

The Shofar

The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong

November/December, 1997



Welcome New Members

Robert and Carol Auld (USA) & Brian 20, Sara 18, David 14, Michael 12

Robert: executive, Fidelity Investments
prev. affil.: Temple Emanu-El, Dallas

Nancy Berkowitz (USA)

fashion designer
special talents, skills: art, sewing, organizing social events
prev. affil.: Lincoln Square, New York City (Orthodox)

Gerald and Beth Borenstein (USA) & Anna Louisa 5, Jacob Enrique 2

Gerald: Operations Manager, Bandag Inc.
prev. affil.: Temple Israel, Long Beach, CA (Reform)

Diane and Allen Clennar (Australia) & Ricky 12, Danielle 10

Allen: banker, Standard Chartered; Diane: teacher, French Intl. School
prev. affil.: Temple Emanuel, Sydney (Reform)

Michael Cooke (UK)

Orthodontics professor, HKU
special talents, skills: tennis coach, runner, 'sports freak'
prev. affil.: United Hebrew, Shadwell, Leeds, U.K.

Thomas Doctoroff (USA)

advertising, J. Walter Thompson
special talents, skills: singing, piano, French, advertising
prev. affil.: Temple Kol Ami, Birmingham, MI (Reform)

Benjamin Fink (USA)

Venture capital, Prudential Asia
prev. affil.: Temple Israel, Great Neck, NY (Conservative)

Jeffrey Forman (USA)

sales executive, Buena Vista Intl

Ronald and Suzanne Glickman (USA) & Rachel Perry 8, Max Herschel 6

Ron: Information Technology Director, Wellcome Ltd.
prev. affil.: Temple Menorah, Redondo Beach, CA (Reform)

Marvin and Carol Goldberg (Canada)

Marvin: professor, marketing, HKUST; Carol: homemaker/artist
prev. affil.: Temple Emanuel, Montreal

Jonathan (Canada) and Cathy Goodman (USA)

Jonathan: Director, Canadian Overseas Secondary School
Cathy: Guidance Counselor
prev. affil.: Beth-El Congregation, Phoenix, AZ (Conservative)

William Gorden (USA)

toy manufacturer, Pro-Source Co., Ltd.
prev. affil.: Temple Emanuel, Newton, MA

Abigail Hornstein (USA)

research, Hong Kong Bank
special talents, skills: Mandarin Chinese, athletics
prev. affil.: Steven Wise Free Synagogue, NYC (Reform)

Matthew Jacobson (USA)

Analyst, Asia Pacific Land
prev. affil.: Society for the Advancement of Judaism, NYC

Jacqueline Wein and Tom LaMacchia (USA)

Tom: attorney, Simpson, Thacher & Bartlett
Jacqueline: antiques dealer

Steven and Jan Loeb & Jason, 12 (USA)

Steven: footwear trading, Tradewinds
Jan: Music Director

Anthony Miller and Cecilia Melin (Sweden) & Magda Rebecca 1

Anthony: Investor, Asian Investment Partners
Cecilia: banker, Chase Manhattan
prev. affil.: Anshe Emet, Chicago, IL (Conservative)

Peter and Penny Mitler (UK)

Peter: professor, HKU; Penny: lecturer, HKU
prev. affil.: Temple Israel, Long Beach, CA

Amelia Petersen (USA) and Bob Nixon (Canada) & Rachel, one month

Bob: TV announcer, CNBC; Amelia: economist
prev. affil.: Temple Israel, Long Beach, CA

Gary and Marci Nusbaum (USA)

Gary: banker, E.W. Warburg; Marci: attorney, Readers Digest

Jonathan Richman & Teresa Armellino Richman (USA) & Benjamin 2

Jonathan: banker, Standard Chartered; Teresa: school psychologist, HKIS

Robert and Roberta Rothbart (USA) & Jamie 7, Corrie 5

Bob: executive, P. Dussman; Bobbe: teacher, Carmel School
prev. affil.: Stephen S. Wise Temple, USA

Rubinovitz, Michael (USA/Holland)

Managing Director, Worldwide Commodities Intl
prev. affil.: Rotterdam (Reform); The Hague (Conservative)

Matthew Schwab (USA)

postgraduate student, finance, HKUST; Norwest Bank
special talents, skills: golf teacher; PR specialist; fund raising
prev. affil.: Wilshire Blvd. Temple, Los Angeles, CA (Reform)

James and Linda Silverstein (USA) & Hannah 8, Ian 2

James: executive, Helly Hansen
previous affil.: Temple Emanu-El, San Diego, CA (Reform)

Lisa Solomon (USA)

journalist, CNBC Asia

Philip & Cynthia Strause (USA)

Philip: management consultant, Deloitte Touche
prev. affil.: Peninsula Temple Beth El, San Mateo, CA

Robert Subbaraman (Aust.) & Reiko Sogabe (Japan)

Robert: economist, Lehman Brothers
Reiko: sales and marketing, ITJ

Michael Switow (USA)

journalist, TVB
prev. affil.: Atath Jehuron, Louisville, Kentucky; Princeton University

Alysha Tetens (USA)

Laura Trust (USA)

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

Erez Weiss

Brink's Hong Kong Ltd.
Director, Diamond & Jewelry Division

Message from the chairman

'Volunteerism' — The Pay's Not Much...But the Rewards are Great



The numerous religious and social activities associated with the very busy holiday programs during the past few months have highlighted some of the benefits we enjoy as UJC members — particularly this year. We are fortunate to have an outstanding rabbi and family and Administrator, who have already contributed substantially to enriching our congregation and community.

The hard work and dedication of many UJC members have resulted in the establishment of the Havurah program; the highly successful fundraising efforts for the Shanghai Project; the building of a beautiful Sukkah; the wonderfully lively Sukkot celebrations that involved members and their families; and the excellent UJC/JDC booth at the Jewish Community Center's 'Apples and Honey' festival just before the High Holidays. There are numerous other examples of our members providing the inspiration — and perspiration — to create and implement activities.

This 'volunteerism,' as it seems to be called these days in the U.S. is vital to the success of organizations like The UJC. We are very grateful to those of you who have volunteered — in some cases, many times — to plan a Seder, conduct a children's program, organize a Shabbat at Sea, put together a New Member's reception, etc. You have been enormously helpful.

However, the supply of volunteers still falls considerably short of the demands associated with UJC programs and services to members. And the gap is growing.

The situation presents our congregation with a challenge and with an opportunity for members who have had little or no chance to participate in UJC activities. We know there is a wealth of talent and experience among our members in many different areas. Whether you are interested in religious/ritual, social, education (children's, youth, adult), fundraising, *tzedakah*, membership, *havurah*, administrative matters or something else, we need your help.

Doing all of this means a commitment of some time and labor. UJC members are, after all, volunteers, and invariably have very full schedules. Yet this commitment can be, and usually is, very rewarding personally and, especially, to our congregation.

Some of you mentioned specific areas of interest on your membership application forms. But we also hope to hear from the majority of members who have not indicated any preferences.

Please contact me or any of the Executive Committee members, Rabbi Oseran, or Jackie at The UJC office to get more information or, better yet, to volunteer.

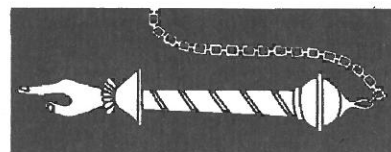
I urge you to give a UJC subcommittee or other activity a try — a serious try. It may take some time, some extra work. But I believe that most of you will find The UJC worth the effort.

Mark Michelson

From the Rabbi's desk...

The Genius of Jewish Survival — Adaptation and Rejection

The festival of Hanukkah which we celebrate beginning Tuesday, December 23, 1997 is rich in Jewish meaning. As children we learned



about the courageous Judah Maccabee and his brothers. We were taught the lessons that freedom was a value worth fighting for and even dying for if necessary. And we learned the important message that the few could prevail over the many if right was on their side.

The celebration of Hanukkah helped us to feel pride in being Jewish, especially in light of the fact that Hanukkah came so close to Christmas. We knew as children that Jews celebrated Hanukkah while almost everyone else celebrated Christmas. Hanukkah was the Jewish Way!

As children we often perceive the world as black and white (or are we taught that it is that way?). A closer look at the history surrounding the Maccabees, however, will show us the complexities which generally exist — then and today! In essence, the festival of Hanukkah symbolizes the outgrowth of a major confrontation between two vastly different world views; that of Hellenism and Judaism.

When Alexander the Great came to power in 336 B.C.E., he confronted a well-organized Jewish civilization in Palestine. Torah was read and taught by the 'Men of the Great Assembly', and the Temple ritual had regained its importance in Jewish tradition. As dynamic as the Jewish Way was at that time, it was nevertheless open to and attracted by the Greek Way of Hellenism. Hellenism offered to the Jewish community attractive options. The language of Greek became beloved to many Jews, stimulating the translation into Greek of the Bible itself.

