



The Menorah

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Notes from the Rabbi: Ethan Seidel Purim – Seriously Silly

Megillat Esther is an odd book for many reasons, not the least of which is its treatment of anti-Semitism.

On the one hand, the tone of the book is serious: the Jews are all about to die! And Queen Esther is the only person who can save them! She risks her life to save us, and there's a furious battle in which many of the bad guys are killed!

On the other hand, the book is a burlesque: it begins with a drunken 7-day revelry sponsored by the King for all the inhabitants of his city -- a party whose rule for drinking (like the modern frat party) is "No restrictions!" And chapter 2 treats us to a "beauty contest" in which the King, (like the evil former President-for-life of the Dominican Republic, Rafael Trujillo) sleeps with every beautiful virgin in the land.

You don't know whether to laugh or cry. Is the book making a joke about genocide?? Is it an ancient version of Mel Brooks' send-up of the Holocaust, the play-within-the play *Springtime for Hitler*?

And just as the book has a split personality, so does the celebration surrounding it. On one level, we've taken the *Megillah*, and the holiday of Purim built around it, very seriously. In fact, many communities have written their own local

(Continued on page 2)



President's Column: Jeff Davidson Using and Abusing the Holocaust

We became aware that our language lacks words to express this offense, this demolition of a man. Primo Levi

Recent events have made writing this column, in preparation for Yom HaShoah, a very difficult task. The news continued to be near apocalyptic, with Netanyahu suggesting that Jews voluntarily make Western Europe a *Judenfrei* zone, new murders commingling with memories of my lovely visit to the Copenhagen Synagogue in happier times, and people I love and respect telling me that these fears are overblown.

Who would have thought that we would now be worrying about the Jews of the Western European democracies? The tale is told of the Hasidic Tzadik who trained his

disciples to be on the lookout for the Prophet Elijah, who would tell of the coming of the Messiah when the time was right.

One disciple noticed a stranger in the marketplace and told him that things were all right for the Jews. The Tzadik upbraided him, saying he had ruined the redemption, and that the Messiah would have come had he told the stranger (Elijah) how bad conditions really were for the Jews.

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Notes from the Rabbi (continued)

megillot, in imitation of *Megillat Esther*. These local *megillot* recorded events not unlike those portrayed in *Megillat Esther*: the Jews were about to be exiled from the town as the result of some anti-Semitic accusation, but at the last minute a powerful “court Jew” intervenes and saves the day.

So historically speaking, this book, and this holiday, really hit home throughout the Jewish world. And I don't need even to mention, given the recent ISIS-inspired massacres in France and Denmark, that modern-day anti-Semitism is no joking matter either.

Is Genocide a Laughing Matter?

And yet, we still celebrate this holiday with feasting and revelry, noise and pastries!? What's going on? Is

attempted genocide really an appropriate subject for merriment?

Maybe there is a lesson here for us. Could it be that this oddly two-faced approach to anti-Semitism makes sense? In fact, maybe a sense of humor when confronting most problems – whether they be national, or personal – is a good thing.

Not that anti-Semitism is a joke – of course not. But acting as if we are desperate (even if we feel, with good reason, desperate) is generally not a great strategy. Maybe, the Book of Esther is telling us that loosening up a bit can help us confront danger more productively and flexibly.

Who knows, maybe if we invite Haman to the party, he will bring about his own demise. Allowing ourselves to laugh can help us recognize that an approaching disaster may contain seeds of possibility.

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 9-5:30; F 9-3
(Often open in evenings and on Sundays.)
Appointments are recommended.

Rabbi: Ethan Seidel, ext. 102
Rabbi Emeritus: A. Nathan Abramowitz, ext. 101
President: Jeff Davidson
Executive Director: Jevera Temsky, ext. 101
Administrator: Sheri Blonder, ext. 101
Lifelong Learning Director: Eitan Gutin, ext. 105
Memb. Accts. Coord.: Grant Maxfield, ext. 110
Kitchen Manager: Roz Kram, ext. 101
Facilities Manager: Steve Ross, ext. 101

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

Join Us for Purim Services, March 4 & 5

Purim this year begins on Wednesday night, March 4. Join us at 7:30 p.m. for Ma'ariv, followed by a really loud, silly reading of the *Megillah* -- with many congregants participating -- the skits, the wearing of stupid costumes, and even a little drinking.

And if that's too loud for you, you might want to check out the early-morning reading of the *Megillah* on Thursday, March 5. Services start at 7 a.m. The *Megillah* reading will probably begin around 7:45. This service is much quieter, but with still a healthy dollop of levity, and maybe even a shot of whiskey to start your day.

Hag Purim Same'ach!

Rabbi Seidel

Readings by TI Authors

Our series of presentations by TI authors will continue on Tuesday, **March 10**, at 7 p.m.

Rona Fields will read selections from her book, *Against Violence Against Women*.

Please join us.

President's Column (continued)

Are we like this old-fashioned Hasid, ready to call out *Gevalt*, but afraid to do so? Ignoring current geopolitical realities, perhaps we can examine how we, as a people, have reacted to the Shoah, and how we have used it as a metaphor and teaching tool for the examination of our lives.

Many of us are mindful of Theodor Adorno's dictum that writing poetry after Auschwitz would be barbaric. We learned from the wisdom of the witnesses, Frank, Wiesel, Levi, Sachs and Celan. The curriculum of many Jewish history classes was geared towards teaching the Shoah as the penultimate event in our history. We also learned from the American literary critic Irving Howe that Shoah literature and art must always have a moral poise and the events must be historic for us to reckon with the past. Temptations to use aesthetic devices to embellish the basic truths should be avoided.

In our post-modernist era, these dicta have been smashed. Writers have shown us alternative views of history. Roth imagines a grown Anne Frank as a survivor. Chabon presents Yiddish culture living on in the wilds of Alaska, of all places. Those who might not have thought of Holocaust representation flocked to the brutal delights of Tarantino's story of Jewish soldiers' vengeance.

Recently, the organizers of Ireland's Holocaust Memorial Day ceremonies banned any mention of Israel (the ban was later rescinded). Is this an example of a strange new wrinkle in anti-Israel and anti-Jewish rhetoric, in which the Holocaust itself becomes a weapon used against Jews? One merely has to google Holocaust to examine this question.

The production of dystopic literature and art has become a major industry. Our anxieties are stoked by such questions as (1) whether a virginal young woman will sleep with a vampire or a werewolf, (2) whether a young woman with a bow and arrow can bring down a tyrannical

government which maintains its power by a series of homicidal games, and (3) countless variations of the fantasy that this world is not real, but is imagined in a matrix of dreams or computer games.

Howard Jacobson's *J*

One of Britain's leading authors, Howard Jacobson, has recently published a dystopic work on a Holocaust theme, entitled *J*. Jacobson has won the Man Booker award for his novel on British anti-Semitism, *The Finkler Question*. For those not wanting to read an entire Jacobson novel, I commend an essay, published in the *Forward*. <http://forward.com/articles/185720/will-we-ever-be-forgiven-for-the-holocaust/>.

J is a difficult book to begin to read. It is set in the near future in an unnamed land, presumably Britain, and the major theme is what was the effect of *what happened, if it happened*. What happened was a second, more successful Holocaust. I thought of the composition of the book as the literary equivalent of a grosse fuge, wherein the theme gets revisited and expanded until one's head is ready to explode. We learn of the methods and extent of the disaster, how and why it occurred and its aftermath.

Missing from the book are many things one might expect. Identifiable Jews and God are the two main entities completely absent. It is not simply a question of God turning his head from us; He is simply not in the picture.

Early in the novel, you might think it is full of Jews, since Cohens, Nussbaums, Solomons and the like abound. Indeed, it is hard to find a character without such a name. Strangely, there are no traditional Jewish first names; instead, vaguely Celtic first names are the norm. Only later, do we learn of Operation Ishmael, which took place after *what happened, if it happened*. The entire

population changed names and adopted Jewish last names for unknown reasons.

The main narrative concerns a romantic couple, Ailinn Solomons and Kevern Cohen, who live in a small seaside town. We follow this couple's romance and as we learn the details of their lives, we learn more and more details of *what happened, if it happened*. Jacobson is uniquely skilled at drawing parallels to the actual history with changed names and details. Instead of the *Einsatzkommando*, he proposes a fleet of ice cream trucks.

This troubling book raises important questions. It separates itself from the frivolous dystopic fantasies of vampires, werewolves and the like to speak to important questions of the day. Like the Hassid in the town square, one has the choice to pull an alarm and *shrai gevalt* or to say things are all right.

