are sponsoring TI's annual Game Night on Saturday evening, January 11, beginning at 7:30 p.m. All ages are welcome. Games will be available in the Cherner Auditorium – and we invite you to bring your favorites.

Have you always wanted to learn to play Bridge? Phil Shapiro and David Matusow will be on hand to teach *Intro to Bridge* in the Mollie L. Berch Library. Want to socialize but not a game player? We'll have a table where knitters and crocheters can visit while working on their projects. Novice knitters welcome; Andrea Kline and Paula Flicker will be available to assist!

Snacks and drinks will be provided. We request a donation of \$5 per person, with a \$15 maximum per family. Please RSVP by emailing Sheri Blonder at [TiAdmin@Tifereth-Israel.org](mailto:TiAdmin@Tifereth-Israel.org).

#### Mimosas and Mingling

Extend your TI family through a Kol Nashim-sponsored brunch on Sunday, February 23, beginning at 10:15 a.m. in the Mollie L. Berch Library. All TI women are invited to share mimosas and brunch (surprise menu - not just bagels and lox!). This will be a great time to meet other TI women, chat and visit with friends, and share ideas for KN activities and involvement. Please RSVP to [Knsalon@Tifereth-Israel.org](mailto:Knsalon@Tifereth-Israel.org), or to the TI office.

#### Book Club

The Kol Nashim book club, open to all TI members, meets at different book club members' homes on the third Tuesday of each month. Next meeting will be on January 21, where

*Wartime Lies*, by Louis Begley, will be discussed at the home of Jessica Weissman and Louise Kelley.

Books to be read during the coming months will be selected at this meeting, so don't miss the opportunity to discuss Begley's book *and* suggest a favorite book for an upcoming gathering. Please RSVP to [Knbook@tifereth-israel.org](mailto:Knbook@tifereth-israel.org).

#### Mitzvah Knitting and Crocheting

The Mitzvah Knitting group creates scarves, baby blankets and hats, as well as community among the knitters and crocheters of TI. We share patterns, stories, and ideas as we knit for others in need. This group, which hasn't met in a while, will begin meeting again starting on January 8. The group will meet on the second Wednesday of the month from 7:00-8:30 p.m.; check the TI calendar for any changes. To participate, please contact Andrea Kline at [andreakline@yahoo.com](mailto:andreakline@yahoo.com).

### WJW Subscriptions

Do you need to renew your *Washington Jewish Week* subscription? Renew and support Kol Nashim at the same time. Here is how:

Fill out the normal renewal form from WJW. Make out the check to TI instead of to WJW, and mail the check and form to TI. TI will mail in the renewal for you, and Kol Nashim gets \$5 on every subscription.

# Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers

Barbara Raimondo

## Everyone Complains About the Weather, But Nobody Does Anything About It

**Esther** and **Gene Herman** were able to have all 10 of their grandchildren for Thanksgiving. Those crafty kids managed to "win" (wink, wink) all of the change in the house during the *dreidl* game.

A week later, they would have had to play in pesos as Grandma and Gramps had hightailed it to Cancun for a week. And what kind of weather did they come home to? Snow, freezing rain, and icy temperatures. Cue the tiny violin.

In "just as bad" weather, **Paula Flicker** traveled to Columbus, Ohio, for the "last trip to visit my mother before winter." Surprise, the trip did not quite go as planned. Columbus got about four inches of snow while she was there. Due to ice and sleet in Washington, her flight back was cancelled so she got an extra night and day with mom.

They did manage to make it out to dinner in a restaurant once, and Paula took care of her grocery shopping. Combining two of their favorite foods – chocolate and beer – they enjoyed a chocolate stout that Paula found at the local food coop. And they attended the "Friday night" service held at 1:30 in the afternoon at the -- Lutheran -- independent living building in which she lives.

**Alan Landay's** family had its once-every-77,000-years Hannukiving gathering in the DC area. Family members came over the river and through the woods by car, train, airplane, bus, and Bikeshare. The actual dinner was at the Silver Spring home of Alan's cousin, **Jeff**, and his wife, **Evelyn**, who was the "official"

hostess this year. She had a name tag and everything!

Evelyn invited her family as well, so there were around 20 for the meal. They also visited museums, went to restaurants, and took in a bluegrass show at the Birchmere, bluegrass being part of family tradition. Niece **Dyanna** brought bagels from Brooklyn, and Alan's sister, **Becky**, (aided by his trusty nieces) cooked up a huge batch of lucky latkes one of the mornings.

## The Other Kind of Jury

**Melanie Greenfield** is proud to announce that her husband, **Larry**, has just had his first "juried" picture, entitled "Night Club Scene," accepted into the Patuxent Arts League Open Juried Exhibition at the Montpelier Arts Center in Laurel, Maryland. This annual exhibition showcased regional artists who work in a variety of media (his is watercolor and oil pastels). It opened on December 6 and ran through the month.

**Judy** and **Morris Rodenstein's** son, **Asaf**, began his service in the Israeli Defense Force on December 10.

And **Judith** and **Lester Turner** are grandparents once again. Daughter, **Carol Turner Klein**, and husband, **Avram Klein**, had their second baby, **Annabelle Turner Klein**, in November. She weighed seven pounds and nine ounces and was 20.5 inches long. Judith and Les were in Los Angeles for the birth. **Daniel** and **Allison Turner** have a picture of the new cousin to show to **Miriam**, **Nathan**, **Benjamin** and **Samson**. All are doing well.

