



August-September 2001

Vol. 11 No. 7

## Charlotte Yiddish Institute

## Milwaukee Report # 1

The Jewish Community Center of Charlotte, N.C. August 16-19, 2001 will sponsor the 23rd Charlotte Yiddish Institute, and features:

1. Miriam Hoffman a WEVD radio personality, lecturer, journalist, Broadway playwright, educator and recognized Yiddish theater producer and director.
2. Robert Abelson an acclaimed singer, cantor Broadway performer and interpreter of Yiddish song, returning by popular demand.
3. Joyce Rosenzweig, an accomplished accompanist and coach of world renown performers, specializing in Yiddish vocal music.

Faculty Lectures in Yiddish and English

- Yiddish Language Classes
- Folk singing and dancing
- Daily and Shabes services
- Judaica Book and Gift Shop
- Oysergevayntlekh Doremlike Gastfreyndlekhkayt (Outstanding Southern Hospitality)

The Charlotte Yiddish Institute is open to those knowledgeable in the Yiddish Language and dedicated to enhancing their understanding of Yiddish in a culturally stimulating, heymish atmosphere.

Enjoy nature walks and scenic splendor at the Wildacres Retreat, a mountaintop conference center of 1400 acres set in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina with an elevation of 3300 ft. Wildacres Retreat \* Little Switzerland, N.C. is located 112 miles from Charlotte, (approx. 2.5 hour drive).

Fees: \$275 per person (double occupancy only) Fee covers tuition, room, kosher meals and gratuities. Full fee must accompany registration.

Guest Rooms: All rooms w/ private bath located in two modern, mountain-view lodges.

Transportation: Directions for travel to Wildacres by auto will be sent upon receipt of reservations. Bus transportation available from Charlotte Airport to Wildacres Retreat

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**Make checks for chai (\$18) payable to *Der Bay*. If you've been blessed, won't you send a LITTLE extra—please.**

The annual Executive Board meeting of the International Association of Yiddish Clubs (IAYC) was held in Milwaukee. This site was chosen because it will be the location of the Seventh IAYC conference next April 12-15. It will be the first time the conference will be held in the Midwest. It already has been held in Miami, Los Angeles, Toronto, Connecticut, and Washington, D.C.

The Board met with the Milwaukee planning committee, chaired by Paul Melrood. One of the main reasons for selecting Milwaukee is the very successful group of Second and Third Generation Holocaust Survivors spearheaded by Sandy Hoffman, Betty Chrustowski, and Jeanette Peckerman. They have had a Holocaust Memorial event since the 1950's and annually draw 600 attendees. They are playing a very significant role in the event. It is because of them that the exciting theme of the conference will be *mame-loshn* and the Shoah. This conference will bring in a larger, younger element and make for a dynamic event.

In future reports you will learn of the facilities at the Park East Hotel near Lake Michigan and the beautiful, waterfront park that stretches along the shore. Milwaukee reminds us of a European capital. It is known for its varied ethnic festivals and restaurants.

There are many attractions including the short walk to the upscale Jewish Home for the Aged where you can attend Friday night and Saturday morning services and have kosher meals.

Milwaukee is located just 80 miles north of Chicago on the western side of the Lake. There will be a large attendance from Chicago because of the great assistance of YIVO leadership. Other cities nearby with which the committee is having contact include Detroit, Minneapolis, Madison, Cleveland, and St. Louis areas.

Coordinator Paul Melrood has an excellent command of Yiddish. He was a leading figure in PERHEFT, the Yiddish theatrical group that performed for over 70 years. He will be sending in regular reports to *Der Bay* to keep us updated on what will be one of the finest conferences we have ever had.

The IAYC Executive Board members were very impressed with the size and depth of the conference committee. Their progress, in having the best event ever, is further along at this stage than any of our previous events. So save the dates of April 12-15, 2002. It will be a great time of the year to come to the Midwest— especially if you have never been there before.

**Conference in Bloomington, IN**  
Prof. Dov-Ber Kerler <dkerler@indiana.edu>

I am finally here at Bloomington, Indiana although in a couple of days I will be off to Jerusalem where I will spend about 5 weeks with my mother. Many thanks for putting the details of our conference on your website.

We had so many proposals (more than 40) that we had to turn some of them down. It will be a very big conference (we had to add another half a day to it). Some of the most interesting scholars participating are from the USA, Europe and Israel. They include; Dovid Katz, David Fishman, Seth Wolitz, David Miller, Mordechai Altshuler, Alan Nadler, Abraham Brumberg, Velvl Chernin and many more). Although we will not be able to include any additional papers, it would be great if people interested in Yiddish culture and scholarship would attend as members of the public.

