

# THE JEWISH STAR

Independent and original reporting from the Orthodox communities of Long Island



VOL. 8, NO. 19

MAY 8, 2009 | 14 IYAR 5769

www.thejewishstar.com

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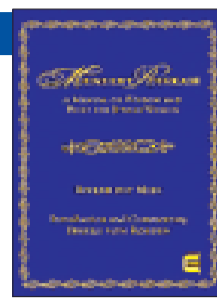
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### RIGHT ANGLE

## The art of growth

I don't often ride the New York subways, but not long ago I found myself leaving a train deep beneath Brooklyn, at the borough's cavernous Atlantic Street station. And I was surprised to be greeted, amid all the usual squalor and bustle, by a large and exquisite reproduction of "The Starry Night," Vincent Van Gogh's eerie painting. I'm no art aficionado but the famous rendering of a haloed moon and stars in a swirling blue firmament has always moved me. What in the world — or underworld — though, was a copy of the painting doing on a subway station wall?

Then, turning to find the track I needed, I found myself face to face with an unmistakable Monet pond scene. Nearby, I noticed with increasing amusement, were cubist visions by Picasso, Warholian soup cans and various other copies of paintings, drawings and photographs whose originals hang in museums.



"As long as we are honestly working toward our goal, our efforts bring us closer."

Or, as I discovered, a museum — New York's Museum of Modern Art. The posters were part of an advertising campaign to lure subway riders to visit the originals.

Clever, I thought, and a nice touch for a famously unrefined environment. Then my

thoughts drifted.

The reproductions before me were, at least to untrained eyes like mine, virtually indistinguishable from the originals. I'm sure the textures of the brushstrokes are evident in the actual paintings, and they alone, after all, were produced by the artists' hands. But great pains had been taken to present subway patrons with top-notch copies of the MOMA possessions. The results, had they been hanging on a museum wall, could probably have fooled most people.

Yet the originals are, well, authentic, and priceless; and the copies mere copies, worth only their printing costs (and copyright fees).

People, too, I ruminated, can be real or ersatz. Some are just what they seem. Others, though, are, in effect, cheap copies, pretending to be what they project but lacking authenticity of character, the brushstrokes of the soul.

There are, for instance, genuine leaders dedicated to advancing the interests of those they lead, and shameful imitations, demagogues donning mantles of power for their own personal gain. There are true scientists, open to wonder and dedicated to discerning natural truths; and there are counterfeit ones, duly credentialed but without the

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Rabbi Shafran is director of public affairs for Agudath Israel of America.

## Campaign trail through Woodmere



Photo courtesy Avi Lauer

Rabbis, community leaders and local elected officials met with Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice on Sunday, May 3 at the home of Aleeza and Avi Lauer of Woodmere. Rice reached out to the Jewish community as part of her bid for re-election in November. Lauer and Rice served together as assistant district attorneys in Brooklyn during the early '90s.

## Partisan sniping in Dist. 15 race

BY MICHAEL ORBACH

As a rule of thumb, Lawrence school board elections are never pretty, at least not recently. They're not even homely. And following the announcement that the Number Six school will close, the election scheduled for May 19 will be no different, if a meeting held last Tuesday in Inwood is any indicator.

The event dubbed a meet-the-candidate night was initially scheduled for the Five Towns Community Center, but the community center canceled the meeting when it was discovered that only two candidates, John Kinder and Barry Ringelheim, were invited.

"As a 501(c)(3) you can't have partisan politics," said Peter Visconti, Associate Director of the Five Towns Community Center. "What [the event] was supposed to be about, it wasn't about."

From now on the community center would only hold meetings that the center itself sponsors, he added. According to one of the rally organizers, the meeting was moved due to a "mix-up."

Two seats will be up for grabs, with Barry Ringelheim of Atlantic Beach challenging incumbent Uri Kaufman. Ringelheim is best known as the author of incendiary comments at school board

See PARTISAN, Page 7

## Going out on Topp

Leaving Woodmere for sunny Beverly Hills

BY YAFFI SPODEK



Rabbi Kalman Topp

Rabbi Kalman Topp of the Young Israel of Woodmere will leave the community this summer to become the senior rabbi at California's Beth Jacob Congregation of Beverly Hills.

After eight years at YIW, during which he moved up the ranks from assistant rabbi to rabbi, working alongside Rabbi Hershel Billet, Rabbi Topp says his fami-

ly's impending relocation is emotional.

"We are certainly moving with mixed feelings," he told The Jewish Star. "YIW is a wonderful community with many phenomenal people. The shul is always pulsating with tefilah, talmud Torah (Torah study), chesed, activism for the State of Israel and the people of Israel. In the time we've been here, we've created many strong relationships. There's no question that I am going to miss all the

members, learning with them, davening with them and sharing their life cycle events."

The new position at Beth Jacob "was a great opportunity and one that we couldn't pass up," Rabbi Topp said, explaining his family's decision. "Positions are hard to come by, and with our kids getting older, if we were going to make a move, we felt it needed to be

See TOPP, Page 8

## Teaching yeshivas to save money by going green

BY MAYER FERTIG

Saving money by going green was the topic of the second meeting between administrators of Jewish schools in Nassau County and Far Rockaway, and Yeshiva University's National School Affordability Team. Sixteen schools attended the gathering at Yeshiva Ketana of Long Island last week. Administrators heard from the Long Island Power Authority (LIPA), National Grid and other presenters.

"A number of schools are doing new construction," noted Eli Shapiro, regional coordinator for the school affordability program and a Far Rockaway resident. "There are retrofitting

opportunities where schools can save money" as well.

The utility companies offer free audits to help schools find efficiencies and potential savings, Shapiro said. Also, three schools in the Five Towns and Far Rockaway will receive consulting grants from YU. Three schools have already submitted applications, he said.

The meeting on April 30 got high marks from Shalom Siegfried, Yeshiva Ketana's director of development. He said he has already followed up with LIPA about rebates and other money-saving ideas mentioned at the meeting.

"The takeaway idea was that there are a

See YESHIVAS, Page 3

## Noam Shalit shares message of hope

BY MALKA EISENBERG

Noam Shalit, father of captive Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, spoke at a number of yeshiva high schools in the Five Towns and Brooklyn on Wednesday, Yom Ha'atzmaut. Shalit made time for the visits during a trip to the U.S. to meet with political leaders, government officials and members of Jewish communities to raise awareness and garner support for his son.

At HAFTR Shalit addressed a full auditorium of students in front of a



Noam Shalit

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### Shabbat

Candlelighting: 7:40 p.m. ■ Shabbat ends: 8:46 p.m.  
Torah reading: Parshat Emor

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**Dear That's Life,**

I was standing at the packed fish case at Gourmet Glatt last week talking to a friend when we both distinctly heard music, and it seemed to be coming from the fish itself.

Strangely, I was not surprised since the store does have a sound and light show near the produce — sounds of thunder, flashing lights and mist to keep the vegetables moist and fresh go on intermittently. I also vaguely recalled stories of a talking fish, but as I leaned closer, I pulled out a cell phone from beneath a package of salmon. Flipping it open and scrolling through the address book to find the owner, I dialed the number listed under "home." The appreciative owner asked me to leave it at the customer service desk.

A Five Towns fish story or a case of being in the right place at the right time?

MALKA EISENBERG  
Woodmere

**Dear That's Life,**

My father, the king of trivia and useless knowledge, likes to challenge my children with different questions. Often, the topic is American history, as it was in this case.

Hoping to elicit the answer 'Abraham Lincoln,' my dad asked my children, "Who freed the slaves?" But being the sharp yeshiva student he is, my son Reuvi exclaimed, "Moshe did!"

BONNIE KUPCHIK  
West Hempstead

**Dear That's Life,**

You weren't the one with the problem at the "luxury item" store. It was ridiculous for them to do that to you, and then expect you to pay for delivery. So don't listen when people tell you that you were the wrong one!

Here's my story — one that could only happen in the Five Towns:

Whenever I get my nails done, go out to dinner at Cho-Sen, or even when speaking to the custodians at school, I'm used to non-Jewish people saying Jewish things like "Shabbat Shalom" and even telling me what time is candle lighting. Last year at Cho-Sen Island, Eunice, the hostess even reminded us, "Don't forget to count sefirah!" But this latest experience was a shocker and different from the rest.

My mother needed some things from Costco so I decided I would accompany her. It was Chol Hamoed Pesach and all of my friends were away and I had nothing better to do. We finished shopping, and on our way out the friendly African-American security guard who checks the receipts checked ours and exclaimed, "Have a good yontif!" This comment made my day. Not only do workers in Kosher restaurants and the nail stores, and the custodians in our Jewish schools, learn some Hebrew catch phrases, but even the workers at Costco! After we packed the groceries into the car I looked at my mother and said, "Mom, that would only happen in the Five Towns!"