Jewish law was also influenced by Hellenism. Our Sanhedrin, using the model of Greek civilization, transformed itself from a court which primarily interpreted the law into a court which legislated the law. Our rabbis also were influenced by Hellenism and evolved their role not only as interpreters of law but also as authorities to issue ordinances which impacted tremendously on the character of Judaism itself. Influenced by Aristotle and Plato, our rabbis stressed the notion of universal education and mastery of Torah for all the people.

As long as Hellenism competed with Judaism under the guiding hand, so to speak, of the Jewish leadership of the day (the rabbis), its influence could be seen as positive and promoting creative adaptation from within Judaism itself. But this was not to be the case indefinitely. After Alexander's death, internal competition within the Greek-Syrian axis took place leading eventually to the restrictive laws against Judaism issued by Antiochus. Hellenism, as symbol as well as substance of Greek civilization, was to become the supreme law. Hence the struggle by the Maccabees for religious freedom.

But it wasn't only a struggle of arms. The impact of Hellenism was felt on the social, cultural and religious fabric of Jewish society. The Jewish people had become more than comfortable within Hellenistic ideas and practices. While it was clear to the Maccabees that worship of Greek Gods, ritual forms and practices went beyond

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from the Rabbi

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the line of adaptation and must be rejected, it was not always so clear to the people. Jews, simple Jews, had become very comfortable with Greek ways, with the style of Greek recreation, entertainment, sport, dress, diet, etc. The charge to reject Hellenism posed tremendous conflicts for many of our people. Not all Jews fought on the side of the Maccabees!

The meaning of Hanukkah for us modern Jews may not be so very different than for our Maccabean ancestors. Like our forebearers, we too are in constant tension with the larger 'Hellenistic' civilization of today (call it western society, eastern society, secular society, or what-have-you). Such societies are no less appealing, influential and ultimately dangerous to Jewish survival as was Hellenism in the 2nd century B.C.E.

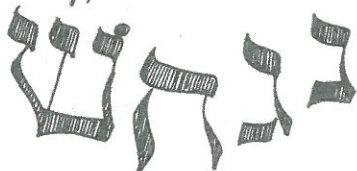
And like our ancestors of old, we too have benefited tremendously from aspects of this non-Jewish civilization. We have integrated into our Jewish Way social values such as human rights, women's rights, a universal commitment to peace and harmony (remembering that in some instances our own Jewish civilization authored such values in the first place). We Jews have also energetically accepted our place in the larger world as equals with other ethnic, religious civilizations. We welcomed the invitation to assume citizenship in all lands of democracy and joyously sang the anthems of loyalty to our 'home' countries throughout the world. We have adapted into our Jewish Way much of this New World Order and indeed it has been a blessing for survival.

But also like our Maccabean ancestors we too must be sufficiently wise to know when to adapt and when to reject. When to take a non-Jewish cultural norm and 'make it Jewish' and when to reject a non-Jewish cultural norm because it simply can not co-exist with our distinctively Jewish Way.

This is the lesson of Hanukkah — our festival of Freedom. May we continue to learn how to use our Freedom to adapt the greatness of the world around us without ever sacrificing the essence of our distinctive Jewish Way. Now is the time to rededicate ourselves (the meaning of Hanukkah is rededication) to our unique path in the world. May we and our children continue to find hope and promise in our future and may we continue to be counted among the children of the Maccabees.

Rabbi Joel Oseran

a great miracle happened there



Former UJC rabbi meets Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat

Letter from Levi

Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman, The UJC's rabbi from September 1996 to July, 1997 while on sabbatical from Kol HaNeshama congregation in Jerusalem, e-mailed the following letter to The UJC on November 15.

Dear All —

A group of twenty five representatives of about seven different Peace groups were invited to Gaza to meet with Arafat. I was there as chairperson of Shomrei Mishpat Rabbis for Human Rights. Morelle Baron was the spokesperson for the group.

We waited around the Machsom Erez 'border crossing point' dealing with both Israeli and Palestinian bureaucracy. I had brought a copy of Kol HaNeshama's Prayer for Shalom. I gave it to Morelle. Everyone was pressing him to push their own agenda.

We arrived at Palestinian Authority headquarters at 10'ish. We were told 'the Rais' (Arafat) would leave for prayers (it was Friday) at 11. Arafat came in and shook hands with everyone in the room. His lip was trembling like crazy. It is a real palsy.

Morelle opened with a fine talk about the significance of our being there (never was such a broad coalition of Peace groups ever assembled...) in between the Rabin Assassination and Palestinian Independence day. Then four representatives said a few words (Bat Shalom — the women's peace coalition, Mizrach Leshalom — the Sephardi peace group, Netivot Shalom — the Orthodox peace group — he spoke in perfect Arabic, Dor Shalom — the Youth for Peace, Peace Now/ Shalom Achshav, Gush Shalom — the old guard hard left peace group).

I was amazed as Morelle closed the first part of the gathering by announcing that he wanted to lead us in the prayer said every shabbat in his congregation in Jerusalem with a line in Arabic. I can't decide what thrilled me more — Morelle announcing to the auspicious gathering of lefties that he was a member of Kol HaNeshama or Arafat hearing our prayer. I was a little disturbed that he didn't mention human rights abuses in the Palestinian Authority.

Then Arafat spoke about the effect of the Rabin assassination, his sadness... the peace of the brave....how our visit gave him hope. I can't say it was a brilliant talk (in Arabic with one of his aides translating into fluent Hebrew). But it was very warm and human.

There was time for remarks and questions. I couldn't resist. I introduced Rabbis for Human Rights and thanked Morelle for leading us in the prayer. The prayer emphasizes that shalom starts within the Jewish people and then spreads to all creatures. There are serious divisions within the Jewish people and we have a challenge convincing the other half of the need for peace.

I also noted that there are divisions within the Palestinian People and those divisions have to be respected. It is impossible to separate the peace process from human rights. It was an uncomfortable moment — so I added that when I told my family that I would be meeting him — Benji [Levi's son] insisted that I invite Chairman Arafat to his bar mitzvah. I took out an invitation and it became a real photo op. We hugged and kissed.

When the radio reported the meeting they ended with Benji's bar mitzvah! The icing on the cake — the board of the Abraham Fund and a group from the new Israel Fund were at shul this evening.

A great day.

If that's not intense enough — I just decided to accept an invitation to a peace conference on Victoria Island, BC Canada. Leaving tomorrow night! I'll be gone a week.

Next shabbat I'll be in New York.

It feels great not to be depressed.

Levi

Levi, Paula, Zoe, Benji and Raphaela Weiman-Kelman
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972-2-561-7184 or 972-2-5638494
weimkelm@netvision.net.il

Eight Ideas to Light Up Your Hanukah from Julie Hilton Danon

Creating Family Traditions

Hanukah is a time to experience beloved traditions: the gentle glow of flames in the menorah, the sound of holiday songs, the tempting smell of latkes frying. By personalizing and customizing the traditions of the season, treasured memories can be created that will long outlast the most elaborate gift from the toy store. Here are eight ideas, one for each candle on the *hanukkiah*:

1. Hanukkiah Traditions

Create your own family traditions surrounding the number or type of *hanukkiah* (menorah) you choose to kindle each night of the festival. One of the most beautiful and authentic customs is to use an oil-burning *hanukkiah*, which harkens back to the miracle of the oil in the Hanukah story. Oil-burning *hanukkiyot* (plural of *hanukkiah*) and wicks can be purchased from many Jewish gift shops. We have made our own oil-burning *hanukkiah* by using small glass containers (the kind used for votive candles) which held a thin layer of olive or vegetable oil floating on water. We placed these in a row on a foil-covered wooden base, and used floating wick kits purchased from a candle shop. The use of real oil brings the Hanukah story to life, but hot oil should, of course, be used with great caution, particularly around children.

Another idea is for everyone in the family to light his or her own *hanukkiah*, with candles or oil, beginning at a certain age selected by the family. There are myriad styles available, ranging from exquisite works of art to whimsical children's designs.

2. Game-playing Traditions

It's amazing how kids who are used to sophisticated computer games all year can suddenly become fascinated by playing with a simple four-sided top when Hanukah rolls around. Create your own family game-playing traditions by having an annual family dreidel tournament with everyone included — no age limits. Your choice of 'high stakes' items to play for can also be an anticipated family tradition, whether the goodies consist of 'gelt' (real pocket change or the chocolate kind), fresh-roasted peanuts in the shell, or your favorite candies from Israel.

You can also start a family dreidel collection, which might include colored plastic in all sizes, hand-carved wooden, artistic porcelain or glass, and novelty styles like inflatable or electronic ones. Try to acquire at least one Israeli dreidel, and note that the last letter on the dreidel is different, for the letters on an Israeli dreidel are the initials of the Hebrew words, 'a great miracle happened here,' (rather than 'there', as in the diaspora version.)

3. Food Traditions

Potato pancakes or jelly donuts are sure to provide fond memories (and hopefully not just for the two days after consumption!), but you can add your own special family touches to the season's culinary delights. Make your own applesauce by simmering peeled and quartered apples in a small amount of water or apple juice; toss in a few red cinnamon candies for color and spice. Bake and decorate cookies in holiday shapes (special cookie cutters can be purchased in Jewish specialty shops).