As an American Jew, I do not feel any compunction about my survival here; raising these questions would appear to be the height of paranoia. For Western European Jews, I don't pretend to have pat answers. Is the situation the same as it was in the 1930's? I could not argue with anyone who makes Aliyah, but at the same time I would dread a Western Europe without our people.

How to Treat the Holocaust

What does concern me as an American Jew is how we treat the Holocaust. Is the narrative exclusively ours? Are the events singular enough that comparisons to any other suffering people are unimaginable? What should be our reaction when others, including our putative enemies, invoke the language, images and metaphors of the Holocaust?

I would like to think that the singular nature of the Shoah is important to keep as an organizing principle.

(Continued on page 4)

New Members

Jared Garelick

Jonathan Bogen



Jon was raised around Philadelphia and has lived in the Washington area for the past six years. He works as a consultant, primarily in the area of data security and privacy. Jon's background is in health care, an area in which he worked for twenty-five years.

Eventually he found himself focusing more on data and computer issues. Now he helps clients maintain large databases in a variety of

fields, fighting the unending battle against security breaches.

Jon has three grown children and enjoys playing tennis. He did some shul shopping last year, and decided that TI has the right mix of what he was seeking, together with geographical proximity to his Silver Spring home.

Nitzan and Tahirih Zecharya

Nitzan grew up in Ashkelon, Israel, steps from its stunning beach. By great coincidence, this reporter first met Nitzan in Ashkelon during the mid-1980s, when both worked with the same arts organization's children's theater. Nitzan moved to the US in 1988, eventually starting a business, modernrugs.com, which sells high-end rugs and carpeting. He also designs custom rugs for residential and commercial customers. If you've been to some of the local Westfield malls, you have trod on his work.

Tahirih, who was raised in Arizona, first came



(Continued on page 5)

President's Column (continued)

Through our museum at the Mall, the teachings found in our sacred texts and the important wisdom books written during and after the Shoah, we have made consideration of the Holocaust part of the general heritage of mankind. By engaging in a dialogue with other cultures about their suffering, we can go far in preserving the unique features of our history and become aware of the stories of others.

At TI, we know our history well. I would like to propose that we expand our opportunities at dialogue. I have presented to the Board a proposal that we participate in a group called New Story Leadership, which builds dialogues between university-aged Israeli Jews and Palestinians. Our member Brad Brooks-Rubin will be contacting this group and will keep the community informed about our possible participation.

It is my hope that through this work in dialogue, we can embrace the prophetic vision of Martin Buber:

*Redemption will be realized when all people
Return out of their exile from each other.*

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 Haverim, 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 Goggin h: 301-593-8480
w: 301-754-1963



Dozens of TI families joined together for a Havdallah potluck on January 31 at the home of Jennifer, Josh, Ari & Dori Kefer. If you missed the fun, please come on March 21 at 6:30 p.m. for another Havdallah celebration at the home of Esther & Gene Herman in Takoma Park.

New Members (continued)

to Washington to earn a PhD in human rights from American University. She moved back here after spending a year in Guatemala doing field work documenting human rights abuses. She has also worked in the family carpet business.

Both Nitzan and Tahirih are interested in Kabbalah, and exploring the spiritual teachings of Judaism. Between them they have four children ranging in age from 5 to 20: a daughter **Shiran**, sons **Nitai** and **Naveh**, and the youngest, daughter, **C'nai**.

Robyn Gopin

Robyn, a Long Island native, lived in Washington some years ago, after which she spent time in Boston before returning to this area. When first in Washington she was a lawyer, working at the Department of Health and Human Services, a position she left to spend eight years home schooling her children.

Robyn is now back to school herself, expecting this spring to complete a master's degree in teaching English as a Second Language from the University of Maryland Baltimore County. In addition to the final coursework, she is student teaching full-time at a school in Howard County. That is to say, she is rather busy this semester.

Robyn has three children: **Ruth**, 18, who just began studies at McGill University; **Lexi**, 15, a sophomore at

Bethesda Chevy Chase High School; and **Isaac**, a 6th grader at JPDS.

Robyn has enjoyed TI's culture of schmoozing at Kiddush on Shabbat afternoon. She has many old friends at TI from pre-kids days when she and they attended a minyan at a conservative synagogue west of the park. She and her kids are serious Red Sox baseball fans.

Welcome to this month's featured new members.

Haverim Needed

The TI Funeral Practices Committee needs one or two additional Haverim to be on call as first responders when a family notifies TI of a death.

A Haver works with the family and the Rabbi to arrange for the funeral and burial, shomrim and shivah services.

Have not done this before? Don't worry, we will train you. If you can join us in this mitzvah, contact Shelly Heller, sheller@gwu.edu

Lifelong Learning

Eitan Gutin

Himmelfarb Happenings

We are proud to announce that enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year is now open. We currently have three classes that are near capacity, so enrolling early will be key to determining whether to split any grades. Point your browser to TinyURL.com/Register2015 and register today.

Any questions about enrollment, or any other aspect of our school can be directed to either Eitan Gutin, Director of Lifelong Learning, or Marla Sevi, the Assistant to the Director. Just email Marla@Tifereth-Israel.org.

Family Events in March

March opens with our annual **Purim Carnival** on **March 1**. The

celebrations continue with **Megillah Reading and Costume Parade** on Wednesday evening **March 4**.

March's family programs continue on **Shabbat, March 28** with this year's third **Family Service**.

Youth Events for Every Age

Don't forget that **Bonim** (PreK-1st) and **Machar** (2nd-5th) meet every Shabbat that school is in session. Machar has added a new wrinkle with **Shabbat Morning Live**, *parashah* plays written by our very own **Moreh David Smolar**.

Our first ever **Kadima Basketball** team is so far undefeated. Congratulations to the team and best of luck as they play both

regular games and playoffs in March. TI **Kadima** will be helping with the Purim Carnival and, just a week later on March 8, cooking and serving at the Luther Place Shelter.

TI **USY'ers** will spend the month working on the Purim Carnival, renting Mac & Cheese groggers on Purim, and participating in the DC JCC's Hunger Action food packing session on Thursday, **March 5**.

Last, but certainly not least, the annual **USY Tzedakah Dinner** is Friday night, **March 13**.

Abramowitz Fund

The Rabbi A. Nathan Abramowitz Fund celebrates Rabbi Abramowitz's service to Tifereth Israel. Part of its mission is to recognize and provide scholarships to youths who spend a summer or part of a school year in a program to enhance their Jewish education.

If you have a child participating in such a program, complete, by **March 31**, the on-line form at <http://tinyurl.com/2015ANA>. Participants will be honored at a special Shabbat service this spring.

Scholarships, based on financial need, are also available for qualifying programs. To apply for a scholarship, download the scholarship form from <http://tinyurl.com/2015ANAScholar>, complete it, and return it to the TI office by **March 31**.

Bake Hamantaschen with Rabbi Seidel

You are invited to bake hamantaschen with Rabbi Seidel on **Sunday, March 1**. These are the hamantaschen we will enjoy after Purim services, but all bakers can, of course, take a few home.

Rabbi Seidel is an accomplished baker, and loves to share his skills with congregants. Come for a relaxed evening of baking, learning, and schmoozing with the rabbi in the TI kitchen. Get yourself in the mood for a happy Purim.

The baking will be done in two shifts: 6-7:30 p.m. and 7:30-9:30 p.m. A light dinner will be served.

Childcare will be available for the first shift only. Children 5 and older are welcome to join in the baking if interested.

Save Snider's Receipts

Your Snider's Super Market receipts can provide cash for **Shepherd Elementary School** in TI's neighborhood.

Leave 2014 & 2015 receipts in the envelope outside the office. Don't cut off the date!

Summary of TI Board of Directors Meeting January 12, 2015

Attending: Larry Baizer, Sharon Brown, Susan Catler, Joel Cohen, Jeffrey Colman, Jeffrey Davidson, Joe Davidson, Wilhelmina Gottschalk, John List, Stephanie Roodman Murdock, Raymond Natter, Cynthia Peterman, Debbie Pomerance, Andrew Reamer, Howard Riker, Morris Rodenstein, Hannah Rubin, Judy Tulchin, Daniel Turner, Mark Verschell, Terri Zall.

Excused: Lisa Goldberg, Judy Herzog, Chris Zeilinger.

Absent: Joanne Hovis.

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

Guests: George Greenberg, Vivian Seidner.

The meeting was called to order at 8:03pm.

December 2014 minutes and summary were accepted and approved by the Board as presented.