ANONYMOUS  
(JUST KIDDING),  
DAHLIA HONIGSFELD  
Woodsburgh

If something happened to you "that could only happen around here," you've got to share! Was it funny? Outrageous? Hopefully, it wasn't too painful. No matter what, if you type it up and sent it to [letters@thejewishstar.com](mailto:letters@thejewishstar.com) you'll have a chance to win a \$25 gift certificate to Burger's Bar on Central Avenue in Cedarhurst — in other words, you could win an outstanding meal at one of Nassau County's most popular kosher restaurants.

Submissions should include your name, your town, and your daytime and evening phone numbers. Sorry, but anonymous submissions cannot be considered. All decisions by the editors are final and all submissions become the property of The Jewish Star.

In case you were wondering, Burgers Bar is under the supervision of the Vaad Hakashrus of the Five Towns and Far Rockaway, and plays music you can find on MLW's iPod.



**IS THE WINE WORTH THE MONEY?**

*Chateau Le Crock*  
**2001**

BY ADAM NEUSTADTER

Never does a week pass without someone asking me to recommend a wine. Don't get me wrong, I love to do it. The hardest question I get though, is, "What would you drink?" Never does that conversation come than before the Passover Seder. As I am a "last minute" type of guy, I usually don't decide until right before. So, to everyone who will ask me next year, take note now. This past Pesach I drank the Chateau Le Crock, St Estephe 2001. Yes, that's the name. If you don't like it, blame the French.

This wine requires a little bit of factual knowledge. The Chateau is owned by the same owners who produce Chateau Léoville-Poyferré, a world class wine at many times the price (worth the money, by the way). The Le Crock is truly an elegant wine, having the depth and complexity that it should. I allowed the wine to sit for two hours before I drank the first cup. While I did finish the whole cup, I admit to doing it slowly and enjoying the wine, as opposed to the chugging that often occurs.

Surprisingly, the wine opened up even further with soft fruit as well the common earthy fla-

vors and velvety textures which much of the wine producing world, unsuccessfully, tries to achieve.

The complexity of the wine continued to develop even at the third cup. While it may have continued until the forth, I must report, with bitter sweetness, the wine did not make it that far.

Rather than digress to a lengthy discussion of my drinking habits, I will get straight to the point. Is the wine worth the money? At \$50 or less, yes. However, 2001 is becoming hard to find. Furthermore the life of the wine really begins to be determined by proper storage. As it is a 2001, it is difficult to know where it has been kept and for how long.

Disclaimer: This should be taken as an indicator for all of their vintages. Each one needs to be tasted. It's a dirty job, but someone has to do it. Once again, you guys are lucky I'm here for you.



Adam Neustadter teaches about wine at the Jerusalem Culinary Institute in Mesilat Zion, Israel. He was a sales executive for the Royal Wine Corporation for 15 years until his aliyah in 2006. He and his family live in Modiin.

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**THE JEWISH STAR**



### HAFTR reuse-a-shoe drive

HAFTR Middle School celebrated Earth Day by participating in Nike's Reuse-a-Shoe program. Used sneakers are collected, recycled and used to make outdoor parks and athletic playgrounds across the United States. Learning to make "Something From Nothing," students collected and donated over 100 pairs of sneakers in the one day effort (top). Some seventh graders also participated in a challenge to make something useful out of used pizza boxes and items like water bottles and plastic caps. Projects included a checker board, the scales of justice, a birdhouse (below) and bowling alley.



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## TAG plans new classrooms; larger expansion on hold

BY MAYER FERTIG

wryly.

Torah Academy for Girls in Far Rockaway is constructing three new classrooms that it hopes to have ready for students in September. The project is a scaled down alternative to major construction that the school planned then put on hold late last year when the effects of the economic downturn became clear.

"Thank G-d our mechanical engineer was running behind schedule so we don't have a hole in the ground," Executive Director Shmuel Reisbaum said

Enrollment in the preschool is expected to be up by 25 percent for the new school year, he said, "and that's mostly because of siblings."

Very few families are new to the school altogether because there just isn't room in the current facility. There is a "desperate need" for more space, he said, and even with three new classrooms going up above existing office space, "we've taken only those families that we can't say no to," because their older children are already TAG students.



Photo courtesy Yeshiva University

Harry Bloom, newly named director of planning and performance improvement for YU's Institute for University-School Partnership.

## YESHIVAS GOING GREEN

Continued from Page One

lot of things that yeshivas can do to help themselves in these difficult economic times," he said. He gave the YU team high marks for "professionalism" and a "proactive approach."

"The meeting was good," said Shmuel Reisbaum, executive director of TAG. He also followed up on tips offered by the energy companies and contacted a company that reviews utility bills for possible additional savings.

A downside is that "for a lot of these [conservation ideas] you have to be in a position to spend money to save money. The problem is the schools don't have money today. We're all struggling to survive. For example, I can't think about a \$100,000 lighting project just because they're going to give me \$50,000. You still have to spend \$100,000," he explained.

Reisbaum noted that TAG has "been thinking along the green lines for quite some time already. Two to three years ago we went green in terms of our cleaning chemicals — the floor wax and cleaner we use."

The school's construction plans, now on hold [see article above], also have a significant energy saving component. "We were going to have rooftop play-

grounds. We were going to have lawns and rooftop gardens," Reisbaum said.

The meeting was held in a building that Yeshiva Ketana just opened last September and, according to Siegfried, the LIPA official who was present noted that care had been taken "in terms of the right lighting, and LED exit signs, and [the school had] done our homework ... the right things in terms of cost savings and ecological concerns."

Participating schools included B'nos Bais Yaakov, Bnot Shulamith, Brandeis Academy, HAFTR, HALB, HANC, Mesivta Ateres Yaakov, Mesivta of Bayswater, Sh'or YOSHUV, Talmud Torah Siach Yitzchok, Torah Academy for Girls, Yeshiva Darchei Torah, Yeshiva of Far Rockaway, Yeshiva Gedolah of the Five Towns, Yeshiva Ketana of Long Island and Yeshiva of South Shore.

Shapiro praised all the schools that were at the meeting.

"Sixteen schools from incredibly diverse backgrounds working toward the common goal of school affordability is really remarkable," he said.

The meeting is planned for early summer. The topic will be determined by the results of a survey being sent to the school administrators.

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# THE JEWISH STAR

Independent and original reporting from the Orthodox communities of Long Island

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## OPINION

# Putting it in plain English

### Editorial

Someone who watched news coverage of Israel's military action in Gaza last year remarked on Israel's choice of a non-native English speaker, a relatively junior officer, to defend Israel's war aims and actions to the Western world. The young woman was one of many detailed to the care and feeding of the media and there was nothing remarkably wrong with her performance before the cameras. On the contrary, she more or less held her own under questioning by reporters and anchors, some of whom were impressively uninformed about the Middle East. Still, English was not her first language and she was not able to express herself as ably as a spokeswoman must in such a critical situation.

This was hardly unique. One consul general posted to New York in the '90s, a political appointee, spoke such terrible, painful-to-follow English that one all-news radio station more or less stopped inviting him on the air except when absolutely necessary. Hardly an ideal choice of representative for a country often misunderstood, criticized and sometimes vilified in the

media.

On the flip side, those who remember the first Gulf War in 1990 recall how an American-educated Israeli named Benjamin Netanyahu shot to fame. In those early days of cable news Netanyahu was a regular on CNN, and on CBS, NBC and ABC, speaking to Americans and other Westerners in a language they could understand: their own. Netanyahu was a natural on camera; he could have anchored the news instead of commenting on it.

Netanyahu is prime minister again and, again, he has appointed an American-born English speaker to be his ambassador to Washington. Dore Gold, a Connecticut native, held that post between 1997 and 1999. This week it was announced that an American oleh (immigrant) named Michael Oren — born Michael Bornstein in upstate New York in 1955; raised in New Jersey — will be the next ambassador. Oren was a paratrooper in the IDF, a

military historian and author considered the authority on the military and diplomatic history of the Middle East, and is a senior fellow at the Shalem Center, a research and educational institute in Jerusalem. As a reservist during the Gaza conflict he was a military spokesman, just like the young officer described above. Some consider him unsympathetic to Jewish communities in Yehuda and Shomron; others see him as the greatest thing since sliced bread. Also in his past: he also lost a sister-in-law to a suicide bomber in Gaza.

Oren's background and skills made him just the sort of spokesman Israel needed on TV during a war and, in our opinion, just what Israel needs in Washington now.

But the real question is this: with so many American-born and educated immigrants, and so many English-speaking children of immigrants, why does any Israeli who doesn't speak American English ever represent Israel in the American media? Not everyone is a Benjamin Netanyahu but there is no shortage of well-spoken Americans in Israel who would probably be only too happy to help. All Israel has to do is ask.

### Letters

## Concerned about Vaad's reputation

To the Editor:

Last week you published a letter from Rabbi Billet and his letter was very telling in many respects (Letters to the Editor; May 1, 2009). I believe it inadvertently strikes at the core of the present Vaad and Streit's problem.

