

SNAC/shots

A Gala Welcome

ISSUE #14 /
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ELUL 5783 /



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Chairman's Message

As the New Year fast approaches it is only natural that we reflect back on the past year with its events that we cherish and those we could have lived without.

But it is the Jewish way to journey forward, to look at the future with awe and with hope. It is our community, our friendships, that encourage us to reach our potential. Our closeknit "family of friends" in many ways defines SNAC. As we prepare to welcome 5783, our "Bar Mitzvah" year, it is this unique *kehilla* of friends who will walk together through our adolescence, through the trials and the celebrations that await us individually and communally. How thankful we are to *HaKodesh Boruch Hu* for bringing us together from the four corners of the world.

On behalf of myself and the SNAC Board, I wish each of you a Shana Tova, a year of health, of peace, of friendship and endless possibilities.

Chag Sameach to all,

Shelli Weisz, Chairman



5 Kehillat Tzfat Netanya
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Chairman
Shelli Weisz

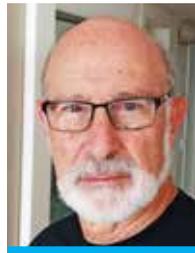
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Editors' Welcome

How exciting! This is a SNACshots first. You may notice that your magazine is a bit thicker than usual. Your responses to our photo competition were way beyond expectations. Within moments of its announcement, your beautiful photos started flowing in. Your "Something Good Stories" are

amazing... In addition, thanks to Shelli and the board, a steady stream of outings, lectures and other interesting programs has increased our SNACactivities pages by 50 percent.

With Covid restrictions lifted, SNACpackers have been out and about, doing our best to make up for lost time. From New York to South Africa, to Greece and also in Israel, we have toured and cruised and re-united with family.

And most important: We have a new Sefer Torah, our very own, thanks to a great extent to the generous contributions from members of our community. We celebrated its arrival with gala festivities on September 1. All of this and more are the reason for the first-ever 40-page SNACshots magazine.

We wish all of the SNAC community, in Israel and around the globe, a new year of health and peace and togetherness. Shana Tova,

Reva Garmise, Roy Pinchot



IN MEMORY OF TOM WEISZ, Z"l

A TORAH FOR



Less than a week before Tom passed away, he told Shelli that it was time for SNAC to have its own Torah scroll. “Write the Torah. You will dedicate it with me or for me, but write the Sefer Torah.” Sadly, Tom was taken from us a year ago, just days after this conversation. The new Torah, written in his memory, was welcomed at SNAC in song and dance and (of course) food, on September 1, 2022.

This was a SNAC community project and all members were invited to memorialize their loved ones by participating in funding the writing

of the new Torah. Alan Lewis oversaw this exciting year-long project, from seeking a suitable *sofer stam* to organizing the gala *Hachnasat Sefer Torah* event, and everything in between.

The celebrations began with members of the community “writing” the final letters in the scroll, supported by the *sofer*. It was a moving moment for everyone who took part in this exciting act. Once the ink on the letters had dried, the Torah was raised and dressed for the first time. Shelli’s grandson, Ronya Arussy, lifted the Torah and Brian

Wolkind, accompanied by his wife Barbara, had the honor of covering it with its elegant mantle.

With the Torah held high under a chupah we proudly marched through the nearby streets accompanied by a police escort and joyous music from a “Jewish music truck,” singing and clapping and ogled by passersby on the *tayelet*. Several onlookers ran over to kiss the Torah and one even took a turn carrying it.

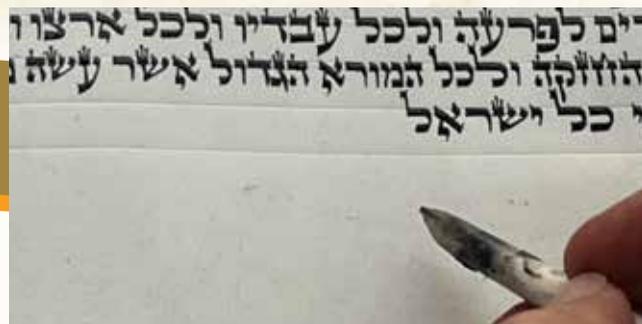
When we returned to the gate of the synagogue, the five older Torah scrolls were waiting there to “welcome” this new Torah to our community.

SNAC



The Torah was then carried into the synagogue for the first time and the joyous welcome included singing, *hakafot* and a *Shehechyanu*. Shelli gave a welcoming talk and was surrounded by her children and grandchildren as we celebrated the momentous event.

The evening was topped off with a tasty and abundant barbecue meal. "Torah, Community and Commitment" may be the SNAC motto, but "Let's Eat" is what really gets us going! ●



Photos by Charles and Toni Green

Meet our Chatanim



Rafe Safier Chatan Torah



Rafe and Roberta Safier made *aliyah* in November 2017. But it seems to have been written in the stars that the Safiers would one day retire to Netanya and become fully

involved in the SNAC community.

Rafe: "Our affiliation with SNAC completes a cycle of life in Netanya which began 50 years ago as we spent our first Shabbat as a married couple in what was then the Four Seasons Hotel. And Roberta will tell you we are even happier today than we were back then! (She missed her parents). We found at SNAC a vibrant community of like-minded active seniors with a passion for life and friendship. In no time at all we were receiving and reciprocating invitations for Shabbat dinner and lunch. I was accepted into the leining rotation, and was invited to join the board shortly thereafter, ostensibly to double the American representation. Making *aliyah* to Netanya was the second-best decision of our retirement; our involvement with SNAC was and remains #1!"

Rafe has proved to be a great asset to the community and it is hard to imagine SNAC without his contributions to the smooth running of the synagogue. In his own quiet way, he manages to be a vibrant, behind-the-scenes moving force. ●



Gareth Kreike Chatan Bereshit



Gareth's connection with SNAC began in 2006, when he was in Israel as a tourist and joined the occasional Friday night minyan. Although he lives in Manchester,

England, his connection to SNAC remains strong until today.

Gareth: "In 2009, Gill Heron asked me to serve as *gabbai* for Pesach services to be held in their building. I agreed readily; two years later, my son Jonah was the first bar mitzvah in the synagogue. Over the years, I have been involved in the *hashkama* minyan, even from my home in Manchester.

Years before my father, Aubrey, made *aliyah* in 2015, he attended SNAC services and was treated with respect and love by the community; the concern and support expressed to me following his death was a great comfort. I am also grateful to the stalwarts of the Mishna Yomi shiur who kept me connected to SNAC during the long time I was prevented from entering Israel. Each time Belinda and I walk into SNAC, it is as though we never left."

The SNAC community also feels that the Kreikes are a kind of permanent fixture even when they are in their other home (in Manchester). Gareth is the first overseas member to be honored as a Chatan on Simchat Torah. ●



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SNACtivities

March Tiyul

Two Don't-Miss Museums

After what many claim to have been the most miserable winter in Israel for decades, SNAC broke the mold by arranging its first *tiyul* of 2022 on Israel's first sunny day of spring!

Our first stop was located on the Tel Aviv University campus. Originally named the Nahum Goldmann Museum of the Jewish Diaspora, after an upgrade, it was re-branded the ANU Museum of the Jewish People. It was only re-opened in March 2021 and since day one, it has beaten all previous visitor records.

Unfortunately, our guide was faced with the task of cramming our tour into just 90 minutes. We time-traveled at a breathtaking pace through an amazing array of audio-visual displays from early biblical characters, different rulers and conquerors of Eretz Israel, to the long distressing history of European persecution and expulsions, and the growth of the Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities.

The exhibition demonstrated how Jews have influenced culture, literature, politics, science and more throughout the world. We then moved on to the Peres Center for Peace and Innovation. The Peres Center features all that is amazing about 'startup Israel.' Our guide pointed out that while the ratio of successful startups in the world is 2%, in Israel it is 4%. We were introduced to an amazing selection of Israeli startups and innovators: Waze, the navigation app; Mobileye, the advanced driving warning system (obviously invented for Israeli drivers); the USB flash drive, cherry tomatoes, first grown in 1991, and drip irrigation, first developed way back in 1959. These are but a few that we saw.

The museum ably demonstrates that these startups were the products of the aspirations of people from all walks of life: men, women, Israeli Arabs and Jews of all nationalities and colors, but most importantly of all, they are all Israelis. ●

Ashley Leboff

April Tiyul

Access to Jerusalem

An 8:45am departure and 43 SNACers gathered under the guidance of Yoni Tokayer to hear what connected the destruction of Lachish in 701 BCE with our war in 1948.

Israel's occupation of Lachish is told in the book of Joshua, when the city was attacked and destroyed. Later, when Hezekiah was the king of Judah, his decision to seek the support of the Egyptians caused grievous offense to the Assyrian King Sennacharib.

After conquering Israel, the northern kingdom, the best route for Sennacharib's army to attack Jerusalem was through the wadis by Lachish. The invaders were armed with battering rams, and to get them close enough to the city walls, they built a ramp. The Romans imitated this tactic in their siege of Masada 630 years later. We saw the remains of the ramp leading to the base of the walls, and Yoni graphically described how the defenders would have been throwing down flaming sticks and boiling oil from the towers on the city walls onto the Assyrian troops. Lachish was soon destroyed and the road to Jerusalem was open.

After lunch, we drove the short distance to the Khan Shaar Hagay Museum. The Arabic for Shaar Hagai is Bab-el-Wad and this is where the road from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem runs through a wadi with high ground on either side. During the War of Independence, Jerusalem was under siege from the Arabs and there was a desperate need to send food, fuel and ammunition to the defenders of the city. The Arabs occupied the high ground on either side of the wadi at Bab-el-Wad and poured hails of bullets onto the convoys that were trying to pass through. Many brave soldiers died in the repeated attempts to run the blockade. In the end, the blockade was beaten when clever people found an alternative off-road route they named the Burma Road to circumvent the wadi. The exhibits at Khan Shaar Hagay record the blockade runners' trials, successes and deaths with inter-active exhibits and movies. ●

Alan Lewis

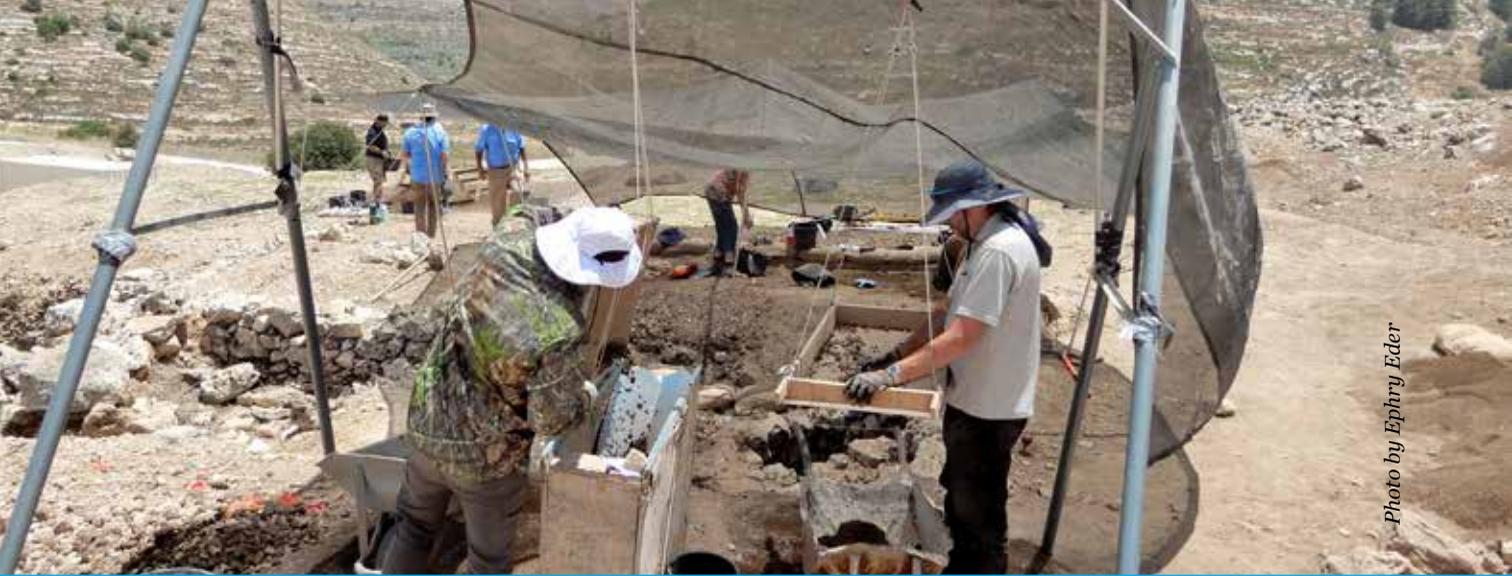


Photo by Ephry Eder

May Tiyul SNAC Visits the Site of the First Temple

The bus ride from seaside Netanya to Shiloh in the heart of the Shomron takes about 90 minutes. But it was 3,450 years back in time

Fourteen years after crossing the Jordan, Joshua called together the elders of the nine and a half tribes that were going to share Canaan west of the Jordan to Shiloh and there he drew lots to determine the territory that each tribe would settle. He also decided that the Mishkan, the Tabernacle with the Holy Ark, would be erected on a permanent site at Shiloh. And it was there that we assembled.

