

# The Shofar

THE UNITED JEWISH CONGREGATION OF HONG KONG

APRIL/MAY/JUNE, 1998



## Rabbi/Cantor Couple Accept UJC Offer, Start in July

Soloist, composer, and touring artist are among the impressive accomplishments of Cantor Janece Cohen. But in addition to these skills, preparing B'Nai Mitzvah students, planning religious and Hebrew School music curricula, and teaching Hebrew classes and adult education courses have also earned her great respect and affection.

Her areas of special expertise include developing music programs for small congregations, forming and working with congregational choirs — both professional and volunteer, and lecturing on topics like 'The History of Jewish Music While Standing on One Foot.' Her Junior Choir at the North Shore Temple Emanuel in Sydney, for example, has toured throughout Australia to rave reviews.

In addition to providing music at UJC services, it is envisioned that Cantor Cohen will participate in life cycle events, help plan Tot Shabbat programs, assist with bar/bat mitzvah teaching, and perhaps start an occasional adult choir for a special event or service.

She is a graduate of the HUC's School of Sacred Music with a Masters Degree in Sacred Music in 1990. Her previous postings include Temple Beth El and Center in San Pedro, California, Brooklyn Heights Synagogue in Brooklyn, New York, and Congregation B'nai Tikvah in Walnut Creek, California.

A number of Jewish organizations and congregations in America and Australasia have engaged the Cantor as scholar/musician-in-residence for seminars and retreats.

In Los Angeles, she collaborated on several movie scores and was part of *SHIR MAGIC*, a women cantors duo that toured the US and produced several recordings. Cantor Cohen has also been featured soloist in concerts in the US, Canada, Israel, Australia, and New Zealand.

The UJC search for longer-term synagogue leadership has been successfully concluded with the appointment of Rabbi Jordan Cohen and his wife Cantor Janece Cohen to positions beginning in early July, shortly after Rabbi Joel Oseran completes his sabbatical term with the Congregation.

As a result of the appointments, for two-year terms, The UJC will enjoy the services of a longer-term rabbi, and, for the first time in its ten-year history, the services of a resident cantor.

The Cohens have been serving at North Shore Temple Emanuel in Chatswood (Sydney), Australia since 1993.

Rabbi Cohen, 37, brings an extensive background in both youth and adult Jewish education. As Associate Rabbi in Sydney, he was in charge of educational programming for the 200-student Hebrew and religious school and led early childhood family worship programs. Previously, at Temple Sinai in Oakland, California, he directed the 500-student religious school.

Rabbi Cohen also has strong interests in interfaith relations and in Sydney, started an outreach program to interfaith couples.

An avid story-teller, Rabbi Cohen has published in the areas of Jewish education and folklore, served on the faculty of the internationally renowned Brandeis-Bardin Institute, and has received numerous awards including the prestigious title of 'Reform Jewish Educator'.

Rabbi Cohen, a native of Toronto, has a B.A. in English literature from University of Waterloo in Ontario and Masters degrees in both Hebrew Letters and Jewish Education from HUC's Los Angeles campus.

He and his wife, Cantor Cohen, have one son, Zachary, 6.



### Greetings From New UJC Rabbi

Janece, Zachary and I are all very excited about coming to Hong Kong and working with the community of The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong. Everyone was so friendly and welcoming to us when we visited in March, and we are looking forward to getting to know all the members of the community. We were very impressed by the programs and activities that the Congregation has initiated during the past years, and see nothing but great potential for growth and enrichment. Hopefully, together, we will grow from strength to strength.

We will be arriving in Hong Kong in late June or early July after leaving Sydney and visiting family in North America. But in the meantime, please feel free to contact us and introduce yourself. We can best be reached by e-mail at [jcohen@compuserve.com](mailto:jcohen@compuserve.com).

We wish you all a *Chag Kasher V'Sameach*, and again, we look forward to meeting you all in Hong Kong.

L'Shalom,

**Rabbi Jordan D. Cohen**



## From the Rabbi's desk...

# Choosing the Right Birthday Present for our 50 year old!

The Big Birthday is fast approaching and like for all birthday celebrations we should plan on bringing a gift. The question is: What present do you give a country turning 50 — and not just any old country, but 'your' country; Israel.

The happy occasion is set for Thursday night, April 30, 1998 — based on the Hebrew date of 5th of Iyar. On that date, 50 years ago (May 15th, 1948) David Ben Gurion declared the birth of the State of Israel — and from that time on the state of the Jewish people would never be the same.

When individuals turn 50, the occasion generally triggers a rather serious soul searching — a look inward accompanied by a number of introspective questions: Is this where I should be by this time in my life? Is my life a success? Am I doing what I really want to do with my life? Am I happy? Do I go on as before or make a change? The list could go on — the point seems obvious.

As we prepare to mark this historic birthday for our Israel, let us take a moment to seriously look at this unique country and our relationship to it. After all — we can't just show up to the party empty handed — perhaps our reflection on Israel at 50 will suggest what we can bring her for an appropriate gift as well!

In answer to the profound question — 'Is my life (at 50) a success?' I believe we can all say with absolute confidence that the State of Israel is more successful at age 50 than most anyone would have ever dreamed. Look back at where we Jews were 50 years ago: the scars of the Holocaust still bleeding; the collective wrath of every single Arab country in the Middle East directed squarely on this little speck of a land, committed to its immediate eradication; the overwhelming need to absorb hundreds upon thousands of refugees each speaking a different language, possessing a different social, cultural, and even Jewish religious norm; and the commitment to create a democracy for a population over 90% of which had never seen a democracy in action — all this and more was our 'birthright' 50 years ago.

If ever there was a country which has so much to be proud of and so much to be thankful for it is Israel.

Then why is our state having such a tough time celebrating this most significant birthday? Why are so many Israelis — both in Israel and abroad, so filled with doubt and profound questioning — as if life at 50 is nowhere near where we thought we would be — where we hoped we would be? Is it possible to have succeeded so miraculously yet to feel our 50 years have left us far short?

Like most 50-year-olds, I believe Israel at 50 is far too critical of itself than is justified by real-life events. We often tend to take for granted our accomplishments and our strengths, focussing instead on shortcomings. Needed is some perspective and maturity which age and more experience often bring. My point — don't panic and don't take our reaction at 50 as the final word on our growth as a country.



Like many of us at 50, we find that certain behavior which we developed to 'cover up' or mask more fundamental character traits (flaws) doesn't seem to be working that well anymore. Excuses we have given for explaining away our basic shortcomings or weaknesses seem more artificial than ever — and our loved ones see through them ever so quickly. It's time to grow up they seem to be saying — grow up and face yourselves straight on. You are old enough, our loved ones tell us, to face the truth and deal with it.

In other words, Israel at 50 is indeed at one and the same time a true miracle story and a nation in acute distress facing decisions of life and death after 50 years of painstaking effort and commitment.

What other 50-year-old is still unsure about basic fundamental life-sustaining properties? At 50 we may not be in perfect health, but most of us are not questioning our very existence. At 50 Israel is still not over the trauma of becoming a State. We have learned to be 'on guard' ever alert to the next act of violence (terror, war, UN resolution, .....).

Imagine how volatile and traumatic our lives would be at 50 if we awakened each morning wondering whether today is the day we discover the next life-threatening illness or disease. Attacks we have endured since birth — attacks which we have always overcome, but paid a heavy price for. And we know it is not yet over — there will be the next one. I can never, never relax and go to sleep without the perpetual concern — what about tomorrow?

Fortunately over these 50 years we have combatted and found 'cures' for many of those 'antibodies' trying to do us harm. We live today with relatively more peace and security than ever before. Egypt and Jordan have agreed to our 'existence' as have many more nations in the world than ever before. Is our life more secure, yes. Does that mean we feel more secure — not necessarily.

And then we must consider the internal 'antibodies' which have more recently begun to work against our

collective health as a nation. For most of the past 50 years we found excuses and other techniques to avoid facing, head on, our internal divisions between orthodox—secular—and other religious movements. We developed some bad habits in our youth which today we realize can not go on. We divided our society into religious and secular



spheres — as if one is either an orthodox Jew or a secular Jew; as if one could not be religious yet non-orthodox. So today we are paying the price for such an artificial unnatural separation. The challenge Israel faces at 50 regarding religious issues is an issue of fundamental character which can no longer be washed over, covered up by any number of previous mechanisms (intentional or unintentional).

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## Israel's 50th

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Resolving this issue will certainly be tough — it will certainly challenge our 50 years worth of maturity and commitment to our unity as a nation. But it is an inevitable undertaking which we can and should no longer avoid. We are old enough to do it.

Now I return to my original question. What is the appropriate gift we Jews around the world should bring to Israel at 50?

For some (but admittedly a declining number) the easiest, simplest and most common gift is to write out another birthday check — birthday gelt (guilt?) is after all, always appreciated and always appropriate, we say.

Israel is in need of birthday gelt — but the needs of a 50-year-old are different than they were at 20. I suggest each of us becomes more aware of our birthday country — more aware of her efforts to develop sides of her character long overlooked — sides which we might want to help with and then support such programs and projects.

My point is use the birthday gelt now to help support specific programs which will assist Israel move ahead in areas like religious pluralism — in areas such as strengthening our Reform movement in Israel. If you want specific ideas — I'll be more than happy to help.

But check writing is not the end-all of gift giving. It is certainly one way — but no less important and perhaps even more important actually, is the giving of love and genuine loyalty as members of the family. In truth, Israel's 50th birthday will come and go with millions of Jews taking no notice at all. How ultimately disastrous for Israel and for us. Our most important gift to give Israel at 50 therefore, is our personal commitment to care — to recognize our responsibility as Jews in the world to know what is going on there, to get there on a trip, to be among the members of the family who remember what it was like before Israel's birth.