He wrote, "I continue to believe that Streit's of 2009 is no different from Streit's of 1979... Each (shul) has their rabbi to direct their choice of products for Passover." That implies that some rabbonim who are part of the Vaad don't even trust the Vaad hashgacha for themselves or their shul. If there is deliberation among the Vaad rabbonim for

any reason, do they personally avoid following majority rule of their own Vaad? If so, what is the point of the Vaad being a unified halachic institution for kashrus in the Five Towns at all if it doesn't bring unity and harmony?

No level of self-scrutiny or number of meaningful steps can fix a Vaad Hakashrus that won't even rely on its own hashgacha or that of rabbinic colleagues. Since the Streit's ban seems to have been rescinded and we don't need to rekasher our homes, we need to know whether a single dissenter, a minority view or a majority view of the Vaad caused this — and why they changed their opinion? This has already cost them their reputation, Streit's unnecessary shipping fees, and much money in lost sales by local stores for refusing delivery on agreed-to shipments of goods. If someone caused this unnecessary problem and

machlokes, and if it wasn't authorized by the whole Vaad organization, the individual needs to be fired or quit with dignity to restore the sullied reputation of the Vaad HaKashrus of the Five Towns and Far Rockaway.

When I hear jokes about the Vaad of the Five Towns and Streit's from friends and family in New Jersey, California and Florida, an apology or another committee is just not sufficient to restore the Vaad's reliable reputation to the quality and level that it needs to be at.

ED STROH  
 Cedarhurst

### Letters

## Homeless in Cedarhurst

To the Editor:

I read Mitch Krevat's article "Still in Mitzrayim" (Guest Editorial; May 1, 2009) with great interest. Mitch is modest about his involvement in assisting the homeless Cedarhurst man. He e-mailed me on Motza'ei Shabbos before Pesach (I run the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty) to inform me of the situation and see how I could help. Met Council was able to raise funds to pay for his stay throughout the holiday, and through working with Ohel CEO David Mandel we began addressing some complex mental health issues.

Mitch single-handedly helped navigate the system and found a place for this man because he cared. Although the future status of this individual is uncertain due to his unwillingness to leave the Five Towns area (Met Council has residences available elsewhere), he found shelter and respite for the Pesach holiday due to the involvement of one caring neighbor.

If all of us can join Mitch Krevat in fulfilling the mitzvah of caring for our fellow Jews the way he cared for this man, perhaps these difficult times will become less bleak.

WILLIAM E. RAPFOGEL  
 Executive Director/CEO  
 Metropolitan Council on Jewish  
 Poverty  
 www.metcouncil.org

### FOR THE RECORD

An article about the Lev Leytman clown troop (When your nose is that red, it's Purim all year; March 6, 2009), incorrectly named one of the volunteers who was being honored by the organization. The Red Nose Award for Outstanding Community Service was given to Shlomo Dov Kopelowitz, not Yosef Dov Kopelowitz. The Jewish Star regrets the error.

# THE FIVE TOWNS COMMUNITY KOLLEL YOM RISHON

Presented by

Yeshiva University's Center for the Jewish Future — Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary,  
 in conjunction with Congregation Beth Shalom, Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst and Young Israel of Woodmere.

## SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2009

10 a.m.

Rabbi Hershel Schachter  
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11 a.m.

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FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BENCH

# A liar or a brother

It's not for mortal man to view what happens to another and opine as to whether he or she "deserved it" as a punishment, a reward, or any other possibility. We are cognizant of the measure for measure means employed by G-d, but it would be presumptuous on anyone's part to affix its application to a certain event.

Nevertheless, sometimes something happens that just makes you wonder if G-d is playing connect the dots right before our very eyes. So here goes. True story. I have a client who, to protect his privacy, I'll call Sidney (his real name is Ira). He was involved in a motor vehicle accident in 2007 that broke his left ankle and tore a tendon in his left shoulder. His vehicle was rear-ended by a truck. The accident occurred while he was working, so under the law he was able to file two separate claims. I represented him for his third



David Seidemann

party negligence claim against the truck owner and operator, and another attorney represented him for his workers compensation claim against the insurance company that covered his employer.

Given these facts, workers compensation would pay for his medical bills and his lost wages, and award him a lump sum payment for the amount of disability or loss of use to his left ankle and left shoulder.

Whatever he would recover in his third party negligence suit would be subject to a lien by workers compensation, meaning that if he would recover more than \$50,000 in benefits from workers comp, he would have to pay that overage back to the workers comp insurance carrier. As it was, he received less than \$50,000 in workers comp benefits, so whatever he receives from the negligence suit is his to keep minus my fee.

At any rate, he appeared in Workers Compensation Court approximately a year and a half ago sporting black pants and white shirt, and a yarmulke that was approximately the size of Madison Square Garden. Much to his delight, the workers compensation judge was also an Orthodox Jew, complete with a beard and yarmulke. Sidney (Ira) figured he had a slam dunk.

He finished testifying and exited the courtroom, followed a few minutes later by his attorney who remained in the hearing room to make his argument to the judge. Sidney (Ira) was crestfallen when his attorney met him in the hallway and said, "the judge said you are a liar; he doesn't believe a word you said and was confident that when you are examined by the workers compensation doctor, you will be proven to be a fraud."

Fast forward a few weeks. The doctor's appointment went well and the doctor issued a report which substantiated all of my client's claims. Weeks passed and once again Sidney was to appear before

the workers compensation judge, the same one who, weeks earlier, had been so dismissive and derisive of his claim.

In walk Sidney and his attorney, not knowing what to expect. What they witnessed was surely the last thing they expected to see. There, seated on the bench was the judge, his left foot elevated and in a cast, his left arm and shoulder in a sling. "Give this man the full amount he is entitled to" bellowed the judge as he pointed to my client.

When the hearing was concluded, Sidney approached the bench and hesitantly asked the judge, "What in the world happened to you?"

The answer stunned him. "I sit on the bench all day and, one after another, injured people come before me. And I believe every single one of them. Black, White, Hispanic, American, Mexican, it doesn't matter. They enter, I hear their story and my natural inclination unless proven otherwise is to lend credence to and believe their testimony. But when my own flesh and blood, my own 'yiddische breeder' (Jewish brother) stood



before me, my instinct was to treat you just the opposite. My instinct was to discount your account, my instinct was to disbelieve you and not only privately but in front of others. The judge continued. "Within

days of your first appearance before me, I was involved in an auto accident at which time I fractured my left ankle and injured my left shoulder. I am begging you for mechilah (forgiveness)."

My client responded to the judge, "No problem, I forgave you the minute I heard what you said about me weeks ago."

Take your pick. There are many lessons to be gleaned. Measure for measure? Perhaps. But that's too obvious. I, for one, am struck by two other lessons. Firstly, how often do we treat our own with more suspicion than is called for? Ask a psychologist or sociologist why.

The second lesson, the one I will carry with me, is the immediate forgiveness extended from Sidney to the judge even before forgiveness was requested. Sidney's ankle might be fractured, but his heart is as whole as whole can be.

David Seidemann is a partner with the law

PARSHAT EMOR

## A leader looking to marry

BY RABBI AVI BILLET

In the laws of Rosh Hashana (Shulchan Arukh 581:1), the Rema says the leader of the services, the chazzan (cantor) must be 30 years old and married. The Mishneh Brurah comments that just as there was always a second wife in the waiting for the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) in case his current wife should suddenly die, the representative of the community must be married so as to guard him from sin.

The Mishneh Brurah concludes this sentence with a caveat, however, that if a younger, unmarried, man is more representative of the community through his piety and devotion, he is to be preferred over a 30-year-old, married counterpart.

Let us examine the law of the Kohen Gadol. The first mishnah in Yoma says that in preparation for Yom Kippur, a "relief" Kohen Gadol is prepared in case the residing one becomes tameh, spiritually unfit to serve. Rabbi Yehudah suggests that a wife-in-waiting is also prepared in the event the Kohen Gadol's wife dies suddenly, lest he remain unmarried on Yom Kippur. The rabbis argue and say that preparing for such an unforeseen occurrence is unnecessary, for there would be no end (maybe the new wife would die, or another prepared wife would die, etc.)

In his comments on the mishnah, Maimonides says the law is not in accordance with Rabbi Yehudah, because we do not prepare for situations that are unforeseeable (i.e. a healthy wife of the Kohen Gadol dying without any indication of illness).

It would seem, in Maimonides' view, which merely sup-

ports the Rabbis who argue with Rabbi Yehuda, were the Kohen Gadol's wife to suddenly pass away, the Kohen Gadol might remain wifeless for a period of time, including Yom Kippur.

This is all very interesting. Did the Kohen Gadol need to be married in the first place?

The Torah tells us that when the Kohen Gadol marries, he must marry a virgin (Vayikra 21:13-14). She may not be a widow, a divorcee, or someone otherwise disqualified from marrying a kohen, only a virgin. Maimonides lists this as Positive Commandment #38, and goes into greater detail in the laws of Issurei Biah chapter 17.