Led by our guide, Yoni Tokayer, we asked how it can be known that this is exactly the site where the Mishkan stood for 369 years. How can we be sure that this was the place where Hannah prayed for a child and was rewarded with Shmuel who became the leader of his people in his time? Yoni took us gently through all the evidence in the Tanach in the books of Joshua, Judges and Shmuel Aleph, finally showing us that the dimensions of the flat and cleared surface were exactly those laid down in the Torah for the construction of the Mishkan.

After lunch, we visited the nearby

family-owned G'vaot Winery and tasted three of their wines. We were told that the proprietor made a study of the grapes of the land of Israel and one of the wines we tasted was from the grapes that were grown historically in the land rather than the more modern vines brought in from France and elsewhere.

The final visit of the day was to Beit El, first mentioned in the book of Genesis as the place where Jacob, fleeing from the wrath of Esau, spent a night and dreamt of angels ascending and descending a ladder between heaven and earth. Centuries later, after the death of King Solomon, Beit El was the southern boundary of the northern kingdom of Israel. To prevent his people from attending the Beit HaMikdash in Jerusalem, Jeroboam, the first king of northern Israel, built a temple at each of the northern and southern extremities of his kingdom. The Tanach tells us that the southern temple was at Beit El and Yoni showed us the evidence.

Many of us at SNAC have been studying Tanach and this *tiyul* emphasized and reinforced so much of what we have learned. It was a wonderful day. ●

Alan Lewis

Shabbaton

On Shabbat Parshat Bamidbar, May 28, we had a special SNAC Shabbaton. This year's Scholar in Residence was Rabbi Anthony Manning accompanied by his wife, Sarah.

Rabbi Manning presented a Shabbat lunch-and-learn session entitled 'Yerushalayim – A Tale of Two Cities.' Sixty people attended a delicious catered Shabbat meat meal in our multi-purpose shul, which was quickly adapted for lunch seating after *davening*. Rabbi Manning led us through an in-depth discussion of the duality of the name of Yerushalayim, giving us a deeper understanding of the true nature of the city and its centrality to our lives. This was particularly meaningful as the following day was Yom Yerushalayim.

Later in the day Rabbi Manning also led a lively Seudah Discussion: Torah and Shavuot. To Ask or Not to Ask – Dealing with Difficult Topics in *Hashkafa*. Rabbi Manning is a Senior Lecturer at Midreshet Rachel V'Chaya College for Women, and Shapell's Darche Noam Yeshiva and gives a regular weekly *shiur* at the OU Israel Center in Jerusalem. He and his wife Sarah live in Alon Shvut. ●

Belinda Calvert

Tom Weisz Memorial



(l to r) Shelli Weisz, Dr. Yael Ziegler and Dr. Tovah Lichtenstein

On June 28, excitement filled the SNAC sanctuary in anticipation of lectures by three outstanding speakers from Yeshivat Har Etzion. “Lessons From Moshe Rabbeinu” was the topic chosen for the Yom Iyun – *The Tom Weisz z”l Memorial Program*. Dalya Arussey Deveroli, Tom and Shelli’s granddaughter, began the program with a beautiful description of her grandfather and his influence within the family.

Dalya’s moving introduction was followed by the first speaker, Rabbi Alex Israel, who posed the question, “Can Moshe come down the mountain?” The answer is complex, including stages in Moshe’s development as a leader. Rabbi Israel concludes that although Moshe does come down from the mountain, he is still more comfortable with God than

with the people.

The next speaker, Dr. Tovah Lichtenstein, focused on the transfer of leadership to the next generation. She explained that intergenerational leadership transfer can occur as a rupture or as a process of continuity.

Last, Dr. Yael Ziegler spoke about, “Moshe: Man of God, Man Among Men.” Dr. Ziegler highlighted Moshe’s conflicting identities, being born twice – biologically and being drawn from the water – creating conflicting Hebrew/Egyptian identities. In addition, the compassion of the women in his life influenced him to become a “midwife,” pulling the people through the Red Sea and becoming the man of compassion. Moshe was both a man of God and a man among men. ●

Ginger Pinchot

Shmone Esrei

In June yet another lecture was given as part of the Tom Weisz Memorial Program by Rabbi Ezra Bick on the subject of *Shmone Esrei*, describing the various ways and reasons we bow and kneel during this prayer. Rabbi Bick also distributed copies of his scholarly book on the *Shmone Esrai* prayer to all comers. The last lecture in the series will be given by Rav Moshe Taragin on October 19th on the occasion of Tom Weisz’s first *yahrtzeit*. ●

A Day Well Spent

SNAC members who participated in the *Yemei Iyun Tanakh*, a rich bilingual program at Herzog College in Alon Shvut, were greatly rewarded by the presentations

of outstanding Torah scholars. The program, presented each year over several days during the Nine Days, includes more than 100 live *shiurim*.

Collectively, we chose a day of outstanding speakers, including, among others, HaRav Moshe Lichtenstein, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Har Etzion, Dr. Yael Ziegler, and Rabbi David Fohrman of Aleph Beta. Rav Lichtenstein’s presentation was very personal to each of us because it was sponsored by Shelli Weisz in memory of Tom Weisz, z”l, Moshe Meir ben Avraham HaKohen, and by his loving family. From the family: “His love of Torah learning remains our inspiration.”

We met the end of the day, informed and inspired, with the satisfaction of a day well spent. The hope is that next year during the Nine Days, more members will choose to attend this very special event. ●

Ginger Pinchot

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When charging the profile, you will be asked to present an ID card that includes the date of birth of the Rav Kav card holder.

NEW!





A Phone Call Out of the Blue

By Issy Zuckerbrod

Someone called Ram Yakir had tracked me down. His call led to the most amazing three days I have ever spent.

He told me that he was a tour guide and had just returned from a conference of Israeli tour guides to Poland. As part of the trip, they spent one day in Mielec, in Galicia, the town that was home to my family probably for several hundred years, until the *shoa*. I was quite surprised, as Mielec was never on any Polish heritage trip itinerary. When I last visited Mielec, the town had managed to wipe out any record of prewar Jewish life, except for a plain stone monument on the site of the previous Jewish cemetery saying that a number of Jews and others had been killed in the area, and the remains of the cemetery including tombstones had been transferred to the non-Jewish cemetery in Lublin “as a sign of respect.”

I first visited Mielec as part of my

attempt to find the *matzeva* that my parents had set up in 1945 in memory of my brother and sister who were murdered while in hiding in 1944 and the rest of the family who were shot or murdered in the concentration camps or died in work camps. I found no sign of it, and again was told it had been taken to Lublin where the stones and marble were used “to lay the paths of the Lublin non-Jewish cemetery.”

Very recently as part of excavations for a new building site, the remains of two Jewish cemeteries were found. Some local Poles, with help from a Jewish philanthropic organization, were now restoring it. Furthermore, the grandson of a photographer who had a shop in Mielic discovered some old unexposed films, which he now developed. These contained pictures of ghetto life in Mielec from 1939, when the Nazis entered, until the destruction of Jewish life in 1942. As a result, a small museum was set up. Polish guides recently visited Mielec and arranged for a local historian to give a lecture. At the end of the lecture a woman holding a wooden box approached Ram. Ram immediately knew that the box contained a medal given to *Chasidei Umot Haolam*, Righteous Gentiles.

She said: “*My name is Renata Szyfner. I was born just outside Mielec, but have been living in Orlando, Florida, for the last 30 years, and I*

just happened to be here for a few days visiting my family and heard about this lecture. The medal in this box was given to my father and another was given to my grandmother for saving the lives of Jews by hiding them in the loft of a chicken coop at their farm. They had decided not to tell my grandfather as, fearing the consequences, he almost certainly would not have agreed. My father told me that the son of one of the families they had hidden was alive and living in Israel. It has always been my dream to meet him but have not yet been able to make contact. His name is Isidore Zuckerbrod.” Ram was overwhelmed, and responded... “I know Isidore Zuckerbrod; he was my doctor in Netanya when I was a child; I will try and get the two of you together.”

Indeed, Ram contacted me and asked if I would be interested in meeting her. I replied that I would be delighted to meet her and thought that it would be a great educational opportunity for my children and grandchildren to learn more about our family background. As with most Holocaust survivors, not much was spoken at home about those years. I was always reluctant to ask questions, especially about my brother and sister who were murdered in 1944, as I did not want to open old wounds. This would be a great opportunity to learn more about how my parents survived those years, and

especially about my brother and sister.

Ram decided he would get her to Israel. Every year Christian supporters of Israel, worldwide, take part in the week-long March of the Nations, trekking the *Shvil Eretz Yisrael*. The event was to end on Thursday afternoon with a large rally on the Golan-Syrian border. Ram arranged for Renata to be the guest speaker at the rally. He also organized a week of sightseeing activities and a special day at Yad Vashem, where Renata would be able to visit the site of the plaques dedicated to her father and grandmother and other honored Righteous Gentiles. And so the date was set for meeting Renata. I organized a room in the Piccolina Restaurant, in Kikar Hamusika in Jerusalem, and was asked by Ram to turn up one hour before our fixed time. I soon found out why.

When I arrived at the restaurant, I was met by a reception committee, including a reporter from the Hebrew newspaper *Yisroel Hayom* who was accompanied by a photographer. I was then introduced to a film crew who worked for the newspaper's online publication, including an interviewer, soundman, film cameraman and a technical expert. Also present was a representative from the Polish embassy, whose job it was to present Poland's cultural heritage, and in particular to show how the Poles helped Jews in World War II, all in all to present Poland in a good light. She particularly asked me to refrain from any comments about supposed Polish Antisemitism during my upcoming interview. And finally, a well-known Polish filmmaker was there to record the event and indeed had followed Renata throughout her week's travel in the Holy Land. This was going to be a documentary on Polish TV.

