

Der Bay

The International Anglo-Yiddish Newsletter

May 2004

Vol. XIV No. 5

Mame-loshn & Mother Nature

Our beloved Yiddish has many similarities to Mother Nature. In the past we have written about the Life History of a river and compared it to the *Life History of Yiddish Organizations*, or for that matter, the Life History of any organization or institution:

Youth: Vibrant and fast running
Middle Age: Larger but slower running
Old Age: Broader and dying

In this article we shall look at another aspect—that of Mother Nature and its cyclical reforestation, and the similarity to Yiddish.

Periodically, there is a forest fire, usually set by a bolt of lightning, and the charred remains cover the landscape. However, within a short time there is rejuvenation, and the small green sprouts push through the gray and white ashes. These are found among the few islands of untouched stands that the fire may have bypassed.

The Holocaust was only one, albeit a major cause of the decline of Yiddish. Its similarity to the forest fire is very obvious. We shall look at some of the new growth that came after the wake of all the calamities that befell Yiddish the causative agent whether it was external (Holocaust, Stalin) or whether it was internal (Israel, assimilation).

One of these *new shoots* is the International Association of Yiddish Clubs (IAYC), and along with the NYBC and new growths in Vilnius, Israel, London, St. Petersburg, etc. there is a resurgence of our mame-loshn.

Inside IAYC

Starting with this issue there will be a monthly column about another aspect of IAYC. We start by featuring the officers and trustees and their activities on behalf of Yiddish. They all are strongly devoted to fostering Yiddish in their community and in the worldwide arena. They are chosen to represent various areas of interest, geographical localities, areas of Yiddish knowledge, major Yiddish groups or computer expertise. Most fit into several groups.

In addition to learning about the IAYC Board of Directors, *Der Bay* again will keep you abreast of interesting developments in the IAYC Conferences (Minneapolis, June '05 will be the next one). *Der Bay's* website adds additional information about the IAYC and lists member clubs. Lists of club events are on the site in *der internatsyonaler kalendar*.

Officers & Trustees of the IAYC

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The Charlotte Yiddish Institute

The love and interest in Yiddish, not its knowledge, will create a joyous experience for you in the XXVI Charlotte Yiddish Institute, Thursday-Sunday, Aug. 12-15 at **Wildacres Retreat, Little Switzerland, NC** on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The program is designed for a multi-generational audience which includes children/grandchildren age 9 and over who will fully participate in the programs.

The theme is *Living Yiddish* through workshops—Jewish cooking, silver jewelry casting, touring the studios of world famous artisans and craftspeople, beginning Yiddish, advanced Yiddish and sharing memories. Presentations by playwright, Miriam Hoffman, international singer, Caroline Channin, orchestral conductor and pianist Joyce Rosenzweig will highlight the weekend, Saturday evening Talent Show and late evening singing and dancing.

Accommodations are in two mountaintop lodges. All rooms have private baths. All facilities are handicapped accessible. The cost for room, kosher meals, snacks, gratuities and tuition is \$285 for adults and \$110 for children. Transportation by bus is available from the Charlotte Airport for \$65 round trip. For information and/or reservations call Branya Gibbs (704-849-6933) or Baila Pransky (704-366-5564).

The JCC Charlotte, Shalom Park
5007 Providence Rd
Charlotte, N C, 28226
704-366-5007 • Fax 704-365-4507

Sholom Aleichem is Coming to S.F.

A Sholom Aleichem stage comedy with songs is planned for local performance in Fall 2004. Joel Schechter, a Workmen's Circle member, will direct the play. He is Professor of Theatre Arts at San Francisco State University, and has directed several other Yiddish theatre projects in English, including *Messiah in America* and *I Want to Be a Boarder*.

Schechter plans to work with State University students on Sholom Aleichem's one act comedy, *She Must Marry a Doctor*. It is a play about parents, their children, and a matchmaker. It will be performed free of charge at local centers, and schools. Songs in the performance will be sung in Yiddish and English, and the play itself will be performed in English. Sholom Aleichem wrote the rarely seen comedy in 1887, while he was in Russia.

It is co-sponsored by the Departments of Theatre Arts & Jewish Studies at San Francisco State University. Prof. Schechter is at: jschec@sfsu.edu

Margie Memorial Musicale

The First Annual Margie Rosenthal Memorial Musicale will be held Sunday, May 16, 2004 at Congregation Ner Tamid in San Francisco. Margie was a remarkable person and the family wants to celebrate her life with a joyful celebration.

Archie Barkan, raconteur, will highlight the program in his Yiddish, Yinglish and Borscht. The cabaret atmosphere will feature The Klezmer Soul Band in Concert, The Larks in beautiful accompaniment and the magnificent voice of Cantor Rudy Hassid in Broadway Tunes.

Ernie Rosenthal, master pastry chef, will oversee the lavish refreshments. For reservations call: 415-661-3383 or 650-349-6946

Bloch Publishing Company

Der Bay has never written an article about a Jewish publishing house. This will come as a surprise to the company. In the last issue there was a Yiddish translation of 2 Shakespeare's sonnets. Your editor asked to see a list of other publications and noticed an interesting mix of Jewish books.