4. Story and Sharing Traditions

Tell a Jewish story each evening while the candles glow (but not by the light of the candles, which are to be used only for 'publicizing the miracle'). There are some stories and anthologies which have eight sections, ideal for reading each night of the holiday: try *Chanukah Cat* by Chaya Burstein (Kar-Ben) for young children, or Isaac Bashevis Singer's *The Power of Light* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) for ages eight to adults.

Add meaning and content to your nightly candle-lighting ceremony by sharing a poem, reading, or lesson from the holiday's history. Two excellent books to enhance the holiday experience are *The Art of Jewish Living: Hanukah*, by Ron Wolfson (Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs/University of Judaism), and *Haneirot Halalu — These Lights are Holy*, edited by Rabbi Elyse Frishman (CCAR).

5. Musical Traditions

Besides singing songs at candle-lighting, make it a family tradition to play recordings of Jewish music as long as the candles burn. You might let a different family member make the selection each evening: one night could feature Yiddish selections, one American-Jewish folk, one

Yemenite Israeli.

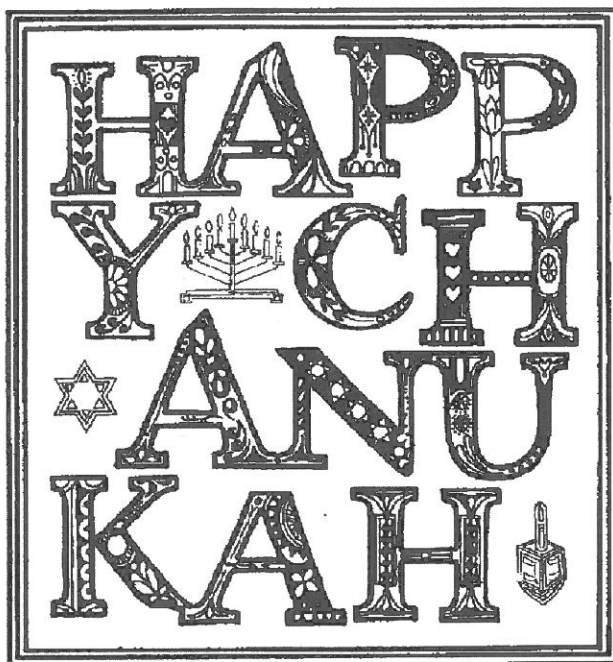
6. Gelt Traditions

Giving gelt is a traditional reward for Torah study, as well as a reminder of the sovereignty gained by the Maccabees. Make up your own traditions about when and how much to give (the fifth night when the number of lit candles is greater than unlit, is a traditional time). One of my favorite personalized traditions is for family members to make 'gelt certificates' for one another that can be 'cashed in' for special favors, mutual activities, or even hugs and kisses.

7. Mitzvah Traditions

With all the abundance of the season, it's appropriate to teach our children to remember good deeds for others, as well. Decide on a special Hanukah interpersonal-mitzvah

(continued next page)





**Dont Miss
The UJC's**



Hanukkah Party

Sunday, December 28

(time, details to be confirmed)

Reserve this date now!

*** games, contests**

*** gifts, gelt,**

*** prizes for all**

*** delicious**

Chanukah

specialities



Light Up Your Hanukah (continued from preceding page)

tradition to do as a family each year, such as giving 'gelt' to a special fund each year, donating to a food bank, giving away used clothing and toys to a shelter before getting gifts, or trying to do an extra *hesed* (kindness) each day of the festival. You might also have a 'mitzvah question' to discuss each evening at candle-lighting or dinner, such as "how can we 'increase light' in our world this year?," 'what are we really dedicated to?' (Hanukah literally means 'dedication'), and the like.

8. Party Traditions

Would you like your children to look back in future years on fond memories of the joyful Hanukah parties that you had each year at home? Create an annual Hanukah party tradition with a havurah (Jewish fellowship group) or friends: not just child-centered, but a real multi-generational celebration. Enjoy a candle-lighting ceremony, pot-luck holiday foods, games or crafts, music, or whatever traditions you want to create. Ask elders what kinds of holiday customs they treasured, and renew some. Invite someone who's alone or far from home, and make a *tzedakah* item the 'price of admission.'

By customizing the Hanukah practices you already do, you can create unique family traditions that will become special memories and may even be passed on to future generations.

Julie Hilton Doran serves as spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Am in San Antonio, and is author of *The Jewish Parents' Almanac* (Aronson). She is a graduate student in Rabbin Literature at the University of Texas and is pursuing independent rabbinic ordination through the Aleph Alliance for Jewish Renewal. She is the mother of five children.

'Twas the Night Before Hanukah

'Twas the night before Hanukah, boychicks and maidels Not
a sound could be heard, not even the draidels.
The Menorah was set on the chimney, alight
In the kitchen the Bubba hut gechapt a bite.
Salami, pastrami, a glessala tay
And zayerah pickles with bagels, oy vay!
Gezunt and geschmack, the kinderlech felt
While dreaming of tagelach and Chanukah gelt.

The clock on the mantelpiece away was tickin'
And Bubba was serving a schtickala chicken.
A tumult arose like a thousand broches,
Santa had fallen and broken his tuches.
I put on my slippers, eins, tsvey, drei,
While Bubba was now on the herring and rye.
I grabbed for my bathrobe and buttoned my gotkes
While Bubba was busy devouring the latkes.

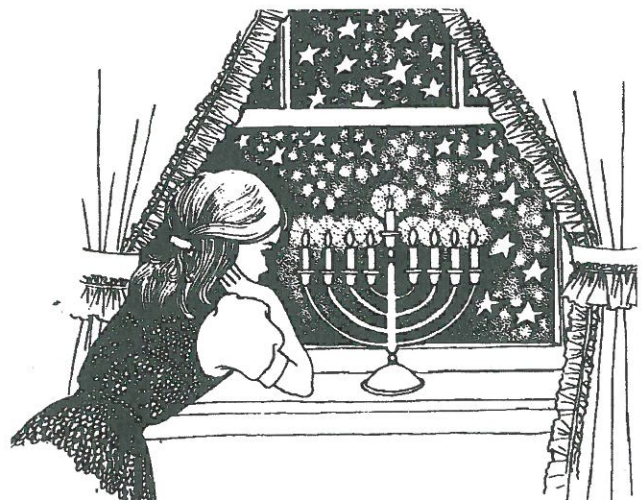
To the window I ran and to my surprise
A little red yarmulka greeted my eyes.
Then he got to the door and saw the Menorah,
'Yiddishe kinder,' he said, 'Kinnehora.
I thought I was in a goyisha hoise,
But as long as I'm here, I'll leave a few toys.'

With much gesshray, I asked, 'Du bist a Yid?'
'Avada, mein numen is Schloimey Claus, kid.'
'Come into the kitchen, I'll get you a dish,
A guppel, a schtickala fish.'
With smacks of delight, he started his fressen,
Chopped liver, knaidlach and kreplach gegessen.
Along with his meal, he had a few schnapps,
When it came to eating, this boy was the tops.

He asked for some knishes with pepper and salt,
But they were so hot, he yelled 'Oy Gevalt.'
Unbuttoning his haizen, he rose from the tisch,
And said, 'Your Kosher essen is simply delish.'
As he went to the door, he said 'I'll see you later,
I'll be back next Pesach, in time for the Seder.'

More rapid than eagles his prancers they came,
As he whistled and shouted and called them by name:
'Now Izzy, now Morris, now Yitzak, now Sammy,
Now Irving and Maxie, and Moishe and Mannie.'
He gave a gesshray as he drove out of sight:
'Gooten Yontiv to all, and to all a good night.'

■ Reprinted from Jewish Humor List
internet address: listproc@jerl.co.il



What does it mean to be a Jew in Hong Kong after July 1, 1997?

BY DR. DAVID ZWEIG

As 'Minister' without Portfolio [on The UJC's Executive Committee] but a university professor, I was approached by Rabbi Oseran to lead a discussion group on this, the afternoon of Yom Kippur, and although I hesitated, I knew that I could not say no to the Rabbi. So I decided to address the issue of what are the moral dilemmas that we as Jews face since the transfer of sovereignty over Hong Kong to China?

For example, at Yom Kippur, we say a prayer for our country and its leaders. But what is our country? Many of us are expatriates, an idea which suggests that we have some other country, besides the one we live in. But even if we accept that our country is the one we live in now, here, we can still ask: Who are its leaders? The leaders of Hong Kong or the leaders of China? Since we now live under an administration that is based on the idea of 'one country, two systems,' we simply cannot forget which is our country and which is our system!

But if our country is China, can we morally justify saying a prayer for its leaders? No doubt, we can hope that our country prospers —almost all of us depend to some extent on China's success for our own economic well-being, so we want to see it do well.

Now, as China prepares to undertake the reform of its state-owned enterprises, which could 'unemploy' 10 million people and bring enormous social unrest to our region, we may indeed want to invoke God's blessing for this endeavour.