Rabbi's Report. The Rabbi reported on new and lost members from 2014. He expressed an interest in launching a congregation-wide listening campaign to spur activity in the congregation.

New Business. The Board endorsed a solidarity event for French Jews on January 13, 2015.

Finance. Finance Vice President John List presented financial projections through June 2015.

High Holidays/Dues FY 16. Finance Vice President John List

and Ritual Vice President Wilhelmina Gottschalk presented for discussion perspectives and proposals for operationalizing the Cohen Plan in its third year (In 2013, under the leadership of then-President Joel Cohen, the TI Board began a process expected to take three years to move towards free High Holiday tickets by increasing the dues as the ticket prices were decreased).

Building Preservation Fund. Building Preservation Fund Chair George Greenberg presented the 2014-2015 spending plan. The Board voted to approve the plan as presented, subject to revision if Lifelong Learning utilizes funds for classroom refurbishment.

Communications. Vice President Debbie Pomerance reported on the structure of TI listservs and the need for establishing stronger guidelines for listserv norms.

Membership. Membership Vice President Susan Catler reported the following new members since December: Mark Feldman, Matthew Bigman, and Annick Gershwind (with husband Reed Gershwind and sons Nirel and Beri). Many new members attended the New Member Shabbat and there will be a TI Havdallah soon.

Bathroom Fundraiser. The Brunch for Better Bathrooms will be on January 25.

Good and Welfare

Passings. David Levy, husband of Ellen Levy, December 11, 2014; Blanche Murdock,

mother of Myron Murdock (Judy Herzog), grandmother of Jonah (Stephanie) Murdock and great-grandmother of Eve and Solomon, December 9, 2014; Nicki Nicklas, mother of Daphna Spear (Daniel Pedersen), grandmother of Rafi, Yoni, Ariana and Keren Pedersen; Malcolm Peterman, father of Jeff (Cynthia) Peterman, grandfather of Tania, December 28, 2014.

Birth. Aliza Seenivasa Pillai, daughter of Deborah Greenberg and Ruben Seenivasa Pillai, grand-daughter of Marjorie and George Greenberg, December 9, 2014.

Youth News. TI's USY chapter won a national award for amount of tzadakah collected; TI's Kadima chapter won its first basketball game; Dan Turner thanked people for hosting USY teens in December.

TI held a successful Shabbaton in December.

Adjournment: 9:50 p.m.

Wear a Hat to Shul

March 21 will be the fifth somewhat annual "Wear a Hat to Shul Day."

Why wear a hat? Because it's fun and this is a good opportunity for more TI'ers, men and women, to try it. Also, it is Bella Abzug's *yahrzeit*. Whatever you thought of Bella, you had to admire her hats.

So try it. You may like it.

Maryland Campaign for Paid Sick Days

Larry Baizer

You shall not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy...or he is poor, and sets his heart upon it (Deuteronomy 24:14-15).

One morning, you wake up expecting to go to work, but quickly realize you're sick and you feel awful. If you don't go to work, you're not going to be able to pay the rent. Even worse, imagine that your young child is sick. Can you afford to take the day off to care for her? Or will you send her to school while you work, and just hope she gets better?

In Maryland, more than 700,000 workers are forced to make impossible choices: go to work sick, send an ill child to school or daycare, or stay home and sacrifice needed income or, worse, risk job loss. At

the SHALEM program on March 7, "**Let my people...have paid sick days,**" leaders from Jews United for Justice (JUFJ) and the Working Matters Coalition will discuss the Maryland campaign for paid sick days.

No one should be forced to choose between their health and their job. The new Maryland **Healthy Working Families Act** would ensure that workers earn up to seven paid sick days per year. The legislation also provides "safe leave" for workers who need to obtain care as a result of domestic violence.

In jurisdictions where state and local standards allow workers to earn paid sick days, surveys show workers' lives improved and businesses succeeded.

About Jews United for Justice

JUFJ envisions a healthy, fair, and safe DC metropolitan area, where the rights and dignity of all residents are respected and their voices are heard. It believes that the only way to build such a community is for Jews to join with their neighbors and organize for change. JUFJ is a pluralistic Jewish voice in the progressive community and a progressive voice in the Jewish community. www.jufj.org

About Working Matters

Working Matters is a coalition of more than 100 organizations supporting the Maryland Campaign for Paid Sick Days. <https://mdpaysickdays.wordpress.com/>

Passover Schedule

March 29	9:00 a.m.	Morning Minyan, followed by Sale of Hametz.
April 3	7:00 a.m.	Service and Siyyum for First Born, followed by Final Sale of Hametz (no sales after 8:30 a.m.)
	6:30 p.m.	Shabbat and Holiday Evening Service
	7:15 p.m.	Erev Pesah -- First Seder (<i>time for candle lighting</i>)
April 4	9:00 a.m.	First Day of Pesah -- Shabbat and Holiday Morning Service, followed by simple Kiddush.
	Evening	Second Seder
April 5	9:00 a.m.	Second Day of Pesah -- Holiday Morning Service, followed by Kiddush sponsored by Mollie Berch z"l.
April 10	9:00 p.m.	Seventh Day of Pesah -- Holiday Morning Service, followed by simple Kiddush.
	6:30 p.m.	Shabbat and Holiday Evening Service, followed by Pesah Dinner. Sign up for dinner online at tiferethdc.shulcloud.com/pesach15 .
April 11	9:00 a.m.	Eighth Day of Pesah -- Shabbat and Holiday Morning Service; Yizkor, 11 a.m.

March Highlights at Tifereth Israel

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| March 1 | Purim Carnival, 12:30-3 p.m. |
| March 2, 9,
16, 23, 30 | Monday Lunch & Learn
<i>Parashat HaShavuah</i>, 11 a.m.; Lunch 12 noon |
| March 4
March 5 | Pre-Purim Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; Megillah Reading, 7:45 p.m.
Morning Service & Megillah Reading, 9 a.m. |
| March 7 | Thomas Wolfson Bar Mitzvah
Learner's Minyan, 10 a.m.
SHALEM, "Let My People...Have Paid Sick Days," JUFJ & the
Maryland Working Matters Coalition |
| March 8 | Torah Art Collective, 2-4 p.m.
"Turning Age-ing into Sage-ing," first of 5-session class, Michele
Sumka & Rabbi Devora Lynn , 4-6 p.m. |
| March 8, 15 | "Sound and Sense: Music and Meaning of Seder Songs," 2-sessions,
Rabbi Avis Miller, 7 p.m. |
| March 10 | Readings by TI Authors, Rona Fields, Selections from <i>Against
Violence Against Women</i>, 7 p.m. |
| March 15 | Gevarim Brunch, Bend the Arc, Rabbi Jason Kimelman-Block, 10 a.m. |

An Appreciation of an Original Recipe

John List

As we know, a new skill, learned from a good teacher, opens many pathways. So it has been for me with Rabbi Seidel's *hallah* recipe.

Years ago, I had a *hallah* baking lesson with Rabbi Seidel which I bid for at a TI auction. That lesson enriched my preparation for Shabbat and *haggim*; connected me with others around shared stories and other bread recipes; expanded my interests in bread traditions; and

created an expectation with an ever widening circle of family and friends that "my" *hallah* will enhance our enjoyment.

What I continue to cherish is the original written recipe itself: oil stained, dog-eared, and complete with Ethan's hand-written notes on the typed page. After all these years I could make the *hallah* from memory as I have in many, many other cities. But, in our kitchen I always take out

the original to connect back to the beginning.

My favorite part of the original is: two tablespoons of yeast [that is the typed instruction]; followed by the hand-written note: "or more depending on your day."

Looking at the original brings me back to the beginning and focuses my thoughts on my day. A wonderful preparation for Shabbat.

Gevarim

Andrew Reamer



Gevarim is pleased to offer the TI community the following events in March:

Sunday Brunch

Sunday, March 15, 10:00 a.m. TI member **Rabbi Jason Kimelman-Block** will discuss the work of Bend the Arc — including its current campaigns for voting rights, immigration reform, and tax reform — within the long-standing tradition of Jewish social action in America.

Rabbi Kimelman-Block is Rabbi-in-Residence and Deputy Director of Bend the Arc Jewish Action, where he works to bring the voices of progressive American Jews into the halls of power in Washington DC.

He also directs the Selah Leadership Program, which trains

a cross-section of executive-level social justice leaders to be effective, sustainable and collaborative agents for change. He is the co-editor and co-author of *Just: Judaism. Action. Social Change* and served as the Director of the PANIM Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values.