**Martin** "The Man" **Kessel** was interviewed on WPFW radio on Friday morning, December 5, about

the TI Social Action Committee's Christmas luncheons for four shelters in DC, giving the history and process — and a plug for TI. [http://archive.wpfwf.org/mp3/wpfw\\_131205\\_090000comwatchthu.mp3](http://archive.wpfwf.org/mp3/wpfw_131205_090000comwatchthu.mp3) (Let the podcast download, and then move to 40:50. Runs 5 minutes.)

## From Putin, With Love

**Alicia** "Snow Maiden" **Levin**, a fourth grader at Lowell School, performed in the Moscow Ballet's "Great Russian Nutcracker" at Strathmore. About 50 kids from CityDance, including SDOTUS (Second Daughter of the U.S.), Sasha Obama, also performed in the show.

**Gigi Levin**, an eighth grader at Parkmont School, participated in National Novel Writing Month in November and wrote a 10,000-word novel. Word is that her next goal is to replace the current *N un M* columnist.

**Lisa** and **Mike Kraft** are delighted that their son, **Daniel**, and his girl friend, **Tracy Mizraki**, announced their engagement, after visiting her 95-year-old grandmother in Jerusalem. The couple met through her uncle, who lives in London and had met Daniel at a previous medical conference, illustrating that old-fashioned matchmaking has not disappeared.

Nor have international Jewish ties. Tracy was born in South Africa. When she was a child she and her family moved to Los Angeles, where she has been working for an NPR station. Her father's family, originally from Turkey, had lived in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and then South Africa.

(Continued on page 13)

## Goettingen Congregation News

Naomi Revzin

Our sister congregation in Goettingen, Germany celebrated Hanukkah with a public candle-lighting ceremony with the city's Society for Christian-Jewish Relations. This year, Hanukkah coincided with the beginning of Advent and the city's Christmas Market. The fifth candle was lit with the first Advent candle.

The Gemeinde congregation hosted a craft display and sale to mark the

event. The Gold Quartet played. And coffee, tea, *gluwein* and *sufganiot* (Berliner) were served to everyone.

In January, the Culture Cafe will host "When Stress Makes You Sick," a discussion of how to take action against negative stress. The Gemeinde will host the Tu B'Shevat seder on January 16. The congregation's major January event is the 70th anniversary of Operation

Barbarosa, and Leningrad's liberation on January 27, 1944, after the German army's 900-day siege.

A Gemeinde member who was in Leningrad during this period, has organized a public exhibition, *No One is Forgotten and All Is Remembered*. The exhibition commemorates the city's liberation, which was a life-altering event for Germany, Russia, and the Jews of both countries.

## Hanukkah Celebration

Jennifer Kefer

On December 4, more than 300 TI members came together for a memorable and festive Hanukkah celebration. The evening featured a delicious Thanksgivukkah dinner, including sweet potato latkes with cranberry sauce, butternut squash, chili, and cornbread.

Himmelfarb teacher extraordinaire, **Sylvia Edenburg**, opened the evening with songs and a group menorah lighting. **Jennifer Schnur**,

with **Bricks2U**, provided thousands of legos for children to design their own menorahs. Actor **Jim Gagne** led school-age children in Hanukkah-themed drama games.

For two hours, the Cherner was abuzz as the Maccabees took on the Greeks to protect the Temple in a quest for oil for their lego menorahs! Meanwhile, the older children raced through the halls on a scavenger hunt with Kadima advisor, **Amanda**

**Rudman**, while the youngest enjoyed crafts and dreidels.

The event was organized by **Brenda Footer**, **Jennifer Kefer**, and **Diana Mayer**. (See event photos on page 14).

Parent volunteers are needed for other upcoming Himmelfarb activities, so please contact Eitan Gutin if you are able to help.

## Nayes un Mekhayes (continued)

Coincidentally, Mike and Lisa had worked as journalists in Rhodesia in the 1960s and their daughter, **Dina**, was an AP correspondent based in South Africa a generation later. The couple will live in Palo Alto, where Daniel had been a cancer researcher at Stanford. He now chairs the medical faculty at Singularity University in nearby Mountain View.

### Sad News

TI member, **Dr. Marshall Jacobson**, passed away in December at age 90 after a long illness. He is survived by daughters,

**Lisa Lipps** and **Andrea Jacobson**, and granddaughters, **Julie Lipps Joachim**, **Amy Silverstone** and **Emily Lipps**. Funeral services were held at TI.

Also, **Irma Naiman Greenspoon**, sister of **Lillian Kronstadt**, died in December. Funeral services were held at Judean Memorial Garden. And **Evelyn Reiss**, sister of TI member, **Larry Greenfield** (**Melanie Gross Greenfield**) and aunt of **Samuel Greenfield**, died in December in New York. May family and loved ones be comforted by their memories.

And now for the meaning of last month's word, *pooch-bah*: "a person in high position or of great influence" (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 about your escapades for next time to [baraimondo@gmail.com](mailto: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 this edition of Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers.