But do we want to say a prayer for leaders who chose to use powerful political violence to keep themselves in power? Do we want to pray for a government that sent in the troops to Tiananmen Square, that keeps thousands of political prisoners in labor camps, and that arrests Christians because they prefer to pray in unofficial churches not controlled by the government? Are these the leaders of our country that we want to bless on Yom Kippur?

This is indeed a dilemma for some of us. These are leaders who suppress political freedom in Hong Kong. Yes, they have proven to be quite enlightened in the manner in which they have implemented the 'one country, two systems' strategy, and we could thank them for leaving much of what makes Hong Kong a wonderful home alone; but they still do not tolerate criticism easily and monitor activities that challenge their authority.

One must recall that ours is a country that lobbed missiles at Taiwan and its people in spring 1996 for daring to choose its own president, for wanting to be independent and free, something we as Jews died for in the thousands in 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973. We can relate to the people of Taiwan and their plight; we know what it is to be David versus Goliath —it is part of our teachings.

Now, although we as Jews come from a people who ask questions, who even answer questions with a question, we today even have to ask whether we might get in trouble even for asking these questions? I worry about it; in fact, after writing this section, I thought of not making it the opening question in order to make the whole pres-

entation less offensive to our leaders in China.

Or we could simply say, yes, it is 'one country, two systems,' but let us bless our system here in Hong Kong and its leaders. We can easily wish Tung Chee-hwa well in his difficult task of ruling Hong Kong. But since we Jews are quite a democratic people, how do we respond to living under an unelected government, led by a provisional legislature half of whose members were defeated in the previous election? How do we deal with the rolling back of some democratic freedoms and the electoral rights of ordinary working people in Hong Kong, all in the name of placating China and serving the interests of anti-democratic forces within China's business elite? By this I refer to the fact that under the new electoral system for the 30 'functional constituency' seats, ordinary members of the functional constituencies have lost their right to vote in this part of the elections. And how do we deal with a government that takes away the right of collective bargaining for its work force?

On a more positive side, as I prepared for the transition to Chinese sovereignty, I anticipated that we would have to fight a much bigger battle for our political freedoms, at the same time dreading the need to do so.

But as Jews, we can relate to the political pressures confronting the people of Hong Kong, as they prepare to deal with the pressures coming from the mainland and from conservative political forces here in Hong Kong. A journalist from Israel covering

the handover asked me how we as Jews could relate to what was happening. He interviewed me for a television special he was making to show in Israel. Stretching it a little, I said that UJC members and reform and conservative Jews worldwide

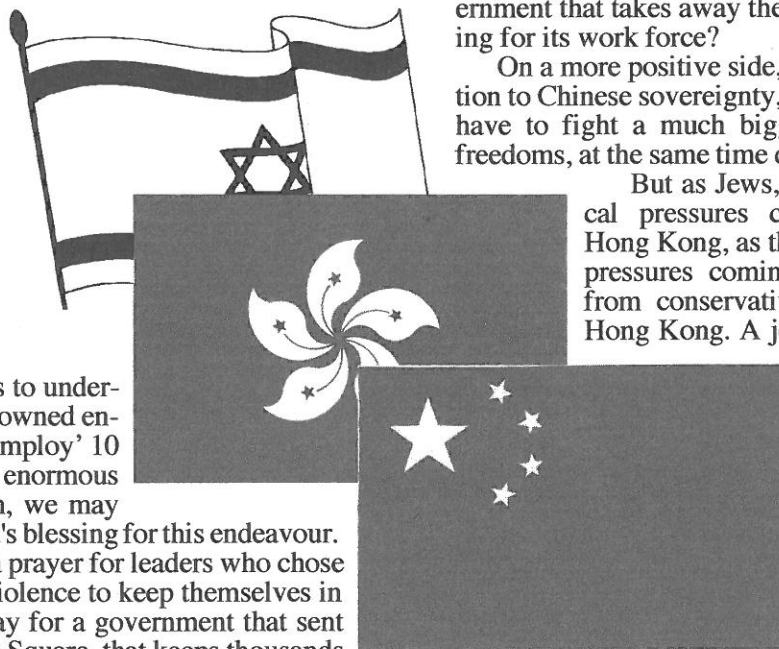
were under attack here. Our rabbi had just had his guitar confiscated for playing in the J.C.C. on Shabbat; our wonderful *chazan* was not allowed to sing to children at the day school, even though about half the students in the school come from our temple; in Israel, reform and conservative Jews were having excrement thrown on their heads for demanding their right to pray at the *Kotel Hamaravi* or Wailing Wall.

In many ways, what was happening within the Jewish community in Hong Kong, in North America, England, and in Israel, is a battle between competing ideologies, where one ideology or belief is telling another that there is only one legitimate value system, and any others are illegitimate. This ruling ideology is telling people that they must behave by someone else's rules or else they will be at risk. To me, this sounded a lot like the challenge that many of the people of Hong Kong were facing.

Yet as we look at the Hong Kong around us, we can see that while there are constraints on freedom, much freedom remains; while there was reason for fear, many of those reasons appear to have subsided. To this extent, we can be happy about our current status in Hong Kong.

I also recognized as I lead this discussion, that even if none of the points I raised triggered much of a response,

(continued next page)





WHAT IT TAKES TO BUILD A PLACE FOR KIDS IN CHINA



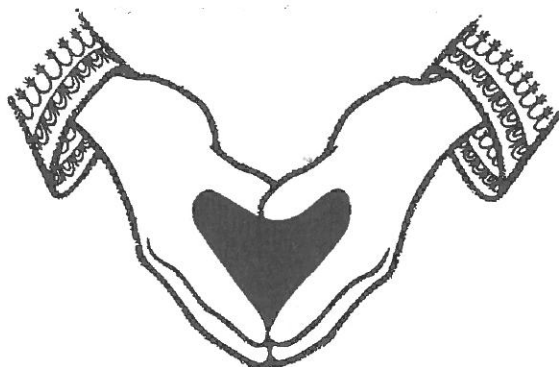
JUST YOU

Construction begins December 8 in Baiwan, some 120 kilometers northwest of Guangzhou, on a mini-kibbutz for poor and orphaned children. We need people to help on our committee.

We need you.
Your hands.
Your heart.
Your time.

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Sussie Lempert Schwartz, Director
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Sunbeam Children's Foundation Ltd.



JOIN HANDS WITH CHINA'S CHILDREN

VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEERS

Jews face challenge to values in post-97 Hong Kong

(continued from preceding page)

I could always turn to front page of the *International Herald Tribune* or the *South China Morning Post*, which described the anti-Semitic statements of Dr. Mahathir of Malaysia. On Yom Kippur, it is good to be reminded that indeed we do have enemies who will attack us even when we have done nothing to them. I am reminded of the Chanukah song: *hain b'chol dor yakum ha gibor go'ayal ha'am* (here in every generation there will arise a hero to save our people).

Finally, we need to address the question of *Tikkun Olam*, the Jewish obligation to right the wrongs or ills of the world. For many expatriates here in Hong Kong, we are brief sojourners on fixed term contracts. Many of us simply live in Hong Kong but really carry on our business in China. What do we contribute to the world of Hong Kong? Not much in taxes. So how do we participate in improving the world of Hong Kong?

One way is that we contribute money to China, to the Shanghai Project, where we say thanks to the people of the Hongqu district of Shanghai for saving 20,000 Jews during the World War II. We can even use this as a moment to ask for a donation to that program too.

But we are also a people who think a lot about earlier generations, about martyrs for our people, about the knowledge, the teachings, and the contributions that great Jews have left behind. But what will we leave be-

hind in Hong Kong? Few of us participate in Hong Kong's political battles for freedom. Do we contribute to its charity?

Have I triggered some thoughts on this the holiest day of the Jewish calendar? So stop and remember—what were your fears before July 1st and what are they now? Can you put them in a Jewish context? On this, the day of Atonement, as we think of our frailties, our mortality, of those who have passed through this world before us, what fears did you have about the transfer of Hong Kong's sovereignty to China? How do you feel about being part of China, and do you feel comfortable even talking about that question? I am not a very spiritual person, so I see many of these issues in political terms, but perhaps there are some spiritual issues at work as well. I invite your comments and reflections

■ Dr. David Zweig, Associate Professor in the Division of Social Science, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, was a Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard University, and taught for 10 years at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. His books include: *Freeing China's Farmers: Restructuring Rural China in the Deng Era* (1997); *China's Brain Drain to the United States* (1995); *China's Search for Democracy: The Student and Mass Movement of 1989* (1992); *New Perspectives on China's Cultural Revolution* (1991); and *Agrarian Radicalism in China, 1968-1981* (1989). His current book project, *Linking China with the World: The Political Economy of Internationalization*, focuses on the local political and economic impact on China of its opening to the outside world.

It's that time again!
An experience not to be missed.

The JWA Annual Charity Bazaar

Sunday, December 7

10:30 A.M. — 4:00 P.M.

Put this date on your calendar now!