Israel's first 50 years have indeed been miraculous. More Jews owe their lives to this country than ever before. Whether Israel will be able to find the cures to the remaining antibodies out there attacking her from every side will depend not only upon her basic health but upon our support and commitment to accept our responsibility in this undertaking.

We can not expect the 4.8 million Jews who have chosen to live in Israel or who are there because there is no other place in the world for them to be — to find the Cures on their own. It is too overwhelming a task and in many ways, they are the least equipped to do the work. We Jews in the diaspora — right here in Hong Kong — are among the most successful, well educated, experienced and resourceful Jews ever to have lived. Can we not afford something of ourselves as our gift to Israel on this 50th birthday?

Mazel Tov Israel — Until 120!

*Rabbi Joel D. Oseran*

## Leaders Tune-Up Havurah Program

Havurah leaders have decided to increase the size of some havurot and broaden organizing responsibility among the members.

At a six-month progress review conducted in March, the organizers discussed ways to involve more members in the program. By asking each group member to take a turn planning a monthly meeting and contacting members, it was felt, individuals would feel more responsible and committed to the program.

The leaders also suggested relating more havurot to specific activities with a book discussion havurah or *rosh chodesh* havurah mentioned as possibilities. Members can contact Ann Lubart or Diana Goldman with their suggestions, thoughts or concerns.

Since the program started, the leaders have assigned new members to havurot and have rearranged, combined, disbanded and started new havurot.

Havurot have engaged in a number of activities during the last few months, as follows:

- **Young Professionals** led by Julie Silberger took part in a Shabbat service and sponsored the Shabbat dinner following the service.

- **Benjamin Havurah** led by Diana Goldman participated in the UJC service during which Rabbi Oseran conducted a naming ceremony for its young member Rose Goodman. The Goodman family sponsored the Shabbat dinner following the service. The Havurah also met in January for a lunch at Indochine restaurant with Robyn Helzner. In March, the Havurah welcomed Shabbat at the Goodman's home followed by dinner at the American Club.

- **The Hiking Havurah** led by Janet Goldman met every few weeks for walks around Hong Kong. In February, the group joined with **Hannah Nechaman Havurah** led by Ann Lubart for a walk starting at Parkview. The two groups pooled resources in April to help lead the Shabbat service and sponsor the dinner afterwards.

- **Moses Havurah** led by Robert Meyer spent a Sunday afternoon in February visiting senior residents of the China Coast Community. This excellent *tzedakkah* outing was organized by Moses Havurah member Steve Sperber. The group has also enjoyed several Shabbat dinners together. Members Bryan and Stacy Palbaum will sponsor a Shabbat dinner-at-sea in mid-April.

- **Aaron Havurah** led by Tina Kushner is off to a great start. Eight couples without children met in March to get to know each other and discuss future plans during a hike around Lantau.

- **Samuel 'Shabbat Starter' Havurah** led by Bob Green continues to meet monthly at the American Club for the ultimate 'power breakfast' and discussion. Rabbi Oseran and Jody Hirsh have led the group in topics of Jewish interest.

- **Rebekah Havurah** led by Shelley Sorani met in February for a walk to the Victoria Peak followed by coffee and discussion at the Strauses' home. In March, the group met at the Hong Kong Arts Centre in Wanchai for a presentation of 'A Coupla White Chicks Sitting Around Talking.'

- **Zipporah Havurah** led by Bradley Abelow has met several times for Shabbat dinners in members homes.

- **Joshua Havurah** led by Joy and David Zweig enjoyed a visit to the Jewish Cemetery in Happy Valley kindly arranged by Judy Green, a long-term resident who is very knowledgeable of the Community's history. This hike was followed by dinner at the Zweig's home. The group also met for a UJC 'family friendly' Shabbat service and dinner.

- **Leah Havurah** led by Fiona and Jeremy Leifer has met for Shabbat meals at the Leifer's home.

■ Diana Goldman



## Shai Oseran's prize-winning essay in ATV TV's Hong Kong-wide contest 'Whoever Saves One Life Saves The World Entire'

Shai Oseran, 16-year-old son of Rabbi and Rachelle Oseran and student at Island School, was awarded third prize out of over 740 entries for this essay submitted in connection with ATV TV's recent screening of Schindler's List.

This very important line that originated in the Talmud (a compendium of Jewish law edited in Babylonia around the 5th century C.E.) can only be fully understood and interpreted if the whole line is taken into account. The full passage says: 'Whoever causes the loss of a single soul is as though he caused the loss of a world entire, and whoever saves one is as though he saved a universe.' In context, it is clear how important its meaning really is.

What this passage from the Talmud reveals is that people cannot save the whole world, but saving one person is like saving the world entire. A number like 6 million, the number of Jews that died in the holocaust, is made up from single people- one, plus another and another, each one representing a world of his own in which he belongs. This line could also mean that when one person's life is saved, someone else's world is saved as well. This has significant meaning to me. My grandfather was a holocaust survivor. He spent 5 years in Dachau concentration camp, and survived thanks to his skills as a jeweler. Unfortunately, he lost his whole family- a wife and two children: HIS entire world, but because he survived, one person, one life, my life is possible. Because his life was saved, my world exists, and I exist. This is why this line has such great meaning to me.

Each person has the ability to either save the world, or to destroy it. Oscar Schindler chose to save it. He couldn't actually save the whole world, but what he did was save the lives of people who could be saved. He saved one person at a time, and by doing so he saved their worlds and the worlds of the people who were connected to them. Oscar Schindler saved many worlds indeed.

My grandfather did this as well. During the time of the holocaust my grandfather and his brother in law prepared a bunker for hiding which was intended for his immediate family, 12 people. Other Jews heard of the hiding place and asked to be hidden as well. Even though there wasn't enough water he couldn't turn the people away. The people kept coming and eventually the number of people reached 55, while only 12 were meant to be there. They managed to survive for 6 days, but then they had to leave for fresh air. They were later captured by the Nazis. Even though my grandfather risked his life, he couldn't turn away people because each one had his own world and life. For each life he rescued he saved a world.

Most people would like to be able to save the world, but they immediately dismiss the idea because it doesn't seem possible. It seems too overwhelming a concept. yet if we started by saving one person, we would be doing our part in saving the world. I began with a quotation from the Talmud so I will end with one. Rabbi Tarfon said, 'It is not your duty to complete the task, but you are not free to desist from beginning it.' We should all do what we can to save the world in any way that we can, because this is our duty as human beings.

K2. Gross-Rosen-A.L. Brunnitz/liste d. menschl. Rtlänge, Stand 11.4.1945.

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Schindler's list

## Shanghai Trip Shows Benefits of UJC Fundraising Effort

'Smashing success,' 'a great trip,' and 'a marvelous weekend' were the ways various UJC members described their trip to Shanghai in late March to see how *tzedakah* funds collected by the Congregation were being put to work. Dr. David Zweig, Associate Professor in the Division of Social Science, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology provided this background and account.

The first wave of Jewish migration to China in the modern period occurred in the mid-19th century, when Sephardic Jews, mostly from Baghdad, settled down in Shanghai. In the early 20th century, in response to pogroms in Russia following the 1905 Revolution, another wave of approximately 7,000 Russian Jews joined the 1,000 Sephardics to form the core Jewish community of Shanghai.

Beginning in 1937, as the forces of anti-Semitism strengthened across Europe, thousands of Jews began to move eastward, some all the way to China. By 1941, over 20,000 Jewish refugees from all over Europe had settled in Shanghai as well. But after Pearl Harbor in 1941, the Nazi government pressured its Japanese ally to implement the final solution for the Jews of Shanghai. Instead, in 1943 the Japanese authorities established in the Hongkou District of Shanghai a 'Designated Area for Stateless Refugees,' a euphemism for a Jewish ghetto, which at its peak housed about 30,000 Jews.

In response to this crisis, the Joint Distribution Committee, a Jewish relief organization, moved into the ghetto, supplying food and medicine which helped the Jews survive.

Beginning last year, the UJC, at the bequest of the JDC, began a fundraising project to help the JDC express our thanks as Jews to the people of the Hongkou District of Shanghai. To date, due to the generosity of our congregants and the hard work on the Fundraising Committee, we have donated about HK\$250,000 to support two projects.

Last week, approximately 27 members of the synagogue and the JCC spent a marvelous weekend in Shanghai, touring the Jewish sites of Shanghai and in particular the district of Hongkou, including the JDC projects which have been the focus of our donations.

On Friday, we were guests of the Shanghai Foreign Affairs Office, whose deputy director, Kitty Xia, accompanied and shared with us her warm feelings for the Jewish people. These feelings were developed in part as a result of her trip to Israel, arranged by the JDC, during which officials in Shanghai and Hongkou were given a first-hand glimpse of the kinds of development projects that the JDC could bring to Shanghai. They were also fostered by close working relations with many US government officials, dating all the way back to the days when Shanghai hosted the Nixon visit in 1972, which she helped organize. We were also hosted by the Hongkou District Foreign Affairs Office and its director Mr. Wei, who sees the return of Jews to his district as an enormous opportunity for strengthening personal as well as financial ties.

We visited the old Kadoorie mansion and the Ohel Moshe Synagogue in Hongkou, which has been converted into a small museum to commemorate the Jewish presence in Shanghai.

We held Friday evening services with about 50 members of the expatriate Jewish community of Shanghai — we brought the challahs, they bought the dinner — and also brought them about 25 bottles of kosher wine for

their forthcoming Passover seder, as well as a beautiful Tzedakah box, which Rachel Oseran hand-carried from Israel.