# Family Hanukkah Party, December 4, 2013



## The “Jewish Question” in Russia

Frank Solomon

Chris Friedman had his bar mitzvah at his local temple, and was active in his college Hillel. He never thought of himself as anything but a Jew.

John Kurzweil was born to Jewish parents, but later converted to Catholicism. He never thought of himself as a Jew.

So they were both surprised with the “Jewish question” when we stopped at St. Petersburg’s Grand Choral Synagogue.

The year was 1994. In the post-Cold War, post-Soviet *Perestroika* and *Glasnost* era of Mikhail Gorbachev, Russia was eager to improve relations with the West. The Russian Foreign Ministry invited eight of us to study the social and economic—but not political—conditions of the newly “open society.” The delegation was to report to the ministry at the end of our cross-country trip on the Trans-Siberian Express.

I had known two of the eight delegates from my days in Brussels in 1978. Steve Dunleavy was then the foreign correspondent for Robert Murdock’s British and Australian papers. David Haworth was the foreign correspondent for the *London Observer*. I worked for Dunleavy in the 1980s while he was managing editor and columnist of the *New York Post*.

### Trip Began in St. Petersburg

Before we embarked on the two-week journey that ended with a reception at the Kremlin, the group met up at St. Petersburg’s Grand Choral Synagogue. Four young men approached us. They asked Friedman if his mother was Jewish. He said, “Yes, but she was a convert by Reform rabbis.” “You are not Jewish,” one of the young men said. “The hell he is not Jewish!” blurted

out Dunleavy. “He is more Jewish than you four lumped together. Are you stupid?”

“I tell you—I am not a fan of Jews,” said Haworth, who was known for his temper and the name he gave his bulldog, Ivan the Terrible. “But this man is nothing but a Jew to me.”

Kurzweil jumped in: “Both my parents were Jewish. But they don’t practice, and I don’t practice. Am I considered a Jew?” All four Russians nodded and shook his hand. He didn’t tell them that he had converted to Catholicism. From that moment on, we named John the Catholic Jew.

### Mother was Baptist’s Daughter

Friedman’s mother, Mary, was the daughter of a man who later in life became a Baptist preacher. She married a Jewish grocery store owner in rural Pennsylvania outside Pittsburgh, converted to Judaism, worked in the temple kitchen during community events, ran the Hadassah rummage sale, and taught elementary Sunday school.

Mary continued to be a contributing member of the congregation until her death. She was buried in the Jewish cemetery in the family plot beside her husband, Max, and had a plaque in the synagogue honoring her service.

Kurzweil’s grandparents were from Austria. Neither of his parents grew up practicing Judaism. In his college days, Kurzweil became a Catholic.

We stopped at a dozen cities from the Baltic Sea in the west through Siberia to the Russian Far East across the Sea of Japan, and toured towns with mayors and village elders. Along the way, we observed the decaying Stalin-era housing and economic and general infrastructure. The famed Trans-Siberian Express

seemed straight out of “Doctor Zhivago.”

Birobidzhan, the capital of the Russian Jewish Autonomous Region in the Siberian Far East, established by Stalin in the 1930s, was among the last stops on our trip before we reached Vladivostok. The first things that caught our eyes were the giant menorah standing at the railroad station, the ubiquitous Stars of David, and the Yiddish street signs. “This is like a Jewish Disneyland,” quipped Dunleavy.

Lev Toitman, the leader of the Autonomous Region’s Jewish community, welcomed us as if we were millionaires from Hollywood. After we introduced ourselves, Toitman told Friedman that although he was not “Jewish in the *halakhic* sense,” he “was “more Jewish” than most of the Region’s Jews, who he said were mostly Jewishly illiterate. When Kurzweil told Toitman that he was a Catholic born to Jewish parents, the elder told him that “it doesn’t matter what you practice, you are a Jew.”

### Why Hadn’t They Gone to Israel?

Asked why the Jews in Birobidzhan didn’t emigrate to Israel as had many of their fellow Jews in the 1980s, Toitman said, “We have always been a minority everywhere. We are comfortable being a minority. We wouldn’t know how to live in a place where we are the majority.”

It was Shabbat. My friend David Zielenziger, the Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) bureau chief for the *Asian Wall Street Journal*, who was visiting his younger brother, Michael, *San Jose Mercury News* foreign correspondent in Tokyo, flew in to join us. Michael and his wife, Diane Abt, a reporter for the National Public

(Continued on page 16)

## The “Jewish Question” in Russia (continued)

Radio, came along. Friedman led the service. Haworth, Dunleavy and Kurzweil suffered through the service without understanding a word. David Zielenziger kept tapping on Dunleavy’s arm to try to get him to stop humming Jimmy Hendrix’s “Purple Haze.”

After the service, Haworth, looking like an angry blowfish, blurted out: “You are a very strange people.” “That incomprehensible language is utter nonsense,” Dunleavy chimed in, to which Kurzweil added, “Amen,” while making the sign of the cross across his head and chest. Toitman said it was the largest and most international Shabbat service attendance in his memory.