I was duly interviewed and then came the drama of my first meeting with Renata, which was stage managed for maximum effect. As she approached Kikar Hamusika, the cameras rolled and flashed and we met for the first time. An extremely emotional



Courtesy of Yad Vashem

encounter as we embraced each other with tears running down our cheeks. Diners at the restaurant, aware of what was going on, broke out in cheers and applause when we embraced. We went into the room I'd arranged, where I introduced the 25 members of my family who had come.

I gave a brief introduction and asked Renata to speak:

"I was born just outside Mielec, my mother's menopause daughter (in our

***"I have six children,
30 grandchildren and
11 great grandchildren.
This is my revenge
and my consolation."***

parlance, bat zekunim). I had two older sisters, but as the youngest, I was very close to my father. He always put me to bed in the evenings, but unlike other children who were read bedtime stories from books, my father always told me his own stories, especially of his escapades as a 17-year-old at the start of the war. Soon after the Germans had rolled into Mielec, he began to hear stories of how the Germans were treating the Jews, in particular one occasion where the Germans had burnt down the town's central synagogue and other Jewish institutions. He could

not believe this was happening, and so decided to see for himself. He walked five kilometers from his farm into town, and as he got nearer, the smell of burning flesh became stronger. By the time he got to the city center, the stench was unbearable. He saw the burnt out remains of the synagogue as well as other Jewish institutions. He started to vomit and ran all the way home. On the way back he saw some Jews hiding and in obvious fear for their lives, and at that point he decided that he had to do whatever he could to save Jewish lives. He told his mother what he had seen, and asked permission from her to bring whomever he could back to their farm. My grandmother agreed, but said this has to be done in absolute secrecy, not even your father should know about what we are doing, and we must do whatever we can not to arouse any suspicion that we are harboring any Jews."

At this point I got shivers down my spine.

Every year before Rosh Hashanah my mother told us her story of the first time she was miraculously saved from death. After the Germans marched into Poland in 1939, they closed all Jewish *kehilla* activities. Erev Rosh Hashanah the news got out that, as a gesture, the slaughterhouse, *mikveh* and shul would be opened for the holidays. She had

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four chickens, two in each arm, which she took for *shechita*. As a result of the crowding, the chickens all suffocated in her arms, and therefore could not be *shechted*. Distraught, and in tears, she turned for home. As she was walking back, she started to hear screams. She looked back and saw that the slaughterhouse and all the other Jewish buildings in the area had been set ablaze. She heard the sound of machine gun fire and realized the soldiers had poured fuel on the buildings, locking the door so that no one would escape. Anyone who somehow got out was shot.

This was the first time I had corroboration of this story from another angle. I visited Poland in 1995 and arranged to meet Renata's father in Mielec. I got his address from Yad Vashem and wondered what I could give him as a token of thanks for what he had done. Flicking through EL AL's duty free magazine on the flight to Poland, I noticed a silver hand, a *chamsa*, and bought it. I asked our Polish guide to write a few words for this gift. The note explained that this was an ancient *kabalistic* symbol promising good health, prosperity and long life to all those who were deserving. Imagine my surprise when we met and Renata produced this *chamsa* from her bag. She said her father treasured it, and gave it to Renata just before he died. She now travels with it wherever

she goes. Renata also confirmed that my sister and brother who were hiding at a different farm were discovered and shot by the Germans in 1944. The remains of my sister were found. Thanks to the stories Renata told me, I now know the date of their death, so I can properly mourn them each year.

On the last day of Renata's visit, we met at Yad Vashem. Throughout the day, we were followed around by a large entourage of people. At the end of the day, a man approached me, saying, "I am a pastor from Germany and have made it my life's mission to tell the German people they must take responsibility for their heinous crimes." He then asked me to forgive him for the crimes of his nation. I did not know how to answer him. I had no interest in forgiving the Germans. So I just put my arms around him and hugged him. "Thank you," he said, through his tears. ●

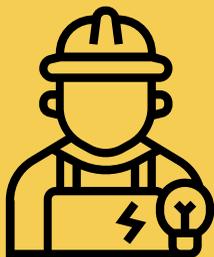
Taxi Drivers

By Alan Mays



Many years before making *aliyah*, we came to Netanya on holiday with our youngest, Jenny, then a toddler. Our taxi from the airport arrived in Netanya shortly before 9 in the evening and we asked the driver to stop at a shop so that we could buy milk for Jenny. He pulled up outside a supermarket that was still lit up and I ran towards the door just as the staff were shutting for the night. My requests to allow me just to buy a packet of milk for our little one fell on deaf ears, and I returned despondently to the taxi. Our driver was enraged and hurling himself out of the car, he charged up to the now locked shop door banging furiously on it. Minutes later he returned to the taxi triumphantly waving a packet of milk! We asked him how he had achieved this. He said that he yelled at the employees that these were tourists just arrived from overseas with a young child. Was this a way to treat visitors? Didn't they want to see more tourists in their town? What sort of impression did they think they were making?! We ended up with our milk and the driver ended up with a well-deserved tip! Where else in the world would a taxi driver have been so motivated?

We made *aliyah* some years later, and shortly after our arrival I needed to get to Assuta for a scan. As the taxi dropped me off and I ducked my head to leave the car, the driver spotted my *kippa*. He said that he was a *cohen* and he proceeded to place his hands on my head and give me a priestly blessing! Over the years I have been the recipient of a variety of hand gestures from taxi drivers, but that one was definitely a first! ●



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Yoni and Abby

A Festival of Weddings

By Roy Pinchot

Ginger and I never fully appreciated the end result of having four children in four years: two a year apart, and then twins!

However, now that our grandchildren have reached adulthood, unexpected benefits are suddenly arriving. Between May 2022 and February 2023, we will have witnessed five weddings of our 17 grandchildren within a mere nine months. If you include the marriage of our grandson Edan that took place in New Jersey this past December, that would make six weddings. A rate of joy and impoverishment hardly imaginable.

The fortunate thing for us, is that our move to Israel was financially a life saver, as only two of the weddings were in America, with one in South Africa, and the rest will be in Israel. (This, plus the discovery of a wonderful store for affordable wedding dresses in Bnai Brak, has been a source of comfort.)

The brides and grooms span three of our four children's families: our daughter Amira's family, who now live in Netanya, provided two grooms and one bride; our son Ari's family in Silver Spring, MD provided both a bride and a groom; and our son Dov who lives in Skokie, IL provided a groom. The spouses hail from Tel Aviv, Efrat, Cape Town, Montevideo –



Ben and Barbara

and two are from Teaneck, NJ, USA.

The couples met in various places. The two in America met in New York, two in Israel met while studying at IDC (now Reichman University), one met in the IAF while stationed at the *Kiryah*, and the last was introduced through friends. All of our grandchildren have spent either one or two years at yeshiva or seminary in Israel following high school (although one spent seven years at "Gush" and married a young woman from Jerusalem). Four are still at university, two are in real estate and film in Israel, one is in finance, one teaches, one is a physician's assistant, and two brides are in high-tech marketing and branding.

The year has been one of "something good"...Our cup runneth over. ●



Edan and Talia



Diary of a Journey

By Joyce Mays

Thursday February 11

9:00am

Summoned to Jerusalem by my oncologist. "If you can get here by 1:00, I can see you."

9:05am

Set off. Alan switches on WAZE. "Weird," says he. "It seems to want us to go on the Ayalon!" Really? In rush hour? It's a first but who are we to argue with one of Israel's finest technological breakthroughs.

9:30am

At Gililot the calm if unctuous WAZE voice insists: "In 800m, keep right." Ayalon it is. Heavy traffic, but moving.

9:35am

Some Israeli clown behind me in a blue bubble car type Fiat. I mind my own business in the slow lane. He's behind me, then parallel to overtake on my left. Drops behind again. Now is on my RIGHT, on the hard shoulder driving parallel to me. I practice my death-stare. He's flapping his arm up and down. Oh, police badge! We pull over.

9:36am

"Lady, I think you have a puncture in the back right wheel and no, you can't carry on to Jerusalem." "Nearest garage?" He sighs. "Follow me." Takes us off the Ayalon.

9:46am

Ten minutes! Still stuck on the slip road off the Ayalon and time is ticking. What would wise woman do now! Calm down. Think. OK maybe use this as a positive message.

9:47am

OK, here's the thought. Maybe this is happening to teach me a lesson. Sometimes in life one bowls along merrily on four wheels. Sometimes you hit a puncture, need time out to fix it and can then carry on your way. Mention 'thought for the day' to Alan. Great vote of approval from him! "Better than some of the stupid things you come out with!"

10:05am

Pull into garage. Cop waves us in and turns to go. I go to thank him. Still glowing with Alan's praise I tell him "Actually, not only did you maybe avert an accident but you made me think. I had some bad news recently and have felt a bit down but you made me realize..." Tell him my 'three wheels on my wagon' idea. He stops and looks at his boots for a full minute. Looks me in the eye and says "Is it cancer?" Who is this guy? He asks which medical insurance group I belong to and takes me over to the bubble car. He scribbles my name and ID on a crumpled old napkin discarded from a takeaway. "Later" he says "I will be in touch. I happen to be friendly with the head of Maccabi's Oncology services in Israel.

She will phone you Sunday." He gives me his number and I ask for his name "Coby" he replies. "Coby who?" "Tell you later" (after all the guy needs to get to work). "OK Coby, for now you go in my contacts as Coby Malach" (angel). We smile and hug and I wave goodbye to the cop who looked a lot like Kojak.

10:15am

Tire fixed (nail in it) 50 shekel bill paid and on our way. Alan is HUGELY impressed. He doesn't argue with me about having been sent a real live angel. He lets me ramble a while and says, "You're right. It is very strange. WAZE would NEVER direct us on to the Ayalon in rush hour traffic." Who says men are prosaic?

Sunday

Phoned by Head of Maccabi Oncology services in Israel. She gives some excellent advice and gives me contact details for an apparently excellent specialist in the field I will shortly need. File it. Maybe it will be useful.

Thursday following week

Urgently need specific biopsies. Need a specialist in the field she has mentioned. Everyone is booked. Son tries the number she gave me. Biopsies booked for Sunday!

Dear God, thank you. I won't know why you sent the cancer back, but am really grateful for your divine protection and for sending me an angel in the unlikely guise of a bald, rotund and very, very kind Tel Aviv traffic cop on his way to work...

A happy and thankful postscript: this was five years ago. ●

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The Brazilians Are Coming!

Four New Members Who Broke the SNAC Mold

By Reva Garmise

Yes, it's true. The Brazilians really are coming to Israel. You meet them in stores, in the street and in synagogues. So far, SNAC has gained two lovely young couples as members, with the emphasis on the word "young." Unless you attend Friday night services, you probably would not have noticed these four new members, as their custom – brought with them from Brazil – is to take part in *Kabbalat Shabbat* prayers but much less in morning services. They are hard to miss as they are about two generations younger than the usual SNAC members. And in August, our community grew by one more when Flavia and Daniel Benoleil's daughter (Yael) was born, dramatically lowering the average age of SNAC members even further. Yael is the uncontested youngest SNAC member! These are the people who broke the SNAC mold. Not pensioners, not a gray hair among them, all gainfully employed in professional positions. They are starting out their married life, while most of us are recalling our halcyon days, sometimes on the pages of SNACshots.

According to Flavia, Daniel, Anna and Leo, Jews and other religious communities enjoy freedom of religion in Brazil. "Antisemitism is beginning to raise its ugly head, but it is not very prevalent at present," says Anna. All were raised in traditional Jewish homes – Flavia and Daniel in Sephardi families and Anna and Leo with Ashkenazi backgrounds. They studied in Jewish schools and are proficient in English and Hebrew as well as in their native Portuguese, Spanish and probably other languages as well. Flavia and Anna studied at two of the three Jewish schools in Rio de Janeiro and met in the Rio branch of a Bnei Akiva group, soon becoming close friends.