Brunch is \$10 for Gevarim and KN members and \$12 for others. Sign-up at <http://www.tifereth-israel.org/bend-arc-talk-and-brunch>

Movie Nite @ TI

Sunday, March 22, 7:30 p.m. *Conspiracy* (2001, 96 mins) is a filmed re-creation of the 1942 Wannsee Conference, in which Nazi and SS leaders gathered in a Berlin suburb to discuss the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question."

Led by SS General Reinhard Heydrich (Kenneth Branagh) and his assistant, Adolf Eichmann (Stanley Tucci), this group of high ranking German officials came to the historic, far-reaching decision that the Jews of Europe were to be exterminated in what would come to be understood as the Holocaust.

Branagh won an Emmy Award for Best Actor and Tucci received a Golden Globe for his supporting role.

After the movie, Bill Galston will provide comments and facilitate a discussion.

The movie is free, nosh is \$4, pay in person.

Kolot HaLev Pesah Concert, March 29

Larry Baizer

Kolot HaLev (Voices of the Heart), a Jewish community choir which includes TI members Loretta Vitale Saks and Larry Baizer, will perform "Pesah – The Sound of Freedom," at **4 p.m., March 29**, at Adas Israel Congregation.

The program, says Hazzan Ramon Tasat, Kolot HaLev's artistic director, "is a musical overture to both Passover and the universal aspirations for renewal and redemption that people of all

faiths associate with spring. The late American Rabbi Menachem Schneerson once said, 'Song is the quest for redemption.' "Pesah – The Sound of Freedom" is dedicated to that quest."

The program presents traditional music from Europe and the Middle East, as well as new compositions by the American songwriter Bobby McFerrin and from Shalsholet, the foundation dedicated to the creation and dissemination of new Jewish

liturgical music. The program includes songs inspired by the *Haggadah*, the biblical figure Miriam and the Song of Songs, and concludes with Hebrew and Yiddish songs that look forward to times of peace, greater freedom, and spiritual redemption.

For tickets and further information, please contact Loretta Vitale Saks at lvitalesaks@gmail.com or Larry Baizer at lbaizer@yahoo.com.

Kol Nashim

Pearl Schainker



Inclement weather has led to several changes for Kol Nashim programs.

Book Club

The Kol Nashim Book Club most recently discussed Roz Chast's book, *Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?*, at a weather-delayed date, February 24.

The Book Club will next meet on March 17 (no need to wear green for St. Pat's Day) to discuss *July's People* by Nadine Gordimer. All are welcome.

Self-Help Program

Adele Natter was scheduled to lead a discussion titled "Self Help for the Stressed Out" on February 22. Kol Nashim is working to reschedule this program. Canceling and changing dates has resulted in a certain amount of stress. We are looking forward to Adele's help.

Seder Songs

Rabbi Avis Miller will be leading two sessions: "Sound and Sense: Music and Meaning of Seder Songs." Rabbi Miller will also emphasize creative ways to enhance your seder.

The sessions are scheduled for **March 8** and **March 15** at 7 p.m. at Tifereth Israel. The cost is \$15 per session for members and \$18 per session for non-members. You may sign up for either session individually or for both sessions. Rabbi Miller is always an insightful and exciting teacher.

Kol Nashim hopes to announce an additional program for the spring, after all the snow has melted.

Adult Education

Jessica Weissman

March will be rich in SHALEM after-Kiddush talks.

On **March 7**, in cooperation with the Social Action Committee, guest speakers from Jews United for Justice and the Working Matters Coalition will discuss the campaign to provide all Maryland workers with sick leave.

Nobody should have to risk job loss to take care of a sick child, or choose between health and job. The Healthy Working Families Act would provide up to 7 days of sick leave a year to every worker.

On **March 21**, TI'er and NASA historian **Steve Garber** presents a Jewish view of extraterrestrial life. Assuming humans discover extraterrestrial life, how will Judaism inform our understanding

of it? How did Jews respond to the Copernican and Darwinian revolutions?

What about Judaism has been helpful in understanding and appreciating scientific advances? Are there Jewish approaches to other life forms on Earth that could shed light on how we might deal with extraterrestrial life? Steve will use these questions as lenses for anticipating possible outcomes.

The **Aging in Place** panel on senior villages was affected by February's snowstorms. We plan to repeat the program in full so that a larger audience can benefit from the panelists' insights and be inspired to join or even help start a village.

At publication time the date had not yet been determined. Watch the weekly newsletter and the calendar.

Retreat Planning

Do you have warm memories of TI retreats? Are you itching to participate in a retreat skit?

Then get involved with planning the 2015 TI retreat! Perhaps you have ideas about what makes a great retreat. Maybe you want to study, or take nature walks, or just be with your TI friends.

We need you! Contact **Jessica Weissman** or **Cynthia Peterman** and join the fun!

Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers

Barbara Raimondo

Babies Are Us

They just keep coming! **Eitan Halper-Stromberg**, son of **Rose Ellen Halper** and **Ed Stromberg**, and his wife, **Olivia**, welcomed a 6.9-pound son, **Caleb**, on December 18.

And **Larry** and **Pearl Schainker** gratefully and joyously announce the birth of their grandson, **Jonah William Kline**, on January 29. Jonah is the son of **Mira Schainker Kline** and **Marc Kline**. He arrived weighing 7 pounds, 7 ounces. All of the aforementioned kiddies, parents, and grandparents are doing well.

Shelly and **Steve Heller** returned safely from a trip to Cuba where they visited five Jewish communities, in Guantanamo, Santiago, and Havana. These communities' efforts to ensure that Judaism is maintained in Cuba are heroic! Ask Shelly and Steve about it. Thanks to all TI'ers who sent Shelly and Steve off with donations for the communities.

Kids Are Us

Dina Borzekowski and her team at the University of Maryland School of Public Health won the Global Health Video Competition, sponsored by the Consortium of Universities for Global Health, with the films *Scary Packages - Brazilian Children Speak* and *They're Very Pretty - Russian Children Speak*. The team has been creating videos highlighting young children's perceptions of tobacco packages and smoking. Interesting link with the acronym – CUGH – and the topic (cough! cough!).

In November, **Zoë Friedman** ran in the Run for Shelter 2014 5k, a charity race to support a homeless shelter in Alexandria, VA. Over 300 participants ran in balmy 22 degree weather for the event. Zoë was the third fastest female, tenth overall, in 19:39, a personal record. Zoë also

ran in the Foot Locker Northeast Regional Cross Country championships Freshman Girls race in Van Cortlandt Park in The Bronx. Zoë medaled, finished seventh, and made First team.



Friends Are Us

Paula Flicker's past is catching up with her! Recently she met an Australian friend at the Biophysical Society meeting in Baltimore. She knows him from their postdoctoral fellow days in San Francisco. He had no children then; now the older child is just finishing medical school.

Paula also saw a pal from college who now lives in Israel. He was in town for a review panel at National Science Foundation. She went to Seder at his parents' home, outside Detroit, when they were in college at University of Michigan. Bopped into both buddies in the same week!

Congratulations to **Larry Bram**, who was appointed by County Executive Ike Leggett to serve as a Commissioner on the Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities.

Susan Morse and **Harry Waldman's** son, **Jonathan Waldman**, will be speaking at Politics & Prose on March 19 at 7 p.m. about his first book, *Rust: The Longest War* (Simon & Schuster). Yes, that orange stuff!

The book just got a great review in The Atlantic: <http://theatlantic.com/17OU047>. Separately, the author Mary Roach described the book as "Remarkable...In a class with John McPhee and Susan Orlean." Jonathan lives in Boulder, Colorado.

Alan Landay went on yet another ski trip, cross-country skiing at Blackwater Falls, West Virginia. This time he actually saw the falls! He skied two days on very scenic back-country trails through the woods. Near the end of the first day, on a long downhill portion of the trail, he fell behind his friends, who checked in with the staff, wondering where the hey Alan was. Fortunately, they did not have to send out the St. Bernard – Alan caught up not long before it started getting dark.

Sad News

TI member **Nira Hodos**, wife of **William Hodos**, died in February after a long illness. She was 79. She is survived by her husband; two daughters, **Gilya Freedman** and **Tamar Lucas**; six grandchildren, **David Benjamin**, **Daniel Moshe**, **Elie Talor**, **Lina Ariella Tova**, **Michael** and **Rebecca**; and a brother, **Aharon Borenstein**. Funeral services were held at Mt. Lebanon Cemetery. Our condolences to family and loved ones.

And now for the meaning of last month's word, *epigones*: "an inferior imitator" (Merriam-Webster Online).