### A Vodka Toast and Ice Dunk

For my report speech in front of hundreds of foreign diplomats—many of whom said later that they were shocked by the group’s honesty and naivety—I was toasted with seven glasses of vodka and dunked into a 5-foot ice hole before being doused with a water hose for one minute. Dunleavy and Haworth had volunteered for the vodka honor, but the Russians seemed to love the speechmaker most. It took me a month to recover from pneumonia.

Back in the States, Friedman left journalism and went to law school. He eventually set up an auto repair shop. When he died in 2004 after a failed double-lung transplant, Michael Zielenziger, now a John S. Knight Fellow at Stanford University, led the *shivah* service. In attendance were the Haworth, Dunleavy and Kurzweil Trio.

Michael Zielenziger was a finalist for a 1995 Pulitzer Prize in International Reporting on China while working as the Knight Ridder bureau chief in Japan, where he became the president of a Tokyo synagogue. He wrote *Shutting Out the Son, How Japan Created Its Own Lost Generation* in 2007. He was a member of two Pulitzer Prize-winning teams for the *San Jose Mercury News*.

After the *Asian Wall Street Journal*, David Zielenziger worked for the *Baltimore Sun*, *Dallas Times Herald*, Bloomberg LP and Thompson Reuters before becoming an independent technology and business writer. He is a regular Torah reader at his synagogue in Great Neck, N.Y.

Dunleavy helped create the U.S. tabloid television market and was a reporter for TV’s *A Current Affair*. He

wrote the book “*Elvis: What Happened?*” In his *New York Post* column, he covered the 2002 Beltway Sniper story and the 2008 controversy over convicted rapist Wayne DuMond. He retired in 2008 after a 55-year career as “The Tabloid Guy.”

### Republican Campaign Staffer

Kurzweil became Senator Jesse Helms’ right-hand man during his re-election campaign, and was a staffer on Ronald Reagan’s presidential campaign. He worked as a communications director for the California Republican Party, editor of the Heritage Foundation’s *Policy Digest* and senior editor for the *National Catholic Register*. He remained a devout Catholic to his death in 2010 after a long stint as publisher and editor of *California Political Review* magazine.

Haworth continued to work as a foreign correspondent in Brussels, becoming the godfather of the Association of European Journalists. He worked as the press secretary of the European Commission in Washington at the time of Friedman’s death, and eventually married his long-suffering Belgian Jewish girlfriend of 25 years. He converted to Judaism at the age of 65.



Steve Dunleavy and Solomon, 1983, *New York Post*



David Haworth and Solomon, 1994, Russian Foreign Ministry



## What Does “Jewish State” Mean?

Mark Berch

When we say, Israel is a “Jewish state,” what does that entail or even mean? This is, of course, a trick question; Israelis have been arguing over this since Israel’s beginning, without any consensus being reached.

But this matters for three reasons. First, using clearly defined terms facilitates discussion. Second, in recent years, Israel has taken to requiring that the Palestinians accept Israel as a “Jewish state” (“JS”). This obliges Israel to say to what it is that Palestinians must sign on the dotted line. And third, to determine if Israel really is a JS, we need to know what the criteria are.

From what I have read, there are four different principle understandings of what Israel is a JS means:

- A. Jews have the right to come to Israel and to become citizens.
- B. Israel is the state of the Jews, rather than a state of its citizens.
- C. Israel is a state governed by *halakhah*, Jewish law.
- D. Jewish culture is the dominant culture, or Israel is the home for Jewish national culture.

Most will hold to multiple definitions, either in the alternative or in combination.

### Political, Religious and Cultural Definitions

These four definitions operate in different domains. A and B are political definitions, with A privileging Jews on entry, and B privileging Jews in the land. C is a religious definition, privileging Judaism itself, and D is a cultural or anthropological definition. This reflects the semantic

range of “Jewish,” a polyseme that can refer either to the people or the religion or the culture.

A is quite precise, but so narrow that few would accept it alone. D is perhaps the least controversial, as it is clearly true. But it’s basically descriptive and doesn’t provide a guide for actions. It is the other two that have gotten the most attention, because these are concepts that can be implemented.

### American vs. Israeli Positions

For Americans, a country not being a state of its citizens might seem jarring, but this is a mainstream formulation in Israel. Prime Minister Sharon said in 2002 that he believes “in a Jewish state, and not a state of all its citizens.”

Limor Livnat (Likud), when a cabinet minister in 2013, said “Israel is a Jewish state. It’s certainly not created to be a state of all its citizens.” Israel’s left has often been accused of aiming to change Israel into a state for all its citizens so as to negate its Jewish character, reflecting a view that the status quo is that Israel is not a state of its citizens.

The statement of principles of the Jewish Home party, a component of the present governing coalition, says: “The State of Israel is a Jewish state ...we will fight against those who attempt to transform Israel into ‘a state of its citizens.’ ” Shinui’s success in the 2003 election was attributed in part to its opposition to a “call that Israel be defined as the state of its citizens rather than as a Jewish state.”

While I have seen Israel itself, and its prime ministers, refer to Israel as the State of the Jews, I have never

heard of either referring to Israel as being a state of its citizens, or as a state of its Jews AND its Arabs.