Flavia and Yael



Flavia and Daniel celebrate their marriage in May 2018. From the photo, it is clear that Israel is in their future.

Jewish Roots

Leo, Anna's husband, is the only one of the four who lived in Sao Paulo and was perhaps a tad less zealous about the idea of *aliyah*. Sao Paulo has a large established Jewish community and is considered a comfortable city, certainly safer than Rio. But then he met Anna and that made all the difference. If this congenial foursome is representative of the Brazilian *aliyah*, Israel is gaining a welcome share of young, educated, traditional *olim*. And if they have their way, more and more young people will be making *aliyah*. As it is, most of their good friends have already made *aliyah* and they are doing their best to woo them to Netanya. "Many of the newcomers from Brazil have traditional religious backgrounds, but many unaffiliated Jewish Brazilians are already in Israel as well, a good many of them living in Tel Aviv. They may have come with little knowledge of Judaism, but some of them have begun to connect with their Jewish roots since coming here," says Daniel. "Other young Brazilians come to Israel for their gap year or to study at a yeshiva and end up staying," adds Flavia.

Flavia and Daniel made *aliyah* about four years ago, just a couple of months after their wedding in May 2018. They lived for a year in Jerusalem, before settling in Netanya. Daniel has many relatives in the country, including his parents (in Netanya), his brother and several aunts and uncles who made *aliyah* in the 1980s. "After high school, I moved to Richmond, Virginia in the US and studied Administration and Finance at a small business college." (He later earned an MBA at the IDC, now known as Reichman University, in Herzliya.) "After completing my course of study in the US, I returned to Rio de Janeiro and enrolled in a Torah class. That's where I met Flavia. I had become disconnected from my Jewish background for several years and wanted to re-connect." Daniel now works as a business analyst for a high-tech company. Flavia is a dentist and works at MaccabiDent, so if you are a patient at that clinic, you may know her or perhaps even have been her patient there.

Romance

Anna and Leo actually met in Israel. He was on a Masa program in Jerusalem for six months and extended his stay after meeting Anna, who joined the program later on. She'd been to Israel before, doing a gap year in Jerusalem, but her parents insisted she return to Brazil to complete her education. When she returned to Israel, she met Leo and this sealed her fate. A lovely romance story except that, as a result Anna missed her best friend Flavia's wedding in May 2018. All is forgiven, it seems, as the two couples are very close. Anna and Leo followed Flavia and Daniel to Netanya after studying at an *ulpan* in Haifa. Leo is one of triplets, but the only one who made *aliyah*. We have Anna to thank for that decision, though his participation in a Masa program probably indicates he was already heading in this direction. Both Anna and Leo work in high tech, she in business development and he in customer service and sales. They were married in September 2020 and made *aliyah* just a month later.



Left to right: Leo and Anna Gewertz; Flavia and Daniel Benoleil

While all of them have strong ties to Judaism and studied in Jewish schools, the main impetus for making *aliyah* appears to be the wish to provide their families-to-be with a safe and secure environment. The main reason for settling in Netanya, they all agree, is the beach. Flavia and Daniel had lived in Jerusalem for a year. They have many friends in Raanana, which has a large population of *olim* from Brazil, but unfortunately, and fortunately for us, does not have a beach. The two couples are close friends and love living in Netanya. They have good friends in other cities and are doing their best to persuade them to move here. What a boon that might be for SNAC!

First Synagogue in the Americas

Jews have lived in Brazil since the Portuguese Inquisition in the 16th century. They arrived during the period of Dutch rule, setting up the first synagogue in the Americas in Recife, the Kahal Zur Israel Synagogue, as early as 1636. Most of these were Sephardi Jews who had fled the Inquisition in Spain and Portugal to the religious freedom of the Netherlands. European Jews immigrated to Brazil after World War I and World War II. The parents of all of SNAC's Brazilian members were born in Brazil and even one or two of their grandparents were native to that country.

According to the Jewish Confederation of Brazil (CONIB), more than 120,000 Jews live in Brazil today, making it the tenth largest Jewish community in the world and second largest in Latin America, after Argentina. Yet, Jews make up only 0.06% of the country's population. They play an active role in politics, sports, academia, commerce and industry, and in general they are well integrated into all spheres of Brazilian life. Brazilian Jews generally enjoy comfort, security and prosperity in a country characterized by the harmonious coexistence of diverse ethnic groups.

Of course, we at SNAC are delighted to welcome these new young members to our midst and hope they will enjoy an even greater level of comfort, security and prosperity in Israel and in particular in the SNAC community.

Bem-vindo to the new additions to the SNAC community! ●



Anna and Leo at their wedding in September 2020, while Covid raged. In the background, Sugarloaf Mountain.



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Photo Tips from the Pro

By Charles Green

This edition of the magazine looks great and is especially colorful thanks to the many beautiful images submitted for the “Our Beautiful Tayelet” photo competition, which I really enjoyed judging. However, from my own experience as a photographer, I know that every image that I have ever created could have been improved upon, if I had a second chance. I therefore present a few hints on how to improve an image for future competitions and for our own sense of accomplishment.

Basic Advice

- Hold the phone steady with both hands only on the rim, making sure that fingers don't come round to the front of the phone where they can be picked up by the lens and seen in the picture.
- Try both the upright or horizontal positions, to see if one is better. If in doubt – shoot both ways.
- Try finding an unusual angle to capture the image, not just from the customary standing position.
- If taking a view of the horizon, make sure the horizon is lined up straight, not on an angle.
- The best light for making images look their best, and three-dimensional, is early morning or late afternoon, not when the sun is directly overhead.
- Look for a main point of interest in the scene; the main point of interest does not necessarily need to be in the center. It can also be to one side.
- To make the image more interesting, try to capture a scene where there is something in the foreground, something in the middle ground, and something in the background.

Advanced Advice

Looking at any work of art, one can discover 10 elements that make the image outstanding. Try to incorporate any one or more of the following: mood / lines / dominance / light / direction / color / texture / reflection / repetition / simplicity.

At the bottom of the camera app screen there is an EDIT feature. Pressing that brings to the screen a variety of possibilities to improve the image by cropping, straightening, adjusting the color, lightening and darkening. Practice using these features and your image will be improved.

Sending Images for Print

Finally, when sending images taken on a phone for printing, do not send them via WhatsApp as they are reduced in size and quality. Always send them by email, or WeTransfer. When prompted to choose SIZE always choose ORIGINAL SIZE. By email you will not be able to send several large quality images at the same time, so you may need to send additional emails, each containing only a few images.

P.S. I know it requires more effort to profit from good advice than to give it... GOOD LUCK! ●

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OUR BEAUTIFUL TAYELET



FIRST PLACE: Ephry Eder
Very striking image with great impact and composition.



SECOND PLACE: Ashley Leboff
Rare view with lots of atmosphere and mood.



THIRD PLACE: Roy Barnes
Unusual view of the tayelet, the beach and sea, which could be used to advertise the beauty of Netanya.



FOURTH PLACE: Sheldon Reich
Great composition, impact and storytelling.



FIFTH PLACE: Gill Gallick
Interesting composition in foreground, parachuter in middle ground, and beautiful background.

Wendy Hirschfeld



Lois Liebowitz



Mike Garnise



Sheldon Reich



Judith Phillips



Gill Gallick



Shelley Fishel

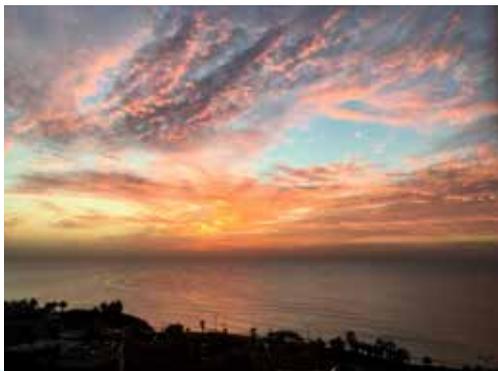


Birgitte Savosnick



■ photo competition ■

Stephen Lambert



Ephry Eder



Ashley Leboff



Ros Cole



Joyce Mays



Eva Engles



Belinda Calvert



Robert Casselton



Julian Lewis





SNACpackers



*Tony and Ros Cole,
Brian and Barbara Wolkind*

Not a Tale of Our Trip to the Greek Islands

By Ros Cole

We went on holiday. That short sentence doesn't convey the hardship of the last couple of Covid years, or our disbelief that we were actually away, or our excited anticipation of the holiday to come. We traveled with Barbara and Brian, our holiday buddies. Actually, our buddies for away and home and anything in between. Ben Gurion Airport was not well organized which is a euphemism for a complete *balagan*. Seems to be the way of the world these days. We boarded the ship in Athens and it was fantastic. Anyone who has cruised will know the food and staff and entertainment are usually so good that you daydream about life being like that all the time.

We visited several Greek Islands, each one prettier than the one before and all lovely to walk around. We visited several archaeology sites and museums dedicated to the horrendous decimation of Greece's Jewish population during the Holocaust. Not so lovely.

This holiday fulfilled all our expectations. A few anecdotes are too good not to share: Picture the scene. The four of us were walking around a very trendy area in Athens. It is full of graffiti, cafes, crowds, entertainers and shops. (Hurray for the shops!) We were enjoying ourselves but aware to be mindful of our valuables. I can't say why but I felt something was happening and noticed a smart young couple, maybe a bit too near us. Tony felt something drop into his shopping bag and

looked inside. He pulled out Brian's wallet. Brian took it and saw his small amount of cash was gone, but his credit cards and passport were all still there.

We all must have looked bewildered. This young couple, who by now had disappeared, must have pick-pocketed Brian, removed his wallet, taken the money and dropped the wallet into Tony's shopping bag. We have no idea how they did it and, although annoyed, we had a grudging respect for their professionalism.

By the way, we loved Athens and recommend Gostijo, the only kosher restaurant there. We thoroughly enjoyed the exhausting five-hour tour of the Acropolis and Parthenon. And, of course, we loved the shopping. We even loved the taxi driver who took us from the airport to our hotel and then for every journey until we flew home. How many times have you had a taxi driver ask to take a photo of you as a memento? The jobsworth person at the port where we boarded the ship took the gold for giving us the worst experience of our whole holiday. Boarding was a long arduous event due to Covid. Isn't everything blamed on Covid these days? When we expressed our concern about Brian needing food desperately as he is diabetic, she assured us all would be fine as, should he collapse, there was medical care to help!!

Our trip ended with a few days in Athens, just in case we had left anything in the shops. We stayed at a nice hotel that Brian had booked. It is irresistible to mention that, we don't know why, but we had a much nicer bedroom, a lounge with a sofa and chairs and two televisions, than the room assigned to Barbara and Brian. I had better not continue because for some reason this seems to annoy our traveling companions. Here's to future holidays for all of us. ●



*Celebrating Their Oldest Son's
50th Birthday*

Reunion in South Africa

By Les and Roy Cohen

We were finally seated in Seats 10A and 10C on Flight LY 31 to South Africa. It took two hours to clear security and check in at Ben Gurion, which was insignificant compared to the two years and 10 months since we had last seen our South African kids and grandkids.

When we made *aliyah* 12 and a half years ago, we had comforted the kids and ourselves by saying that we would only be 12 hours away from them, but that was before Covid struck.

That damn Covid put our lives on hold, but not those of our kids and grandkids. The last time we saw them, the grandkids were 14 and 12; now they are 17 and almost 15 years old. How would they react to us? Would we need to get reacquainted? Would we have to re-establish relationships? These were the questions that were running through our minds, as the pilot navigated his way to Johannesburg.