The Talmud (Yebamot 59) discusses the age of the woman the kohen may marry — some argue she must be younger, while others say she may be a more mature woman. The Sefer HaChinukh (#272) discusses the mindset of the bride in question. The Netziv focuses on both of these points in his commentary on 21:13, recommending that his wife of choice be a bright, God-fearing woman.

But did she need to be present in his life? Did he need to be married?

In 21:14, Netziv says he could not be a Kohen Gadol without a wife. And yet the Torah suggests that when he marries, as a Kohen Gadol, he must marry a virgin.

There are those who question whether if, as a regular kohen, he married a widow (which is permissible, though a divorcee is prohibited from being married to a kohen), he would need to divorce her and find a new wife upon the occasion of his new appointment. Many say he need not, and he may retain his previously widowed wife, despite her not having been a "betulah" at

the time she married him.

But there is a point when a Kohen Gadol might be single and unattached.

This is not to suggest that a Kohen Gadol could have been appointed if he had never been married. If, like the Shulchan Arukh, we take our cue from the Kohen Gadol in appointing a cantor, perhaps, as per the Mishneh Brurah, we can reverse the rule and suggest that a kohen who is more pious and devout is more fit to serve than one who fits the criteria of age and marriage.

Even if it is not a valid halakhic argument, it is a valid parallel to draw. And the lesson is this.

There is no question that the ideal status of man in the Jewish community, and certainly for the perpetual continuity of our people, is to be married. The first commandment in the Torah (procreation) and the first chapter of Shulchan Arukh Even HaEzer (first words, in fact) make this point quite clearly.

But there are times when even the Kohen Gadol might be seeking a wife, and yet he is still the Kohen Gadol.

The singles and unmarried members of our community, and in particular the ones who have "demonstrated piety and devoutness" have much to share and should be embraced and encouraged to be leaders in our community. And for those who seek hard enough to play this communal role, perhaps their being in the spotlight will help those who are looking to find the spouses they seek — especially when they do not have (or create for themselves) the limiting criteria the Kohen Gadol has in his pool of potential spouses.

We welcome your comments to this article on our web site, [www.thejewishstar.com](http://www.thejewishstar.com)

## IN MY VIEW

Continued from Page One

sense of objectivity that underlies the genuine pursuit of truth.

There are deeply religious people who understand that there is a greater Power than any temporal one, whose will human beings must strive to discern and follow. And there are charlatans, pretenders to spirituality, sometimes obvious, other times not. It is no different in the observant Jewish community, where there are sincere men and women pledged to the laws and ideals of the Jewish religious tradition, but also people who dress the part but whose clothes are just costumes.

But those are the extremes; human nature isn't a dichotomy. There are also leaders who want to do what is right but succumb at times to doing what's best for themselves; scientists who are basically objective but occasionally allow their biases reign; religious people whose deepest

desire is to serve G-d but who are vulnerable to laziness, jealousy and anger.

That describes many of us, I think. But we aren't fakers for the fact. There is a great difference between pathology and imperfection, between being hypocritical and being human.

The Talmud relates how, for a period of time, under the leadership of the illustrious sage Rabban Gamliel of Yavneh, the study hall was open exclusively to students whose "insides were like their outsides" — who were precisely what they purported to be, righteous scholars.

Rabban Gamliel's successor, however, loosened the requirement — for the better, the Talmud implies.

So it would seem that even those of us who are less than perfectly coherent need not despair. My revered mentor, Rabbi Yaakov Weinberg, of blessed memory, noted that the Talmud's wording is instructive. We are not exhorted to bring our "outsides" into line

with our "insides" — to achieve spiritual purity and then adopt its signifiers — but rather the other way around. We are permitted, even required, to outwardly emulate those more spiritually accomplished than we, to embrace acts of observance and goodness, even if our souls are not yet as pure as our clothing. "A person is acted upon," in the Sefer Hachinuch's words, "by his actions."

And yet, the "insides like outsides" ideal clearly remains the ultimate goal, not only for scholars but for us all. We may not yet have achieved — and, as the imperfect creatures we are, may never achieve — full coherence, but we must strive for it all the same. The only excuse for not being there is that we're trying to get there. And as long as we are honestly working toward our goal, our efforts bring us closer.

How fortunate are we humans. A copy of a Van Gogh cannot ever, no matter how hard it tries, grow into the real deal.

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# ON THE Calendar

For a complete listing of upcoming community events, including items that didn't make it into the print edition, go to [www.thejewishstar.com](http://www.thejewishstar.com).

Greater Five Towns is offering two Yoga classes. The evening class is held on Mondays, beginning May 11 from 8-9 p.m. The fee for six sessions is \$80. The daytime class is scheduled for Tuesdays, beginning May 12 from 9:15-10:15 a.m. The fee

for seven sessions is \$90. For more information please call (516) 569-6733, ext. 222.

**Plainview** - The community is invited to join The Hebrew Academy of Nassau County (HANC-Plainview) at

their annual Spring Family get-together on Tuesday evening, Lag B'Omer, May 12, at 6:00 p.m. Please call (516) 681-5922 or e-mail [plainview@hanc.org](mailto:plainview@hanc.org) for further details and directions to 25 Country Drive.

**Cedarhurst** - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns, Orthodox Union and Jewish Community Council of the Rockaway Peninsula have scheduled a three part-series called "Navigating the Financial Crisis," presented by Five O'Clock Club Certified Career Coaches. The last two classes in the series will be on

Wednesday, May 13, and Thursday, May 21. Both seminars begin at 7 p.m. and are being held at the JCC, 207 Grove Ave. in Cedarhurst. Admission is free. For more information, please call (212) 613-8188 or visit [www.ou.org](http://www.ou.org).

**Cedarhurst** - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns is hosting a book review of "The Middle Place," by Kelly Corrigan on Thursday, May 14 at 10:00 a.m., to be held at the JCC, 207 Grove Ave. in Cedarhurst. For more information, please call (516) 569-6733.

**Lynbrook** - Congregation Beth David will host a Lag B'Omer event on Sunday, May 17 at Greis Park in Lynbrook. Join us for a festive holiday BBQ and picnic with softball and horseshoe games, and lots of food and drinks. If rain, event will be held at Congregation Beth David, 188 Vincent Ave. in Lynbrook. Cost is \$12 per adult, \$6 (under age 13) or \$25 per family. Deadline to reserve is Tuesday, May 12. For more information, please call (516) 599-9464.

**Lawrence** - Nash Kestenbaum of Bikur Cholim of Long Beach is celebrating 25 years of community service at its annual dinner on Sunday, May 17 at 6:00 p.m. at the Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst, honoring Lea Eisenberg. For more information, please call (516) 239-3951.

**Hempstead** - The Nassau County Department of Health Emergency Preparedness Program invites residents to come to a community meeting to learn how to prepare for an emergency, "Strengthening our Training on Emergency Preparedness" (STEP) on Tuesday, May 19 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. at the Hempstead Community Center, Kennedy Park 335 Greenwich Street. Come learn how to prepare for you, your family and your community. Creole and Spanish translators are available. The Department of Health will distribute a valuable and free "Go-kit" packed in a sturdy backpack that will start you on "self-preparedness." Refreshments will be served. Please RSVP by May 18 to Fayola Creft at (516) 573-0752 or e-mail [fayola.creft@hnsnassaucounty.us](mailto:fayola.creft@hnsnassaucounty.us)

**Lawrence** - The JCC of the Greater Five Towns continues its Israeli Film Festival with "Srugim," which can be seen Wednesday, May 20 at 8:00 p.m. at Temple Israel, 140 Central Ave. in Lawrence. The film, in Hebrew with English subtitles, focuses on the relationships between the young, single orthodox community in Jerusalem. The fee is \$10. For more information, please call (516) 569-6733.

**Cedarhurst** - The National Council of Jewish Women Peninsula Section will be holding a 5K Fitness Walk through Cedarhurst and Lawrence on Sunday, May 31. The purpose of the walk is to inspire members of the Five Towns community and surrounding areas to get into better shape this spring. To attain this

goal, a fitness and motivational plan will be provided through the NCJW web site, [ncjwfitnesswalk.com](http://ncjwfitnesswalk.com), to help community members get started and build their endurance over an eight-week period. There will also be weekly training walks beginning on April 7 at 6:30 p.m. at the Hewlett High School track. The sessions will be open to all registered participants, to prepare for the 5K (3 mile) walk. Walkers of all levels and abilities are encouraged to participate. To register for the event, contact the NCJW office at (516) 569-3660 or visit [ncjwpeninsulasection.org](http://ncjwpeninsulasection.org).

**Lynbrook** - Congregation Beth David is hosting a Plaza Player Productions of "Camelot" followed by a dairy dessert (including making your own sundae) and meeting the cast, on Sunday, May 31, at 188 Vincent Ave. in Lynbrook. The cost is \$25 per person, and \$12 for children 13 and under. For more information, please contact (516) 599-9464 or [cbdooffice@verizon.net](mailto:cbdooffice@verizon.net).