The wording of “state of the Jews” raises the question: which Jews? The bare use of “Jews” is ambiguous. In December 2013, Defense Minister Moshe Ya’alon used “nation-state of the Jewish people,” a common wording that some want made into Israel’s Basic law. That would imply *all* Jews, especially in the more emphatic form “...of the entire Jewish people” (Uri Regev). By contrast, Israel’s official website uses the narrower “The State of Israel is the State of the Jews in the Land of Israel.”

A more difficult question is: what, as a practical matter, does “state of the Jews” translate into and legitimize? Israeli law has never spelled this out, but in 2011, Avi Dichter submitted to the Knesset a proposed “Basic Law: Israel as the Nation State of the Jewish People.” From its wording, and that of similar proposals, and arguments made by its many proponents, we can see aspects of what JS means to some people.

### Self-Determination for Jews Only

The proposal provides that “only Jewish people may realize the right to self-determination in the state of Israel.” It would demote Arabic from “official” to the status of “secondary language,” which Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein called a vital counteroffensive against “the many attacks today on the idea of Israel as the Jewish state.”

Since 1948, Israel has established some 600 local Jewish councils and municipalities, and not a single Arab one. For many, such a policy indeed reflects Israel as a JS, and Dichter’s

*(Continued on page 18)*

## Tu B'Shevat Coins

### Simcha Kuritzky

The Talmud lists four new years, one of which is for trees. The Torah requires tithing from the fruit of trees, so it is necessary to determine in which year the fruit is harvested.

Shammai ruled the tithing year began on Shevat 1 but everyone follows Hillel's date of Shevat 15. In gematria, the number 15 is represented as a *tet* (9) and *vov* (6), so most people use the shorter name Tu B'Shevat instead of *Hamishah Asar B'Shevat*.

Trees have always been important to Jews, both agriculturally and culturally. The Torah describes the first humans tending a garden, and

the only other inhabitants to be named are the snake and two trees: one of knowledge of good and evil, and one of life. Later, *eitz hayim* (the tree of life) became a synonym for the Torah (Proverbs 3:18).

Israel's 10,000-*sh'kalim* banknote, introduced in 1984, shows Golda Meir and a stylized tree whose branches form a Magen David. It was reissued as a 10-new *sh'kalim* note in 1985.

This same tree appeared in 1985 on a medal with the inscription *Am Yisrael Hai* (People Israel Lives) indicating this is the Tree of Life.



Just as the cedar tree has long been the symbol of Lebanon, the palm tree is an ancient symbol of the Land of Israel. The earliest coins with distinctly Jewish designs (starting around 100 BCE) portrayed

*(Continued on page 19)*

## What Does “Jewish State” Mean? (continued)

proposal dropped any government obligation to build for other communities living in the state.

The 2000 Kaadan case, in which the Supreme Court ruled that an Arab family must be permitted to live in Katzir, is seen as having eroded Israel's Jewish nature, and Dichter's proposed legislation would immunize Jews-only towns, or landlords with Jews-only policies for tenants, from legal attack. It would establish the primacy of the Hebrew calendar, as presently the Gregorian calendar has become preeminent.

In addition to the Basic Law amendment, other proposals have been urged in the name of Israel as a JS. Some have proposed that on the most important Knesset actions, or on a peace-with-Palestinians referendum, a Jewish majority be required. These reflect assorted understandings of what is encompassed by state-of-the-Jews.

### Religious Definition Has Tensions

Definition C's meaning of “Jewish State” has its own tensions. Although it is a religious, rather than political, definition of JS, *halakhic* rulings can be political in impact.

For example, some years back, a substantial panel of rabbis ruled that Israel as a JS must have a Jew as Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Justice Minister. Shas has said that Israel as the Jewish nation's state means there cannot be legislation that contradicts *halakhic* laws, specifically civil marriage of Jews with non-Jews, and operating public transportation on Shabbat. These positions are clearly in the political arena.

One question regarding C is: whose *halakhah*? It may startle those unfamiliar with *halakhic* decision-making that there can be stark differences among the Orthodox authorities, even at the top level. Are

Jews permitted on the Temple Mount? Religious Zionist authorities generally say “yes” while *haredi* authorities tend to say “no.” Is it *halakhically* permissible to evacuate Jewish settlements in the West Bank to obtain a peace deal? Again, there is a split, with *haredi* authorities this time on the permissive side. So, does a JS accept or forbid such things?

There is also the question: how far “down” must compliance with *halakhah* go? Is it a requirement just for the most important policies, or is it more comprehensive? Should it apply just at the national level or at the local level too? For example, it has been argued that in a Jewish state, municipalities should not allocate public, i.e. Jewish, lands for mosques, churches or non-Orthodox synagogues.

In a future article, I will look at the question of whether Israel is, in actual practice, a Jewish state.

## Tu B'Shevat Coins (continued)

agricultural symbols such as cornucopia and palm branches. These designs were also used by the Roman prefects (governors). The first such coins were issued by Coponius in the name of Augustus Caesar in 6 CE and portray an eight-branched date palm, and this design was occasionally used over the next fifty years.

The first Jewish ruler to place a palm tree on a coin was Herod Antipas in 39 CE. His palm had seven branches, reminiscent of the menorah in the Temple. Towards the end of the First Revolt, as silver became scarce, the rebels minted bronze token coins. The half-*shekel* portrayed a seven-branched palm tree with two date clusters and two baskets beneath, which may have also symbolized the first fruits festival of Shavuot.