JCC — One Robinson Place
70 Robinson Road

- All proceeds go to charity
- All items factory donated

Clothing ★ Electronics ★ Toys ★ Books
★ Cosmetics ★ Raffles ★ Gifts
★ and a Kid's Corner with Lots of Fun

Take the #45 Minibus from Star Ferry
or #56 Minibus from Admiralty

Open to the Public

Volunteers, Donations Needed for JWA Charity Bazaar

The Jewish Women's Association of Hong Kong needs your help to make its Annual Charity Bazaar a success.

Please participate in this very worthy cause by contributing samples and left-over merchandise, starting now!

Call Tommy's Transport, pager 76681647 for pick-up of cartons and large packages. He will deposit all goods in the JCC garage.

Our fundraising is vital to women and children in need in both Hong Kong and Israel.

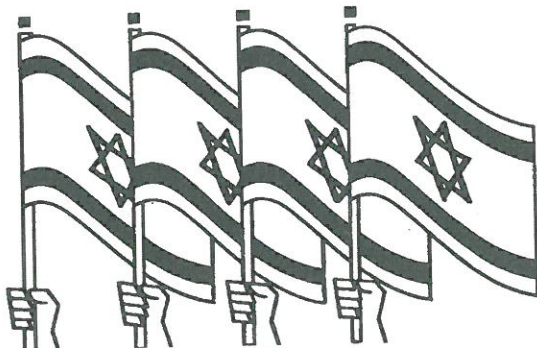
We are a non-profit organization with a remarkable history of over 40 years of fundraising in Hong Kong. For several years we have regularly received the bronze award for our contributions to the Community Chest of Hong Kong.

Let's keep this record going!

To sign up as a volunteer, please fax or leave volunteer forms at the JCC reception.

We greatly appreciate your kind consideration.

■ Daryl Ries



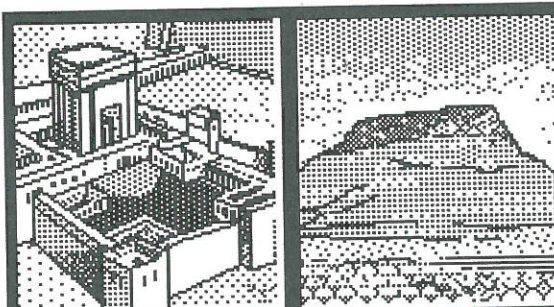
Invitation

Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- We'll have you reading Hebrew in just a few weeks
- We'll teach you to Read Torah
- We'll make you comfortable with the Jewish prayer book.

**It's Never Too Late to Celebrate this
Important Jewish lifecycle experience**

Mondays, 7-8:30 p.m., JCC Coffee Shop
Details from The UJC office, 2523-2985



Book Now JCC/UIA trip to Israel

January 22 — February 2

**Join Community friends
on a journey that will include:**

- Tel Aviv • Latrun • jeep trip on Burma Road to Mevasseret • Jerusalem • Old City tour
- Machaneh Yehuda • walking tour of Mahlaot neighborhood • Kibbutz Misgav on the Lebanese border • Hula Valley
- kayaking on Jordan River • Kineret Courtyard and cemetery • hike to Mt. Arbel
- Tzippon • visit to Foreign Ministry • Efrat
- Har Homa • Abu Gosh/Orient House
- meeting with Palestinian leaders • Masada
- Hike to Ein Gedi • Dead Sea • City Hall
- Visit to Absorption Center • study sessions
- walking tour Yemin Moshe • Diaspora Museum • Yad Vashem

For details, call

Elaine Robinson (JCC) at 2589-2697

David Diestel (UIA) 2408-6330

Havurah Program Launched with Variety of Activities

The Havurah program is off to a good start. The groups have held all sorts of enjoyable activities. Some of the groups have expressed concern that it is very difficult to get all the members together on one day. Do your best! Find a day and time that works for most people and then meet. Perhaps those who didn't make the first meeting will get to the second or later gatherings.

☆ Benjamin Havurah ☆

Families with young children

The first lunch meeting, attended by Rosh Diana Goldman, Jody Kuzmik and Lynn Goodman, was held in the JCC coffee shop. The group discussed ideas and dates for future activities. John and Jody Kuzmik prepared a delicious dinner at their home for the second meeting at which the group enjoyed an evening of lively discussion. Diana Goldman, Lynn and Wayne Goodman also attended. This was a chance for more of the members to meet and discuss and plan activities. Diana, Jody and Ivich Neuville attended the third meeting, held in the JCC coffee shop, at which 'old' members had the opportunity to meet Ivich and plan future events.

At the fourth meeting, in the home of Dan and Diana Goldman, Diana led a 'challah and hamantaschen making class' in which the children learned how to braid a challah and fold the hamantaschen. The group discussed shabbat and the reciting of the prayer for challah. The children played, had supper together and took their challah home to use for shabbat. Diana, Rachel and Katie Goldman, Ivich and Amanda Neuville, Lynn, Jean and Daniel Goodman and Jody and Andrew Kuzmik attended this event.

☆ Joseph Havurah ☆

young professionals

The first meeting, led by Julie Silberger, was held in September at the F.C.C. Ed Hoffman, Ben Fink, Jimmy Hexter, and Jean Candiotte also attended. Julie, Ben, Jean, Sophie and Alex Tunik, Eliot Cohen, Amy Gendler, Abigail Hornstein and David Greaubard came to the second meeting. The next meeting will be Friday, December 5.

☆ Abraham Havurah ☆

Southside families with young children

For the first meeting, the Abraham Havurah enjoyed a delicious potluck dinner with lively discussion. Ed Handleman was elected Rosh (leader). The Haase, Auld, and Michelson families attended. Another meeting is planned for early December.

☆ Ruth Havurah ☆

Mid-Levels families with young children

Members gathered at the American Club to get acquainted and discuss ideas for future activities. At the second meeting (the office of Robert Meyer) the children, Skyler Friedlander, Jonathan Levi-Minzi, Zachary Case, and Jake Levitt colored, made paper chains and danced to the beautiful songs of Robyn Helzner. The parents (and future parents) Ellen Friedlander, Ellen and Maurizio Levi-Minzi, Cara and Andrew Case, Alison Greenbaum and Masaka and Steve Levitt met to discuss the next meeting — swimming and lunch at the American Club.



☆ Zipporah Havurah ☆

Southside families with young children

Carolyn Murray and leader Bradley Abelow and their daughters Hannah and Sarah hosted a lovely shabbat dinner. Fiona Connell, Ben Frankel, Judah and Hara attended. Although not a member of the Havurah, Diana Goldman joined the group. The next meeting is planned for December.

☆ Miriam Havurah ☆

Hong Kong Island with young families

Paulette and leader Melvin Bazerman planned an enjoyable afternoon of lunch and family activities at the Aberdeen Marina Club. Unfortunately, the Bazermans with son Haris were the only members to attend.

☆ Leah Havurah ☆

families with young children

A meeting was held at the home of the leaders, Fiona and Jeremy Leifer. Alison and Fred Greenbaum attended. Another meeting has been planned for a shabbat dinner in November.

☆ Hannah Nechaman Havurah ☆

young professionals

At the first meeting, held the Saturday following Yom Kippur, the group enjoyed lively discussion over vegetarian *dim sum* and chose Ann Lubart and Nancy Berkowitz as *co-roshem*.

☆ Moses Havurah ☆

Mid-Levels mixed grouping of couples, singles and families

Mary Seddon and Robert Meyer hosted the first shabbat dinner gathering. They prepared a lovely meal and Rachel Meyer and friend Vicky Edwards added to the warmth and liveliness of the evening by performing a song and dance routine. Charles and Amy Bickers, Sharon Ser, Steven Sperber, Stacy and Bryan Palbaum and Robin Harris and Robin Sears also attended.

The second shabbat dinner was held at the Harris/Sear home. The group discussed ideas for future activities. Members gave five-minute 'personal updates.' Rachel and Vicky provided light humor skits. Bryan was elected Assistant Rosh. All members attended except Bryan (out of town).

The next get-together will be at the home of Charles and Amy Bickers combined with a visit to the Hong Kong Jewish Cemetery with a member of the community as a guide.

☆ Sarah Havurah ☆

the 'hiking havurah'

Rosh Janet Golden organized three beautiful walks on the Hong Kong trails. The first, from Bowen Road to Black's Link, included Robyn Helzner who led the group in song. On Erev Yom Kippur, a group walked Bowen Road to the Jewish Cemetery. The third walk followed Sir Cecil's Ride above the Hong Kong Cricket Club and along the old Catchwater trail.

☆ Samuel Havurah ☆

aka 'Shabbat Starter' Havurah

This group meets every third Friday at the American Club coffee shop for a buffet breakfast followed by a discussion led by Rabbi Oseran. The theory is that a great view, good coffee, and stimulating talk will inspire early-risers working in the area to attend. Participants have included Frank Lavin, Cara Case, Al Fine, Ann Lubart, Bob Green, Janet Goldman, Dr. Ted Axler, Jonathan Feiger, Jack Mayer, Robert Rothbart and Mark Michelson. Contact Bob Green to join.