**Oceanside** - The Women's Circle from the Chabad of Oceanside is looking for vendors to rent space at a flea market on Sunday, June 7. Space is \$40 per table with two chairs. For more information, please e-mail [jbhakim@verizon.net](mailto:jbhakim@verizon.net).

**Wheatley Heights** - The Friedberg JCC will hold a "Walk to Help the Sun Rise for Children with Cancer," on Sunday June 7. Proceeds from the event will go to Sunrise Day Camp, the only dedicated day camp in the nation for children with cancer and their siblings. The walkathon, presented by The Laura Rosenberg Foundation, will be held at the Henry Kaufmann Campgrounds on Colonial Springs Road in Wheatley Heights. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. More than a "walk," the Walk to Help the Sun Rise will be a fun, non-competitive morning for the entire family. There will be 3 different courses to choose from so you can pick your ability level and join in the fun. Games, prizes, entertainment, food, character appearances, pony rides and more will be part of this special day. For information, please call Amy Pilott, Walkathon Director at (516) 766-4341 ext. 161 or visit our web site at [www.sunrisedaycamp.org](http://www.sunrisedaycamp.org).

**East Hills** - The Sid Jacobson JCC is holding its 3rd Annual 5K Run/Walk and Children's Fun Run on Sunday, June 7 from 9 a.m. until 12 noon, rain or shine. The professionally timed and USATF certified course is for all ages and fitness levels and includes an award ceremony, great raffles, T-shirts for participants, and free childcare. The event will take place at the JCC, 300 Forest Drive in East Hills. Register online at [www.sjcc.org](http://www.sjcc.org) or [www.Active.com](http://www.Active.com). For more information on sponsorship or participation, please contact Adrian Sadowski, Personal Training Director at (516) 484-1545, ext. 153 or [asadowski@sjcc.org](mailto:asadowski@sjcc.org).

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# Collecting tzedaka just got easier

BY YAFFI SPODEK

The Vaad Hatzedaka of Far Rockaway and the Five Towns has upgraded their services to a new computerized system that is intended to streamline the certification process for individuals and organizations collecting charity.

Using a system created by the Vaad Tomchei Shabbos of Lakewood, a new database has been created which contains close to 3,000 names of institutions and individuals worldwide who have been approved and issued a certificate rendering them as valid collectors of

tzedaka.

"Until now, we have been interviewing collectors and verifying information manually, and every community has been doing their own checking," said Rabbi Avrohom Liss of Lawrence, the newly appointed administrator of the Vaad Hatzedaka. "Before, there was no interaction between the communities, and there was a lot of duplication of research, work and effort. This is a wonderful idea that will streamline the entire process."

If a collector has been to

one community and has already been checked out and issued a certificate there, the Vaad of another community can find out by simply looking the person up in the database, which contains passport information, pictures and other identifying details, as well as a comments section. If it is a person's first time collecting, they will be entered into the database by the Vaad of that community after they are approved, so that their name will be in the system forever, enabling other Vaads in other

communities to check their credentials when the time comes.

Rabbi Liss, who has taken over the helm of the Vaad following the 17-year tenure of Rabbi Hersch Leib Gefen, explained that access to the database is strictly controlled, and it is only open to Vaad administrators, to ensure complete confidentiality.

In keeping with the Vaad's long-standing tradition, certificates issued to collectors will retain bright yellow appearance and will have a security holograph bearing the Vaad's logo, in addition to a color picture of the collector.



## PARTISAN SNIPING

Continued from Page One

meetings. Abel Feldhammer, an attorney in Cedarhurst, is officially running unopposed for the seat being vacated by board member Michael Hatten, but John Kinder, a resident of Inwood, is expected to run as a write-in candidate.

Expressing frustration as they walked to a nearby park, dozens of parents complained about the closure of the Number 6 school.

"It's just unfortunate. Education shouldn't be for the wealthy," said Norma Gonzalez of Inwood. "If a child doesn't grow up with a good education than they're at a disadvantage. They'll start doing drugs and robbing and that'll affect everyone."

"Where is the girl's soccer team going to play?" asked a middle-aged woman who declined to be named. "Both my kids went to the after-school programs, where will that go?"

Responses ranged from valid concerns to blatant racism as one man said that there would be "blood on the streets" if the "Orthodox school board" remained in control and the Number Six school is sold.

"They're going to come after kids wearing yarmulkes," he said.

The meeting was organized by Save Our Schools, a group that opposes the current school board and has been trying to drum up opposition to a plan to move the Bnot Shulamith school to Inwood. The school met with Hempstead zoning officials last week.

The decision to close the Number Six school was announced at a board meeting three weeks ago. The decision, according to school superintendent Dr. John T. Fitzsimons, was based on economic factors and a steadily decreasing enrollment in the district.

The decision has been criticized by parents since the Number Six school is the largest in the district, with the greatest number of amenities. The rationale for

the closure was not discussed at the meeting which devolved into a shouting match with members of the audience directing anti-Semitic slurs at the board members.

Andrea Oberstein, whose children attend the Lawrence School district, expressed disgust about the meeting. School board members ignored the audience and text messaged during comments, she said, even when school children asked questions.

"It's one thing to disregard adults," Oberstein said. "It's another to disregard a six-year old."

As residents sat on the park benches and on the jungle gym, they discussed plans to gain votes — using Facebook, a voter registration drive in Inwood, even situating people next to voting booths.

Ringelheim refused to speak to The Jewish Star at the meeting since Jewish newspapers "don't print" his letters. During his speech he hinted at conspiracy theories as to why the board members chose the Number Six school, then added that he wanted to make "Lawrence a place where people want to move."

Kinder said that he believes in openness between the board and the parents. "There should be a place where we, as parents, can voice our concerns."

Kinder, who is African-American, stressed that race was not a factor and also publicly rebuked the audience that attended the last meeting.

"It got out of control," he said.

Michael Hatten, the school board member who is not seeking reelection, was the only Orthodox Jewish person who participated in the session.

"I want a united community," he explained. "The only thing I care about is getting a good educational experience for our students. I'd like to see us open a dialogue between the board and the community to try to work out the issues we face."

## Quick moving zip codes

Great Neck, Woodmere homes singled out as big sellers

STAFF REPORT

The Forbes Luxury Housing Index lists Great Neck and Woodmere among the top five neighborhoods on their list of "luxury movers," signifying that homes in those areas are selling more quickly than in other places.

An April 22 report on Forbes.com said the housing index tracks the 500 most expensive zip codes in the country using real estate statistics provided by Altos Research. The others in the top five are Redwood City, Calif. (listed as number one), Coral Gables, FL and Palo Alto, Calif.

While the complete index currently averages 115 days on the market, houses in the 10 fastest-selling zip codes sell in just 66 days, on average. Even though the median prices for homes in these luxury areas are relatively high, prices are dropping as non-motivated sellers pull their homes off the market, leaving only sellers eager to

negotiate with buyers who have fewer choices.

"It has to do with a lot of the lower quality homes coming off the market," said Jonathan Miller, president of Miller Samuel, a Manhattan-based appraisal firm. "In a high-priced market like Great Neck, the lower days on market just shows the willingness of people to pull things off the market rather than take a price cut."

In places like Great Neck, with a median price of around \$1 million, sellers should expect to negotiate downward this selling season. Further cuts would bring prices within range of new federal loan limits, a stimulus for sales, Miller explained.

"With a 20 percent down payment, a \$915,000 home fits within the \$729,750 Federal Housing Administration loan limit," he said. "The disparity between availability of conventional financing and jumbo financing will affect a lot of these markets."



## Long Island NCSY Champs

Long Island NCSY's 3rd annual basketball tournament on April 26 featured 24 teams playing on courts around the neighborhood. As the race for the 5 on 5 championship was running, a simultaneous 3 on 3 tournament was going on for men over 35. As the afternoon progressed, Lawrence High School filled with spectators coming to watch the championship game and participate in the free community BBQ sponsored by Supersol. Entertainment included magicians, face painting, arts and crafts, cotton candy and balloons. At 5:00 p.m., attention shifted to the main court, where Avi Esses and his team claimed the title by defeating "The Choppers," led by Hillel Olshin.

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## RABBI TOPP

Continued from Page One

now."

Like YIW, Beth Jacob is a vibrant, thriving shul with a rich history, and is home to over 750 member families in the heart of Beverly Hills and the Pico-Robertson area of Los Angeles. The congregation has a diverse population, incorporating a Bnei Akiva branch as well as a Lakewood kollel, a unique mixture of people whom Rabbi Topp is excited to meet, while at the same time acknowledging the challenges he may face going forward.

"I will strive to present Torah in a way that touches all the diverse members and to present them with a vision and an ideal," Rabbi Topp said, outlining his expectations for what lies ahead, "a vision that makes them better Jews, adds meaning to their lives and brings the people together to become a stronger community."

Rabbi Topp will take with him fond memories of his tenure in Woodmere and of the relationships he shared with both colleagues and congregants.

"I have always tried to present Torah in a sophisticated and relevant way," he noted. "I've always attempted to be warm, inclusive and open-minded. Instead of putting people down through mussar (rebuke), I've tried to raise people up by showing them what they are and what they could become."