On Saturday afternoon, we heard a lecture on the Jews in Shanghai by Professor Pan Guang who directs a Jewish Studies Center at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Our visit there also brought out about 10 expats from Shanghai who joined us for the seminar.

We also used this opportunity to visit traditional tourist sites, such as the famous Yu Garden in old Shanghai, as well as the newly-constructed, world class, Shanghai Museum, which holds a marvelous collection of porcelain and bronzes dating back to the Early Shang Dynasty (1500 BC), 400 years before Moshe and our people were traipsing around in the desert.

The first JDC project, the Children's Welfare Centre, uses computers and software from Israel to teach children with quite low IQs (approximately 30-60) how to use computers, how to recognize colors, and assorted other skills with the core purpose being to make them independent citizens who can feed, dress and fend for themselves.

While the visit to the Centre was brief, all of us were touched by the sight of an ambulance on the computer screen flashing the *Magen David Adom* (Red Star of David) which signified the return of Jews to Shanghai. Due to our donations as well, the Centre was able to elicit significant financial support from the Chinese government for a major renovation of the main building, which according to Will Recant, the project director from the JDC, was quite dilapidated before our support began.

We also visited the Sunshine House, a centre for rehabilitation and gerontology which supplies walkers, training, and meals to the elderly in neighborhoods throughout the district. Fortunately, we went out to one of the local centres, where we met Ms. Xu, a 70-year-old dynamo who had undergone a training program in care for the elderly run by the JDC through the Sunshine House. In a booming voice, which brought laughter to the entire group, she told how the project had taught the elderly to care for themselves and keep on walking. She introduced us to one 80 year-old woman, who, despite her family's decision to limit her to the home, had decided with the help of Ms. Xu to keep on walking. Today, she remains a vibrant and proud citizen, with a great deal of self-respect.

The trip had several other special moments. A highlight was a Havdalah service at 9.30 P.M. at the old Har- doon estate, led by Rabbi Oseran. After watching an acrobatics performance at the Portmann, most of us trooped across the street to celebrate the end of the Shabbat.

We stood in the dark, beside Shanghai's most Stalinist edifice, the former Sino-Soviet Friendship Building. High above the Rabbi's head, 50-story skyscrapers were in the making, as sparks poured down the sides of the buildings. As we locked arms and sang songs, I poignantly realized that our informal, spontaneous ritual might be frowned upon by the Chinese government.

Sunday evening we returned *en masse* to Hong Kong, aware that we had seen a piece of Jewish history. Many of us hope that there will be more trips like this, where we can both learn about our Jewish heritage and at the same time contribute something to improving the world around us (*Tikkun Olam*).

■ David Zweig



# Why Be Reform?

BY RABBI ERIC H. YOFFIE

PRESIDENT, UNION OF AMERICAN HEBREW CONGREGATIONS

Excerpted from Rabbi Yoffie's speech to the UAHC Executive Committee, February 1998.

Members of our movement are continually confronted, knowingly or not, with the need to answer two questions: Why be Jewish? And Why be a Reform Jew?

Our members know instinctively the answer to the first question. To be a Jew is to be a member of the people of the covenant, an heir to one of the world's most ancient, enduring, and awe-inspiring faiths. It is to be committed to values to which Jews have always been committed: to love of family, to education, to philanthropy, to individual righteousness, and to the idea of a unique Jewish destiny.

But when the members of our movement are asked the second question — Why be a Reform Jew? — many have trouble articulating an answer.

Why is it that so many of our members have no clear sense of what it means to be a Reform Jew?

First, we are victims of our own success.

Take any Reform congregation in the country, and you are likely to find that well under 50 percent of the board members grew up in a Reform temple; some came from Orthodox homes, some from Conservative homes, some from non-Jewish homes. They do not possess the positive associations or childhood memories of Reform that were common in an earlier era.

Second, North American Jews, particularly today, are not inclined toward systematic thinking when they make religious choices. They rarely ask what is the belief system to which the synagogue subscribes or the philosophy to which it adheres. More often, Americans choose their synagogues because the location is convenient or because they like the rabbi; because they want a cantor or they don't; because they want more singing or less; because they want two days of religious school or three.

Third, our communal leaders are rarely comfortable with denominational differences. Fearing that communal unity will be disrupted and fund-raising affected, they tend to speak a language of unity — a too-often bogus language that blurs religious differences even when they need to be sharpened. Communal leaders should learn what religious leaders already know: that in most cases, the passionate particularism of religious life does not weaken our communities, it strengthens them.

And so, our members ask, what are the religious principles that distinguish Reform Judaism? I suggest five.

1. Reform Jews are committed to a Judaism that changes and adapts to the needs of the day. Since its earliest days, Reform Judaism has asserted that a Judaism frozen in time is an heirloom, not a living fountain. Changes must be thoughtful, of course, and must be rooted in the history and traditions of our people. But we assert Judaism's innovative character, and we assert, too, that a stubborn failure to change will make Judaism an irrelevance. This willingness to adapt has brought new vitality and strength to a Jewish community that is fully integrated into North American culture.

2. Reform Jews are committed to the absolute equality of women in all areas of Jewish life. We were the first movement to ordain women rabbis, invest women cantors, and elect women presidents of our synagogues. While we have not yet totally fulfilled this commitment, there is no longer any debate that a Judaism that diminishes the equality of women is a Judaism that degrades our dignity and besmirches our soul.

3. Reform Jews are committed to social justice. Even as Reform Jews embrace ritual, prayer, and ceremony more than ever, we continue to see social justice as the jewel in the Reform Jewish crown. Like the prophets, we never forget that God is concerned about the everyday and that the blights of society take precedence over the mysteries of heaven. A Reform synagogue that does not alleviate the anguish of the suffering is a contradiction in terms.

4. Reform Jews are committed to the principle of inclusion, not exclusion. We understand clearly the need for boundaries between Judaism and the society around us, but we have little patience with those who spend day and night trying to define precisely where the boundaries are to be drawn in order to keep the maximum number of people out. Far better to spend time filling our Jewish world with experiences that will draw people in to Knesset Yisrael — the indivisible collectivity of the Jewish people.

5. Reform Jews are committed to a true partnership between the rabbinate and the laity. Of course, rabbis have their prerogatives, and we defer to their scholarship.

But Reform Jews have come to understand that holiness and religious insight are not the monopoly of any segment of our community. And so we neither flatter one another nor refute one another; rather, most of the time, we decide together. This is not how it is done elsewhere in the Jewish world. Elsewhere the grand rabbis decide, or the Seminary decides, but we Reform Jews prefer shared insight and learning.

Where else does such a constellation of principles exist in the Jewish world? Absolutely nowhere. The power and uniqueness of Reform Judaism does not in any way demean the other religious movements, which we respect and with which we join in common cause whenever possible. But we can best serve the members of our movement and draw upon the springs of their Judaic spirit if they understand — truly understand — what it means to be a Reform Jew.

At the World Zionist Congress last December, members of our delegation wore buttons that said: *Ani Yehudi Reform Gay'e* — I am a proud Reform Jew. We wore them to demand Reform rights and as a protest against Orthodoxy's legal monopoly.

Here in North America, we need to wear such buttons as well, not actually but in the symbolic sense. However, we need to do so for a different reason: to keep our great movement strong and to affirm, to our community and our children, Reform Judaism's unique and powerful legacy.

*Ken yehi ratzon.* May it be God's will.





Save This Date! Booking details to be announced soon.

# Havana Nights

UJC Fundraising Ball  
Celebrates The UJC's  
10th Anniversary

Saturday, June 6

Hong Kong Country Club

The UJC's first-ever fundraising ball promises to be an absolutely wonderful evening (if the fun that the organizing committee has had is anything to go by!)

Honorees: founding members  
Chuck Monat and Bob Green

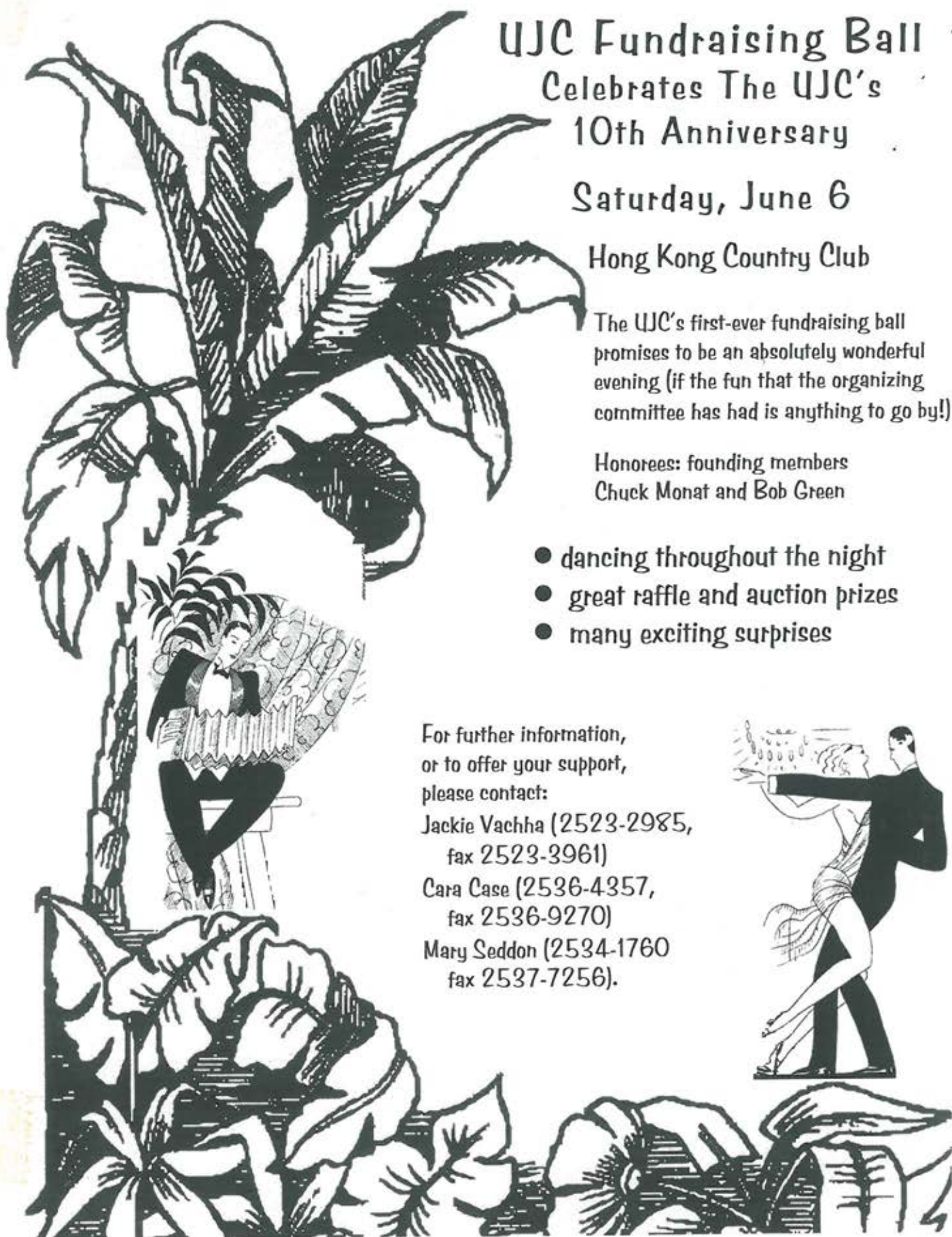
- dancing throughout the night
- great raffle and auction prizes
- many exciting surprises