Thanks to all who sent me news, sent me to others who sent me news, or otherwise helped sniff it out. Send your panoply of news bits 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 this edition of Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers.

Join us for a
JTS DAY OF LEARNING

What Is the Good Life? Happiness and Fulfillment *in the* Jewish Tradition

A celebration of adult Jewish learning featuring outstanding faculty and fellows from The Jewish Theological Seminary.

How do we live a "good life?" What is the meaning of happiness? Jewish philosophers, poets, and sages have reflected deeply on these questions. Together we will explore a range of Jewish sources and consider what they suggest about how to live as individuals and as members of Jewish and global communities. We will compare Jewish philosophic conceptions of "the good life" to contemporary American definitions and discuss the role of values, ethics, and Torah in the quest for a well-lived life.



Dr. David Kraemer, Keynote Address

Joseph J. and Dora Abbell Librarian and professor of Talmud and Rabbinics



Dr. Eitan Fishbane

Associate Professor of Jewish Thought, JTS



Rabbi David Hoffman

Assistant Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics, JTS



Dr. Michal Raucher

JTS fellow and Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies, University of Cincinnati

Sunday, April 26, 2015

1:00-5:30 p.m.

Light refreshments will be served.

Congregation Har Shalom

11510 Falls Road
Potomac, Maryland

\$36 for advance registration

\$54 at the door

Childcare is available at no cost with registration by March 30.

Register at www.jtsa.edu/maryland

For more information, contact Erika Balsler of Congregation Har Shalom at adulteducation@harshalom.org or (301) 299-7087 x228 or Tani Schwartz-Herman of JTS at tanischwartz@jtsa.edu or (212) 678-8996.

Sponsored in partnership with Agudas Achim Congregation, Temple Beth Ami, Congregation Beth El of Montgomery County, Beth El Congregation, Congregation Beth Emeth, B'nai Israel Congregation, B'nai Shalom of Olney, Congregation B'nai Tzedek, Congregation Har Shalom, JCC of Greater Washington, Kol Shalom, Congregation Olam Tikvah, Shaare Torah, Kehilat Shalom, Tifereth Israel Congregation, Tikvat Israel Congregation, and The Foundation for Jewish Studies (partners in formation)

 **JTS** / Community Learning

Who Were The Masorettes?

Mark Berch

The Jewish Bible is called the Masoretic Text (“MT”), a technical term to distinguish it from other ancient versions, notably the Samaritan Bible (“SB”) and the Septuagint (“LXX”). This name comes from the Masorettes, who assembled the text into its final form -- the letters, the vowels and assorted other markings, and some spacings. They created an immense collection of marginal notes to accompany this text.

We owe them an immense debt of gratitude, but who were they?

Israel Yeivin, an authority on the work of the Tiberian Masorettes, answers this starkly: “We know absolutely nothing about the scholars who performed the immense labour....” The Masorettes did not write about themselves or much about their methodology, and outsiders did not write about them either, so far as we know.

Three Schools of Masorettes

There were three separate groups of Masorettes. The “eastern” schools were in Babylonia (Iraq), in Sura, Nehardea and Pumbeditha. These tend to get lumped together because the differences were not substantial.

The “western” schools apparently became dominant somewhat later. One, called Palestinian, was possibly centered in Jerusalem. The only actual manuscripts we have from them were those found at the Cairo Geniza.

The second, and by far the most important, group of western Masorettes was at Tiberias. They produced the great majority of the (surviving) manuscripts, their markings were the most complete, and they assembled the fullest Masorah. All the printed Bibles today, and all the hand-written Torah scrolls (except for some older ones

from Yemen), are based on the Masorettes of Tiberias.

Ben Asher and Ben Naftali

The pinnacle of the Tiberian Masorettes’ work was done in the 9th and 10th century. The most prominent among them was Aaron ben Moses ben Asher, “ben Asher,” whose work was taken to be the most authoritative., His father Moses ben Asher was also important, but the second most prominent Tiberian Masorete was Moses (or sometimes, Jacob) ben David ben Naphtali.

Entire treatises were created setting forth the differences between ben Asher and ben Naphtali, and where they agreed with each other but disagreed with other Tiberian Masorettes. Manuscripts are pored over to calculate a percentage of ben Asher as opposed to ben Naphtali content. And some scholars feel that ben Naphtali more faithfully reflects the work of the father Moses ben Asher, for whatever that’s worth.

But we don’t know why they came to different conclusions. In fact, we don’t even know if ben Naphtali was a real person or even a real school. That “ben Naphtali” might have been instead a list of variants.

We also don’t know why the work essentially stopped with ben Asher. Masorettes continued working for centuries, but their work was just derivative, copying operations. Was it considered that ben Asher had completed the task? Or did they just decide things could go no further?

Unresolved Issues

Some scholars believe that certain matters just could not be resolved as to which was correct and which was variant. On Shabbat morning, have we “worshipped” or “worshipped”? Which shall be the verdict of the “decision maker”? Or is that “decision

-maker”? These are two of the very issues Masorettes had to deal with: the matter of the missing/extra letter, and when words should be joined by a hyphen (called a *makkaf* in Hebrew).

Jews or Karaites

Finally, it’s not clear whether these Tiberian Masorettes were even Jews. Whether ben Asher, the most important of the Masorettes, was or was not a Karaite has been debated for decades. There’s even a book, *Ben Asher’s Creed: A Study of the History of the Controversy*, which deals in substantial measure with that debate (as of 1977).

My impression is that at present the majority view is that ben Asher was a Karaite. The Karaites after all were completely focused on the Bible, and had no use whatsoever for Talmud, and the same could be said for the Tiberian Masorettes. Indeed, the Masoretic Text they assembled is in places at variance with Bible quotations appearing in the Talmud.

Juniper St. Collection

We are still collecting children's books for the [District Alliance for Safe Housing \(DASH\)](#). The organization provides relief to survivors of domestic and sexual violence, through emergency and long-term safe housing and homelessness prevention services.

DASH has requested [paperback books suitable for children ages 2-9](#), in new or in very good condition.

Please put your donations in the Juniper St. basket. The collection will end [March 5](#).

Baltimore/Washington Jews Between the World Wars

Cynthia Peterman

- Dodge Brothers automobiles for sale (\$500);
- Shops for millinery and shirtwaists;
- “Personal” ads keep you up to date on people’s comings and goings (“Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Engel of West Arlington are taking a motor trip to Poland Springs”).

These were some of the ads that filled a special New Year edition of *The Baltimore Jewish Times*, 1923-24. While the ads evoke amusement and nostalgia, the articles have a more serious tone. They explored “Why Ford Attacked the Jews and Discontinued,” “Is America Anti-Semitic?,” “Summer Hotels That Bar Jews,” “What Has Become of the Melting Pot?” and “The Jew and the University.”

The *BJT* cover features an image of a woman with flowing robes and the words “Equality, Opportunity, Liberty and Prosperity” around her head. She rises out of a cauldron engraved with “The Melting Pot,” and below the words “And God Hath Made of One Blood all Nations of Men.”



Why so much emphasis on loyalty to country and equality of all persons?

Some 1.4 million Jews had immigrated to the US between 1880 and 1910, and 1.1 million stayed. Fully 25% of New York’s population was Jewish! In 1923 the US had a Jewish population of 3.6 million, the largest in the world.

This massive immigration produced a backlash from American non-Jews who believed that the new immigrants were uneducated, unhygienic, and unable to earn a living. In 1917 Congress passed the first of a series of laws curbing immigration, requiring literacy tests and higher taxes.

That year the Dillingham Commission urged passage of a Quota Act, fearing large numbers of Europeans would immigrate to America during World War I. President Woodrow Wilson vetoed the bill, but in 1921, President Warren Harding signed similar legislation, the Emergency Quota Act, into law.

In 1924, Congress passed and President Coolidge signed the restrictive Johnson-Reed Act. It limited immigration to 2% of the total in 1890, before the height of immigration from eastern and southern Europe. An annual maximum was set at 150,000, 86.5% from western Europe, 11.2% from eastern and southern Europe, and 2.3% from other countries (Near East, Africa, Asia).

The curb on immigration reflected the social and economic discrimination that American Jews faced in the years following the Civil War. Laws and “gentlemen’s agreements” kept Jews from living in nice neighborhoods and visiting swank hotels. Despite their service in all of America’s military actions, Jews were accused of disloyalty and indolence.