As for his personal legacy, "I'll leave it to others and to Hakadosh Baruch Hu (G-d) to decide," he said.

Members of the shul are sad to see Rabbi Topp and his family go, and feel it will be difficult to find a worthy successor.

"I think it's a bittersweet day for the Young Israel," said Shlomo Zuller, the shul's president. "While Rabbi Topp and Jordana are moving on to a nice community and the opportunity for Rabbi Topp to grow in his career, the YIW is going to have a big void that we are going to have to fill. Rabbi Topp accomplished so much, from his personal relationship with the members to running the adult education program to just serving as the rabbi in the shul; he was so beneficial to so many that he will definitely be missed."

"As president of the shul, it really was an honor and a privilege to work with Rabbi Topp and see how much he did and how he did everything with a smile," Zuller said.

Others offered similar praise. "He is a young, innovative rabbi with very creative ideas," said long-time member Steve Wagner. "What is special about Rabbi Topp is that he has the ability to relate not only to the young married people closer to his own age, but also to the entire population of the YIW, which is a huge range. He will be sorely missed."

"As a member of the search committee who convinced Rabbi Topp to come to the shul, I am

## Rabbi Weinreb at YIW

BY YAFFI SPODEK

Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb will serve temporarily in August and September as an interim rabbi at Young Israel of Woodmere, working with Rabbi Hershel Billet to facilitate the transition involved in Rabbi Kalman Topp's departure.

Rabbi Weinreb recently became Executive Vice President emeritus of the Orthodox Union and says he now has "fewer responsibilities and much less work, and a lot of time of my hands."

"The shul approached me and said it would be great if I could fill in for August and September," he told The Jewish Star, "since Rabbi Topp is leaving to California."

The new position will technically begin on erev Shabbos Chazon and Rabbi Weinreb is scheduled to continue his rabbinic duties through Yom Kippur. Responsibilities will include giving shiurim and lectures, and "being available and accessible for whatever needs may arise and whatever comes along," Rabbi Weinreb said. Since Rabbi Weinreb lives in Manhattan, YIW is providing him and his wife Chavi with a house in Woodmere where they will stay.

"We felt that a shul of our size needs proper coverage during the summer months," said Shlomo Zuller, President of YIW. "We needed someone who would be able to step in right away, and be able to do the job, and Rabbi Weinreb has the prior experience from his work at the OU and as a pulpit rabbi in Balti-

more."

The interim appointment has been met with enthusiasm, Zuller said. "Our shul demands the caliber of a person such as Rabbi Weinreb, and our membership is very excited about having him."

Although the shul would ideally wish to hire a successor to Rabbi Topp as soon as possible, the search committee, co-chaired by Gerald Pinsky and Jacob Weichholz, realized that this could not be accomplished in so short a time.

"We knew that the search for Rabbi Topp's replacement would take a while, and we decided that if it took longer to find the proper replacement, we would wait it out," said Zuller. "Myself, and George

Wertheimer, the chairman of the board, pursued Rabbi Weinreb and felt he would be a perfect fit for what the shul needs at this time."

The shul has begun the process of considering candidates to succeed Rabbi Topp but will not hold "probas" (public try-outs for potential candidates) until some time after Sukkot.

"The search process is well underway," confirmed Weichholz. "We've received numerous resumes that we are vetting at this time. We hope to hire someone as soon as possible, but given the rapidly approaching summer and High Holidays, we can't be certain how soon we will be able to. But we are certain that Rabbi Weinreb will serve the community well during this time."



Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

particularly saddened by him leaving," commented YIW member Jacob Weichholz. "He served a valuable function as rabbi and many of the members grew very close to him and relied on him for various rabbinic functions. As co-chair of the search committee to replace him, these are some big shoes to fill, but we will do our best and we wish him much luck in his new position."

Rabbi Topp will assume his new responsibilities at Beth Jacob in August, and he is hoping for a smooth transition for his family and himself.

"We're hoping that the adjustment for the kids will be relatively easy," he said, pointing out that although the family has minimal ties to the West Coast, the allure of warm weather and nearby Disneyland are good selling points. "Right now the kids are moderately excited ... but I'm not sure if they realize yet that they will actually have to go school in L.A.," he added jokingly.

As senior rabbi, Rabbi Topp is to succeed Rabbi Steven Weil. He is relocating to New York to become executive vice president

of the Orthodox Union.

At Beth Jacob, Rabbi Topp will work together with Associate Rabbi Marc Mandel and Assistant Rabbi Uri Pilichowski.

Although he will have "a talented rabbinical staff and great members" in his new home, Rabbi Topp said, he knows that his Young Israel of Woodmere family will always remain close to his heart.

"I've had the great privilege to work with an excellent staff," he said.

"Firstly, I've had the unique privilege of working with and learning from Rabbi Billet and I thank him for that. I also want to thank Rabbi Dr. Aaron Glatt, [assistant to the rabbi], Rabbi Joel Jerozolim, [Executive Director] Danny Frankel and the office staff, Paul Silverstein and President Shlomo Zuller and his administration."

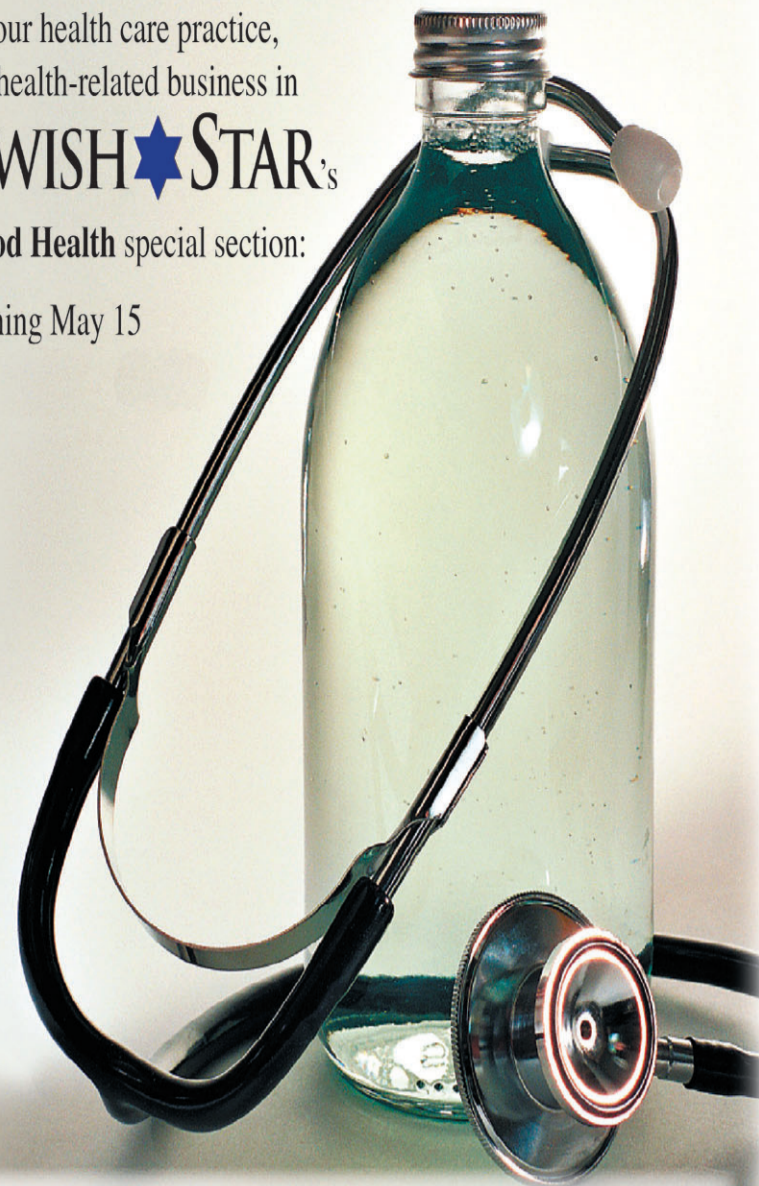
"We will cherish the memories," Rabbi Topp added, "and Jordana and I hope to hear besurot tovo (good news) from the community."