☆ Rebekah Havurah ☆

professional couples with 'grown-up' children

A 'get acquainted' Sunday meeting was held at the home of the leaders Shelly and Giorgio Sorani. The attendees were Joe and Elane Fine, Miron and Roda Mushkat and Phil and Cindy Strause. Another meeting has been planned for a Dolphin watch.

■ Diana Goldman

Lifecycle data to enhance new Congregational database

UJC seeks ways to recognize, celebrate special occasions, birthdays, anniversaries, and *bnai mitzvot* and note *yahrzeits*

Yahrzeits

Commemoration of the anniversary of a death (*yahrzeit*) is a ritual which began in talmudic times to help meet the crisis of bereavement. To ensure that the *yahrzeits* of loved ones will be noted when *Kaddish* is recited at Shabbat and other services, members are urged to submit the following information.

name of the deceased (Hebrew name is optional)

male or female and relationship

date of death

(If known) did death occur before or after sunset? (If after, Yahrzeit is customarily observed the next day)

Who will be observing the Yahrzeit?

Preference for observance date (common or Hebrew date)

Do you want to be notified of upcoming yahrtzeit?

Name

Address

Tel

Fax

Adult Birthdays

name

date of birth (year is optional)

Anniversaries

name

date

Children's Bar/Bat Mitzvahs

name

date

Other special occasions

name

description

date

Please mail above information to The UJC, GPO Box 5259, Hong Kong or fax to 2523-3961

Know anyone who might be interested in becoming a member?

Please let us have their contact details and we will do the rest.

Participation disappointing as less than 40% contribute; additional \$200,000 required to meet deficit

Membership Donations Reach \$334,410 as Circle Campaign Continues

○ Aleph Circle (\$72,000 or more)

- Robert L. Meyer

○ Gimmel Circle (\$18,000 to \$35,999)

- Robert and Sheri Dorfman
- Dan and Diana Goldman
- Charles S. Monat
- Andrew Pleatman and Ellen McNally

○ Dalet Circle (\$7,200 to \$17,999)

- Maggie and Joel Eisemann,
Zachery, Benjamin, and Perry
- Jason and Noel Fenton
- Mark, Kate and Lillian Michelson,
Max and Aaron

○ Hay Circle (\$3,600 to \$7,999)

- Arthur and Linda Belfer
- Cara and Andrew Case
- Carol Betson and Henry Goldstein
- Jonathan Feiger and Nancy Laben
- Joseph and Elane Fine
- Matthew Ginsberg
- Bob and Grace Green,
David and Jonathan
- Peter and April Kaminsky
- Steve, Masako, and Jake Levitt
- Stacy and Brian Palbaum
- Diane and Leonard Patsiner
- Jean-Eric and Melanie Salata
- Dan Shure
- Cindy and Paul Theil

○ Vav Circle (\$1,800 to \$3,599)

- Anonymous (2)
- Ken and Debbie Bell
- Roy and Junggae Birnbaum
- Andrea and Jeffrey Chaitman
- Kerin and Adam Conn
- Brian and Rebecca Dlugash
- Al and Sharon Fine
- Maureen and Jonathan Fox
- Pierre and May Gabison
- Janet Golden
- Gary Greenberg and family
- Alex Grinberg
- Patsy and Ed Handleman
- Julie and Alan Jacobson
- Daniel Kirwin
- Leonard and Christel Lane
- Richard Lapkin
- Sharon Ser
- Janeth and David Weil
- David and Joy Zweig

○ Zayin Circle (\$720 to \$1,799)

- Anonymous (4)
- Elsa and Martin Berman
- Margaret Britton
- Eliot Cohen
- Marvin Greenberg
- Neal and Jane Horwitz
- Saul Lockhart
- Ann Lubart
- Michael March
- Viviane Meyer
- Terry and Jeffrey Paule
- Jeffrey Rosichan & Christy Dittrick
- Dan Schwartz
- Steven Sperber
- Daniel Tretiak

Children's Circles

○ Het Circle (\$360 to \$719)

- Jacqueline Birnbaum
- Sandra Birnbaum
- Emma Conn
- Gerald Conn
- Charlotte Cronin
- Dylan Cronin
- Carly Dorfman
- Justin Dorfman
- Gabriel Felton
- Mitchell Felton
- Perry Feuer • Perry Feuer
- Jasmine Gould-Wilson
- Zachery Gould-Wilson
- David Handleman
- Michael Handleman

○ Tet Circle (\$180 to \$359)

- Anonymous (3)
- Anna Berman
- Jacob Berman
- Jessica Berman
- Alex Kalo
- John Kalo
- Perry Feuer
- Ariel Kaminsky
- Benjamin Kaminsky
- Daniel Kaminsky
- Gershon Sloven
- Lucas Sloven
- Aliana Weil
- Samuel Weil

○ Yod Circle (\$1 to \$179)

- Victoria Edwards
- Benjamin Meyer
- Michael Meyer
- Rachelle Meyer

May their names, and all, be inscribed for blessing in the Book of Life.

Just for the record, Bob Green reminisces about the makings of The UJC High Holiday services

Evolution of a Synagogue on the Move

A synagogue is more than bricks and mortar, a temple more than a suburban address. As Robert Meyer so correctly observed in his talk at the Kol Nidre service last month, The UJC's most important and almost only assets are its members.

We are indeed fortunate in having had the dedicated service and generous contributions of time and money from many members over the few short years of our existence. At the same time, I believe they have been 'paid back' many times over by the satisfaction derived from their contributions. It brings to mind an advertisement I saw in a magazine many years ago. It was a picture of grainfields stretching into the distance with the simple caption, 'The earth returns what man puts into it, many times over.'

Yes, its more than the physical plant that counts. But sitting in our 'High Holiday synagogue' last month in the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, I couldn't help thinking about what went into making it such a pleasing sight — not only my observation but that of a few others. Both the ingredients and process are important and interesting parts of the recipe for creating a portable synagogue.

You begin by looking for a venue that can seat at least three or four hundred people. It's got to be convenient and affordable. Sound easy? It was, for the first few years — 1989, 1990, and 1991 — when we could rent the China Fleet Club (CFC) in Wanchai for only a few hundred Hong Kong dollars an hour and have their staff cater a 'break-the-fast' snack for a reasonable fee.

One year, Tomas and Veronica Frankenberg generously agreed to underwrite this break-the-fast expense. I'm not sure who did the ordering but we apparently overestimated the appetites of our members for tuna fish and egg salad sandwiches, cookies, etc. Fortunately, the U.S. Seventh Fleet was in town and The UJC ended up provisioning a number of American sailors passing through the CFC with enough food for several long voyages.

I'm not sure what the Frankenbergs thought when they got the bill to feed the Fleet but before departing Hong Kong and returning to their home in Argentina, they donated a beautiful pair of sterling silver candlesticks which have become important fixtures at our Shabbat and High Holiday services ever since.

Without a thermostat to control the air conditioning, the CFC auditorium was either freezing cold or very hot. Those of us in the back row kept a careful eye on Carol Betson, our unofficial temperature monitor, and shuttled in and out during the services in response to her signals to tell the staff to turn the air conditioning on or off.

We surprised ourselves with what we could do with an old Korean chest and some tapestries collected from Indonesia, Philippines, and other parts of Asia. Rabbi Sam Joseph brought a small Torah lent by a congregation in Cincinnati and told the same joke every year about passing through customs in Tokyo with the comment 'Tora Tora Tora.' We fondly associate that story with his High Holiday services for The UJC, together with his reminders that the Haftorah is more than half a Torah, and his recollection of members of the small congregation he served as a student rabbi in Ardmore, Oklahoma lining up at the local Dairy Queen during the break in services on Yom Kippur day.

From the time the Royal British Navy sold the China Fleet Club to a developer who saw little value in renting precious space for ballroom dancing, beer drinking con-

tests and Jewish religious services, the yearly scramble began for High Holiday venues. The search, led by Janet Golden, took The UJC to Shouson Theatre, a gem of an auditorium in the nearby Hong Kong Arts Centre. But instead of hundreds of dollars per hour, we were paying thousands. And because we were not an organization specifically involved in the arts, we could not get confirmed bookings until just a few months before our 'events,' and then only somewhat begrudgingly. I recall writing a fairly convoluted letter to the Arts Centre management arguing that we were a kind of arts organization since music figured prominently in our services and our 'singers' known as cantors had often come from or were pointing toward singing or operatic careers. Still, it took frequent phone calls by Janet and our staff and, as part of our contingency plan, a constant lookout for other venues.

When The UJC could no longer get bookings at the Art Centre, Janet found an even more impressive place across the street — the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (APA). But rental charges were even higher and getting bookings still a touch and go affair since we did not enjoy priority status as an arts organization. By now, however, we were experienced in the mechanics of transporting the Torah, ark, prayer books, and a multitude of accessory items needed to set up services on the run. In the process, we 'retired' the 'Korean ark' and replaced it with a beautiful old chest from the Indian state of Rajasthan.