I hope to have more details before long—hopefully including the provisional schedule of sessions and papers.

The first week of August I will be in Los Altos. Are you planning to be in California around that time?

**From Mahwah, NJ**  
Jack Berger JSBerger@Sigmaxi.org

I note the ongoing debate about Romanized vs. Original script Yiddish writing. In this connection, I thought your readership would be interested in a FREE facility I acquired recently via download from the Internet.

The site to visit is at: <http://www.sahbak.com>

The program 'Sahbak' is best described as a "Hebrew e-mail Demon." It is specifically designed for those people (principally outside of Israel) who are not likely to have a full-fledged Hebrew version of an operating system, etc.

It will sit in your computer, and you can invoke it anytime you want to send a message using Hebrew script. While I find this helpful in my correspondence with Israeli family members, there is no reason it couldn't be used to transact in Yiddish as well.

This is not to be confused with the several quite good Hebrew word processing programs, such as DAVKA and DAGESH, among others. This is an e-mail tool.

Maybe this type of facility will ease the concerns of the various protagonists on the transliteration issue.

**Nayes fun Vashington**  
Hilda Rubin hirubin@starpower.net

We had our Sholem Aleichem yortsayt program. S'iz geven a groyser derfolg! I did the first few kapitlekh of Motl-Peysei dem Khazns. I'll be in California on the 11th of June- July 2<sup>nd</sup>—so will certainly be in touch and can bring script for your perusal— it's 19 pages. Can I forward it to you thru this mashinkele?

I've been busy planning next years' Cafe Kasrilevke and working on our Yiddish Cultural Festival's 2003 program. We put ours off for a year because of the IAYC 2002 Conference date. At this point it's very dangerous to postpone anything—we're losing people yedn tog! I'm really oysgematern these days and can't wait to get away. Is Sunny Landsman still OK? Chayeel Ash and I talk, and she sounds as if she's in fine fettle. I'd love to have her here to do her "thing" on the Rumanian Yiddish Theatre.

**A Response from Florida**  
by Rucheleh (Cookie) Blattman

I was shocked when I saw my name all over *Der Bay!* Certainly brought out some very strong feelings! Guess I will have to continue to fumfeh when reading words I don't know. But as far as my writing to my American (Are we all dummies?) friends, as I have since I was a child, in my own transliteration. That will take a long while to change. I'm more interested in learning to speak better Yiddish and learn more Yiddish songs. At this point I will have to continue to rewrite the *correct* YIVO transliteration into our American transliteration for those who need to learn Yiddish songs phonetically.

It's maddening to hear them pronounce the words incorrectly. However, I bow to the majority. Remember the people I deal with are not learning a new language and most speak it or understand it but can't read it, etc. They are in their 80's and just want to enjoy it. Actually I agree that YIVO transliteration is a language in itself.

I just came back from Italy. When in Florence, I had the pleasure of speaking Yiddish to a Chabadnik who invited us for Shabbos dinner and lunch. I love Yiddish with all my heart and wish I were more knowledgeable. Coming from an orthodox home there was no reason, as far as they were concerned, to teach us to read or write Yiddish—only Hebrew, so we could daven, etc.

I'm trying my best and bringing pleasure to others through my singing and conversation. *My Father's Nigun* is perfect!! When I get it that way, if I don't know a word, I can pameylach read the Yiddish, and then I know how to pronounce the YIVO transliteration. Then the English tells me what it means, and so my vocabulary grows through poetry and song. I always look up a word I don't know so that I will not sing anything I do not understand.

Thank Portia Rose for having some mitgefuehl (I don't know how it is spelled YIVO way but I know you can read it) . I have SHOKL, the Yiddish Bingo game and will try it. Ah leebhubber foon yiddish (There I go again) Is there a dictionary of Yiddish in YIVO transliteration?

### **Yiddish on the Internet**

The Dora Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture's Institute for Yiddish had Introduction to Yiddish Language & Culture, as part of the Institute's Yiddish Online program.

This college-level course was offered archivally ON THE WEB and was taught by Professor Mindelle Wajzman. This summer course emphasized self-quizzes from the text, listening to the archival classes on line and doing the practice lessons offered on line. It was offered to prepare students for the Yiddish Level II course that will be offered Live and on-line in the Fall Semester beginning on Monday, August 27, 2001 through Florida International University.