For further information,  
or to offer your support,  
please contact:

Jackie Vachha (2523-2985,  
fax 2523-3961)

Cara Case (2536-4357,  
fax 2536-9270)

Mary Seddon (2534-1760  
fax 2537-7256).



## Passover Grazing on the Internet

### Cauliflower-Potato Latkes

These buttery, crusty latkes are eaten out of hand in the streets of the Marais, the old Jewish neighborhood in Paris. Use thawed frozen cauliflower florets if you like, to speed up preparation. If served with meat, oil should be used for frying, and the mashed potatoes should not contain any dairy products.

- 1 cup cauliflower florets
- 1 1/2 cups mashed potatoes
- 3 tablespoons matzoh meal
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon white pepper
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 tablespoons kasha
- 4 to 6 tablespoons butter

1. In a large pot of salted boiling water, cook cauliflower until it is very soft, 10 to 15 minutes. Drain and pat dry.
2. In a mixing bowl, mash cauliflower to small bits with a fork. Add mashed potatoes, matzoh meal, garlic, salt, pepper, and egg. Blend thoroughly.
3. Shape into 12 patties 3 inches in diameter and about 1/2 inch thick. Sprinkle with kasha, pressing into both sides.
4. Melt 3 tablespoons butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Fry latkes in batches, adding more butter as necessary, until they are browned and crust is crisp, about 3 minutes per side. Drain on paper towels. Serve hot.

This recipe is from *Everyday Cooking for the Jewish Home* by Ethel G. Hofman and has been reprinted with permission from the author. © Ethel G. Hofman.

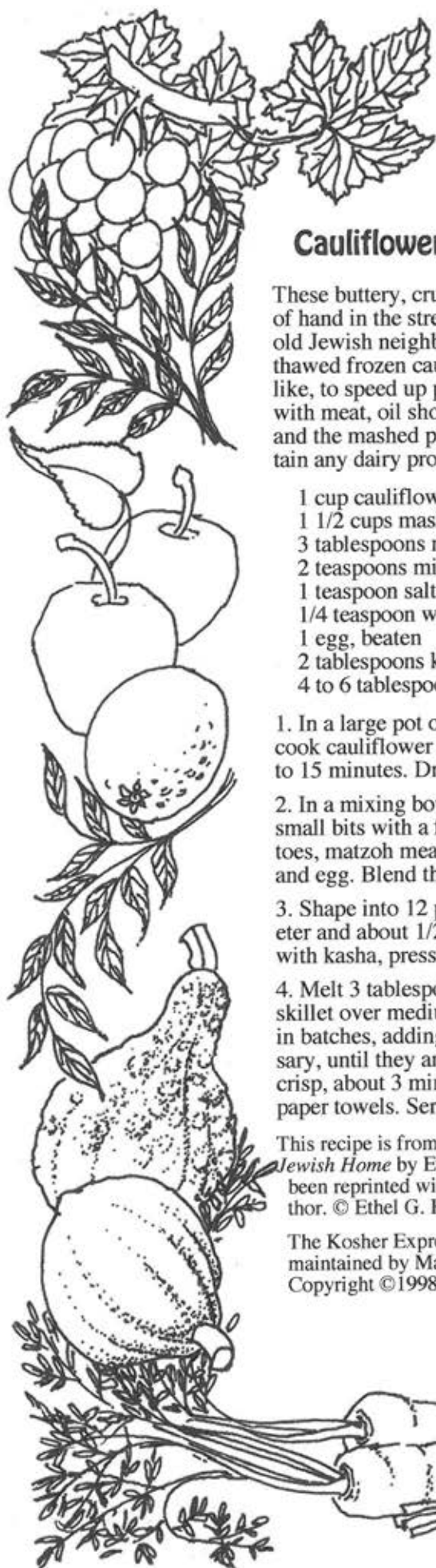
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### Zucchini, Tomato, And Cheese Pie

- 1 1/2 lb zucchini
- salt
- 3 md ripe tomatoes
- 4 tb butter
- 1 tb oil
- 3 eggs; separated
- 2 cups Swiss cheese; grated
- 1/2 cup Feta cheese
- freshly ground pepper
- 1 tb fresh basil; chopped or mint
- Yield: 4 servings

1. Wash the zucchini, trim, and cut into 1/4 inch slices. Salt, drain, and pat dry.
  2. Meanwhile, peel the tomatoes, halve horizontally, and remove the seeds. Heat 2 tbs. butter with the oil in large saute pan. Lightly brown the zucchini on both sides; drain on brown paper. Lightly brown the tomatoes until they soften slightly but do not become limp. Cool.
  3. When you are ready to assemble the pie, beat the egg yolks, set aside. Place half the zucchini in 9 x 12 inch dish. Sprinkle with 1/3 of the grated Swiss cheese and half the Feta cheese, dot with 1 tbs. butter, and sprinkle with salt, pepper, and half the basil or mint (I always use basil).
  4. Beat the egg whites and fold into the yolks. Spread half of this mixture over cheeses. Slightly flatten the halved tomatoes, and arrange across the pie. Sprinkle with 1/3 of the Swiss cheese, half of the Feta cheese, and the remaining basil or mint. Top with the remaining zucchini slices, and season with salt and pepper. Spread with remaining egg mixture, top with the remaining Swiss cheese, and dot with remaining tbs. butter.
  5. Bake in a preheated 400 oven for 25 - 30 minutes or until the eggs are set.
- This can be done in a pie dish, quiche pan, or any 9 x 12 baking dish. It's delicious!

Source: Penina Freedenberg, Passover Internet







### April

01 Alyssa Diamond  
 03 Magda Rebecca Miller  
 04 Tim Leung  
 05 David Sherman  
 07 Laine Hosking  
 08 Ariel Kaminsky  
 09 Olivia Reingold  
 09 Sussi Schwartz  
 11 Tatiana Paris  
 16 Rami Lempert-Schwarz  
 17 Bradley Wayburne  
 18 Jayce Feiger  
 18 Katie Goldman  
 18 Emily Theil  
 23 Peter Scherr  
 27 Sara Johnstone

### May

01 Alexander Conn  
 03 Orli Handmaker  
 04 Jacob Shure  
 06 Janet Golden  
 06 Tamar Zwick

09 Jasmine Gould-Wilson  
 09 Charles Monat  
 13 Emily Hana Blumenthal  
 14 Joanna Lipsher  
 15 Daniel Lerner  
 16 Emma Conn  
 16 Robert Subbaraman  
 17 Todd Daum  
 19 Rachel Dlugash  
 22 Alexis Fine  
 23 John Dasaro  
 24 Daniel Goodman  
 25 Jodie Siff  
 29 Asher Lockhart

### June

02 Kimberley Diamond  
 02 Aaron Kroeber  
 03 Sharai Lowenstein  
 03 Matthew Sears  
 04 Rachel Glickman  
 04 Dana Leventhal  
 05 Arthur Berman

05 Michelle Sander  
 09 Carolyn Harris  
 11 Alexandra Chern  
 11 Stephanie Chern  
 12 Hannah Silverstein  
 13 Michael Brooks Reid  
 14 Mitchell Felton  
 14 Aaron Zweig  
 17 Max Glickman  
 19 Alicia Feigenberg  
 19 Terence Wayburne  
 20 Courtney Aaron  
 20 Ian Silverstein  
 24 Eden Lowenstein  
 25 David Leventhal  
 26 Daniel Brooks Reid  
 26 Grace Miller-Day  
 26 Amanda Neuville  
 26 Eva Sturtz  
 27 Linda Simon-Mietus  
 29 Sandra Koo  
 29 Benjamin Meyer  
 30 Ashley Wayburne

on their special Birthdays





*Final call . . . Please join!*  
**The Annual  
UJC Family  
Passover Seder**  
conducted by Rabbi Joel Oseran