Jews who had emigrated from Central Europe a generation earlier set up organizations to provide basic necessities as well as classes in

English and American culture for the new immigrants. However, they feared that the more traditional, Yiddish-speaking Jews from Poland and Russia would cause anti-Semitism to increase.

In 1920 the highly respected and admired automobile manufacturer, Henry Ford, began to publish articles in his newspaper *The Dearborn Independent*, entitled “The International Jew: The World’s Problem.” He accused Jews of conspiracy to control the world’s finances and of planning World War I, and included excerpts from the “Protocols of Elders of Zion.” Ford distributed bound copies of the 91 issues in which the articles appeared to Ford dealerships throughout the country.

In an interview for PBS’s “American Experience” on Henry Ford, Hasia Diner says the effect on American Jews was powerful. “It causes them to really question how really they’re being accepted as Americans. I think it had psychic damage... caused a kind of inward turning, a kind of fear of the larger society. I think it caused them to feel that they had to prove themselves, that it wasn’t just enough that they were sober, honest, hard-working citizens. They had to make these pronouncements about how American they were.”

The five articles, noted above, in the 1923-24 special edition of the *Baltimore Jewish Times* reflect the American world in which Jews lived in the 1920s.

“Why Ford Attacked the Jews and Discontinued”

This article was written by E.G. Pipp, editor of *Pipp’s Weekly* and former editor of *The Dearborn Independent* (“his manhood rebelled and he resigned his lucrative position when he was asked to conduct the anti-

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Baltimore/Washington Jews Between the World Wars (continued)

Semitic campaign"). Pipp claimed Ford ended his campaign against the Jews after Gaston Plantiff, Ford's New York representative, explained the impact on Ford's bottom line in New York "where Jews buy 75 per cent of the cars....The loss of thousands of car sales impressed Ford..."

In addition, rumors abounded that Ford intended to run for president. Pipp explained that "with Ford attacking them [Jewish communities]...naturally would be solid against him...and...what chance would he stand in New York, with its 45 electoral votes?"

"Is America Anti-Semitic?"

The unidentified author of this article attempted to explain popular resentment against minorities, including Jews. "[T]he reason why... Anglo-Saxon resentment of the foreigner concentrates on the Jew is his very eagerness to adapt himself to Anglo-Saxon standards.... [This eagerness] defeats us at our own game. It not only wins scholarships and prizes in the schools and universities; it solves problems and achieves business success."

Forcing Jews "to choose between assimilation with complete loss of group identity, and the establishment of entirely independent cultural institutions...is a defeat for the ideal of America as a harmony and symphony [sic] of the cultures of the world."

"What Has Become of the Melting Pot?"

The "loss of group identity" was a key element of the popular early 20th century concept of the "melting pot," based on a play of the same name by British playwright Israel Zangwill, which debuted in Washington in 1908. The play was a contemporary spin on *Romeo and Juliet*, featuring a

clash between Russian Jewish and Cossack families.

While today we live in an America of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity, America at the turn of the 20th century demanded that immigrants shed what made them different (language, culture) and assimilate into the culture of America. Jenna Weissman Joselit, professor of History at GWU, says that *The Melting Pot* "succeeded in generating a passionate and long-running discussion about one of the more intractable and controversial issues of modern times: the limits and possibilities of identity" ("Giving the Melting Pot Its First Stir." *The Jewish Daily Forward*, March 3, 2006).

The 1923-24 special *BJT* edition article entitled "What Has Become of the Melting Pot," was written by the prominent Jewish leader Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver. He called the Zangwill play "grotesque" for its rosy description of assimilation in America. Citing quotas imposed on immigration and on Jews attending higher education, Silver said "our melting pot theory, for one reason or another, temporarily, at least, has collapsed."

Silver wrote hopefully that "as for America, let us take heart. The America of 1922 is not the America of tomorrow. The America of klans, of immigration laws, of restrictive education, is not yet the America of the future...when men have learned to know the heart of democracy."

"Summer Hotels that Bar Jews"

The quotas cited by Rabbi Silver were in place in many walks of life: admission to colleges; hiring practices; and renting rooms at social clubs or hotels. In the article "Summer Hotels that Bar Jews" the writers identify the many reasons given by hoteliers for limiting the number of rooms rented to Jewish

patrons, or refusing to admit them at all. Some "number among their friends many Jews, hold the Jews in highest respect, would be only too happy to accomodate [sic] them if it were not for the fact that their non-Jewish guests have threatened or would threaten to leave the place if Jews are welcomed...."

The article includes hotel ads which refer to bans against Jews: "No consumptives or Jews are desired," "Altitude 1,860 feet. Too high for Jews," "Hebrew patronage is not solicited." The authors note that hotels which *did* open up to Jews "enjoyed tremendous popularity and registered splendid financial successes."

"The Jew and the University"

Up until the 1920s most universities admitted applicants based on an entrance exam. Quotas emerged because too many "undesirable" Jewish students of East European background passed the exams. Entrance requirements were developed which considered, among other things, athletic ability, geographic diversity and if parents were alumni. As a result, the percentage of Jewish students at Harvard dropped from a high of 28% to 15%. The quota at Yale was 10%; at Princeton, 2%.

Alexander A. Goldenweiser, the author of "The Jew and the University" in the *BJT* special edition, likened college quotas to "Shades of Tsarist Russia!" He described the characteristics which turn people against Jewish students. These include being "critical and argumentative...questioning the premises of a speaker or inquiring about the methods by which certain results were obtained. A most distracting habit!" He claimed the majority of Jewish applicants were atheist, and "even his atheism has a peculiar repulsive and shallow kind of

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Bar Mitzvah

My name is **Thomas Ethan Wolfson**. My bar mitzvah is March 7. I am a seventh-grader at North Bethesda Middle School, where my favorite classes are French and Algebra. I have two sisters, Margaret (16) and Rachael (9), a brother, Alex, (11), and a yellow lab, Ira.

I enjoy all sports, but especially tennis and baseball. This past year, I played on BCC Select Tigers at second base and pitcher. I also play on a rec basketball team and help to coach my brother's basketball team. I am a Chicago Cubs fan, and believe good things are on the horizon for the team this year. I enjoy Jewish humor and Seinfeld reruns.

For my bar mitzvah project, I volunteered at the Hebrew Home of Rockville, transporting residents to afternoon services and other events. I learned a lot working with the residents there. I have enjoyed getting ready for my bar mitzvah with my great tutor, Judy Cohen. I hope to see you at my bar mitzvah!



Baltimore/Washington Jews Between the World Wars (continued)

atheism.” Nevertheless he argued against quotas at universities since knowing they are not wanted, Jews would be completely segregated from their non-Jewish peers.

Not all the articles in this *BJT* special edition were about anti-Semitism. Several articles told about Jews and Christians working together for mutual understanding (this was 42 years before Vatican II's pronouncement *Nostra Aetate*). A lengthy article entitled “The Jewess Beautiful,” extolled the virtues of attractive, intelligent women past and present.

In “The American Jew and the World War,” Rabbi Lee J. Levinger of Wilmington, DE advocated for the American Jewish Historical Society to “collect the letters home, the

occasional published articles, as well as the materials gathered by workers of the Jewish Welfare Board” and publish a full account of Jewish participation in the war.

Sections of the edition were devoted to Jewish communities in the greater Baltimore region including: Cumberland, MD; Wilmington, DE; and Fairmont, WV. A list of congregations in Washington, DC includes:

CONGREGATION TIFEREETH ISRAEL
14th and Euclid Street, N. W.
L. DINOWITZ, President
M. GOLDMAN, Rabbi
SERVICES
Daily—Morning, 6.30.
Friday Evening—7.
Saturday—Morning, 9; Evening, 5.

And, as with any Jewish newspaper, the *BJT* offered the latest news on marriages, births, and deaths.

The special *BJT* edition is a glimpse into an American Jewish world that is long gone. Gone are the quotas, gentlemen's agreements, and other forms of discrimination. Jews today no longer need to prove our loyalty to America or shed our Jewishness in order to feel American. The fragile relationship of Jews and Christians has been replaced by interfaith dialogue. Jews have positions of influence and power in politics. Today nine senators and 19 Representatives are Jewish (9% in the Senate and 4% in the House). Jews comprise 5% of the 114th Congress (well beyond our 2% of the American population as a whole).

The *BJT* is a reminder of where we have come from as well as what we have to be grateful for as Jews in America.

Israel's Lira Coins

Simcha Kuritzky

Even though a Jewish government (*Va'ad Leumi*) operated under the British Mandate, it was not allowed to issue its own coins. When the State of Israel was established in 1948, the British withdrew the Palestine Currency Board coins and notes. Israel demonetized them on September 15, 1948, and replaced them with the small change notes and the aluminum 25 mils I described last month. Israel designed a new set of coins in July 1948.