After the revolt failed in 70 CE, the Romans issued coins proclaiming Judea Captive. These often showed a Roman soldier standing over a bound or weeping Jew, a design used for many other Roman victories. To make the design specific to Judea, the captive usually sits beneath a palm tree. The seven-branch palm tree design was resurrected during the Bar Kokhba Revolt (132-5 CE) on a number of bronze coins. The early *shekel* dues receipts of the World Zionist Organization portrayed a fictitious *shekel* coin with a palm tree.



Modern Israel has also used the palm tree on her coins. The first coinage consisted of *prutot*, of which 1000 made a *lira*. The 100-*prutah* coin of copper-nickel (1949-50 and 1955) or nickel-clad steel (1954) shows the palm tree from one of Bar Kokhba's coins.

In 1960, the *lira* was divided into 100 *agorot*, so 100 *prutot* became 10 *agorot*. The new coin was brass and smaller, replaced by an aluminum coin starting in 1977. When the *shekel* replaced the *lira*, 10 *agorot* became 1 *agorah hadashah* (new), and the 1-new *agorah* coin had the same palm tree design.

After the *shekel hadash* replaced 1000 *sh'kalim*, a new palm tree design was adopted in 1995 for the 10-new *sh'kalim* coin of a steel ring around a bronze core. The design is the same palm tree with baskets shown on the First Revolt bronze half-*shekel*, with the same inscription, For the Redemption of Zion, in Paleo-Hebrew characters.



Over time, Tu B'Shevat took on Zionist overtones, with fruits from the Holy Land taking center stage over local produce. By the 19th century, a back-to-the-land movement had started among Jews, and the planting of trees was considered both a

practical and symbolic act of redeeming the Holy Land.

Beginning in 1882, thousands of Yemenite Jews walked to the Land of Israel. Their watchword was Song of Songs 7:9, "Ehehleh b'tamar (I will go up in the date palm)." This phrase appears on the silver 1- and 2-*shekel* Hanukkah coins of the centennial year 1982, which portray a lamp from Yemen.

Israel's first medal honored her tenth anniversary of independence in 1958. On one side is a copy of a Judea Capta coin with a Roman soldier standing over a weeping woman under a palm tree, while the other shows a man planting a tree next to the same palm tree from the other side, while a woman plays with an infant.

Medals commemorating the *halutzim* (Jewish pioneers) also show them planting trees, such as the First Settlers Year medal of 1963, and the Jewish Legion 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary medal of 1967 (which shows a soldier watering a sapling from his helmet).



Planting trees became a major activity associated with *Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael* or the Jewish National Fund. Their 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary medal of 1971 shows a

(Continued on page 20)

## Tu B'Shevat Coins (continued)

bulldozer moving boulders on one side and ground view looking up at trees rising all around on the other. The JNF has issued a number of beautiful receipts over the decades which are quite collectible in their own right.

In 1967, Israel issued a medal commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lord Balfour's declaration which symbolizes the Jewish community as an ancient olive tree. The 1987 medal commemorating a decade of resettlement in Samaria also shows an ancient olive tree. The 1978 anniversary commemorative 50-*lirat* coin honors land reclamation and shows a stylized tree.



92:15, "They shall bring forth fruit in old age." The other side shows a cross section of a tree with many rings.

Israel's anniversary coins of 2005 show an old olive tree and honor one's golden years. Trees' regenerative abilities inspired the design of the 1983 sesquicentennial medal for Youth Aliya. One side shows a boy and girl reading and the other shows 50 with a stylized new sapling growing out of a tree stump.



In Israel's 1994 holiday series, the Tu B'Shevat medal shows a flowering tree with the quote from Leviticus 20:23, "When you have come to the land you shall have planted," and the prohibition of using fruit from a tree less than four years old.



In the 1500s, Tu B'Shevat was given special significance by the Kabbalists of Safed. They created an elaborate *seder* with 30 different fruits and new liturgy. These *sedarim* have taken on a new popularity in recent years as modern Judaism has accepted more kabbalistic ideas and practices.

Israel has also become more open to acknowledging Kabbalah in her commemoratives. Its 1992 medal, on the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Spanish Expulsion, and its 2010 Kabbalah medal included kabbalistic themes and images.



The last generation has seen a growing cognizance of the impact of human activity on the natural environment. For many Jews, Tu B'Shevat is the ideal holiday to celebrate environmental awareness, both here and in Israel. They have augmented traditional, fruit-eating celebrations with cleaning parks and planting.

Israel issued a series of coins from 1991 to 2000 commemorating native flora and fauna mentioned in the *Tanakh*. The trees that were honored were the cedar, apple, palm, fig, pomegranate, cypress and acacia.

The coins were issued, as in the past, in silver 1- and 2-*shekel* and gold quarter-ounce 5-*sh'kalim* denominations, but the Bank of Israel added a new one-tenth-ounce gold 1-*shekel* coin just for this series.

You can celebrate Tu B'Shevat with an entire *seder*, just eating some fruit, planting a tree, cleaning up your neighborhood, or just wishing your local trees a happy birthday.