After landing, we quickly and

efficiently cleared Passport Control and Health formalities and exited into the Arrivals Hall where we were met by our son, Saul, who was eagerly waiting for us. What a reunion! We hugged, embraced, laughed, and wept tears of joy before climbing into the car to travel into Sandton where Saul, Sorelle and their kids live.

After having been away from the country for almost three years, the drive from the airport came as a shock. One tends to forget the security measures that residents have implemented: the high walls, electrified fencing, access-controlled points of entry and video cameras at entrances to homes and at intersections.

A couple of hours after arriving at our kids' house, the grandkids came home from school. The reunion began with a somewhat formal handshake, but the formality quickly disappeared and turned into hugs and kisses and comments about our relative heights. Between our shrinking with age, and their teenage growth, the grandkids are either the same height as or taller than we are.

We met with our friends and those family members who have remained in South Africa. Everyone had gotten

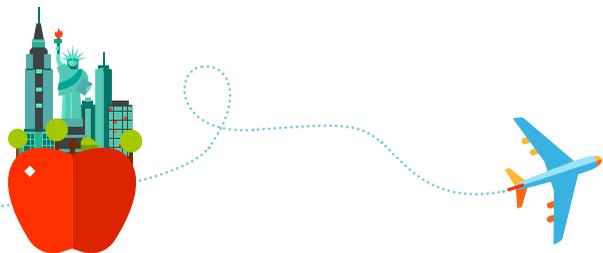
older in the last three years, some more than others, but all expressing a high level of frustration with the latest South African phenomenon, "loadshedding." This entails a rotation of areas where there are two-hour interruptions in electricity supply. This can occur once or twice a day, depending upon the shortfall in the amount of electricity produced in relation to the demand. As a result, most households have installed generators or batteries to store electricity for use during the period of outage. South Africans are innovative, tenacious, and forever hopeful that the authorities will eventually get on top of it.

One of the highlights of our trip to South Africa was a three-day safari into the Pilanesberg Game Reserve, where among other animals, we had some wonderful sightings of elephants and rhinos. ●



*Mothers with their young,
both animals and humans.*

"Saying good bye to our South African family was not quite as difficult as previous departures, knowing that four weeks later we would see them in Israel, where they would be reunited with their Canadian cousins after a three-year separation."



Manhattan: Then and Now

By Brenda Brett

When I was fifteen, starstruck and movie mad, the silver screen of the sixties dripped glamor, sophistication and glittering lights. It was all there, just across the pond, this city that was the backdrop to many of the romantic comedies that informed my teenage years. I couldn't wait to be old enough to visit and take a bold bite of this enticing Apple. I did, when I was 25 and it didn't disappoint.

From the moment the plane descended and the night skyline of Manhattan emerged from beneath the wing, I was enthralled. A million lights twinkled like a new galaxy and beckoned me in. And did I have fun! Today, 45 years later, the images are as clear as if I were there yesterday. I loved ambling through the streets which seemed to me like canyons of glass and steel – so high I sometimes lost sight of the sky. We all know 'The Top Ten Tourist Attractions of New York.' I did them all, with the soundtracks of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* or *Barefoot in the Park*, or Sinatra's *New York, New York* playing in my head. I was starring in my own film! By night I was too full of energy to sleep. The view of Central Park from my room in the St Moritz Hotel (now defunct) at 3am was as good as a Broadway show. The traffic, late night revelers and clip clapping of the horse carts buzzed incessantly. True to its word, the city never sleeps. By day I recall indulgences at Rumpelmeyers in the lobby – the only time I ever ate calorific sundaes and enjoyed every bite. I sipped iced tea at Windows on the World, 107 floors up – frenetic concrete jungle to the north, zig zagging of Brooklyn bridges to the east, and off to the south the Lady of Liberty holding her pose in the sunlight. There was a sense of well-being in that moment, "God's in his Heaven, All's right with the World." Go figure.

I was neither noticed nor accosted as I wound my way up Broadway, fearless and trusting, after the evening shows. I even traveled the subway alone!

Fifth Avenue epitomized New York chic. There was always time to window shop like Audrey Hepburn. I rarely bought. The sight of such a variety of opulence and luxury sufficed. I did however discover Marshall's with its "Labels less 70%" – and have been a fan ever since.



I returned last May, older, perhaps a little wiser, but still with stars in my eyes. But now, New York seemed gray, somewhat deflated. Where once it was charged with energy and excitement, now it was as if the city had been asleep gathering dust. The pandemic and its subsequent unemployment, mental health problems, travel bans, redundancy and general depression had taken their toll. We chose a midtown hotel, and when I tried to recapture earlier memories, I drew a blank. Streets were still overcrowded, mostly with millennials tattooed and scantily dressed. All seemed at ease with the sickly-sweet aroma of marijuana that was sold in a myriad of flavors and varieties from the green Weed World Candy Trucks parked at most corners.

Farewell to Times Square with its megawatt billboards flashing the latest Kardashian caper. Farewell to the crowds and the queues and the time slot online booking. I know it's the sign of the times. Despite the mayhem and the madness there still is magic in the Big Apple and I'll take a bite again. But the blush is a little faded and the bruises are clear to see. ●



At the opening of an AWIS clubhouse on a naval gunboat in Ashdod

AWIS: R&R for IDF Soldiers

By Roy Pinchot

Six years before the State of Israel was founded, David Ben Gurion established Yachad to look after the physical and mental well-being of Israeli soldiers. The English-speaking branch of Yachad, AWIS – The Association for the Wellbeing of Israel’s Soldiers – was established in 1982 to provide support for Israeli army, navy, air force soldiers and border police through contributions across the English-speaking world. Ian Fine, long-time chairman of the English-speaking branch, describes AWIS’s purpose as providing “a genuine sense of love and care for the young men and women of the IDF.”

As a volunteer organization, AWIS uses contributions and the support it receives to build and open “clubhouses,” providing rest and relaxation for soldiers at bases across Israel. Israel has more than 100 military bases and each base supports multiple military units.

AWIS builds and supports clubhouses to meet the needs of the individual military unit, frequently providing multiple clubhouses on a single base.

AWIS’s clubhouses give off-duty regular and special forces soldiers a place to meet with friends, watch TV, exercise, read, play popular video games and table soccer, before returning to active duty. Many of the clubhouses, which cost between 50 and 100,000 shekels each, are dedicated and named for young soldiers who have given their lives to protect Israel, such as the Golani soldier, Amit Ben Yigal, who was killed near Jenin. His Druse commander requested an AWIS clubhouse and synagogue in his memory at their base. A new Jerusalem clubhouse was requested by a former commanding officer and dedicated to a lone soldier from South Africa, Elyahu David Kay, who was recently murdered in that city. Requests for new clubhouses flow in regularly from unit and base commanders, showing the great need for the services AWIS delivers.

According to Chairman Fine, “During 2021, AWIS built and dedicated 25 new clubhouses, sometimes constructing three in one month, and renovating many older ones.” A typical clubhouse is approximately 50-100 square meters

and takes four to six months to build. AWIS installations exist throughout Israel, from bases high in the Golan, facing Lebanon and Syria, in Yehuda v’Shomron and on bases protecting the southern border with Gaza.

Additionally, AWIS provides support vouchers for soldiers whose family circumstances do not allow them to provide the “extras” that the IDF does not provide, such as extra underwear, special winter clothing, extra warm gloves, phone accessories, as well as family food vouchers for Pesach and Rosh Hashanah.

120 Club Draw

Donations come from the annual AWIS membership fee of 500 NIS, which includes a raffle ticket in the “120 Club Draw” which has a first prize of \$1000, 2nd prize of \$500 and 3rd prize of \$250. The annual Prize Draw takes place during Chanukah in Netanya. Club members are invited to a catered buffet reception that features a concert by the IDF orchestra. Members are also invited to accompany Clubhouse Donors on bus trips to regular and special military bases when dedicating new clubhouses. These *tiyulim* usually include a special briefing by the unit’s commanding officer as well as demonstrations and explanations by the soldiers themselves. Other donations are received from people in celebration of a bar or bat mitzvah, wedding, birthday, or in commemoration of a loved one’s memory or anniversary. A beautiful special AWIS certificate notifies recipients that a donation to support Israel’s soldiers was made in their honor. SNAC is proud that two of its members, Tony Cole and Gertie Forman, recently have been appointed to the AWIS committee. ●

Donations can be made by cash, credit card or bank transfer. Contact Gertie (054-8194354) or Tony (052-3559381) for details or to volunteer.



Meet Gigi and Freddy Speaker

By Reva Garmise

“I can never be President of the United States.” – Freddy Speaker

Freddy Speaker came very close to being born in the USA (which theoretically would have made him eligible to run for the US presidency). So why wasn't he? On May 10, 1940, Germany invaded France, Belgium and Holland. Freddy's parents left on that very same day. Witnessing the Blitzkrieg, they packed their bags and fled to the south of France. Their plan was to sail from Lisbon to New York, where Freddy's uncle lived. Thanks to good instincts, good decisions and more than a bit of good luck, the Speakers managed to get through Spain to Portugal. The good luck was mainly due to the Portuguese consul in Bordeaux, Aristides de Sousa Mendes, who, in violation of strict instructions, authorized 30,000 visas to Portugal, 10,000 of them to Jewish refugees. He was dismissed and ended his life in abject poverty. His picture is on display in Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. “Without him, I probably wouldn't be here!” says Freddy. In Portugal, Freddy's father politely approached the US authorities asking whether their crossing to America could be expedited since his wife was pregnant. That was the wrong approach. “Pregnant? No way you can go now,” was the answer. And that is why Freddy was born in Lisbon instead of in New York...and can never run for the US presidency.

The now expanded Speaker family arrived in New York in 1941 and settled in Manhattan. In 1950, to Freddy's great distress, his parents decided to return to Antwerp. He had been happy in New York. Back in Antwerp, he would be the new boy who spoke no French or Flemish and could not even write in script. “For years I dreamt of returning to my childhood home in Manhattan.” In Antwerp he was enrolled in a good Jewish school. “Thanks to my schooling and to my parents, I've always felt a strong connection to Israel,” he says. Eventually he adjusted to the change in his life and the dreams of New York began to fade.

After his bar mitzvah, his father hired a “melamed” to teach him. He was taught Gemara until age 18. “The lessons had the opposite effect of what my father wanted. I was totally turned off the study of Gemara. Years later, aged 40, I joined a Mishna class given within the diamond district, with about 10 other participants. Over the years, one by one the others dropped out. I continued to study with this rabbi for 25 years, even when I was the only student in the class. These studies were the underpinnings of my Jewish knowledge.”

Like many of Antwerp's Jews, Freddy became a diamond dealer. At age 18, he began learning the business, working as a diamond polisher. Later, he joined his father's diamond company.

1974: Enter Gigi

Freddy met Gigi on a Swiss ski slope – a bright, ambitious and attractive young woman from Strasbourg, France. Like Freddy, she had a traditional education. Unlike Freddy her upbringing was ‘all work and no play.’ “The main focus of my youth years was Bnei Akiva and the Rolling Stones,” says Freddy. Romantic as the ski slope meeting was, it took Freddy three years to decide to tie the knot again. Having lived through a marriage that ended in divorce, he was not yet ready to make the bold move. “I was sure right away,” says Gigi. And she waited patiently. As it turned out, it was worth the wait.