Thanks to the multi-talented Raymond Au Yeung (a member of Robert Meyer's staff), the inspired thoughts of Executive Administrator Jackie Vachha ('put the ark on wheels'), and the design skills of Rabbi Howard Kosovske and Robert Meyer, The UJC ended up with an easily movable, reinforced ark with interior lining and form-fitting acrylic stand for holding our two Torahs.

Some of the money from the Torah Fund went for the purchase of accessories and in the fall of 1996, members attending High Holiday services at the APA witnessed the dedication of a sterling silver Torah crown, *rimonim* (the finials that fit on each of the Torah rollers), a breastplate, and pointer (*yad*). The words engraved on the Torah shield read: 'Dedicated in honor of Robert L. Meyer, in recognition of his wise counsel and generous support.'

One of Rabbi Oseran's first priorities after arriving in Hong Kong this fall was the acquisition of an Eternal Light or *ner tamid*. A chance meeting in Central with Robert Meyer led to the purchase of a beautiful red-tinted glass *handi* (hanging globe) from India. Raymond fit it with an electric light and made a removable, decorative iron arm by which the Eternal Light can be attached to and suspended from the ark. Some rich, antique-looking tapestries I found in India were used to cover the table used for Torah readings and 'dress' the front of two newly-acquired podiums imported from Japan.

One of the most important ingredients at every High Holiday service has been the flowers. In recent years Al and Sharon Fine and Ken and Debbie Bell have underwritten this expense. By some fortunate accident, we ended up this year with a double order of flowers for Yom Kippur services. I'm not sure who, if anyone, had to pay but one thing was certain — it made for a very impressive picture with large arrangements of beautiful white lilies at the base of the stage on each side, large stands of the same on each side of the ark, and another arrangement center stage in front of the table.

(continued page 16)

Thoughts on a steep mountain path: getting crushed by a falling elephant; 'Something I might not want to do again' Rabbi says of trek in Northern Thailand

Rabbi and Family Take to the Hills, Savour Tribal Travel, Pastimes

The following is excerpted from a letter by Rachelle Oseran, wife of Rabbi Joel Oseran, to friends of the family.

This was our first vacation during our sabbatical year in Hong Kong and the trip exceeded our expectations. Levi and Paula [Levi Weiman-Kelman, The UJC's previous rabbi, and his wife Paula] had been to Thailand and had told us what a great time they had had, but our kids had no idea what to expect. We flew directly to Chiang Mai (in north Thailand) together with a large group of noisy tourists (can't get away from them). We stayed in a quaint hotel and immediately made arrangements through the hotel for our trek the following day. This was a touchy subject as I (Rachelle) love hiking, but Joel doesn't. Our Thai guide, a lovely guy named Somkient, tried to please us all and planned a varied two-day trek.

We left early the next morning and drove three hours in a truck up north into the mountains very close to the Burmese border. After lunch (which was accompanied by a monsoon-type downpour) we climbed into a tiny boat together with three Italian tourists and their guide for a three-hour trip down the river. It was an exciting experience. We wore life jackets as we went through several sets of rapids (we were told not to move at all during those times as the top of the boat was only about 6 inches above the water). We did get quite wet. On the way we saw fishermen, temples with large buddhas, farmers in the rice paddies and buffalo. We stopped at a village of one of the hill tribes and immediately smelled the opium the women were smoking, while selling their handicrafts. This was our kids' first exposure (I hope) to that smell.

When we arrived at our final destination, the Italians climbed onto the elephants they had rented to take them to the village and we began our hike. It started off fine and everyone was happy until we hit the hills. At the same time the heavens opened up and it poured. Our guide supplied us with raincoats which we put over our backpacks, creating a sauna effect from the sweat of our bodies. This went on for about half an hour and then the rain stopped as suddenly as it had started. The air cleared and we were walking through some of the most magnificent scenery we had ever seen. It was no easy trail and some of us were having quite a hard time. There were no other people around for miles.

We reached our village as it was getting dark and had no idea what to expect from our sleeping accommodations which turned out to be the hut of one of the families of the Lahu hill tribe. It was very authentic - we saw no other tourists at all. The hut was divided up into several areas (we had to remove our shoes upon entering). The first was the cooking area - they were cooking our dinner in woks over an open fire. The second was our sleeping area, but some of the family members also slept in that area. Our 'beds' were one-inch mattresses on the floor with a blanket and a pillow. There was another sleeping area for other family members and then the *piece de resistance* - the

deck outside. The view of the mountains from the deck was absolutely incredible. Ilan took his cue from the surroundings, assumed his meditation pose and began to contemplate world peace!

We ate dinner on the floor around a straw table out on the deck. Our guide had gone to great efforts to keep our food pork-free and succeeded in showing off his culinary skills. It was a memorable dinner - beef with spinach, chicken with onions, rice, vegetables and fresh banana and pineapple for dessert. Delicious.

After dinner, Somkient sat with us and told us about the culture of the hilltribes, Buddhism and general life in Thailand. He explained that all Thai men over the age of 20 are supposed to assume the life of a monk and live in a temple for any period of time it takes to understand 'enlightenment'. During that time they only eat two meals a day, which consist of food that people donate. Somkient explained that he had not yet had this experience as he enjoyed food too much!

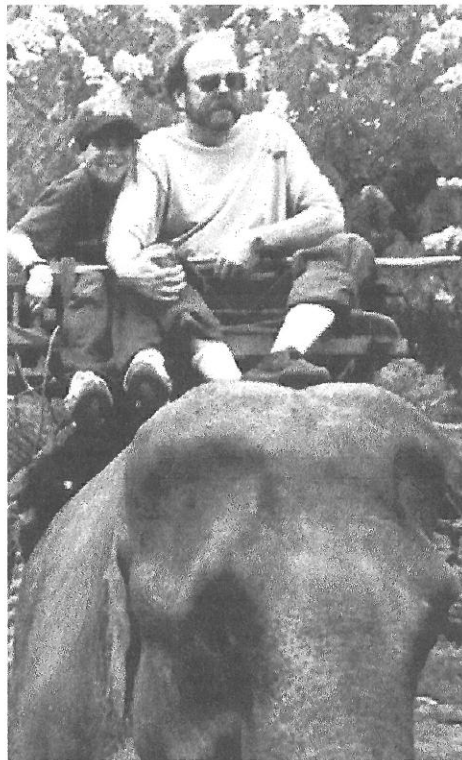
We were then offered a Thai massage by the womenfolk of the hut at a price of 50 baht (U.S.\$1.25) for one hour (each). How could we refuse? Joel and I lay down on our mattresses right next to the kids who watched in awe as the grandmother and mother kneaded Joel and two daughters pummelled me. At one point the kids felt Joel's pulse thinking that he had died from pleasure! It was quite an experience. Joel quipped that he wanted to give them ten dollars to keep it up throughout the night.

We were woken at four in the morning by the first rooster who began a lengthy conversation with the other roosters of the village. The pigs and other animals interjected their opinions at given intervals. We gave up any attempts at sleep by around 6.30 A.M. and Somkient made us breakfast. Later we packed up and left the village and began a hike to a waterfall. The kids found the water too cold to swim in.

We had lunch at another village. In Thailand one has a choice between 'very spicy' food and 'spicy' food. Even Somkient's stomach was showing

signs of distress and he kept running off into the bushes.

We then mounted our elephants for our climb up the mountain. Joel and Ilan were on one, Ariel and I on another and Shai had one to himself. We rode the elephants through incredibly dense forest (there was no path whatsoever) - at times the trainer on my elephant had to stop to cut down the bamboo and branches above us so that we could pass. It was very steep and Joel was thankful that it was the elephant doing the climbing and not him. I was petrified that the elephant was going to lose his balance, but I guess they're pretty steady on their feet. The trainers were smoking their opium so the elephants were probably somewhat high. It was a real experience! We did more hiking until we finally came to our truck and then returned to Chiang Mai. The trek was, without a doubt, the highlight of our Thailand experience.



Rabbi and son Ilan on the trail

MAZEL TOV TO

November

Sam Lewis
 Julian Maerowitz
 William Rosichan
 Merav Ferriger
 Claudia Cucker
 Callan Handmaker
 Nat Lavin
 Yana Katzap
 Joshua David Payne
 Jessica Adler
 Satchel Sturtz
 Jake Morio Levitt
 Ian Stanton
 Dylan Guttman Cronin
 Michelle Haase
 Chelsea Blumenthal
 Rachelle Meyer
 Jonathan Green
 George Geicke
 Samuel Frederick Weil
 Ruti Zwick

December

Mackenzie Cohen
 Jason Loeb
 Tovi Lê Simon
 Thomas Belfer
 Libbie Cohn
 Kristin Garber
 Michael Palitz
 Kit Leung
 Aaron Michelson
 Corrie Rothbart
 Azriel Sheps
 Dana Schawelson
 Gabriel Felton
 Michael Meyer
 Jeffrey Carmen
 Benjamin Eisemann
 Deborah Gitin
 Danielle Clennar
 Jason Strasser
 Johanna Geicke
 Jean Goodman
 Jeremy Homier

ON THEIR SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS

Farewell

Nancy and Alan Brenner, to Singapore
 Eva and Marcus Eliason, to USA
 James Robin and David Kaptzan, Fu Du Garden, Apt. M-D, Block C, 299 Xuan Hua Road, Shanuhall China 200050 Tel: (66) 21 6240 7056 Fax: (86)21 6240 7055
 E-mail: kaptzan@prodigychina.com
 Justin Leibowitz, to USA
 Anton and Bernadene Marcus, to South Africa
 Abbey Newman, 7310 North Redwood Road, Glendale, Wisconsin, WI 53209, USA
 David and Joshua Payne and Judy Immerman Payne, to Shanghai
 Andrew Sollinger
 Wilhelmina Waldman, to USA

Thanks!