Trees are among the oldest living things on earth. Israel has also issued commemoratives using trees as a sign of advanced age. The 1982 Honor the Elders medal shows a stylized tree with Hebrew letters appearing like leaves with Psalms

## Upcoming Friday Night Minyan Assignments

### January 3

David & Judy Cohen  
David & Elana Cohen  
Raymond & Rebecca Coleman  
Jeffrey Colman & Ellen Nissenbaum  
Nataliya Chernyak Cowen  
Merry Danaceau  
Jeffrey & Miriam Davidson

Ronni Davis  
Adam Diamond & Rabbi Jane Berman  
Helen Disenhaus  
Allan & Vered Drazen  
Stan Dorn & Carla Ellern  
Earl Dotter & Deborah Stern  
Desirée Douglas  
Lisa Drazin  
David Drelich & Rabbi Gilah Langner  
Susan Dreiband & Jackie Urbanovic  
Benjamin Dreyfus & Rabbi Elizabeth Richman

### January 10

Pierre & Deena Dugan  
Janice & Yiftach Eisenberg  
Ernie Englander  
Miriam Feinsilver  
Lisa Ellern Feldman & Seth Feldman  
Joshua & Mita Felman  
Bob Feron & Dione Pereira  
Rona Fields  
Joshua & Lucia Filler  
Eric Fingerhut & Karen Beiley  
Anita Finkelstein  
Jay & Rachel Finkelstein  
Violeta Fiorino-Schwartz  
Joseph & Rachel Firschein  
David & Patricia Fisher  
Paula Flicker  
Judah Flum & Lisa Itkin  
Claude Fontheim & Orit Frenkel  
Benjamin Foote & Alison Asarnow  
Lee & Brenda Footer  
Ira Forman & Caryn Pass  
Monica Freedman

### January 17

Bruce Friedland & Jenny Bryant  
Arthur & Diane Friedman  
Naomi Friedman  
Jonathan Fritz & Lorien Abrams  
Joshua Furman & Alisha Klapholz  
Judy Galat & Geoff Thale  
William & Miriam Galston  
Stephen Garber & Lynne Snyder  
Jared Garelick & Ellen Kramarow  
Andrew & Allegria Gelfand  
Seth Glabman & Martha Hare  
Rick Glaser & Sheryl Gross-Glaser  
Howard Gleckman & Ann Kline  
John & Marcia Goggin  
Sigfried Gold & Galia Siegel

### January 24

Eliot & Traci Goldberg  
Joseph & Dody Goldberg  
Joshua & Sara Goldberg  
Marcia Goldberg  
Myrna Goldman  
Paul Goldman & Debbie Pomerance  
Tom & Lisa Goldring  
Paul & Rachel Goldstein  
Michael Gotthelf & Rachel Vile  
Stefan & Wilhelmina Gottschalk  
Stan Grabia & Varda Fink  
George & Marjorie Greenberg  
Larry Greenfield & Melanie Gross  
Greenfield

### January 31

Abraham & Dena Greenstein  
David Greisen & Jessica Bell  
Franca Brilliant  
Leah Weinryb Grohsgal  
Richard Gryziak & Leigh Verbois  
Stefan Gunter & Lisa Goldberg  
Eitan & Aviva Gutin  
Jonathan Halpern  
Daniel & Elizabeth Handwerker  
Eliot Harrison & Wendy Blake-Coleman  
David Hart & Lois Frankel  
Michael Heimowitz & Dori Gillman

Matt & Linda Heller  
Steve & Shelly Heller  
Bruce Heppen & Bonnie Suchman

### February 7

Eugene & Esther Herman  
Mitchell & Patti Herman  
Carolivia Herron  
James & Annie Hershberg  
Judith Herzog  
William & Nira Hodos  
Robert & Helen Hovis  
Hedy Howard  
Neil Hyman & Rachel Decter Hyman  
Anita Isicson  
David & Shana Jacobs  
Leonard Jewler & Andrea Rosen  
Harvey Kabaker & Andrea Kline  
Steven Kalish & Anita Bolt  
David Kass & Iris Amdur  
Joshua & Jennifer Kefer  
Kenneth Kellner & Nina Bronk Kellner

### February 14

Rabbi Jason & Devora Kimelman-Block  
Alexandra Kincannon & Paul Moorehead  
Shemaya & Dori Klar  
Morris Klein & Naomi Freeman  
Roger Kohn  
Allan Kolker  
Edward Koren & Claudine Schweber  
Michael & Lisa Kraft  
Anita Kramer  
Joel Kramer & Adena Galinsky  
Joshua & Francesca Kranzberg  
David & Amy Kritz  
Richard Kruger & Naimah Weinberg  
Matthew Kunkin & Hilary Sachs  
Simcha Kuritzky  
Susan Laden  
Alan Landay  
Robert Lande & Jeri Roth Lande

## Donations

### GENERAL FUND

#### Donor

Robert Feron and Dione Pereira  
Holly Shulman  
David and Rona Siskind

Irving Borochoff  
Irving Borochoff  
Irving Borochoff  
William and Miriam Galston  
Sharon Light and Gidon  
van Emden