Although they lived in Antwerp for 46 years, Gigi never felt connected to the Jewish community. It was uncommon in Antwerp for women to work outside the home. Being a full-time housewife was not an option for Gigi. A straight-A student with a combined degree in journalism, political science and law, she soon set up her own publishing company, producing glossy consumer magazines for businesses. Her company was a great success and rewarding for her in every way. Freddy explains the main difference between the Jews of Strasbourg and those of Antwerp. “In France you are respected for your intellect and academic achievements. What counts in Antwerp is your success in business.”

Three children were born to Gigi and Freddy, happy additions to the son from Freddy's first marriage. They too studied in Jewish schools and inherited a love of Israel from their parents. Three of them live in Israel.

Epiphany

In 2002, while sitting at the popular Café Exodus in Tel Aviv, their son-in-law mentioned that real estate prices were dropping in Israel. You could almost see the light bulb flashing over their heads. They were visiting Israel several times a year. Why not have their own home to stay in? Without further ado, the Speakers left the café, strolled over to a nearby real estate agency...and the rest is history. Within the year they had purchased their apartment in Netanya. It was to be a holiday home, for vacations and for their frequent visits to their children who live here. “But in March 2020, something happened that completely changed the course of our lives. We had come to spend Purim in Netanya,” relates Freddy, “and were scheduled to return to Belgium when we received notification that our flight was canceled. In fact, all flights were canceled, and the airport closed its doors.” Covid had arrived in Israel. “So we would stay as long as necessary.”

Amazing, Ongoing Project

And then something else happened. “Simultaneously, we both came to the same conclusion. We would drop anchor here in Netanya. We had officially made *aliyah* in 2017 but now this would be our permanent home,” says Freddy. They soon sold their Belgium-based businesses and their house and started a new chapter in their lives. In almost no time, Gigi had established a new publishing company, this time based on an e-commerce platform. “You have to change with the times,” says Gigi. Freddy works side by side with his wife and they continue to be productive, as they always were.

Recently Gigi and Freddy embarked on an amazing project, writing the stories of their lives, beginning with their grandparents and parents, continuing with their own exploits and that of their children. The whole



At the wedding of their daughter Joy to Ruby, surrounded by her parents, three brothers and sister-in-law

family is involved in this massive undertaking. Their first grandchild is now engaged to be married, so the story will go on. Another grandchild just began his army service in August. “At present, we have 17 grandchildren,” says Gigi, “and we want them to know their family history.” Gigi relates that her entire family in France managed to stay safe throughout the Holocaust. Her aunt, who emigrated to Australia with her mother, wrote a day-by-day account of life in France during the war. Gigi’s father also wrote accounts of his life. So, on Gigi’s side, there was plenty of documentation for the family biography. Freddy has managed to piece together some of his grandparents’ history too. He knows that his maternal grandfather was killed by the Germans, though he was not able to determine where this happened. Some aunts and uncles perished in concentration camps. But much of the family history was not to be found. “Every time we came across a piece of information – such as finding the family name in a 1930s telephone directory – it was a cause for celebration.”

This documentation is an ongoing

project. It begins long before the Holocaust and relates the survival of two Jewish families through the war years. The four children wrote about their childhoods, their education, their professions, their marriages and their own children. In every way it is a Jewish story, comprising Freddy and Gigi’s religious upbringing, the way they raised their children to be independent, professional individuals, the strong religious Zionism that defines them all. It is an inspiring and ultimately happy story, with a promise of continuity into generations to come.

“Since settling in Israel, my religious practice has more meaning to me, for example when reciting prayers and blessings that relate to the Land of Israel. When I exit a train station and see a sign ‘*Mincha* at 4pm’ or when I see *oznei haman* in a bakery rather than the Christmas log cakes displayed in the Belgian bakeries, I feel that my religious practice is that much more meaningful. And I never feel self-conscious wearing a *kippah* or walking through the streets with a *lulav* or other outward signs of my religion. I am home.” ●

Welcoming Refugees from War-Torn Ukraine



Ukrainian Refugees at the Ramada Hotel

A Long Tradition of Support

Our community in Golders Green London twinned with the Jewish community in Zaporizhe Ukraine well over 20 years ago. Their dynamic Chabad Rabbi Nochum Ehrentreu established a Jewish day school, mikvah and many other facilities there and, until hostilities began earlier in the year, the community was thriving. A group of six of us from Golders Green visited Zaporizhe in 2002 and were hugely impressed by all that was being achieved.

All this of course has changed dramatically during these past months. Rabbi Ehrentreu has been instrumental in having those of his congregation who were willing to leave (mainly women and children) evacuated to Israel where he and his wife are located in Kfar Chabad. Their oldest son – now himself a rabbi (the child in his father's arms in the photo) – stayed behind to take care of the needs of the remaining community. Daily reports of the situation in Zaporizhe were sent out on the Golders Green synagogue email list and the *kehillah* has been assisting financially. We asked what we in Israel could do to help. The rabbi explained

that the refugees from Zaporizhe were located in different parts of Israel, but he was trying to bring them all together for Lag B'Omer in Kfar Chabad. Donations of women's and children's clothing would be much appreciated and SNAC members responded magnificently to Shelli's request for clothes. We filled our little car to the roof with the donations, and drove to Kfar Chabad to deliver them. We were shown round a huge warehouse methodically stacked with clothes for all ages, shoes, baby equipment, toys and food. Rabbi Ehrentreu had asked to meet us when we came, but he was not there because – as we learnt the next day – he and his wife Dina had flown back to Zaporizhe to try and persuade the few remaining women in the community to leave while they still could. Those who had stayed were frightened to leave their homes and their menfolk who had been called up to army service and were unable to leave the country.

Eliyahu Gutmann, the

rabbi in charge of the warehouse, greeted us warmly and explained that additionally they needed cots, household furniture, games and puzzles. SNAC once again rose to the occasion. At the time of writing, Rabbi Ehrentreu is trying to relocate as many congregants as possible together, so that they can support each other. The community in Mitzpe Yericho has proven keen to assist in housing them there. This Chabad venture and the support being given by communities in so many countries, is a true illustration of *כל ישראל ערבים זה לזה* All Jews are responsible for one another. ●

By Joyce and Alan Mays



Group of supporters from Golders Green, with Rabbi Ehrentreu and his family. Alan Mays is third from left, holding one of the rabbi's children.

SNAC

Rises to the Challenge

My involvement with the Ukrainian refugees began several weeks after the invasion by Russia and the *aliyah* of mainly women and children to Israel. My friend Lydia became involved with the organization Alynu that helps refugees not only with their physical needs but also with practical assistance – navigating Israeli bureaucracy, the health care system and finding accommodation and employment. These are, by and large, professional people looking to find work and settle in their new country. I asked how we at SNAC could help and, thanks to our community's kind generosity, many vital donations were distributed to those who at that time were staying at the Ramada Hotel. A musical evening was arranged which Paul and I attended – more about this from our own Charles Green – where with a few words of English and Hebrew and lots of sign language we managed somehow to communicate with these new *olim*.

Roll forward six weeks, sitting at my son's house, I received a phone call from Joyce Mays, telling me about another group of women and children from Zaporizhyye, Ukraine who are being assisted by Chabad in their new life in Israel. Then she tells me that they are going to live in a place called Mitzpe Yericho – which is exactly where I was sitting at the time! Our son and daughter-in-law and family moved to this *yishuv* last summer. What a coincidence!! For those of you who don't know, Mitzpe Yericho is on route 1 out of Jerusalem to the Dead Sea past Maale Adumim – a *yishuv* of approximately 400 families and growing. From their lookout point you can see Jericho. This is desert land that must have been walked on by our ancestors when Joshua led Bnei Yisrael into the land.

So once again I was able to help in a small way. I passed on to Joyce the names of the dynamic mayor and of the woman in charge of Alynu and of course SNAC rose to the challenge of collecting more much needed donations of ladies' clothing. The many young families on the *yishuv* assisted with children's clothes.

It made me think how easy our *aliyah* had been compared with that of these families who had to flee their homes, leaving almost everything behind. Hopefully they will settle down successfully in the Jewish homeland. ●

By Barbara Westbrook



Chabad rabbi delivering SNAC contributions of clothing and toys to the refugees

A Musical Connection

We were on the coach on our way back from a wonderful day in Jerusalem, meeting with President Herzog, arranged by IPCA chairperson Brenda Kattan.

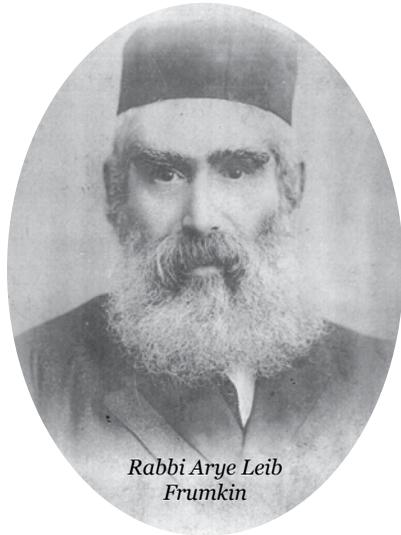
Glancing at my phone I saw a WhatsApp message from Paul Westbrook, inviting us to the Ramada Hotel In Netanya, where a large number of Ukrainian refugees had been given refuge. The advert asked for anyone who could play a musical instrument to bring it along to give some pleasure to the refugees. I contacted my fellow band members, Roy Cohen and Mike Garmise, and asked if they would join me in performing this mitzvah. Of course, they both

agreed immediately.

It was only an hour's notice, so as soon as I returned home, I loaded the equipment into my car and set up at the Ramada, where I was joined by Roy and Mike. The room quickly filled up with (mainly) women and children. The husbands were not allowed out of Ukraine as anyone under 60 was called up to the army. We played our repertoire of Jewish *simcha* music which put a smile on their weary faces. Some even danced. We felt good that we had this opportunity to contribute in a small way to welcoming the refugees to Israel. ●

By Charles Green





Rabbi Arye Leib Frumkin

Some Family History

Louis Frydman

Our family history is fascinating, and we know a good amount of it due to the writings of our illustrious great grandfather, my mother’s grandfather Rabbi Arye Leib Frumkin. The name

Frumkin is known to many associated with the Frumkin Family wine business, which was started by Rabbi Frumkin in 1893 and supplied kosher wines in Britain for over 100 years. However, I wish to go back one more generation to Frumkin’s father Reb Shmuel Kelmer (1797-1867), our great great grandfather.

Shmuel Kelmer lived in Kelm, Lithuania and made a living as a teacher. He married Zlota from the well-known Broaude family and on Zlota’s death after bearing three daughters, the Broda family persuaded Reb Shmuel to betroth her younger sister Fruma (aged nine at that time), and to continue learning for a further six years. Fruma then became the family mainstay, running a store while Reb Shmuel contributed to the household through his earnings as a teacher. Fruma bore another four daughters and last but not least their son Arye Leib. At the age of 60, Shmuel decided to make *aliyah*, having been influenced by the teachings of the Vilna Gaon. Although his wife became ill, he felt that, as he had made a promise to take funds to poor families in Jerusalem, he would make the journey alone, leaving his family in Kelm and his wife in the care of their married

daughters. He hoped the family would be able to join him in the future.

During his travels he wrote letters to the family in beautiful Hebrew

script, telling of his experiences. These letters, which can now be found in the national archives in Jerusalem, were about life in Jerusalem and in Lithuania and were so descriptive that Professor Emanuel Etkes of the Hebrew University wrote a book called “Lita in Jerusalem” based on what he gleaned on life in Jerusalem from Rav Shmuel’s letters.