Israel's coinage reflected the Hebraicization policy of the new state. Most of Israel's new coins had the same diameter as their equivalent Palestine coins but contained no English.

The obverse (front) had designs taken from ancient coins with the country name in Hebrew and Arabic. The reverse had the denomination and date only in Hebrew in an olive wreath. The only part most Europeans could read was the denomination in Western numerals. The denominations were also converted to Hebrew: mil became pruta, and funt (based on Yiddish) became lira.

The new coins and designs included an aluminum pruta featuring an anchor from an early Hasmonean coin, a bronze 5 pruta showing a lyre from a Bar Kokhba Revolt bronze coin and a bronze 10 pruta with an amphora from a large Bar Kokhba Revolt bronze coin.



Other coins were a copper-nickel 25 pruta with the same grape cluster from a Bar Kokhba Revolt silver coin shown on the 25 mils coin, a 50 pruta with a vine leaf from a First Revolt bronze coin, a 100 pruta portraying a palm tree from a Herod Antipas bronze coin, and a 250 pruta with three wheat stalks. The latter was based on the only existing First Revolt silver quarter shekel coin, though subsequently discovered coins showed the design was really three palm branches.



By 1951, the Anglo-Palestine Bank (originally founded by Herzl) was replaced by Bank Leumi as Israel's coin issuing authority.

The Bank decided it was time to issue coins for collectors as well as for circulation, so special silver 250 pruta coins using the same design as the circulating coins, and a new dollar-sized 500 pruta coin showing a

branch of three pomegranates from the First Revolt silver shekel were struck and sold. Special mint sets containing all denominations were sold to collectors the next year.



Israel's lira started with the same \$4 value as the British pound, but the British severely devalued their pound in 1949, and the Israelis devalued their lira even further, down to 55 cents in 1953. The first series of coins now contained too much metal for their value, and the 1 and 5 pruta coins were discontinued. In 1952, Israel introduced a smaller 10 pruta made of aluminum, with scalloped (wavy) edges.



In 1954, the Bank of Israel was established as the coin issuing authority, and issued new 25, 50, and 100 pruta denominations in nickel-clad steel, with the 100 pruta also shrinking slightly in size. The new 100 pruta proved to be unpopular, so the old composition and size were restored in 1955.

In 1957, Israel experimented with a round aluminum 10 prutot (using the

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Israel's Lira Coins (continued)

correct plural) and also the same design electroplated in copper (which quickly wore off in circulation), but returned to the scalloped design the next year. For all the pruta coins, the date shown was when the design was introduced.

Also in 1957, the Bank of Israel decided to replace the pruta with a new denomination equal to one hundredth of a lira. The Knesset passed the bill in 1959, and decided the new denomination would be called an agora (plural agorot).

Four new coins were issued in 1960. They also contained no English. The design side has Israel in Hebrew and Arabic, while the other just has the denomination and date in Hebrew.

The 3 ears of barley on the aluminum 1 agora was from a copper coin of Agrippa I. The brass 5 agorot shows 3 pomegranates based on a carving in a Capernaum synagogue. The brass 10 agorot shows the same date palm as the equivalent 100 prutot.



The lyre on the brass 25 agorot was taken from a silver zuz of Bar Kokhba. The agora uses a scalloped aluminum flan just like the equivalent 10 pruta, but much smaller. Unlike the pruta coins, the dates on the agora coins changed each year.



By 1963, Israel had devalued the lira to one-third of a U.S. dollar, and the Bank of Israel replaced the half and one lira notes with coins showing the ancient menorah used in Israel's coat of arms. Bowing to pressure by tourists, the Bank added the name Israel in English.



Complaints that the one lira coin looked too much like the half lira resulted in the Bank changing the lira design in 1967 to the same three pomegranate branch formerly used on the 500 pruta coin, though with a tiny coat of arms.

The Bank also added two eight-pointed stars based on Alexander Yannai's copper coins (called "the widow's mite" by Christians) flanking the denomination.



Continuing inflation caused the Bank to switch the 5 agorot from brass to aluminum in 1976 and the 10 agorot in 1977. The new 5 lirot coin was introduced in 1978. Like the lira, it contained a small coat of arms and the country name in English on the design side, and two eight-pointed stars surrounding the denomination.

The stylized lion was taken from a famous seal of Shema, Servant of Jereboam, found in Megiddo in 1904. This seal was portrayed on the 5 lirot banknote used from 1959-1972.



In 1970, the Knesset passed a law requiring the Bank of Israel to replace the lira with the sheqel. As the lira continued to lose value, the Bank decided to delay the name change until 1980 when they were ready to replace all the coins with smaller equivalents. The original sheqel and current new sheqel coinage will be discussed in part three.

Many of the lira coins have made their way to the U.S. in the pockets of tourists, and all types are available from coin dealers for a nominal amount. But don't try spending these coins on your next trip to Israel; the lira coins were all demonetized in 1980.

World Zionist Congress Elections

Joel Cohen

The World Zionist Organization is in the process of holding elections for the 37th WZO Congress. I would encourage every TI member to take part. With 11 slates running, you can certainly find a slate that represents your point of view. You can then vote *for* that slate, plus as an added bonus, you get to vote *against* the other 10 slates!

The following is a summary of each slate:

Mercaz

Since we are part of the Conservative movement, I should first mention Mercaz, the official slate of the movement, endorsed by every organ associated with Conservatives: the JTS, the USCJ, the Rabbinical Assembly, Masorti, Ramah, etc.

Its main plank is to support an open pluralistic society in Israel. Many TI kids have gone to Camp Ramah, which is associated to this slate. Dr. Arnold Eisen, the Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, heads the slate.

Hatikvah

Hatikvah supports a two-state negotiated solution (as does Mercaz), and opposes the BDS (Boycott, Sanctions, Divestment) movement, which has gained popularity in some quarters in the US. It is aligned with the Labor Party and Meretz, and includes the American groups Hashomer Hatzair, and Partners for Progressive Israel.

Some TI members have children who go to Camp Shomria, and many others have been associated with Hashomer Hatzair, which operates that camp. Folksinger Theodore Bikel heads the slate, which includes many familiar names such as Randi

Weingarten of the AFT, Debra DeLee of Peace Now, Daniel Sokatch of the New Israel Fund, and DC Rabbi Gerry Serotta.

Green Israel

Green Israel supports everything that our environmental committee could want.

Herut

Herut represents the Jabotinsky wing of Zionism, although you wouldn't know it from its very bland platform.

Religious Zionists

The Religious Zionists are supported by the Orthodox Union, Young Israel, and Yeshiva University.

American Forum for Israel

The American Forum represents Russian-speaking Americans.

Arza

Arza represents Reform Judaism and is supported by every arm of that movement, including NFTY, Hebrew Union College, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, as well as (interestingly) the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. Much of its platform is similar to that of Mercaz.

Zionist Spring

Zionist Spring is supported by Young Judea and the Baltimore Zionist Council, and its platform seems to represent motherhood and apple kugel.

Alliance for New Zionist Vision

The Alliance is a youth slate and definitely has the best graphics. If you like the idea of an Israel with great graphics, this is your slate.

World Sephardic Zionist Organization

This slate was founded by the late Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef, founder of SHAS, who believed that the Six Million were reincarnated souls of sinners, that Hurricane Katrina was a repayment for godlessness, and that Gentiles were created to serve Jews.

Zionist Organization of America

The ZOA slate, which is supported by Benjamin Netanyahu and the Wall Street Journal, is headed by Morton Klein, the president of the ZOA since 1993, and the person who revived it and moved it to the right.

On the slate is Jon Fox, a two-term member of the US Congress, who came in with Newt Gingrich's class of '94, knocking out Marjorie Margolies (ex-Mezvinsky).

For full information, including how to register (\$10, although last time it was \$4), the complete platforms and the full slates of each party, go to <https://www.myvoteourisrael.com/>

I mentioned people on the slates whose names are familiar to me. I am sure I missed names known to many others in the congregation. I urge everyone to go to the website, learn the issues and vote. If you can't decide, you should probably vote for Mercaz as Rabbi Seidel and God want you to. I voted Hatikvah and almost immediately got a terrible cold.

Upcoming Friday Night Minyan Assignments

March 6 (6 p.m.)