Students interested in registering for this course should contact:

Liz Weintraub

Program Director

The Dora Teitelboim Center for Yiddish Culture,  
P.O. Box 14-0820, Coral Gables, Florida 33114

Call: 305-774-9244, or

E-mail them at: [info-yiddishculture.org](mailto:info-yiddishculture.org).

## **Soviet Silent Film—Jewish Luck** Daniel Hoffman krywanoga@jps.net

I want to let you know about the new score I'm writing to the 1925 Soviet silent film, Jewish Luck.

It will be performed live at the SF Jewish Film Festival this summer on the following dates:

July 22 at the Castro in SF

Aug 1 at the Fox in Redwood City

Aug 2 in Berkeley

The score is so far a weird fusion of klezmer, Bartok and jazz. I'm busting my tail on this one. It's 90 minutes long. Here's the film festival blurb:

+++++

World Premiere of a new score by Daniel Hoffman and the San Francisco Klezmer Experience

Jewish Luck

Russia, 2001, 35mm, 90 min., black & white, Silent

Director: Alexander Granovsky

This classic of Soviet cinema is a very funny adaptation of Sholom Aleichem's story, "Mendel the Matchmaker." It is also the film debut of the great Yiddish State Art Theatre actor, Solomon Mikhoels, who was considered the greatest living Yiddish actor of his time. Mikhoel's character study of Mendel as a Chaplinesque figure – lovable, tragic and comic – has been called one of the finest performances in cinema history. Mendel is a luftmensch (one who buys and sells dreams) who, by chance, becomes a matchmaker and experiences one hilarious calamity after another. This film features a luminous dream sequence on the Odessa Steps that became the inspiration for the famous scene in Sergei Eisenstein's PÖTEMKIN, which was shot on the same location. Both films were photographed by Eduard Tisse.

Following the success of last year's THE GOLEM, with music by Daniel Hoffman, we have invited back this Bay Area musician and composer. He performs JEWISH LÜCK with the San Francisco Klezmer Experience (Ben Goldberg, clarinets; Daniel Hoffman, violin; Jeanette Lewicki, accordion; Kevin Mummey, drums; Stephen Saxon, trumpets, alto horn; Richard Saunders, bass; Charlie Seavey, trombone). The SFKE's infectious blend of Bay-Area-roots-klezmer, Yiddish folk and art song, and improvisational jazz has earned them a place amongst the most exciting new bands in New Jewish Music. Created by Daniel for the American Conservatory Theater's 1996 production of the hit klezmer musical, "Shlemiel the First," the SFKE boasts an all-star roster of the Bay Area's nationally recognized and innovative klezmer musicians.

### **Boise, Idaho**

We recently lost a wonderful contact in The Yiddish Network. This was learned from a call to Joel Stone's widow and a letter from his dear friend and new contact—Ted Century. The information about Joel comes from an article in The Chai Lights—the newsletter of Congregation Ahavath Beth Israel. It was written by Rabbi Alan J. Kahn, who is now on sabbatical in Israel.

"Joel could be gruff, even cantankerous. But if his temper sometimes flared, so too did his compassion and forgiveness. Unlike most people, Joel could admit when he was wrong. For all of his stubbornness, he knew when to compromise. He did not hold grudges. His spirit was generous, and always just. And he was, to me, a special friend. Many times 'a new rabbi encounters troubles from the lay leaders whose position he is, in some sense, taking. But this was never the case with Joel. He was always a source of help and support for me. He was as much my rabbi as I was his. I think he was proud of our community for hiring me as a rabbi, and I know I felt privileged to have him as my teacher.

I always will remember Joel chanting the Unetaneh Tokef prayer on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I've heard great cantors, but no one did this with the power that Joel did. When he sang those words, he sang with his whole heart. They are hard words—who shall live and who shall die, who shall be tranquil and who shall be troubled—but they end with consolation: prayer, forgiveness, and tzedakah soften the divine decree."

### **Hoosier Mame-loshn?**

This is the title of a column our friend Gus Tyler of the English Forward wrote a while ago. It was sent to us by Alice Ginot Cohn—one of our regular readers. This article was written by Andrew Muchin of Milwaukee, WI. He had been the editor of the Heartland.

Reference is made of Professor Dov-Ber Kerler's filling the Yiddish Studies Chair which Alice Ginot Cohn and her husband established at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. Along with Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, Michigan, this gives the Midwest a strong regional support for Yiddish education at the university level.