'Thanks to all who took part and assisted in the High Holiday services and a special mention to the HKSAR Government for the free fireworks display after the services. We hope this can become an annual tradition.' Note from Rabbi Joel Oseran

Jackie Vachha and Diana Goldman for organizing the High Holiday services, member and visitor tables, and related activities

Janet Golden, Jonathan Feiger, Ken Bell, David Zweig, Mark Michelson, and Mary Leventhal for High Holiday help as greeters and at the member and visitor tables.

Ken and Debbi Bell and Al and Sharon Fine for donating flowers for High Holidays

Jon Feiger for carrying the Torahs to and from the HKAPA and his helpers for polishing candle sticks and havdalah set

Amazing Grace staff (Julie, Evelyn, Cindy) for polishing the Torah ornaments

Brian Blank and the security team for helping us all feel more comfortable.

Joy Zweig for donating and supplying the 'honey and apples' and **Ted, Marie, and Renata Axler and Ken Bell** for 'chopping' and distributing them

April Kaminsky for helping with the booking at the American Club for the Selichot service

Rabbi Lennard Thal for conducting a leadership seminar for the Executive Committee

Robert Meyer and his staff for the use of The Terrace, building the Sukkah, and arranging the Sukkot dinner

Ben Frankel for assisting with preparations and supervising arrangements for the Sukkot dinner and celebration

Diana Goldman for arranging the Sukkah decoration party
JCC for lending us the sound system for the Sukkah parties

Ann Lubart for bringing the apples and honey

Mary Leventhal, Alyshe Tetens, Melanie Nutbeam & Lynn Goodman for organizing the UJC information booth at the JCC 'Apples & Honey' day September 28

Cara Case, Diana Goldman, Ann Lubart and Robert Meyer for organizing the Havurah program

Ellen Levi-Minzi, Patsy Handelman and Mei Hwa Biers for their assistance in organizing the new members reception

Ken Bell for donating the plaque for the Arc and Friday flowers on several occasions

Bob Green for sourcing the new podiums and donating the tapestries for High Holidays

Robert Meyer for sourcing and arranging the fitting out of the Eternal Light

Jody Hirsh for substituting at Rabbi Oseran's Introduction to Judaism class.

Sharon Fine, Janet Golden, Cindy Theil, and Joy Zweig and others for supplying photos for the UJC records and the new UJC brochure due out shortly

Merle Wolin and Ed Hoffman for leading services in Rabbi Oseran's absence

Shabbat dinner sponsors**Steven Sperber**, August 22**Janet Golden** to welcome Rabbi Oseran and family, Aug. 29**Cara and Andrew Case** to celebrate the 1st birthday of their son Zachary, September 19**Clare and Robin Ray** in celebration of their Silver Wedding Anniversary September 26**Sue and Alistaire Hayman** to celebrate their wedding anniversary, October 31**Steven and Linda Simon-Mietus** to celebrate the birth of their twins, November 21**May and Pierre Gabison** to celebrate the birth of their daughter, Claudia Leah, November 28**Lesley and Martin Lahm III** to celebrate the birth of their girl, December 12**Masako and Steve Levitt** to celebrate the 1st birthday of their son, Jake Morio, December 19**Anne-Marie Gordon and John Colmey** to celebrate the birth of their son, Benjamin Jakob, December 26**Lynn and Wayne Goodman** to celebrate the naming of their daughter, Rose, January 9**Births***The UJC welcomes these new arrivals:***Benjamin Jakob** — son for Anne-Marie Gordon and John Colmey, October 11**Claudia Leah Gabison** — daughter for May and Pierre, November 4**Alexandra Elizabeth** — daughter for Lesley and Martin Lahm III**Mats Zefer Najberg** — son for Merve Zefer and Adam Najberg**Rachel** — daughter for Amelia Petersen and Bob Nixon**Dana Maria Mietus and John Edward Mietus** — twins for Linda Simon and Steven Mietus*The UJC gratefully acknowledges the following donations***General Fund****Jonathan and Louisa Ross****Amy and Don DaSaro****Alexandre and Sophie Tunik****Anonymous****High Holiday Donations****Dennis and Marey Leventhal****Cara and Andrew Case****Romy Serfarty and Julian Hipwell****Bryan and Stacy Palbaum****David Harris****Robin Harris and Robin Sears****Marc Berger****Charles Berzon****Richard and Debbie Sender****Robert Fetzner and Rosanne Zimmerman****Mel, Paulette, and Haris Bazerman****Robert Risman****Jonathan Kriegel and Samantha Ho****Steven Strasser and Joyce Barnathan****Anonymous (2)*****The United Jewish Congregation
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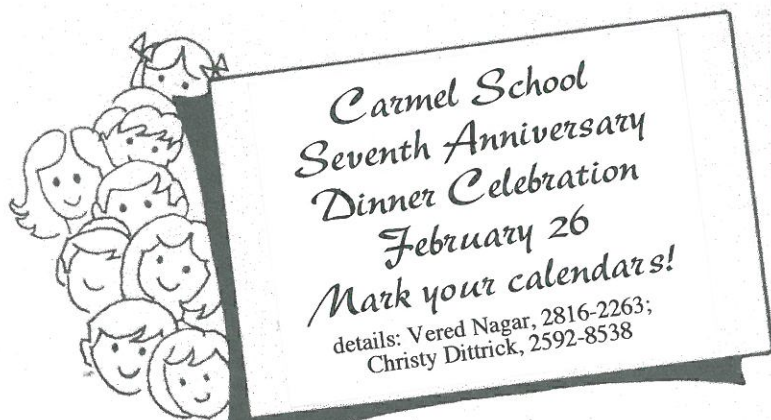
UJC Funds

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*; the *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; and 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.

Prayer and Worship

Shabbat services conducted by Rabbi Joel Oseran 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.

Join us
November 29, 10 a.m.
Shabbat Morning Service
conducted by Rabbi Joel Oseran
with the B'nai Mitzvah group
Auditorium, Robinson Place
followed by kiddush lunch
in the JCC



Synagogue on Wheels

(continued from page 12)

Because we pay by booking periods, we found ourselves up against the deadline at the conclusion of Yom Kippur services. While others rushed off to the break-the-fast, Rabbi Oseran and family, cantor Robyn Helzner, Ken and Debbie Bell, Jonathan Feiger and Nancy Laben, Robert Meyer, Jackie Vachha, Charles Monat, my wife Grace and several others stayed behind to wrap it all up.

Inspired by hunger pangs, we dismantled our carefully-constructed 'set' within minutes. Shai, Ariel, and Ilan (the Rabbi's sons) set book-packing records while Jonathan and Nancy were a model of efficiency in wrapping silver. What had been such a beautiful synagogue a short while ago was now just a bare, dark stage and a collection of boxes and furniture pushed to the side, waiting for the truck driver to come the next day.

When Rabbi Lennard Thal gave a leadership seminar for Executive Committee members last month, I think he forgot to mention a couple of things. For all the inspiring words we heard, I'd say skills in wrapping and packing are high on the list if you want to make it with The UJC. As a member of a congregation on the move in more ways than one, it also helps to have a car with a big trunk (or boot if you're British).

Friday, November 28
is
FAMILY NIGHT
down at the UJC
Auditorium, Robinson Place
starting at 6:30 P.M.

We want to see kids, lots of them
Bring the entire family, young and old!

*for our new, once-a-month
'FAMILY-FRIENDLY'
SHABBAT SERVICE
conducted by Rabbi Joel Oseran

followed by a
delicious buffet dinner (no kidding!)
sponsored by Pierre and May Gabison
in honor of the naming of their baby

*Stay tuned for 'Family Friendly' Shabbat services
on December 12, January 16, and February 13.



Become a Shabbat Sponsor

Sponsoring a Shabbat dinner or Saturday kiddush lunch is a wonderful, meaningful way to honor or remember a special event or person(s) in your life.

To save all the logistical problems of collecting from each individual for our post-service meals, we depend on members to sponsor these occasions. These are easily affordable at an average of \$1800 per occasion. Sponsorship may be undertaken individually or shared with others, as some *havurot* are planning to do.

If you have enjoyed our Shabbat dinners and lunches — the ease with which you can show up without a reservation, the convenience of bringing friends and visitors, the fellowship around the Shabbat table — then please call Jackie and book a date.

We're counting on you — as a member of The UJC family — to do your share. This is what makes a family and community work.