**Friday, April 10, 6 P.M.**

**The Excelsior Hotel**  
Harbour View Room  
Causeway Bay

Delicious Passover menu  
with vegetarian option

see page x to book

*Travelers, Visitors Invited to Join*  
**The United Hebrew Congregation  
of Singapore**

*Fourth Annual*  
**Community Seder**

*Saturday, April 11, evening*  
*American Club (Singapore)*

*adult non-member: S\$75*

*non-member child (3-12): S\$25*

*Everyone takes part in the service and a  
special activity is planned for the children.*

*To book:*

Linda Mendoza

tel: (65) 383 3087 (h); 738 9232 (o)

Fax: 738 9227

E-mail: mendoza@signet.com.sg

mendoza@singnet.com.sg

*There are also first night seders at member's homes.  
Anyone interested in being a guest may contact Linda  
for more information.*

*The Jewish Community of Beijing*

**Kehillah Beijing**

*invites you to join their*

**Passover Seder**

**Friday, April 10, 7:00 p.m.**

**Kempinski Hotel, Beijing**  
Jade Ballroom B & C

adults: RMB 280

students (12+) / teachers: RMB 200

children: (5-12) RMB 130

Select chicken, beef or vegetarian entrée

Tickets available at Israeli Embassy, Beijing  
(9 A.M. — 5 P.M. Monday — Friday)  
or through Elyse Silverberger (see below)

Limited ticket sales at door  
for those with confirmed reservations

Ticket and I.D. with picture required for admission

Contact: Elyse Beth Silverberg  
tel: (010) 6512-6662 ext. 112  
(leave voice mail or ask for my assistant Traci Smith)  
fax: (010) 6512-9903; mobile: 1391131093  
home: (010) 6505-3701 (ask for Elyse or Elaine)  
email: eslvbrg@public3.bta.net.cn

**B'nai Yisrael**

*The Jewish Community of Shanghai*  
*invite you to join their*

**Passover Seder**

Kosher food & imported kosher wine

**Friday, April 10, 7 P.M.**

**Portman Ritz-Carlton Hotel**  
3d Floor

Shanghai Renaissance & Metropole Rooms

Adults: RMB 300

Students and children: RMB 150

R.S.V.P.: Susan Schulman immediately!  
Tel: 6279-8223

Fax: 6279-8610 Attn: Susan Schulman  
E-Mail: schulman@public.sta.net.cn



# You Don't Need To Be Religious To Observe Shabbat

*A Move to the Bible Belt Convinces One Family to Set Aside a Day of Rest*

By NAN CHASE

Nonreligious? Afraid so. My husband, Saul and I didn't have much of a clue about giving our children a Jewish upbringing when we made the big move in 1981 from Madison, Wisconsin to fundamentalist Boone, N.C., 'Buckle of the Bible Belt,' [Jesse] Helms Country.

Why were we suddenly worrying about religious education anyway? After all, Saul and I had been drawn to each other in large part because, in those cynical decades, we both loathed empty rituals and meaningless ceremonies and saw organized religion through that imperfect lens. Saul, grandson of a *chasid*, had been raised in the Ethical Culture Society by his decidedly nonobservant Jewish parents; I was raised Unitarian and only learned of my distant Jewish roots during college.

However, by the time our two older children, Daniel and Marina, had reached preschool age, Saul and I knew that somehow we must show them they were not part of the strict Baptist culture all around them in our small mountain town.

What were we though?

Hoping for answers, in 1984 or '85, we drove from our home at an isolated boarding school where Saul worked as an administrator, to talk with the rabbi at a congregation in Winston-Salem. Saul and I asked 'What do we teach our children?' His answer: 'Keep the Sabbath.'

We certainly heard the words, but when it came to making it happen, neither of us could surmount the self-consciousness of trying to create something from, well, nothing. My only experiences with Shabbat had been as a teenager — occasional evenings of candles, good food and soft, sing-song prayers when I joined the family of some close Jewish friends. Saul's exposure to Shabbat? None, as far as I knew. The rabbi's advice faded away.

Fast forward ten years. We're living in a larger town and now we have a third child, Austin. Marina and Austin have been attending a small Hebrew school on Friday afternoons, and Daniel has been studiously ignoring religion. We have a Seder at Passover and sometimes attend High Holiday services.

Most important in the equation: Saul and I are stressed out, working regular jobs and also trying to develop some real estate using the arduous sweat-equity method. We never have time to relax, we both feel the workload is out of control, and we're bickering constantly — something we both hate.

At that point we decided to see a counselor — a sobering step for both of us and a powerful motivator to find a lasting solution to our time-management problems.

The first meeting was tense, of course, but in the middle of the next week I suddenly sensed a breakthrough: While dusting in the living room, I came across a children's book about the Jewish holidays. As I read, the simple textbook description electrified me. Shabbat, it said, 'marks the difference between man and all other creatures that live in the universe.' This day of rest was to be strictly observed in order for humans to cease the

everyday struggle for existence and enjoy life's material and spiritual gifts — not to do so was a capital offense!

A holiday, a special event that occurs not once a year, but once a week — a day so important it is inscribed among the Ten Commandments along with 'Thou shalt not steal.' Suddenly, I felt the power of Shabbat as a force that might change our lives, not just as a fancy dinner and prayers in a language I didn't understand.

At our second (and last) meeting with the counselor, I suggested to Saul that we try a day of rest, a day set aside from the others, as a way to break out of our rut. He readily agreed, and all that remained was to follow the 'rules' and see what happened.

Admittedly, our observances are not those of Orthodox Jews. Instead, we try to honor the meaning of Shabbat while adapting the practices to our tastes, temperaments and times. Still, we've adopted the no-cooking and no-shopping regulations and spend part of Saturday reading

Torah commentary. The changes in our personal lives and family life are substantial. Shabbat has opened the door to spirituality — directly for Saul and me, indirectly for the children. As Saul and I have come to understand and love Shabbat as a special gift, we have become comfortable and confident in guiding our children to an understanding of Jewish life.

So what's changed? The time management problem sorted itself out as soon as Saul and I began setting aside our work-related responsibilities and worries for 24 hours, and the same went for the seemingly endless labor of maintaining a large, old house. By using half a day Friday to

clean house, bake challah and cook the moral equivalent of *cholent*, I magically could get the whole week organized. Oceans of time seemed to open up, time that the whole family has used for day-long hiking trips, theater and concerts, and visits to friends and family (the most precious).

When Saul and I first announced to the kids that we would not be going to stores or the video arcade on Saturdays, we also told them why. Our discussions on the meaning of the Sabbath have blossomed into ongoing conversations about Torah, ethics, charity. The simple — and significant — step of deciding to observe Shabbat lifted all of us to a higher level of consciousness about intangibles [such] as community life and friendship and the meaning of Judaism.

I see the next generation taking form with the powerful inspiration that Shabbat provides. Once so cool to religion, Daniel, now 18, left for college this fall and, to my amazement, immediately gravitated to the Hillel center to make friends. Marina, 16, lives the busy life of a serious high school student and athlete — but all that fades away as she rests on Shabbat. As for Austin, 12, I'm not sure what path he'll take, but, at a naturally awkward age, he is gracious about pitching in to help elderly neighbors and inform friends, instead of heading to the mall.

Religious? I think so.

Mrs. Chase is a freelance writer in Boone, N.C.

Abridged and reprinted from *Forward*, January 30, 1998

*We had to show our  
children that they  
weren't part of the  
strict Baptist culture  
all around them.  
But how?*



Purim Party debater's due diligence, weighty research brings new evidence to the table

## Advocate Sees Latke as Inspiration in Myth, Art, History

### The Noble Latke

By BENJAMIN FRANKEL

Aristotle, Maimonides, Emanuel Kant, Monica Lewinsky . . . It is my privilege to stand on the shoulders of giants in coming before you this evening to hail the glories of the noble latke.

There are those — like, no doubt, my worthy opponent in this debate — who may think of the latke as merely a grated spud fried in a Crisco substitute.

Through the ages, however, the unique blend of that delicately starchy tuber, the potato, and the golden nectar which the Romans called *oleum* has been a source of inspiration to philosophers, poets, artists, and yiddishe mamas everywhere.

First and foremost, of course, the latke is a food — nourishment for the body. Our sages tell us that, at creation, the Holy One, Blessed be She, had to decide what growing thing would be the principal ingredient of the latke.

Celery was the first to speak: 'Lord,' said a brave stalk. 'Celery has a heart. What better way to give your chosen people heartburn than to make latkes with grated celery boiled in chicken fat?'

Next spoke Corn: 'O Lofty Creator, corn has ears. What better ingredient for a nation that loves to listen to gossip?'

Finally, came the humble potato: 'Master of the Universe, though we grow underground, the lowly potato has eyes. If you truly desire to create a Jewish death food, shouldn't your children's eyes be bigger than their stomachs?'

And God thought for a while and then proclaimed, 'The eyes have it. Let latkes be prepared from ground potatoes fried in oil of the highest possible cholesterol content.' And God saw that it was good eating and retired to rest in the steam room.

Mankind's veneration of the latke is apparent from the earliest days of recorded history. The Egyptians, for example, worshipped Isis, the Latke God. (As you will recall, Isis is depicted holding a latke above his crowned head.) Indeed, the existence of this pagan culinary deity is perhaps the best independent corroboration of the Biblical account of the Hebrew's enslavement in Egypt. It may also explain why latkes are commonly referred to in our tradition as 'the pancake of affliction.'

Ancient Greeks likewise held the latke in high esteem. Many of your are unfamiliar with the famous classical sculpture *The Latke Thrower* — which commemorates perhaps the most obscure, but reportedly most popular, of all Olympic events in antiquity — the latke toss. (Unfortunately, the record distance in this event is not preserved for us.)