Professor Kerler came from Oxford University where he taught with Professor Dovid Katz who is now in Vilna. While at Oxford, Prof. Kerler was co-editor of the *Oksforder Yidish* and wrote *The Origins of Modern Literary Yiddish*.

Getting involved with the Judaic program, he is working for the success of an international academic conference this October 27-29 at the university. The theme of the conference is Yiddish Language and Culture in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe.

### **Second Avenue Yiddish Posters Wanted** Cookie Rucheleh Blattman, len25@bellsouth.net

A friend got a box of old Yiddish Second Avenue songsheet covers and made them into beautiful posters. I want others like them for my bedroom. A cantor gave me a small one called The Jewish Crown an operetta in 4 acts by Thomashefsky. It was published by A. Teres Music a dealer and publisher at 88 Delancy St. NYC.

In Phila, I hope to find the largest Yiddish collection of music in the world. I hope they have posters I might copy. In fact that place was written up in one of your newspapers. Please let me know where it is. There must be people out there with these copies sitting in their house or perhaps a former publishing firm, etc. If you could help, I'd be grateful.

**Di yidishe literarish-gezelshaft**  
Barbara Goldstein <neuron@ev1.net>

The Yiddish literature class that meets with Houston Yiddish Vinkl leader Susan Ganc every week has named itself "di yidishe literarish-gezelshaft." There is historical precedence for this name. "Di yidishe literarish-gezelshaft" was the name of the pioneer Yiddish organization that became the Houston, Texas branch of Der Arbeter-Ring early in the 20th century. The Houston Yiddish Literary Society made its debut with a major Yiddish event. Please post this information in *Der Bay*.

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The Houston Yiddish Vinkel in cooperation with Holocaust Museum Houston presented the Houston Yiddish Literary Society (di yidishe literarish-gezelshaft) in a dramatic reading in the original Yiddish. It was accompanied by an English translation of *The Symphony of Erev Shabes* at the Holocaust Museum Houston. *The Symphony of Erev Shabes* (di simfonie fun erev shabes) is an essay by Dr. Moses Einhorn from the Wolkovisker Yizkor Book, which he wrote and which was published in 1949.

On the eve of World War II, Wolkovisk was a large Polish shtetl located not far from the cities Grodno, Bialystok, and Vilna. Dr. Moses Einhorn (b.1896-d.1966) was born and raised in Wolkovisk. In his lyrical essay, Dr. Einhorn describes preparations for the Shabes that was celebrated and observed by Wolkovisk Jews, and thereby, transmits to readers and listeners knowledge of a Jewish civilization that was destroyed in the Holocaust.

We invited the community to learn about the precious Yiddish culture as it was lived by the Jews of Wolkovisk, Poland. For more information, call the Houston Yiddish Vinkel at 713-771-7535, the Houston Yiddish Literary Society at 713-960-0975

### **A Nono Mies**

#### **Wishes to remain anonymous**

I thought I better e-mail and ask you to remove my wife and myself from your mailing list. I taught a Yiddish Class for several years but much to my dislike, it disbanded for lack of participation. For your information, my class was full and no open seats in the beginning and I even had several "Goyim" come and want to learn Yiddish, but alas, later, some of the old Jewish yentes decided that it should not be a teaching class but rather, a conversational class. I fought the idea because most were there because they did not speak Yiddish but wanted to learn, but I got voted down. The old yentes (men and women) sat there and spoke Yiddish to each other, and all the others disappeared, never to be heard from again. Very sad!

I tried to reserve the last ten minutes for conversation and the first 50 minutes for teaching but again, I was shouted down. I also left the class and they soon disbanded. The Yiddish Club here was a lot of fun but it also disbanded because it did not encourage young people who are interested in the beautiful rich culture that Yiddish can bring. That is what happens when you have a bunch of "A.K.'s" run it. I will never do that again because I poured my heart and soul into preparing interesting lessons for all levels of Yiddish. It was fun for two years and very rewarding for me because I love Yiddish.

**It's a Wonderment!**  
Archie Barkan ArchiefromCA@webtv.net

What's going on here?

What's going on is another manifestation of the rejuvenation of interest in Yiddish. The heritage and humor, the charm and wit of the Mama-Loshen, spell magic.

I am currently teaching two weekly classes at the Santa Monica Emeritus College. The Wednesday morning class for lesser mayvinim has an enrollment of 47; the afternoon reading group has 31 registered. Who would have thought it?