David & Stephanie Rubin
 Howard & Hannah Rubin
 Stephen & Jill Saletta
 Mark & Diann Saltman
 Lawrence & Pearl Schainker
 Eric & Shira Schechtman
 Daniel Schiff
 Michael & Mical Schneider
 Keith Secular & Susan Catler
 Paul Seltman & Jeanne Ireland
 Hershel & Judith Shanks
 Phillip & Ruth Shapiro
 Yvonne Shashoua
 Scott Shoreman
 Randy Showstack & Michele Zador
 Nathaniel Shyovitz
 Richard & Marjorie Siegel
 Yochanan Sullivan

March 20 (6:30 p.m.)

Morton Simon
 David & Rona Siskind
 Audrey Smith
 Aaron & Reva Snow
 Dan & Elizabeth Sokolov
 Frank Solomon & Laurie Russell
 Louis & Madge Lee Specter
 Phil & Dianne Spellberg
 Barry & Sari Siegel Spieler
 Gregory Stackel & Genevieve Dara Sapir
 Jeffrey & Julie Steinberg
 Lois C. Steinberg
 Jack Stone & Wilma Brier
 Herman & Malka Stopak
 Noam Stopak & Shelley Sturman
 Alexander & Laura Strashny
 Edwin Stromberg & Rose Ellen Halper

March 27

Jonathan Strum
 Marc Suddleson & Molly Surden
 Howard & Michele Sumka
 Gabe & Ruth Tabak
 JT & Naomi Taransky
 Kassahu Teffera & Melke Mengiste
 Jevera Temsky
 Neil & Rachel Tickner
 Michael Tilchin & Linda Greer
 David & Anne Crandall Tobenkin
 Peter & Rhoda Trooboff
 Paula Tucker
 Jonathan & Cathy Tuerk
 Allan & Judy Tulchin
 Daniel & Allison Turner
 Michael & Ruth Unterweger
 Mark Verschell & Elizabeth Leff
 Susan Vitale

April 17

David Wachtel & Jennifer Goldstein
 Harry Waldman & Susan Morse
 Marc Warshawsky & Vivian Seidner
 Matthew Watson & Ellen Cabot
 Marc & Deborah Weinberger
 Eric Weiner & Sharon Moshavi
 Jon Weintraub & Judith Heimlich
 Michael Weiss & Phyllis Stanger
 Jessica Weissman & Louise Kelley
 Dov Weitman & Sylvia Horwitz
 Alan & Cynthia Weitz
 Howard & Barbara White
 Louise Wiener
 Peter Winch & Denice Zeck
 Adam & Dorothea Wolfson

Ariel David Wolsztijn & Karen Lisa Silberstein
 Christopher Zeilinger & Ann Baker
 Benjamin & Monica Zeitlin
 Yonannes Zeleke
 Alan Zibel & Renee Gindi
 Diana Zurer
 Ellen Zwibak

April 24

Luis & Karen Acosta
 Andrew Afflerbach & Joanne Hovis
 Seth & Elaine Akst
 Miriam Alpern
 Jon Alterman & Katherine LaRiviere
 Robyn M. Altman & Brendan J. Doherty
 Timothy Anderegg & Lisa Fogel-Anderegg
 Leonard Bachman
 Sidney & Heike Bailin
 Lawrence Baizer & Elaine Lewis
 Paul & Esther Bardack
 Burt Barnow
 Mae Cooper & Gideon Bass
 Charles Baum
 Leonard & Joy Baxt
 Mark & Mona Berch
 Alex Berg & Mikah Goldman
 Bruce & Laurie Berger
 Carl Bergman & Margie Odle

Donations

ANNUAL APPEAL

Donor

Jeff and Miriam Davidson
Anita Isicson

BATHROOM RENOVATION FUND

Donor

Andrew Afflerbach & Joanne Hovis
Judith Berland
David (Carla) Cohen
Jared Garelick & Ellen Kramarow
Stephen & Shelly Heller
Andrew Reamer
Howard & Hannah Rubin
Ethan & Rachel Seidel
Paula Tucker
Allan & Judith Tulchin

Richard & Marjorie Siegel
Susan Vitale

In Honor of

Bernard & Debra Shleien
Deena Dugan

ETZ HAYIM FUND

Donor

David Hart & Lois Frankel
Michael & Mical Schneider

David & Judith Cohen
Morris Klein & Naomi Freeman
Morris Klein & Naomi Freeman
Marc Rothenbe & Ivy Baer

In Memory of

Pinya Cohen
Henry Freeman
Tirza Freeman
Paul N. Baer

GENERAL FUND

Donor

Morris Klein & Naomi Freeman
Phillip & Ruth Shapiro

Erica Raphael

In Appreciation of

TI accommodating
Segulah

Joseph & Kathy Davidson
Susan & Joseph Furman
John & Lynne List
Beila Organic

In Honor of

Jeff Davidson
Myrna Goldman
Mark Berch
Judy Tulchin's mother

GENERAL FUND (continued)

Donor

Jonathan & Helen Sunshine

Henry & Florrie Einhorn
Donatic Givalike
Murray & Jeanne Halfond
Susan Knight & Cal Carter
Jack Levy & Judith Bass
Rhonda Rose

In Appreciation of

Marjorie and Richard
Siegel

In Memory of

Malcolm Peterman
David Levy
Florence Meltzer
David Levy
David Levy
David Levy

HELPING HANDS FUND

Donor

Beth Naftalin

In Honor of

Tova Furman

HIMMELFARB 2.0 FUND

Donor

Howard & Hannah Rubin
Peter & Rhoda Trooboff

MARVIN CAPLAN SOCIAL ACTION FUND

Donor

David (Carla) Cohen
Jeffrey & Miriam Davidson

Eugene & Esther Herman

Myrna Goldman
Eugene & Esther Herman

In Honor of

Jed Alterman

In Memory of

Malcolm Peterman
David Levy

MOLLIE L. BERCH EDUCATION FUND

Donor

Gail Phillips

In Honor of

Mona Berch

(Continued on page 23)

Donations (continued)

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Donor

Stephen Meltzer

In Memory of

Stephen Garber & Lynne Snyder Jerry Rosenberg

SOCIAL ACTION CHRISTMAS DINNER FUND

Donor

Ethan & Rachel Seidel

YAHARZEIT DONATIONS (continued_

Donor

Faith Szydlo
Gisele Tawil
Jonathan & Catherine Tuerk
Michael & Marion Usher
Michael & Marion Usher
Perry Vinner
Avi & Devra Weiss
Avi & Devra Weiss
Charles & Nancy Wolfson
Diana Zurer

In Memory of

Ruth Breslow Young
Marie Amsellem
William David Miller
Harry Moses Lazar
Ruth Polacheck Usher
Jacob Janus
Michael Goldberg
Goldie Back Goldberg
Reuben I. Wolfson
Josephine Woll

YAHARZEIT DONATIONS

Donor

David & Felice Anderson
Charlotte Anker
Natalie Arosemena
Leonard Bachman
Rodney & Karen Brooks
Edward & Ruth Cogen
Jeff and Miriam Davidson
Marc & Karen Drazin
Marc & Karen Drazin
Esther "Terry" Eden
Esther "Terry" Eden
Esther "Terry" Eden
Ernie Englander
Tamar Hendel Fishman
Tamar Hendel Fishman
Tamar Hendel Fishman
Robert & Andy Herman
Irene Kaplan
Lillian Kronstadt
Alan Landay
Elihu Leifer
Fred Lipschultz & Diana Lynn
John & Lynne List
Kenneth Morris & Terri Zall
Stephen & Freda Resnick
Lawrence & Pearl Schainker
Lawrence & Pearl Schainker
Joseph & Nancy Schifrin
Sylvia Schlitt
Esther Silverman
Lester Stanfill & Roanne
Leidman
Lester Stanfill & Roanne
Leidman
Lester Stanfill & Roanne
Leidman

In Memory of

Amelia G. Radler
Jerry David Anker
Rebecca Gorewitz
George E. Bachman
Milton Finkelstein
Jennie Lippman
Ruth Davidson
Morris Tranen
Sidney Drazin
Morris Brown
Sidney Brown
Pearl Malcom
Beth Shulman
Fannie Fishman
Hana Sarah Handy
Isaac Handy
Dora & Morton Gerber
Albert Emsellem
Annie Naiman
Nathan Landay
Agatha Leifer
Audrey Lynn
Bess Swerdloff
Milton Zall
Albert Lopatin
Bertha Leah Charnow
Mollie Schainker
Isidore Schifrin
Ethel Feig
William Silverman

Myrtle Leidman

Victor Leidman

David Leidman