And, finally, to cite only one example of the latke in more recent times, I draw your limited attention to the most famous of the French monarch, Louis XIV, commonly known as *Le Roi Latke*. Apparently Louis considered latkes with applesauce to be the

indispensable accompaniment to a fine chateaubriand and crisp *pinot noir*.

I could go on, and I will.

Potato pancakes have always figured prominently in art. We have already seen several examples from antiquity, but as those of you who didn't sleep through your college Introduction to Art classes will recall, the latke achieved its greatest artistic glory in the Italian Renaissance. It is fair to say that, between the years 1425 and 1560, a painting was not considered complete without one or more prominently displayed latkes. Here, for example, is a fine fresco by that 15th century painter/philosopher Piero della Francesca. (Incidentally, this painting dispels any mistaken impression you may have that the latke is inferior to the hamentasch as a head covering.)



It is well known that Rembrandt, considered by many to be the greatest non-Jewish painter of all time, had close connections with the Jewish community of Amsterdam. This goes a long way to solving an art historical riddle that has baffled scholars for decades. The theme of Rembrandt's justly famous painting in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art is, of course, *Aristotle Contemplating a Busted Latke*.

The French Impressionists were not unmoved by the glories of the latke. Even the philistines among you undoubtedly have a warm spot in your puppiks for Claude Monet's great masterpiece, *Water Latkes*, which depicts impressionistic latkes topped with impressionistic raspberry sauce floating on a tranquil pool of impressionistic olive oil.

I could go on, and I will.

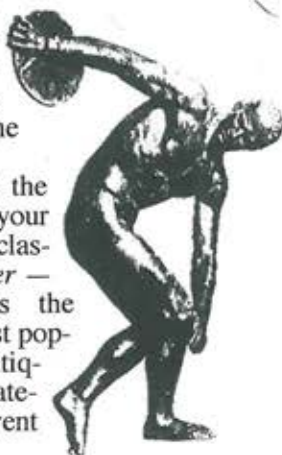
Let me take a moment of your unvaluable time to remind you of some of the prominent appearances of the potato pancake in another artistic medium, the cinema. Who can forget the stirring performances of Ingrid Bergman and Humphrey Bogart in the immortal WWII romantic drama *Cassalatte*? (And the memorable line, 'Fry it, Sam. Fry as time goes by.'

And two thumbs up the kishke for Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Latke Kind*. Unfortunately, due to budgetary constraints, James Cameron was forced to cut the latke scene from his recent blockbuster, but the good news is that the scene will figure prominently in the soon-to-be-released sequel, *Titanic*, *Schmitanic*.

I could go on, and I will.

In conclusion, no survey of latke-ology would be complete without a mention of the role of the latke in the history of medicine. Indeed, it was the great Hippocrates himself who observed, 'As the eyes are the windows of the soul, so the latke is the window to the small intestine.' In the modern era, Sigmund Freud entered the pantheon of psychiatric immortals by identifying the syndrome commonly known as 'Latke Envy' — characterized by a compulsion to fondle potatoes and slather one's body with peanut oil while eating triangular pastries filled with poppy seeds. And surely, it is a testament to our national cuisine that the only food product upon which Dr Jack Kervorkian has seen fit to bestow his personal endorsement is Manischewitz Latke Mix.

I could go on, but I won't.





Hamentasch as creative, liberating force unchains Jewish female from kitchen stove

## Triangles in Perspective, Latke Invective Score Debate Points

### The Case For and Against

By BOB GREEN

Given that *The Shofar* is a family publication, Mr. Green presents his opening argument in a summarized version of that presented at the Purim Party debate.

It is apparent from the arguments my friend Ben has presented that he has been spending too much time in the International House of Latkes.

I, unfortunately, do not have any beautiful pictures like his to support my position, just some personal observations from my travels and a little information I picked up on the Internet.

Many of you may wonder what I do on these many trips I make throughout Asia and the sub-continent and I can now reveal that I have been researching the symbolic meaning of triangular objects, influenced by my great love for hamentaschen and the infinite variety of their fillings.

In India, I discovered, the representation of a triangle pointing downward is a fertility symbol of sorts. Keep in mind that it was around 450 B.C.E. that the events of Purim took place — which is also around the time we start seeing the representations of this symbol in India and around the time, according to some scholar, that the earliest migrations of Jews to India and China took place. Is it possible that this fertility symbol was modeled on the triangular hamentasch, or that hamentaschen reinforced an existing interpretation?

I offer as support of this interpretation one of the earliest advertisements ever to appear in India — which I have produced in English and Yiddish to better convey the flavor.

[Green distributes ad picturing early Indian version of a hamentaschen with the text: *Why our Hamentaschen Taste So Much Better (Take Some Home). Happy Purim. Yoni Shimmel's Riboyne Shel O'lem Bakery. Cochin, Bombay, Delhi, Nathan Road.* He then proceeds with an argument 'demonstrating the fundamental dualism or combination of the feminine masculine principles without which the creation of the world would have been unthinkable' and concludes: 'Try making that claim for the latke'.]

This will give you some idea not only of the importance of the hamentasch as both symbol and object — to the extent you believe it influenced Indian cosmological beliefs — but how highly enjoyable Indians found eating hamentaschen to be.

In the West the circle is conventionally used to designate women on kinship charts and the triangle to represent men. These are, in fact, iconic representations of latkes and hamentaschen. Why the circle to designate women?

As Professor Judith Shapiro has argued in her paper *Latke vs Hamentasch — a Feminist Critique*, it is because latkes are 'clearly part of the oppressive apparatus upholding the most retrograde patriarchal elements of Judaism.'

Her observations are based on extensive participant observation of the production and consumption of latkes

and hamentaschen — taking into account the gendered division of labor, family power dynamics, norms of sociability, and the structural conditions of participation in a late capitalist, post-industrial economy. This research is further documented in Professor Shapiro's monograph, *Fear of Frying*.

First, let me mention the harsh physical conditions under which the latke is produced. Many of you may be familiar with Emma Goldman's famous 'blood of our foremothers' speech in which she asks: 'How much of the blood of our foremothers' knuckles have we battered and fattened on every Chanukah, for surely their lifeblood is invariably an ingredient in our latkes? Could oceans of apple sauce or mountains of sour cream ever fully mask the salty taste of the tears of our onion-grating sisters?' More than 50 years after Goldman's death, these questions still haunt us.

After peeling and grating, frying batch after batch in spitting oil, the cook is exhausted and sweaty, her knuckles are scraped raw, her arms sting from the continual splatters of oil; she spends most of the holiday meal in front of a hot stove; the smell permeates the drapes, lingers for weeks afterwards.

Did the introduction of mechanical devices to grate potatoes have a great impact? Not really. First of all, access to Cuisinarts is highly class-stratified. And even with Cuisinarts, there still remains the physical, social and emotional demands of peeling and frying. In fact, Cuisinarts have increased demand for latkes and generated increasingly fussy standards of latke texture without changing the power dynamics that are really at issue here.

What about instant mixes that can be purchased at the supermarket? As most of you know, I think, prepared latke mixes are their own punishment and are seldom purchased more than once. For more information on this, I refer you to the recently published book: *When Bad Food Happens to Good People*.

The liberating potential of the hamentaschen is particularly great because Purim provides us with a clear model of a feminist heroine.

I refer, of course, to Vashti who bravely resisted patriarchal authority (here reinforced by State power) and refused to accept the powerless position of the trophy wife exhibited as an ego-boosting *ichotche* at her husband's command. We don't need to go as far as some critics in describing Esther as a 'male-identified scab' in order to acknowledge that it is Vashti whose independence, personal integrity, and brave refusal to be judged according to male standards are most worthy of celebration.

My last argument, based on observations by a participant at a debate in the U.S. last year, shows the influence of hamentaschen on jazz music. We note that the piano is shaped like a hamentasch; the triangular arrangement of many jazz trios; and Thelonious Monk's song *Brilliant Corners*.

In conclusion, I refer to Cole Porter's lyrics: 'I say tomato, you say toMAHto, I say potato, you say poTAHto . . . let's call the whole thing off.' These lines illustrate Porter's ambivalence about the potato.



Hand, Jewish lady, c. 1998 not endangered by potato grater or hot oil



**You**  
and Israel's 50th

Your message in the

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year of emancipation and  
restoration provided by  
ancient Hebrew law to  
be kept every 50 years

## Souvenir Brochure

for the gala

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May 3, Grand Hyatt, HK

means

- a classroom for underprivileged children at the Boris Green Day Care Center in Yad Eliyahu
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Proceeds from the sale of personal ads and messages go directly to these charities.

Gold page: HK\$4,000

Silver page: HK\$2,000

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What is  
**your**  
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Contact:  
Ambra Raccah, 2592-4808  
Daniela Maghnagi, 2895-4092



The  
Jewish  
Women's  
Association  
of Hong Kong

## Condolences to

Robyn Helzner and family  
on the death of Robyn's mother

*The memory of the righteous  
is a blessing*

## Letter from Robyn

Thank you for your messages of love, comfort and support. I greatly appreciate your caring words and prayers.

The shiva week was very full. People streamed in and out all day and we often had 100 people in attendance at the evening minyan. The outpouring of support was just incredible. The only thing missing was my UJC community, but I know that you were all with me in spirit and prayer, if not in actual physical attendance. My entire family was moved to tears when we received the magnificent fruit basket sent by the UJC. Thanks to you and the community for your thoughtfulness.

Since the end of shiva, I've been concentrating on catching up on work set aside during the seven days. Truthfully, it's all a bit unreal. But, my mother was ill for so long, I believe we had already begun the grieving and separation process, even before her death. We have all been through quite an ordeal. Fortunately, there's still time to process and recover before my busy concert schedule begins.