Reb Shmuel stayed in Jerusalem for three years, teaching and becoming an integral part of the Ashkenazi community, while his wife Fruma returned to health in Kelm. To help maintain his family, he sent Hebrew books from Jerusalem, which she was able to sell, and one year he even sent *lulavim* and *hadassim* for Succot. After three years, understanding that his family would not be able to join him, he returned to Lithuania.

Back in Kelm, after marrying off the rest of the daughters and their son Arye Leib, Reb Shmuel decided to fulfill the mitzvah of writing his own Sefer Torah. At the age of 69, feeling his end was near, he wished to return and end his life in Jerusalem. Despite the pleas of his family and his good friend Rav Yisrael Salanter (the leader of the *Mussar* movement) he set off once again for the Holy Land.

On 8 Tishri 5627 (1866), Reb Shmuel wrote this remarkable letter from Jerusalem to his wife:



Grave of Rav Shmuel Kelmer in Mount of Olives Cemetery

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“Dear Family,

My journey has been difficult. I sailed from Odessa on 6th Elul and reached Constantinople two days later, but we had to stay a week on the boat, as one passenger was ill, and we had to remain in quarantine. On disembarking, I found I had now missed my original passage and had to desperately find another ship. I finally found an Austrian steamer and boarded, despite the conditions and difficulties with the crew. We had only one toilet for two thousand passengers, but fortunately I had some useful herbs that helped me overcome my stomach and hernia issues.

We embarked on Wednesday 18th Elul and arrived at the port of Jaffa nine days later on Friday, erev Shabbat – 27th Elul. After Shabbat I needed to look for a way to get to Jerusalem for Rosh Hashanah, as it would be very difficult for me to pray with the “Frankim” (Sephardim) because we do not understand their language or the format of their prayers. So, some of us hired mules and a guide to take us on Motzei Shabbat to Jerusalem.

I tied my Sefer Torah in a sack on one side of the mule and my belongings on the other side and we set off on the journey. Being slow and with heavy baggage I was the last in the mule train and trailed behind. Sadly, my cries to slow down and wait for me were not heeded. About an hour out of Jaffa, the baggage strings broke, and my Sefer Torah and my belongings fell to the ground. I was now completely alone in the dark of night, and for more than two hours, frightened for my life. Then I heard another group passing by and I did not know whether they were gentiles or Jews and I shouted out but got no response. Then I encountered a different, more frightening group of men with swords, traveling towards me on their way to Jaffa, but they ignored me and left me unharmed.

Finally, a small group passed me and I shouted in Russian ‘Are you Jews or Russians? I am a Yehudi

help me!’ They were “Frankim” and one of them heard the word “Yehudi” and understood I was a Jew who needed help. Their Arab guide stayed behind and assisted me to get my bags back onto the mule and despite very little understanding between us we caught up with his group. Completely exhausted, I slept with them overnight. In the morning we caught up with my group and managed to reach the walls of Jerusalem at three in the afternoon, in time for Rosh Hashanah.

I wish all my family and descendants to be aware of my miraculous escape and remember the two days, the 27th of Elul when I arrived in Jaffa and the 29th Elul, the eve of Rosh Hashanah, when I reached Jerusalem, and keep them as days of thanks to Hashem for His kindness and protection.”

Reb Shmuel died in Jerusalem a few months later. He was buried on the Mount of Olives. Following in his father’s footsteps, his son Rabbi Arye Leib Frumkin made *aliyah* with his mother Fruma and his family. In his will, Reb Shmuel left the Sefer Torah to his son Arye Leib and commanded him not to sell it under any circumstances. Apparently, it was very beautiful, and a delegation came some years later to Arye Leib with a request to buy the Sefer Torah, to present to Sir Moshe

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Montifiore on his famous visit to Jerusalem, but he could not part with his father’s Sefer Torah. It remained in the Old City and probably was destroyed in the battles of the War of Independence in 1948.

Let us hope that, just as Reb Shmuel was redeemed from his troubles, we can find hope and encouragement that all of Israel will be delivered from our troubles in the coming year and we will gather in Jerusalem in good health in the year to come. “*Leshanah Haba’ah Beyerushalayim!*” ●

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In 2006, 50 years after having been expelled from Egypt, Marcel visited the city of his birth and the 4th floor apartment his family had lived in and abandoned. He met there the owner of the apartment who had moved in after Marcel's family left. Donations can be made by cash, credit card or bank transfer. Contact Gertie (054-8194354) or Tony (052-3559381) for details or to volunteer. His 'friend' Nabil lived on the second floor.

My Friend Nabil

By Marcel Cohen

We lived on the fourth floor of a block of apartments on Maleka Nazli Street in Cairo. On the second floor lived a well-to-do Egyptian family. Their son, Nabil, was my age and we spent lots of time together. We played marbles, cowboys and Indians, hide and seek, virtually every day. We even went to the same school in Daher, a little way from our home, sharing a taxi lift there and back.

In October/November 1956, the Suez crisis erupted. It was then that Nabil turned on me. Suddenly I was a 'dirty Jew.' His family even accused us of secret signaling to British war planes during the blackout. This led to a visit from the police, who issued an arrest warrant— but that's another story!

I was relating this memory to my friend Tom Weisz z"l, when he told me that he had an identical experience at roughly the same time. For him, it was in Hungary during the uprising in 1956. As he put it, "one minute we were friends, the next minute I was the 'dirty Jew.'"

While the word 'friends' generally conjures up a feeling of loyalty, for me, it will always evoke the notion of betrayal.

Is this where Jew hatred begins? Little children who know little of world politics being brainwashed by adults and/or the media? If so, how can we remedy this? ●

An Ecumenical Friendship

By Gloria Deutsch

They met 61 years ago, when Alex came up to Liverpool University to study medicine: Alex, a Jew, Paul Nener, a devout Church of England adherent, and Mike Cornah, son of a Methodist minister.

We all met up again on our last trip to England. Mike, a retired consultant orthopedic surgeon and his wife Pauline have a home in the Lake District; Paul lives near Liverpool; and we were staying near Lancaster, so our meeting took place in a trendy restaurant there.

The Cornahs have two daughters and a grandson who is a policeman. Paul never married. In the 70s he worked as a doctor in a South African mission hospital (stopping in Israel on his way there and back) and, in spite of having being top in the year with a brilliant honors degree, decided to give up medicine and go into the church. He worked as a vicar for years until retiring. All his parishioners knew he was a



Alex Deutsch re-unites with medical school friends in UK

doctor and after Sunday services would seek his advice for their physical ailments although he was more concerned for their souls.

We had some great laughs together over the fish and chips and decided we would try and meet up again soon. And they all promised they would come and visit us in Israel. ●



Israel's National Sport

By Mike Garmise

Despite 50 years and undreamt-of changes, some things stay the same.

It wouldn't be too much of an exaggeration to characterize Israelis as people who see the world in black-and-white. Either you're for me or against me. You're religious or you're secular. You're Ashkenazi or Sephardi. And as is the case in most of the world, when you play, there's a winner and there's a loser.

Except in Israel's national sport.

No, it isn't football (soccer), nor is it basketball. Those are imports. Israel's home-grown national sport is probably the antithesis of the Israeli character. There's no winner and no loser. There aren't points. There aren't even rules!

The game is *matkot*, and if you have ever been on a busy beach you have seen it. You have heard it. You may even have been beamed by it.

This is *matkot*. Two people stand two to seven meters from each other, usually on the beach, each holding a racket that looks like a table tennis racket on steroids. Except that the head of the racket has no padding. Traditionally, it's made of wood, or plastic, but today, upscale people (but not purists) will buy carbon/graphite rackets.

The ball is the size of a squash ball, with a little more bounce, although today, like squash balls, they come in

color-coded levels of elasticity (not when I was playing).

As for the game. One person hits the ball to the other, the second returns it to the first, who sends it back to the second, who sends it back to the first... until one of them misses the ball. When this happens, no one gets a point. No one is "out." They just pick up the ball and start again. And the hollow shloop-shloop of rubber on hollow wood continues until the two decide to cool off in the water.

That's the game? In Israel? Yes.

For better players, there are refinements. One player is the attacker, the other the defender. The attacker hits the ball as hard as he can and the defender just has to return it. Then they switch. At the highest level, both players attack and defend at the same time, and this is where the ball will whiz past your head at 100kph. The idea is to make the other player work hard to return the ball but not to make it impossible for him to reach or return it, because that stops the flow. Jumps, pirouettes and diving saves are part of the show.

How did the game start? Don't know. It was documented (in a Nahum Guttman painting) back in the 1920s, and I do know it is played today in Italy and Brazil, and perhaps in Greece, but I think it was exported there from Israel.

What is certain is that the game is now played in the US, under the name Kadima (forward!), brought there by a *matkot* enthusiast.

When we first moved to Netanya, I was fascinated by the game. One day, I asked someone if I could join his game. He said yes, gave me a racket and we started to play. He couldn't have enjoyed it very much at first because I was hitting the ball every which way, except to him, and I was missing a lot of the balls he hit. So we both spent a lot of time running two, five, ten meters to retrieve the ball.

My partner, Yitzhak, was patient, and we met on the beach, sometimes several times a week, to play. And I improved enough to keep the ball in flight for several minutes at a time, and to slam it, and to play decent defense too.

A few years later I took up tennis and found that the differences in racket length, ball weight and kinesthetic movements were too much, so I cut down on my *matkot* playing and beach-going. Yitzhak and I remained friends, greeting each other heartily when we met in the street.

I still have my *matkot* rackets and when I hear the shloop-shloop of the balls I think, "Been there, done that." And wish I could do it still... I get tired just thinking of the effort involved. ●

A Visit with the President

By Brenda Katten

It isn't every day that one gets to meet the President of the State of Israel. Perhaps this is the reason that when IBCA (Israel, Britain and the Commonwealth Association) notified its members of the opportunity to meet Israel's 11th President, Isaac Herzog, the 100 places accorded were taken up within a matter of hours.

IBCA has long enjoyed a close connection with the Herzog family. The 6th President of Israel, Chaim Herzog, was one of IBCA's earliest chairmen, having addressed the annual IBCA Balfour Dinner in successive years. His son, the current President, has addressed a number of IBCA events in his former life, as Minister of Tourism and Minister of Social Welfare as well as the leader of the Opposition and head of the Labor Party.

How did this prestigious visit come about? IBCA's flagship event is its annual Balfour Dinner where IBCA pays tribute to Britain's catalytic role in Israel's rebirth – via the Balfour



Photo by Charles Green

Declaration of 1917. Over the years, dinner participants have enjoyed hearing eminent speakers from the UK as well as from Israel. However – primarily due to COVID – IBCA has been unable to hold the dinner since 2019. As a result, it was decided to hold three events in its place. The first was a reception in November 2021, hosted by the British Ambassador at his Residence, where former Israel Ambassador to the United Kingdom Daniel Taub gave a riveting lecture on the Rothschild family.

The second was a tour of Beersheba where participants visited the ANZAC Museum, which graphically recreates the October 31, 1917 Battle of Beersheba. The Australian Light Horse Cavalry Brigade – consisting of young Australians on horseback armed solely with bayonets – miraculously won this battle against the heavily armed Turks. Without the success of the Australians,

it is highly unlikely that Arthur James Balfour would have written his famous letter to Lord Rothschild on November 2, 1917, committing the British Government to creating a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine.

The third and final event proved to be the icing on the cake when President Herzog graciously agreed to receive the Association at his Residence in Jerusalem.

Following a welcoming reception, the group had photographs taken with the President in the beautiful grounds of the Residence. The photographer? None other than Queen Elizabeth II's former investiture photographer at Buckingham Palace, SNAC's very own Charles Green. Initially we were told that the President's official in-house photographer would take a few group photos. However, the President's team was delighted to invite Charles to take all the photos. Following the photo call, we returned to the beautiful reception hall for the formal part of the event.