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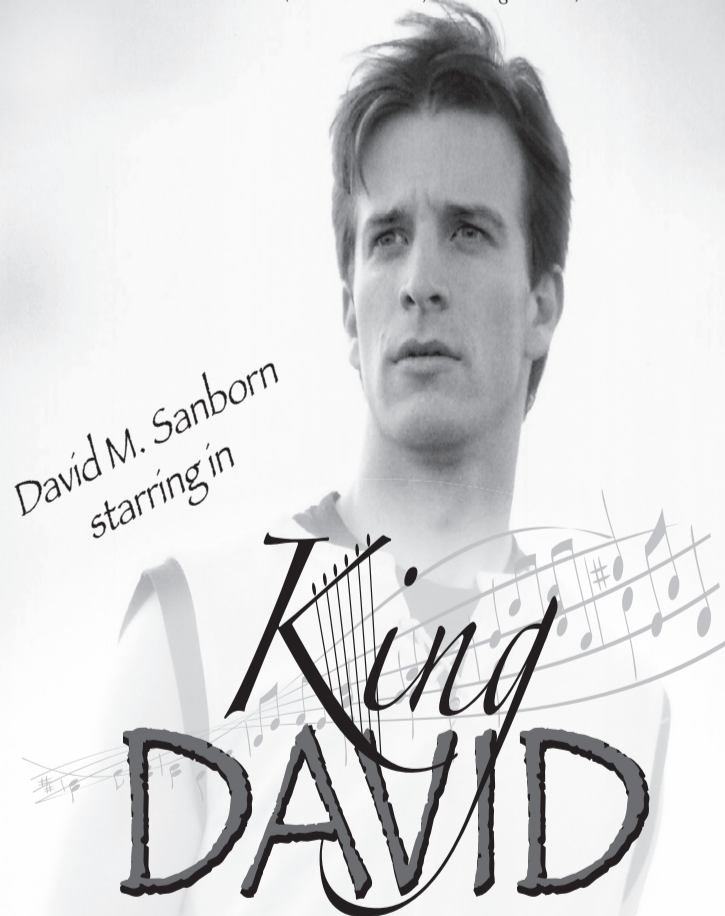
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THE KOSHER BOOKWORM

# Books as gifts for mom

"Ish imo v'aviv tira'u ... You shall each fear your mother and father."

This Sunday is Mother's Day. Should you by any chance forget to get mom the obligatory greeting card, the above admonition from last week's parsha kicks in: fear.

Here is your opportunity to avoid such an unfortunate situation; my advice is to get her a book. I am here to assist you in this with a choice that will be meaningful to her, both spiritually and intellectually.

For many of us, Yiddish has been the lingua franca for over 1,000 years. In that time a whole sub-culture of literature was developed by Jewish women in Eastern Europe that included a body of liturgy and meditations, all in the Yiddish language, all designed to address the spiritual needs of women. Called tkhines, these works were to be cherished by women with the same fervor that siddurim and chumashim were venerated by men.

Lost for genera-

tions and in disuse in the English speaking diaspora for the past two centuries, a revival of both interest and usage has generated new literature that has recently been published.

Yiddish is normally absent from the modern Siddur, but the Artscroll Women's Siddur, edited by Rabbi Dovid Weinberger of Cong. Sha'arei Tefilla of Lawrence includes in the Havdalah service the Yiddish rendition of "Gott Fun Avrohom," attributed to Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev.

According to Chava Weissler, "Many women regarded this prayer as the female equivalent of Havdalah: just as all the restrictions of the Sabbath ended for men as they recited Havdalah... so women could return to weekday work after reciting Gott Fun Avrohom." This Yiddish prayer would then be followed with "Baruch



Alan Jay Gerber

hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol," thus formally ending Shabbos for those women.

This siddur would make a great practical gift to the women of your household, mothers and daughters alike as well as sisters and aunts. And don't forget grandmothers and grand daughters. Rabbi Weinberger deserves a special "yashar ko'ach" for this unique liturgical contribution.

Recently the Jewish Publications Society issued two very unique books that hopefully will help revive both interest and practice in the kavanos and tkhines of previous generations.

These books are not just volumes containing prayers and meditations for women; rather, they are scholarly works containing detailed information on the histories of the liturgies, the personalities and the milieu in which they were written and recited.

The first, titled "Meneket Rivkah," by Rivkah bas Meir (Tiktiner) was originally published posthumously in Prague in 1609, 400 years ago this year. Unusual for her time, Rivkah was the first female Jewish author of a comprehensive work in Yiddish and one of the few whose work survived the passage of time.

This book includes her divrei Torah that she gave to other women, including her interpretations on the Torah, and halacha as a guide to unlettered and illiterate women in matters relating to familial relationships.

The introduction to this work consists of 58 pages plus 366 notes to the introduction, followed by an English translation that is footnoted in great detail.

The footnoting helps explain phrases and language that might prove daunting to the novice reader. In both the introduction and commentary, Dr. Frauke von Rohden does a superlative job in presenting a work of high quality. The reader should know

that this work was originally Dr. Rohden's Ph.D dissertation. Currently she is a senior research assistant at the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture at Leipzig University in Germany.

The translation from the original Yiddish manuscripts done by Samuel Spinner is found at the back of the book in its entirety, reset in clear lettering.

The next book is titled, "Seyder Tkhines: the forgotten book of common prayer for Jewish women," translated and edited with an exceptionally detailed and annotated commentary of 110 pages by Devra Kay.

This work first appeared in print in Amsterdam in 1648 and was reprinted within siddurim for several generations. The prayers include those for daily and Shabbos use, as well as for

fast days and High Holiday observance. Other tkhines are devoted for use by pregnant women, niddah, as well as for other life cycle needs.

The only drawback to this volume is the absence of the original Yiddish, some of which has unfortunately been lost to time. Otherwise, this is an exceptionally valuable work reflecting a time and era that deserves greater academic attention as well as popular study.

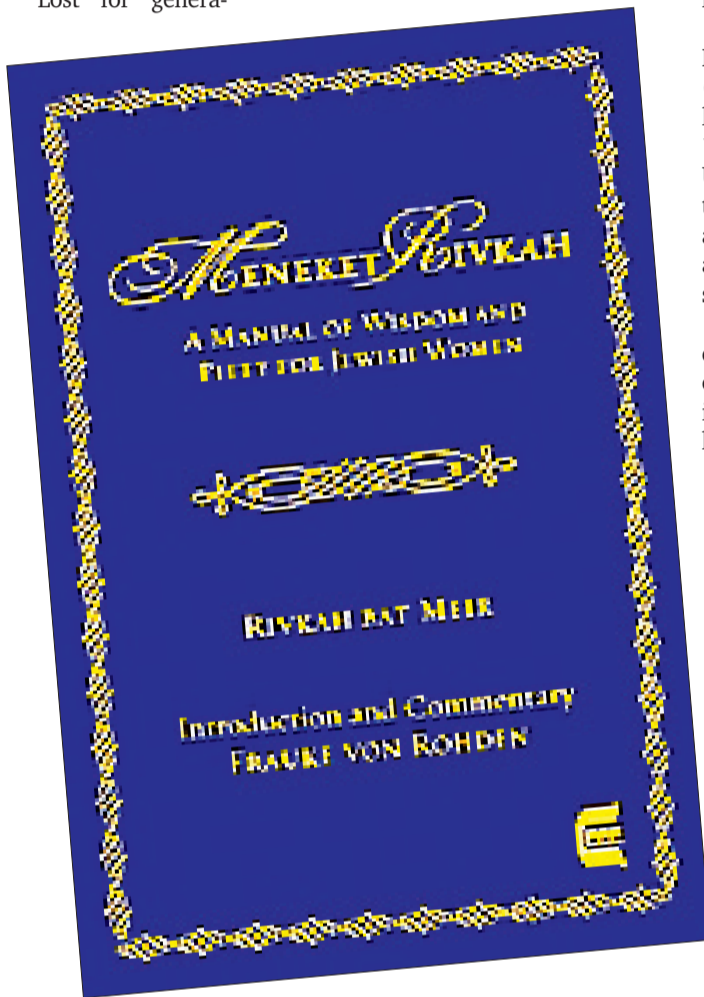
Dr. Kay is also the author of "Elementary Yiddish," a self-study text, and was the first lecturer of Yiddish at Oxford University. She is currently on staff at The House of Commons of the United Kingdom.

While it is popularly said that every day is Mother's Day, it is not by coincidence that Mother's Day is the most popular civic

day on the calendar in our culture. Traffic is at an all time high, and all major sports events record the highest number of empty seats for the year. Mothers are the mainstay of our society and this is reflected in all the events that we will witness next Sunday. My wish is that in some way, this could be reflected in a literary manner, both on Mother's Day and on any other day of the year. This is one tangible gift that if chosen carefully, will be appreciated for a long time.

Remember, we are the people of the book. Include your mothers!

Post comments and enjoy previous installments of The Kosher Bookworm online at [thejewishstar.com](http://thejewishstar.com).



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# Exile and redemption

*YU learning program explores timely topic*

BY YAFFI SPODEK

A Yom Iyun at Yeshiva University on April 26 drew 500 men and women eager to learn different perspectives on "Exile and Redemption in Tanach and Jewish History," an event organized by the Center for the Jewish Future featuring 21 dynamic rabbis and educators.

The day of learning was dedicated to the memory of David Rottenstreich z"l, a 20-year-old YU student from Queens who fell ill and died suddenly on Erev Pesach. In opening remarks, YU Rosh Yeshiva Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky spoke about David, who had been his student, and the love of Torah he shared with all around him in his short span of time in this world.

Rabbi Jacob J. Schacter introduced the Yom Iyun with a discourse on how exile and redemption can be viewed today in light of the establishment of Israel, and how to reconcile the apparent contradiction that exists between the two concepts. He explained that Israel is a place where there is "a dualism ... an intersection of both exile and redemption simultaneously."