I hope that you and your families are well. Have a happy Purim! I look forward to seeing you at the next opportunity. Thanks again for your comfort and condolences. Keep in touch.

With much love,

*Robyn*

## UJC Funds

There are many wonderful ways to honor, thank, and/or remember friends and loved ones in our tradition.

One special way is to make a donation to one of the UJC Funds. These include:

- *The General Fund*
- *Prayerbook/Bible Bookplate Fund* which enables you to dedicate a prayerbook or Bible in honor or remembrance of a special person or event;
- the *Shabbat Sponsorship Fund* to help defray the expenses of Shabbat dinners, altar flowers, and Oneg Shabbat;
- the *Rabbi's Discretionary Fund*.

Each fund has a specific purpose which in the main help our Congregation with its expenses. Please consider a donation to a UJC fund as a beautiful tribute to someone or something special.



## Welcome

The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong welcomes you, your family and friends to join our Family Passover Seder. Our Seder includes the recital of the traditional Haggadah with an emphasis on participation by everyone. It is designed to be a creative family experience in which young and old will find renewed meaning in this ancient ceremony.

## Seating

The Seder is a wonderful opportunity to meet other members of the UJC community as well as visitors and friends. Seating will be at round tables of ten. If you feel strongly about your seating arrangements, please purchase an entire table of ten. We will do our best to seat everyone with their preferred choice(s). Please remember, however, that this is not always possible.

## Passover audio cassettes (and song sheets)

Available on a loan basis by checking appropriate box on booking form (right). In this way, you and your children will be familiar with the melodies when you come to the Seder.

*You shall observe this as an institution for all time, for you and your descendents . . . And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this rite?' You shall say, 'It is the passover sacrifice to the Lord, because God passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and smote the Egyptians, but saved our houses.'*

— Exodus 12:24, 26-27

# Book Now! Last Call! UJC Family Seder

conducted by Rabbi Joel Oseran

**Friday, April 10, 6:00 P.M.**

**The Excelsior Hotel**

Harbour View Room, 2nd floor

Gloucester Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong

Parking available at the World Trade Centre next to Excelsior

### Traditional Menu:

- Home Made Gefilte Fish • Chicken soup with matzoh ball*  
• *Roasted turkey with matzoh kugel • Candied carrots, roasted potatoes, Bah Choi*  
• *Fresh fruit platter • Home made macaroons • Coffee or tea*

### Vegetarian Menu:

- Caesar Salad • Vegetable soup with matzoh ball • Vegetarian schnitzel with matzoh kugel • Vegetables, etc. as above*

## Members

Adults, \$295.00; first child (3 - 11), \$195.00; additional children: no charge

## Non-members

adults, \$395.00; children (3 - 11), \$295.00

Price includes ritual wine and grape juice.

A cash bar is available for soft drinks and other wines.

If you wish, bring your own family Seder Plate, Elijah Cup and Matzoh Cover.

Name _____ Tel. _____ Fax _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> I am booking and paying for a full table of 10	
<input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> I am booking and paying for my family only	
For both A & B, please list full names of everyone in your group and ages of children	
_____	
_____	
_____	
I am booking and paying for my family only but, if possible, would prefer to sit with	
<input type="checkbox"/> adults <input type="checkbox"/> families with older children <input type="checkbox"/> families with children under 6 <input type="checkbox"/> no preference	
Please try to seat me with _____	
I require _____ traditional meals and _____ vegetarian meals.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Please send me a copy of the Passover audio cassette and song sheet.	
<b>Members and visiting family members</b>	<b>Non-Members</b>
_____ Adult(s) at \$295.00 = _____	_____ Adult(s) at \$395.00 = _____
First child (3-11) at \$195.00 = _____	_____ Children (3-11) at \$295.00 = _____
_____ All additional children <u>No charge</u>	_____ Total number of seats booked
_____ Total number of seats booked	
<input type="checkbox"/> I enclose total payment of \$ _____ Payment by:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Check payable to The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong (enclosed)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit card — Charge to <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> Amex <input type="checkbox"/> Mastercard	
Card number	Expiry date name as it appears on card signature
<b>Return to The UJC office without delay</b>	
tel 2523-2985 fax 2523 3961	

## Prayer, Worship, Study, Events

Shabbat services conducted by Rabbi Joel Oseran, visiting rabbis, or lay members are held every Friday night in the Auditorium, Robinson Place, Jewish Community Centre, 70 Robinson Road, Mid-Levels, followed by dinner in the JCC coffee shop. A pre-service Fellowship Oneg begins at 6:45 P.M. Saturday morning services (when scheduled) begin at 10:00 A.M. and are followed by a kiddush/lunch.

**Wed., April 8, 8:00 P.M.**

*Introduction to Judaism*

**Friday, April 10, 7:00 P.M.**

*Passover Seder*

*led by Rabbi Joel Oseran*

*Excelsior Hotel, Causeway Bay*

**Saturday, April 11, 10:30 A.M.**

*Passover Morning Service*

*followed by communal Kiddush lunch*  
*Auditorium, 70 Robinson Road*

**Monday, April 13, 7:30 P.M.**

*Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class*

**Wed., April 15, 8:00 P.M.**

*Introduction to Judaism*

**Friday, April 17, 7:00 P.M.**

*Shabbat Evening Service*

**Monday, April 20, 7:30 P.M.**

*Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class*

**Wed., April 22, 8:00 P.M.**

*Introduction to Judaism*

**Friday, April 24, 7:00 P.M.**

*Shabbat Evening Service*

**Monday, April 27, 7:30 P.M.**

*Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class*

**Wed., April 29, 8:00 P.M.**

*Introduction to Judaism*

**Friday, May 1, 6:30 P.M.**

*'Family Friendly' Shabbat Service*

*UJC celebration of Israel's*

*Independence Day*

*followed by Shabbat supper sponsored by Roy and Jungae Birnbaum in honor of Roy's parents' 50th wedding anniversary*

**Saturday, May 2, 10:00 A.M.**

*Shabbat Morning Service*

*Bat Mitzvah, Emily Theil*

*details to be announced*

**Monday, May 4, 7:30 P.M.**

*Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class*

**Wed., May 6, 8:00 P.M.**

*Introduction to Judaism*

**Friday, May 8, 7:00 P.M.**

*Shabbat Evening Service*

**Saturday, May 9, 10:30 A.M.**

*Tot Shabbat Service*

**Monday, May 11, 7:30 P.M.**

*Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class*

**Wed., May 13, 8:00 P.M.**

*Introduction to Judaism*

**Friday, May 15, 6:30 P.M.**

*Shabbat Evening Service*

**Saturday, May 16, 10:00 A.M.**

*Shabbat Morning Service*

*Bar Mitzvah, Ilan Oseran*

*Venue, details to be announced*

**Monday, May 18, 7:30 P.M.**

*Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class*

**Wed., May 20, 8:00 P.M.**

*Introduction to Judaism*

**Friday, May 22, 7:00 P.M.**

*Shabbat Evening Service*

**Saturday, May 23, 10:00 A.M.**

*Shabbat Morning Service*

*Bat Mitzvah, Elizabeth Belfer*

*Venue, details to be announced*

**Monday, May 25, 7:30 P.M.**

*Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class*

**Wed., May 27, 8:00 P.M.**

*Introduction to Judaism*

**Friday, May 29, 7:00 P.M.**

*Shabbat Evening Service*

**Saturday, May 30, evening**

*Shavuot study session*

*details to be announced*

**Sunday, May 31, 10:00 A.M.**

*Shavuot Morning Service*

*Adult B'nai Mitzvah Ceremony*

*followed by communal Kiddush lunch*

**Friday, June 5, 7:00 P.M.**

*Shabbat Evening Service*

**Saturday, June 6**

*Gala Anniversary Celebration*

*Hong Kong Country Club*

**Friday, June 12, 7:00 P.M.**

*Shabbat Evening Service*

**Saturday, June 20, 10:30 A.M.**

*Tot Shabbat Service*

**Saturday, June 20**

*Bar Mitzvah, Michael Auld*

*ceremony will take place in the USA.*

**Friday, June 26, 6:30 P.M.**

*'Family Friendly' Shabbat Service*

**Friday, July 3, 7:00 P.M.**

*Shabbat Evening Service*



### The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong

Address for correspondence:

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email: [ujc@hk.super.net](mailto:ujc@hk.super.net)

Rabbi Joel Oseran: tel. 2546-6158

home tel: 2517-7967; home fax: 2803-0709

mobile: 9053-4003; email: [JDO@hk.super.net](mailto:JDO@hk.super.net)

Executive Administrator: Jackie Vachha

email: [jvujc@hk.super.net](mailto:jvujc@hk.super.net)

Chairman: tel. 2866-2313, fax 2866-1917

### Executive Committee

Mark Michelson ..... Chairman

Jonathan Feiger ..... Vice-chairman; Educ.; Admin.

Terry Paule ..... Vice-chairman; Membership

Robert L. Meyer ..... Treasurer; Legal; Liaison

Ken Bell ..... Secretary; Religious & Ritual

Cara Case ..... Fundraising, Outreach

Joseph Fine ..... Membership

Diana Goldman ..... Social, Planning

Robert Green ..... Editor, *The Shofar*

Daniel Kirwin ..... Fundraising, Administration

Charles Monat ..... Community Relations; Liaison

Julie Silberberger ..... Education

David Zweig ..... Without Portfolio

Honorary: Carol Betson, Benjamin Frankel, Albert

Fine, Janet Golden, Peter Kaminsky

*The Shofar* is published tri-monthly by The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong. Requests for copies and notification of address changes should be addressed to The UJC office.