In the morning we go over a song and its meaning, sing it, converse a little, do a bit of vocabulary, some proverbs, a Khelmer or Hershele Ostropolyer tale, etc. We also stay up on the happenings in the world of Yiddish.

The afternoon group is busy with reading and discussions. This is the group that was nurtured for the past ten years or so by the late Marion Herbst. About a half dozen of the attendees choose to make a day of it by sitting in on both two-hour classes.

Preparing the weekly handouts and material for these two groups is becoming exponentially more and more challenging. BUT—talk about a labor of love! Isaac Bashevis Singer was right: "Yiddish dead? Hardly! We'll all meet 2,000 years from now, sit along the banks of the Jordan, and shmues a bisl in Yiddish!"

### **Friends of Klezmer**

Bill Campbell <klezmer@sc.rr.com>

Our klezmer band, The Friends of Klezmer, here in Columbia, SC was formed about two years ago. I love Jewish music and had been trying to find musicians with similar interests for a few years with no success. Finally through a friend, I was put in contact with Meira Warshauer at Beth Shalom Synagogue here in Columbia.

Meira is a well-known composer and plays keyboard and runs the band when she can squeeze time from her very busy schedule. Sam Baker, her husband, is a university professor and is our guitarist. Bass is played by Jay King, who also handles sound, and has a production company for bands. I play clarinets, taragato and also use English horn on some pieces. A new addition is Dr. Robert Tabachnikoff, a retired physician who plays violin or viola and makes use of his wonderful baritone voice and extensive Yiddish repertoire

Although we are onheyber klezmerim, we have supported many local Jewish activities and have become very popular. To me, this is a wonderful and rewarding learning experience. I'm an oboist and studied in Germany, specializing in Baroque music. I am also catholic and am constantly playing more Jewish music at Mass. The music is very widely accepted and it has been a wonderful medium to display the beauty of Jewish music as well as reinforce the fact that my religion stems from Judaism. (Yes, on certain up-tempo old Jewish pieces we use, I do "klezmerize" them.)

We hope that in the next few months, we can expand our repertoire and get more rehearsal time. We have a win-win situation—we love the music, enjoy playing it and our audiences are always very receptive and happy when we play.

## The First SYSA Research Fellowship

The Board of Directors of the Friends of **The Secular Yiddish Schools in America** Collection, proudly announces The First SYSA Research Fellowship for the Year- 2002 in memory of Moyshe Goldstein, Yiddish teacher par excellence, established with love and generosity by Drs. Steven and Gail (Gella Messinger) Shak. The archival collection is housed at the Department of Special Collections at Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, California.

The awardee will be required to work on a topic related to the secular Yiddish schools in America, during a 3-month in-residence period, using the resources of the SYSA Archival Collection. Upon completion, a publishable paper (in Yiddish or in English) must be presented by the awardee at a public gathering at Stanford University Libraries. Submitted applications will be judged by a panel of scholars in Jewish Studies, Education, Bilingualism and Ethnic Studies.

The fellowship award offers the sum of \$2,000 and may be held simultaneously with other awards. The deadline for submission of applications is November 1, 2001 and notification of award will be no later than December 15, 2001. For application details, contact:

### The FSYSA Fellowship Committee

**Joshua A. Fishman, chair**

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## Jewish Currents

There are excellent Yiddish/Jewish publications. Your editor does not usually single out a special one, but the May issue of Jewish Currents deserves recognition. While Yiddish articles have appeared periodically in this secular, progressive monthly, this one issue had one by Stillman entitled, *Peretz Writes to Sholem Aleichem*.

Many of us are quite conversant with the writings of these two giants of Yiddish literature, but are lacking in the historical background and times they lived in. Y.L. Peretz was a lawyer who was disbarred. His efforts were unsuccessful to get the Polish authorities, and then the Russian ones, to reverse the order.

Portions of a letter Peretz sent to Sholem Aleichem is reprinted in the article. In it Peretz lists 4 reasons why Peretz's submissions of songs and articles are not exactly what Sholem Aleichem probably wants, but he urges Sholem Aleichem to move to create a mutual ground.

Sholem Aleichem was the editor of Jewish People's Library and Peretz wanted to have his works published. In a second letter, Peretz espouses the need to educate the masses in science and that women learn about history, for they did not study Hebrew as did the men.

Stillman notes that a major source of his information came from *Briv un redn fun Y.L. Peretz*, written by Nachman Meisel and published by YKUF in 1944.  
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