There seems to be a fluctuation between these two states of existence, he explained. According to him, it is "manifestly obvious" that the redemption has not yet arrived, and that we are living in an "imperfect reality" where the external threats to the State of Israel are very real. He referred to Israel as an "unexpected state." We now find ourselves in the exile that followed the destruction of Bayit Sheini (the second Temple) which should have ended with the rebuilding of the third Temple, as our ancestors intended.

Although we are now in a different situation than we were prior to 1948, "what is the theological understanding of the state of Israel?" Rabbi Schacter asked. He discussed the three oaths found in Masechet Ketuvot determining Israel's return to Zion, and cited different opinions on



Rabbi Jacob J. Schacter addresses the crowd at YU's Yom Iyun April 26.

whether or not they still apply today, as some people believe we cannot initiate the return to and must wait passively, while others disagree. Since Israel is now a Jewish state and not under the authority of "others," these oaths may no longer be applicable, and so we may have permission to rebuild without being in violation of the oath saying that we cannot rebel. This is the argument for the modern day Zionist movement.

Rabbi Schacter cited a letter from Rav Herzog, the late Chief Rabbi of Israel, which was written several months before the establishment of the State, in which he refers to Israel as the "atchalta d'geulah," the beginning of the redemption. This shows that "we're on the way to redemption ... in the paradigm of geulah," Rabbi Schacter explained. He also brought the text of the tefillah l'shlom hamedina (prayer for peace in Israel), highlighting composer Shai Agnon's words of "reishit tzemichat geulateinu," literally translated as beginning of the blossoming of the redemption.

"We are not used to this 'metzius' (reality) and so we solve this theological conundrum by referring to it in redemptive language, while acknowledging that redemption has not yet arrived," Rabbi Schacter explained. "It's hard to define ... how to frame a reality that is exile and redemption at the same time... We're as far away as we can be [from redemption] but we are framing it in a category couched in redemptive language."

Following Rabbi Schacter's words, participants were free to

attend any of the 20 shiurim offered throughout the day during four hour-long time slots. Speakers included Rabbi Menachem Leibtag, Rabbi David Berger, Rabbi Chaim Angel, Dr. Shawn Zelig Aster, Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel, Dr. Naomi Grunhaus, Dr. Shira Weiss Mrs. Elana Stein Hain, and Mrs. Nechama Price among other top Tanach scholars speaking on a range of topics, from the Messianic era to the prophecies of Isaiah to Rav Kook. In addition to the Torah insights offered, YU provided breakfast and lunch to all participants, who were asked to pay a modest donation fee upon entry. The day of learning concluded at 3:00 p.m. with Mincha services. Many of the day's shiurim were recorded and can be viewed and heard on the Internet at yutorah.com.

"I really enjoyed all the shiurim, especially Nechama Price's, 'Splitting the Seas of Tanach,' which drew a lot of physical parallels between the texts and corresponding ideas, showing how all of Tanach is inter-related," said Ayelet Mael of Lawrence, who attended the classes with her mother, Lynn.

Mael, 22, a student at YU's Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, is also a regular attendee of the Millie Arbisfeld Midreshet Yom Rishon series which takes place every Sunday at YU, featuring two shiurim offered to women, with a parallel program for men known as the Abraham Arbisfeld Kollel Yom Rishon. The Yimei Iyun, which are organized by students several times a year, are an extension of these popular Sunday programs.



Noam Shalit (second from right) at Machon HaTorah with Rabbi Zev Friedman (far right), Richard Altabe (far left), reporter Malka Eisenberg (second from left) and Dr. Chagit Hadar (center), who coordinated Shalit's trip.

## NOAM SHALIT BRINGS MESSAGE OF HOPE

*Continued from Page One*

poster that read, "Gilad is Still Alive, 1038 Days Away from Home."

"My wife and I miss him more than we can express," he said in measured tones. "We are concerned with his physical and mental health. In captivity there is no tomorrow; time is of the essence. We have to keep praying and raising his plight all around the U.S."

He thanked everyone for their support and solidarity and quoted from Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) in Hebrew ending with "... 'and the sons will return to their borders,' thank you and happy holiday."

Gilad Shalit has been in captivity for close to three years now. Hamas grabbed him from Israeli soil on June 26, 2006 while he was on a mission with his tank unit on Israel's southern border. Aside from an audio recording and two letters, the Shalits have received no solid proof that Gilad is alive, but they are hopeful.

The elder Shalit is here also to stress that his son's captors are flouting international law, first by holding Gilad hostage and making demands, second by not allowing the Red Cross to visit and report on his condition.

Rabbi Zev Friedman, Rosh Yeshiva of Machon HaTorah, emphasized that the commandment of pidyon shevuyim (freeing captives) is a "priority over every mitzvah," and the student body needs an "action plan, not

just talking and feeling bad."

"There has to be a sense of urgency," noted principal Rabbi Yotav Eliach.

"We're trying to keep hope," said Joy Elias, a 12th grader. "It's really sad; it's three years already. We wear his dog tags and keep saying tehillim."

"It's amazing to see that he is still hopeful," noted Jamie Rohr, another 12th grader. "He is so reassuring about it."

Kyra Mae Garber, a sophomore, read a story, "When the Shark and the Fish First Met," at the assembly before Noam Shalit spoke. It is an allegory about the Arab-Israeli conflict written by Gilad in fifth grade.

"When I read it I thought it was unreal, how it relates to (his situation) that he's a captive," Garber said. "If we can't make peace then we have to step up. It's amazing that Gilad's father came. You can really feel that he wants us to do something."

Shalit had met with the Bush administration without success and hopes the Obama administration, with its dialogue with Damascus, might help.

"He is trying new channels," Shalit said of President Obama. "He wants to be more involved."

After the assembly he met with Rabbi Friedman and Richard Altabe, principal of Magen David Yeshiva High School, to plan strategy. Shalit would like to establish an action committee in the U.S. and mobilize and unite Jewish communities "to bring up and make this

an issue" and to "solve it rapidly," and get all governments involved to solve this "before any other issue. It is a bottleneck in the Middle East," he emphasized, "otherwise nothing will go forward."

Altabe explained that a teacher in his school with a connection to Shalit had requested his help. Altabe, in turn, enlisted Rabbi Friedman to spur schools and community members to mobilize political connections and financial resources on behalf of Gilad Shalit.

At DRS students gave Shalit a Sefer Tehillim (Book of Psalms) that "represented their daily effort to pray for Gilad," Altabe noted.

"A Jew in tza'ar (suffering) affects every person," said Rabbi Yisroel Kaminetsky, Menahel of DRS. "We wanted him to come for us, it helped put a face on the pain of the family," to enable the students to pray for Gilad with greater fervor. He noted that Noam Shalit was truly moved and strengthened to know that "310 kids he never met and never knew were saying Tehillim for the past 36 months every morning," noting that "we don't have connections to politicians but we have connections to the One who decides, the Ribbono Shel Olam."

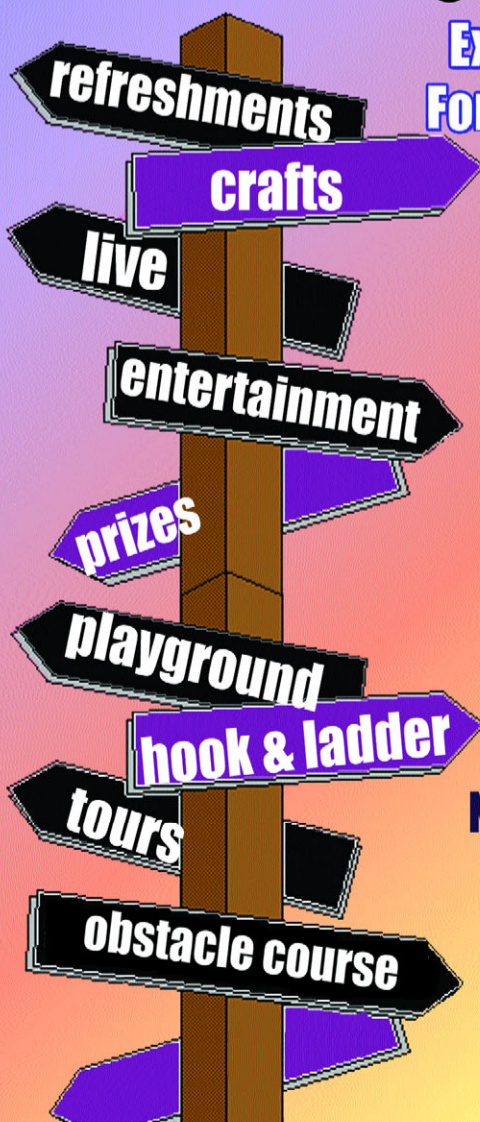
Anyone interested in helping can e-mail Richard Altabe at raltabe@mdyhs.net, or Rabbi Zev Meir Friedman at roshmesivta@rambam.org.



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