Articles and letters from members and friends are welcome and encouraged. Address all submissions to Editor, *The Shofar*, G.P.O. Box 6083, Hong Kong; by fax to 2730-5507; or e-mail to [rgrgreenhk@hk.super.net](mailto:rgrgreenhk@hk.super.net)

## Shabbat Dinner Bookings Essential

Members wishing to join the Shabbat dinner or kiddush lunch are requested to book a place by contacting The UJC office. Bookings should be made no later than one P.M. Wednesdays, preferably earlier. Without bookings, The UJC cannot ensure enough food and places for everybody. It also results in higher bills to The UJC if the office staff overestimates the numbers.

Regulars may book on-going reservations but need to inform the office in advance on those occasions on which they cannot come.

Contact Michael at 2523 2985, fax: 2523 3961, or e-mail [ujc@hk.super.net](mailto:ujc@hk.super.net).



## Thanks!

**Terry Paule** for an outstanding job heading up the rabbi search, **Jonathan Feiger** for his valuable help as co-chair, **Robert Meyer** for handling contract negotiations, all the search committee members for their efforts and everyone involved in hosting and escorting our visitors

**Robert Meyer** for housing and hosting Rabbi Mark and Karen Bloom and Rabbi Jordan and Cantor Janece Cohen

**Joy Zweig, Ellen Levi-Minzi, Kee Cronin, Kathie Zwick, Fiona Leifer, Diana Goldman, Ed Handelman, Suzanne Glickman, and Shai, Ilan and Ariel Oseran** for making the children's Purim party a great success.

**Dan Goldman** for his skills as a clown and talents with balloons as demonstrated at the children's Purim party

**Zweig family** for donating helium balloons for the Purim party

**Dan and Diana Goldman** for hosting the adult Purim party in their home

**Ben Frankel and Bob Green** for debating the merits of latkes and hamentaschen at the adult Purim party

**Lourdes** (Oseran family's helper) for polishing the Megillah

**Ben Frankel** for leading Services in the Rabbi's absence.  
**Neal Horwitz** for leading Services in the Rabbi's absence.

**Rabbi and Rachelle Oseran and family** for hosting leadership and havdalah gatherings in their home

**Joy Zweig, Suzanne Glickman, Kathie Zwick, Ann Lavin, Ed Handelman, Masako Leavitt, Jackie Vachha, and Rabbi Oseran** for the enormous effort that has gone into organizing the Passover seder

**Carol Betson and Henri Goldstein** for donating flowers for Shabbat services.

**Cara Case, Dan Kirwin, and David Zweig** for organizing the Shanghai trip

**Mordechai Ben-Porat** of the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center for the gift of a mezzuzah

**Ariez Vachha** and his engineer **Biondi** for enduring a marathon session to install and reorganize the Temple office computers

**Michael Dowd** of Corel Corporation (WordPerfect) for sharing his expertise and teaching Jackie & Michael how to use the new Perfect Office computer software.

## Mazel Tov

**Jill & David Samelson** on the birth of their son Adam Ryan Samelson, February 16. Bris was held Feb. 24

## Donations, General Fund

**Jill & David Samelson** in recognition of the bris of their son, Adam

**Rhoda and Saul Poretzky** (parents of Joy Zweig)

**Ken & Wanna Adler** in honor of the bris of their son, Max and in recognition of Robyn Helzner's visit.

## High Holiday, Circle Campaign

### Donations

**Susan Berfield**

**Bill Schoenfeld**

**Richard Reitknecht**

## Welcome New Members

### **Jonathan (USA) and Jessika Auerbach (Germany) and Olivia, Klara, Louisa**

Jonathan: Management Consultant, McKinsey

Jessika: Real estate, Colliers Jardine  
previous affil: Reform (New York City)

### **Albert and Prucilla ('Prucie') Belman (USA)**

Albert: Vice-President, Morgan Stanley

Prucilla: graphic designer (seeking employment in Hong Kong)  
talents, skills: computer graphics, invitation preparation  
prev. affil.: Brotherhood Synagogue, New York City

### **Todd Daum and Kairavi Patel (USA)**

Todd: American Express

Kairavi: Bankers Trust  
prev. affil.: Conservative, Reform

### **David Graubard (USA)**

financial analyst, MCM Corporatwatch

special talents, skills: writing, fund raising, sports  
prev. affil.: Conservative temple, Pittsfield, MA

### **Jonathan Shaw and Sandra Koo (USA) & Jessica, 1**

Jonathan: stockbroker, Clarion Securities

Sandra: stockbroker, UBS

### **Sacha and Matthew Miller (USA)**

Matthew: journalist, South China Morning Post

prev. affil.: Temple Beth-El, Great Neck, NY (Reform)

### **Susan and Rafael Nishihira (USA)**

Rafael: Director of Marketing, Northwest Airlines

prev. affil.: congregation in New York  
special talents, skills: cooking instructor, Japanese cuisine

### **Mike Sherman (USA)**

**& Alex, 8; David, 5; Jennifer, 2**

Management consultant, McKinsey & Company  
talents, skills: marketing, Jewish genealogy  
prev. affil.: Har Sinai, Trenton, NJ (Reform)

### **Jodie Siff and Peter Scherr (USA)**

Jodie: rabbinical student; Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Philadelphia

Peter, investment banker, Chase Manhattan  
prev. affil.: Kol Hanesama, Jerusalem (Reform)

### **Suzanne Smith (USA)**

Director, Ratings for Standard & Poors

prev. affil.: Temple Emeth, Teaneck, NJ (Reform)

### **Laura Trust and Alan Litchman (USA)**

Laura: Mast Far East

prev. affil.: Temple Adath Yeshurun, Manchester, NH (Reform)

## Shabbat dinner, lunch sponsors

**Aaron & Rachel Zweig**, kiddush lunch in honour of the visit of their grandparents, Rhoda & Saul Poretzky, February 14

**Benjamin and Joseph Havurot**, Shabbat dinner, February 27

**Robert Meyer**, Shabbat dinner, in honour of the visit to Hong Kong of his son Benjamin, March 6

**Neal and Jane Horwitz**, kiddush lunch, in honor of Bert & Hertha Horwitz, March 7

**Adam & Kerin Conn**, Shabbat dinner, to bid farewell to Hong Kong, March 13

**Joshua Havurah**, Shabbat dinner, March 20

**Alex Grinberg**, Shabbat dinner, March 27

**Sarah Havurah**, Shabbat dinner, April 3

## PESACH SONG

sung to *The Sound of Music*

Cleaning and cooking and so many dishes  
Out with the hametz, no pasta, no knishes  
Fish that's gefilted, horseradish that stings  
These are a few of our Passover things.

### REFRAIN:

When the plagues strike  
When the lice bite  
When we're feeling sad  
We simply remember our Passover things  
And then we don't feel so bad.

Matzo and karpas and chopped up haroset  
Shankbones and kiddish and Yiddish neuroses  
Tante who kvetches and uncle who sings  
These are a few of our Passover things.

### REFRAIN

Motzi and maror and trouble with Pharoahs  
Famines and locusts and slaves with wheelbarrows  
Matzo balls floating and eggshell that clings  
These are a few of our Passover things.

### FINAL REFRAIN, once more with feeling!

Thanks to Ken Bell, Michael (UJC office), and Eve Silverberger of the Beijing congregation, who emailed this favorite Passover song of her sister Mara's congregation in Los Angeles

You are cordially invited  
to meet the artist  
at a private view of

# Ikats Etc.

by Peter Lighte

Thursday, April 16  
6:30 P.M. — 8:30 P.M.

the exhibition continues  
through April 30

The American Club  
Exchange Square  
Tower II, 48th floor

artists proceeds to  
benefit Caritas Hong Kong

## Farewell

**Dr. Daniel Tretiak** (and Lois) who are moving to Beijing where Lois will be Chief Representative of The Economist Group.

## Yahrzeits

**Hubert Saal**, April 6

**Dora Esther Fine (Esther Dvora Bat Mordechai)**, June 1

**Rex Bruce Randel Hayman**, June 29

## Anniversaries

**Ira Kasoff and Ellen Eliasoph**, 13th, June 13

**Neal and Jane Horwitz**, 3rd, March 4

## Correspondence

To: Rabbi Jordan Cohen

Congratulations on accepting the UJC's offer. I look forward to working with you on developing a long term dialog with Carmel School that will create an atmosphere of trust and cooperation that will be everlasting.

Peter Kaminsky

## Letter from Shanghai

Dear Rabbi Joel Oseran and the UJC Community,

Your visit to Shanghai in late March 1988 left historic memories of many shared events and warm feelings of appreciation for our new Jewish friends from our neighboring Asian city. Your community's generosity was overflowing and overwhelming.

The sterling silver *tzedakah* box from Israel is a beautiful piece of art. We cannot imagine a more appropriate gift for a growing community like ours to assist us in encouraging the important Jewish value of *tzedakah*. The box will be a permanent fixture at all community events, with the donations used to further build our community.

The *tzedakah* box was not the only expression of your Community's benevolence. It was extremely compassionate of each person in your group to bring to Shanghai a bottle of Kosher for Passover wine — a holiday necessity that is unavailable in Shanghai. Warm thoughts of appreciation will be expressed on April 10 when we gather for a community Seder and enjoy the delicious wine.

The Kosher challahs, the thank you gifts, and the tour and lecture invitations are only some of the other many contributions you made to our Community. **The most important gift, however, is the further development of the relationship between the Jews and Chinese that you fostered by your successful Hongkou District Project. For this, we can never thank you enough.**

The time shared with you and the members of your group was inspirational. We hope to share more times in the future with our new friends from Hong Kong. Our doors are always open should you or any member of your community have Shanghai on the travel log.

Warm regards,

The Members of B'Nai Yisrael  
The Jewish Community of Shanghai