As IBCA's chair, I welcomed the British, Australian, Canadian, Cypriot and Sri Lankan ambassadors. I thanked the President for his gracious hospitality paying tribute to his outstanding achievements in a mere nine months in office in which he has brought his political know-how and sensitivity to this illustrious position. He has successfully reached out, not only to our neighboring Arab countries, but also to Israeli Arabs living here in Israel.

President Herzog began his address by welcoming the ambassadors with personal anecdotes. He recalled that the British Ambassador, Neil Wigan,

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accompanied him to his meetings with the Prime Minister and Prince Charles; he told the Australian Ambassador, Paul Griffiths, that at one point he chaired the Knesset's Israel-Australian Parliamentary League and on addressing the Canadian Ambassador, Lisa Stadelbauer, he spoke of the famous debate between Toynbee and his uncle, Yaakov Herzog, who had served as Israel's Ambassador to Canada. To the Cypriot Ambassador, Theodora Constantinidou, he referred to his recent visit to Cyprus and informed her that his maternal grandfather founded a citrus enterprise in her country.

Herzog praised the Abraham Accords believing that such cooperation will create better lives for all citizens in the region. He went on to say that just a short while ago no one could have imagined what is happening here today. At the conclusion of his address, the President generously took a number of questions, including about Israel's relationship with Turkey and the UAE, the increasing gap between Israel and Diaspora Jewry and his own transition from politics to the presidency.

In response to a question, the President related that while he is very proud of his eminent, high-achieving family, he has his own way of doing things. He took the family's contribution to public service as an example to follow. His transition from politics to the Jewish Agency has served him well in understanding the Jewish world – a significant aid in his new role. Neil Wigan, the British Ambassador to Israel, appropriately concluded this part of the visit with words of appreciation of and to the President.

The visit concluded with a guided tour of the gardens boasting its own small but beautiful synagogue, sculptures, ancient architecture and pieces of art. An appropriate feature is the busts of the former 10 Presidents of Israel together with their respective achievements. Among the verdant foliage the guide pointed out a number of trees planted by special visitors embracing British Royalty and US Presidents.

The general consensus was that this event was one of the most exciting in the history of the Association. Certainly a hard act to follow! ●



French Friends

By Judy Isenberg

Bon Jouring
Madame & Monsieuring
Chic Dressing
Both Cheek Kissing
Croissant Tearing
Recipe Sharing
Facebooking
Good-Looking
Challah Baking
Statin Taking
Too Hot Weathering
Family Gathering
Some Graying
Bridge Playing
New Baby Cuddling
Language Struggling
Kippah Wearing
Grandchild Caring
Middle Aging
Pro-Israel Raging
Shabbat Shaloming
Welcome Homing
.... Just like us! ●



“Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart”
–Eleanor Roosevelt

Finding New Friends in Israel

By Charlotte Wiener

My mother's best friend was her next-door neighbor. They would stand for hours talking across their fence. How I longed to have a next-door neighbor as my friend. But I had to wait to come to Israel to find one. My neighbor, like me, came from South Africa, also works in the medical field and she too has three children. We even found that we had several friends in common, so we are never short of subjects to bandy about.

We *olim* left our countries of birth and our friends behind. Our childhood friends knew us before we learned to put on a face for the rest of the world. Will we be able to replace them in our new life? A major challenge and key to a successful *aliyah*.

Need a Friend? Get a dog!

So, how do newcomers meet new friends in Israel? Actually, several options are available. If you sign up at an *ulpan*, you can meet people who are in the same situation as you and also looking for friends. If you have a job, you will be rubbing shoulders with many potential friends on a daily basis. If you join an organization as a volunteer, you will certainly be in contact with other like-minded volunteers. How about a country club? Or over a bridge table? Through a synagogue... or on *tiyulim*, even with complete strangers? All these can work and can lead to lifelong friendships. But here's my advice for a foolproof way to meet new people: get yourself a dog. As you walk your four-legged friend, you are bound to bump into other dog-walkers. Sometimes you learn the dog's name even before that of the owner. But then there is a click and you are exchanging telephone numbers...

And then, when you least expect it, you bump into friends from your previous life – perhaps you'd wondered what had become of them. Will they become your new best friends? ●

A Visit to the Gaza Border

By Alan Lewis

Friends of the IDF

While the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) provide essential items for the servicemen and women who defend us, budgetary constraints make it difficult for the Israel Government to provide the extras that raise the quality of the lives of our soldiers. Friends of the IDF is a charity based in the USA that raises money to provide those extras. The FIDF raises \$90 million each year – a breathtaking sum of money that only emphasizes the huge importance of its work.

The FIDF hosted a small group of friends at the Gaza border in the sector manned by the Golani Division 51. When I say the Gaza border, I am talking about 300 meters from the fence and it's difficult to get closer than that.

We met at the Black Arrow monument commemorating



the activities of the legendary paratrooper unit 101, which conducted the reprisal operations against the terrorists who infiltrated from Jordan in the early '50s. Reading the inscriptions was a stark reminder of the perils that afflicted the Jewish State in its early years and the miracle of the security and prosperity that we enjoy today. We were welcomed by the base commander, a 35-year-old with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Driving a few hundred meters towards the border fence, we arrived at an outpost comprising eight or so small huts (each including a kitchen and a latrine) and a concrete bomb shelter. The base is manned by a combination of Golani 51 soldiers and soldiers from the mechanized corps. The soldiers are all conscripts doing their compulsory military service who have volunteered to serve in fighting units. Meeting some of these soldiers and hearing their stories was inspirational. On the post were four armored vehicles, one tank and three armored personnel carriers (APCs) which are basically tanks without turrets but with interior perimeter seating to transport up to eight soldiers in safety. The vehicles are fitted with what are, essentially, miniature Iron Dome units to protect them against incoming missiles. A real miracle of modern technology.

Throughout its length, the border fence is monitored by electronic devices. If there is any breach of the fence, the soldiers of this small outpost have a few seconds to board their APC and go to the location of the breach.

We then went a couple of kilometers to the base where most of the soldiers and the military hardware are kept and where we were hosted to a surprisingly good lunch. After lunch, we were taken to what I can only describe as a war room. Before we could enter the room, we had to leave our smartphones and smartwatches outside. In the room, we were surrounded by electronic equipment and screens. The screens are monitored by female soldiers who spend 150 minutes monitoring their screens before having a 30-minute break, all within a 12-hour shift. The ability of the girls to concentrate for such extended periods greatly exceeds the ability of male soldiers so this work is the exclusive area of females. So men and women are not equal – in military missions each sex has its own strengths and weaknesses. We were shown videos of events on the fence that have occurred over the past few days and were told that some kind of alarm – not all of them dangerous – occurs daily.

I am writing this on a balmy evening in Netanya, kept safe in my home by the efforts of the young people who would be described as children in Europe or the USA. I am overwhelmed with gratitude to them and astounded by the sophistication of the devices at their disposal. ●

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[macar/macara]

Contact (n)
קשר
[keshet]

Friendly
ידידותי
[yediduti]

To befriend
להתיידד
[Lehiyaded]

Polite
מנומס
[Menumas]

Kind
טוב לב
[tov lev]

Sincere
כן/כינה
[ken/kenal]

Tolerant
סובלני
[sovlani]

Welcome
ברוכים הבאים
[bruchim habaim]

How are you?
מה שלומך
[mah shlomcha] (m)
[mah shlomech] (f)

How are things?
מה קורה?
[Mah koreh?]

Nice to meet you
נעים מאוד
[Na-im meod]

Have a nice day
יום טוב / יום נעים
[Yom tov/yom na-im]

Barbara Westbrook

Rosh Hashana Greetings

Marilyn & David Ashton

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Barbara P. Billauer

Laraine & Roy Barnes

Birgitte Savosnick &
Michael Baziljevich

Myriam & Howard
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Norma, David, Shloime,
Moriel & Adam

Molly & Jack Zwanziger

Sue & Issy Zuckerbrod



The Last Word

By Mike Garmise

Did You Say Glamping?

You may not know it (or care), but the fastest growing type of tourist accommodation in the world is “glamping.” What, you haven’t glamped yet? Perhaps you did and didn’t know it.

Glamping is “camping-in-style,” with air-conditioned tents that would shame a four star hotel. In Israel, the per-night price of such accommodations ranges from NIS 600 to NIS 1000, which may include beds (or at least mattresses) for a whole family. One of the largest glamping sites in the world is in Israel – in Makhtesh Rimon. According to Booking.com, there are seven glamping sites in Mitzpe, 12 at the Dead Sea, 30 in the north of the country, and 15 in the Golan.

So, what overeager advertising maven coined the word “glamping”? It’s “glamorous camping” and it is a hot example of “portmanteau” word amalgamations that are popping up faster than mushrooms after rain.

Portmanteau words coquettishly merge the essence of two words, and in today’s shorter-is-better world, new portmanteaus appear almost daily. For example: With the horrors involved in flying overseas or even driving up north, many people prefer *staycations* – vacations spent near home. And while you’re home, you can catch up on your *orature* – your oral literature (did anyone mention the *Mishna*?). Just hope you don’t have a neighbor deep in *anecdotage*. (Or would that be us?).

Here are some examples of portmanteau words from a possible daily schedule today: attend a webinar, listen to a podcast, perhaps on a subject like *netiquette* or *emoticons*.

Here are some more examples, some of them quite old or odd:

Those of you on the wagon may settle for a *mocktail* instead of a dry martini at the end of the day.

How many of us get *hangry* when our meals are late? How many of you men have had your *bromance* interpreted as something deeper (not that there’s anything wrong with that) or been told that your *brainiac frenemy* should *chillax* ASAP?

Don’t answer (even if you can). These *newspeak* sentences simply highlight the playful aspects of modern English’s

portmanteau words.

Portmanteau words differ from contractions. Goodbye is actually a shortening of God be with ye and not a portmanteau. Nor is bedlam, a contraction of the notorious Bethlehem (home for the insane).

Portmanteaus abound in the arts. Michael Moore is known for his *mockumentaries*, which are never interrupted by endless *infomercials*. And public broadcasting stations offer much in the way of *edutainment*. Those who like to delve into the non-existent past, love the new *prequels* that relate the tales of Wonder Woman or Batman before they became super heroes. And of course we can always veg out on *sitcoms*

and *romcoms* until our eyelids shut tight for the night. Or laugh ourselves to sleep watching the *Muppets* (marionette puppets).

Politics are also fertile ground for combo words, from *Brexit* to *Obamacare*, from *Reaganomics* to *Medicare*, and going back to *gerrymandering* (when in 1812 Governor Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts reconfigured the state’s voting districts so that one resembled a salamander).

Modern technology thrives on portmanteaus, creating words

which, like the manna in the desert, our parents never knew and we have difficulty comprehending: *pixels* (picture elements), *modems* (modulator-demodulator), *email*, *malware*, *adware*, *bionics*, and the list goes on.

Food has its share of portmanteaus. Monty Python sang about *Spam* (spiced ham), and today we have *Silk* (soy milk) and *froyo* (frozen yogurt). And when you have a headache from too much junk, take a *caplet* or two.

You must have heard of *mansplaining* (how men explain things in simple terms, usually to women)? How many of us make *guesstimates* (when real data is missing) or let loose a *snark* (snide remark) or two when provoked?

The lists of portmanteau words continue to expand as we read this, in our attempts to convey more information in fewer words, often with the result that no one understands anything. Maybe we should just go *glamping* to get away from it all! ●



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