David and Janice Mehler

Naomi Friedman  
Marcia Goldberg  
Paul Goldman and Debbie  
Pomerance

#### In Honor of

Len Bachman  
Susan Catler  
Joel Cohen  
Annabelle Turner Klein

Josh Furman and Alisha  
Klapholz  
Shelley and Sandy  
Reback

#### In Memory of

Isaac H. Friedman  
Irma Greenspoon

Evelyn Reiss

### HIMMELFARB 2.0 FUND

#### Donor

Seth and Elaine Akst  
Anonymous  
Leonard Bachman  
Danielle Glosser and Howard Riker  
Leah Weinryb Grohsgal  
Michael and Lisa Kraft  
Jeanne Ireland and Paul Seltman  
Shemaya and Dori Klar  
Ethan Merlin and Joelle Novey  
Beth Naftalin  
Dan and Elizabeth Sokolov

### LIBRARY FUND

#### Donor

David (Carla) Cohen

#### In Memory of

Irma Greenspoon

### MADELEINE NESSE FUND

#### Donor

David (Carla) Cohen

#### In Memory of

Gertrude Schwalb  
Cohen

### RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

#### Donor

David (Carla) Cohen  
David (Carla) Cohen

#### In Memory of

Sonya Rozansky  
Gertrude Schwalb Cohen

### SOCIAL ACTION FUND

#### Donor

David (Carla) Cohen

#### In Memory of

Gertrude Schwalb Cohen

### TORAH REPAIR FUND

#### Donor

David (Carla) Cohen

#### In Memory of

Sonya Rozansky

### YAHARZEIT DONATIONS

#### Donor

Rabbi A. Nathan and  
Barbara Abramowitz  
Natalie Arosemena  
Natalie Arosemena  
Florence Berlin  
Anita Bollt and Steven Kalish  
Erwin and Harriet Bondareff  
Robert Chew and Ronna  
Corman-Chew  
Robert Chew and Ronna  
Corman-Chew  
Edward and Ruth Cogen  
Jeffrey and Miriam Davidson  
Esther Eden  
Esther Eden  
Ernie Englander  
Barry and Karen Fierst  
Lois Frankel and David Hart  
Jared Garelick and Ellen  
Kramarow  
Marcia Goldberg  
Myrna Goldman  
Paul Goldman and Debbie  
Pomerance  
Stuart and Elizabeth  
Gorewitz

#### In Memory of

Esther Hillson  
Samuel Gorewitz  
Joseph Levin  
Abraham Berlin  
Theodore Bolt  
Harry Bondareff  
Max Friedman  
Stuart David Corman  
Jennie Lippman  
Ruth Davidson  
Sidney Brown  
Nathan Edenbaum  
Beth Shulman  
Beryl Reynolds  
Robert Frankel  
Eli L. Garelick  
William Fargotstein  
Lorraine Goldman  
Hilda Pomerance  
William Gorewitz

(Continued on page 23)

## Donations (continued)

### YAHARZEIT DONATIONS (continued)

#### Donor

George and Marjorie  
Greenberg  
Gerson and Joan Grosfeld  
Gerson and Joan Grosfeld  
Rose Ellen Halper and Edwin  
Stromberg  
Melvin and Sue Heyman  
Pauline Katz  
Michael and Lisa Kraft  
Alan Landay  
Roanne Leidman and Lester  
Stanfill  
Roanne Leidman and Lester  
Stanfill  
Barry Levin  
Peter and Carol Levin  
Fred Lipschultz and Diana Lynn  
Edith Lopatin  
Princeton Lyman  
Arnold and Vera Mayer  
Elaine Miller  
Jonah and Stephanie Murdock  
Beth Naftalin  
Ray and Adele Natter  
Gelach Penn  
Arthur and Doris Pincus  
Stephen and Freda Resnick  
Eileen Rose and David Silber  
Herbert and Enid Rubenstein  
Morton and Adele Samler  
Robert and Judith Samuels  
  
Lawrence and Pearl Schainker  
Lawrence and Pearl Schainker  
Phillip and Ruth Shapiro  
Yvonne Shashoua  
Gisele Tawil  
Jonathan and Catherine Tuerk  
Mike and Ruth Unterweger  
Mike and Ruth Unterweger  
Michael and Marion Usher  
Jonathan Wilkenfeld  
Brian Wruble

#### In Memory of

William Greenberg  
Ruth Bender  
Naomi Grosfeld  
  
Esther Stromberg  
Harry Lopatin  
Esther Pincus  
Stella Kraft  
Nathan Landay  
  
Myrtle Leidman  
  
Victor Leidman  
Joseph Levin  
Celeste Gellner  
Frances Friedlander  
Sara Berman  
Sidi Ermann  
Tilia Waltman  
Lawrence Miller  
Rose Murdock  
Micah Naftalin  
Pauline Natter  
Miriam Penn  
Esther Pincus  
Burt Lopatin  
Louis Rose  
Marjorie Hecht Watson  
Henry Goldstein  
Philip and Florence  
Samuels  
Arnold Schainker  
Molly Schainker  
Sam Shapiro  
Alfred Salim Shashoua  
Roger Amsellem  
Gladys Miller  
Ellis Bloom  
Michael P. Unterweger  
Ruth Polacheck Usher  
Harry Plotkin  
Sadie Nathanson