Jewish Heroes of the Wild West—True stories of 4 Immigrants: For young readers.
Brownsville—The birth, development and passing of a Jewish community in New York.
Come for Cholent—The Jewish stew cookbook
Come for Cholent...Again
Come for everything but Cholent
Burning Lights—Memoir of Bella Chagall
The Book of Jewish Curiosities—Subjects include: chemistry, astronomy, zoology, personal hygiene
The Original Jewish Cookbook—3,000 recipes

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118 East 28th St. #501-503
New York, NY 10016-8413
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E-mail: Blochpub@Worldnet.att.net
URL: <http://www.blochpub.com/index.html>

Yiddish Class in Fort Meyers, FL?

I am interested in finding a Yiddish language class in Fort Myers, Florida. It is between Sarasota and Naples on the gulf. We have at least 6 temples here (conservative, reform and Lubavicher). Hebrew lessons are available, but Yiddish isn't.

Beverley Winfeld, Ft. Meyers, FL Bazion2@aol.com

History of the West Coast Jewish Theatre

The West Coast Jewish Theatre is alive and well in Los Angeles! We started with a dream that began in 1993 when Naomi Karz Jacobs assembled a group of friends with Yiddishkayt and love of theatre in their hearts to formulate a way to start a permanent Jewish theatre in Los Angeles. Until then, Los Angeles, the second largest Jewish community in the United States, with a pool of the most talented people in the film, television and theatre industries and the home of major Hollywood studios, had no Jewish theatre. Yet, there are over forty Jewish theatres throughout the United States and Canada.

Our mission is to keep alive dramatic works of the past and to promote and encourage new and contemporary playwrights whose plays deal with Jewish themes, so that our rich literature and culture continues to inform and entertain future generations. Theatre is part of our tradition. Jewish cultural continuity is something we believe in and, at this time, when people are searching for their roots, a key communicate it is through the theatrical experience.

To this end, we began with staged readings, musical and comedic performances, which have been well received. Although previous attempts by others had failed, Naomi Karz Jacobs successfully gathered support from many talented, dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who understood this important need. Naomi and Skip Usen, co-founders of the WCJT, opened with a production of *Love, Dreams & Lost Uncles*, with an introduction by Elliott Gould on November 16, 1994 at the Friars Club in Beverly Hills.

Over the years, other productions featured the talents of writers, poets, actors, producers and directors, such as Judy Arnold, Edward Asner, who appeared with his son and daughter, Matthew and Kate, Barbara Bain, Gene Barry, Glen Beaudin, Shelley Berman, Herb Brin, Mike Burstyn, Amy Beth Cohn, Mimi Cozzens, Jerry Cutler, Leslie deBeauvais, Bonnie Franklin, Arlene Golonka, Harold Gould, Monty Hall, Estelle Harris, Rocky Kalish, Stanley Kamel, Hal Kanter, Bernie Kopell, Steve Landesburg, Valerie Landsburg, Alison LaPlaca, Sheldon Leonard, Len Lesser Paul Linke, Bennes Mardenn, Taylor Negron, Peter Mark Richman, Doris Roberts, Marion Ross, Paul Michael and Sammy Shore.

Works presented included

The Rally by John Herman Shaner,
Hollywood Trilogy by Malvin Wald,
The Elevator by Allan Byrns,
Sholom Aleichem's *plays*,
Chaim's Love Song by Marvin Chemoff

The Yiddish Trojan Women by Carole Braverman, ,
Horowitz & Mrs. Washington by Henry Denker,
Peace Talks by Audrey Kahane,
A Medal for Murray by Peter Mark Richman,
When the Rabbi Lied, by and starring Hildy Brooks,
The God of Isaac by James Sherman,
Antisemitropolis by Dan Kagan,
Ben & Charlotte by Marvin Chernoff,
First Is Supper by Shelley Berman, and
Der Onshitel Makher by Howard Teichman

A Sunday Morning Bagel Theatre Series, Works included:

Nobody's Gilgul by Lois Roisman,
It Should Be So by Ted Herstand,
Static Line by Bennett Michaelson.
The Gathering by Arje Shaw
Churches Nearby by Larry Cohen
The Festival of Lights by Steven Korba,
Vilna's Got A Golem by Ernest Joselovitz,
Next Year In Jerusalem by Naomi Karz Jacobs,
A Place in the Land by Ron Friedman,
Hold Onto Your Heart by Ernest Joselovitz
Fugumetunachai by Howard Teichman & S. Simon.

In 1998, West Coast Jewish Theatre began a Writers / Actors Workshop devoted to writers and professional actors working to develop new works concerned with our Jewish heritage. The venues used included private homes, the Friars Club, University Synagogue, the University of Judaism, The Wilshire Boulevard Temple, Temple Etz Chaim, and JCC Los Angeles.

From September 12 through October 13, 2002, the WCJT and the LA Repertory Company presented *The Chosen*, by Chaim Potok.

The establishment of the West Coast Jewish Theatre is a positive thing to have happened in Los Angeles. This will enhance the quality of life of those participating in the productions, as well as the community at large. Other plans include the acquisition of a Center for Jewish Theatre, including areas for creative research, teaching, workshops for youth, play readings, development of new works and, a permanent venue for future productions.

The West Coast Jewish Theatre is affiliated with the Association for Jewish Theatres and is a member of Theatre L.A. It is a 501(c) non-profit corporation.

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URL: www.westcoastjewishtheatre.org

Tangele

Yiddish tango flourished during the first half of the 20th century, combining the zest of tango with the language and culture of the Eastern European Jews. This show recreates the vibrant atmosphere of Argentinian and European cabaret, featuring songs written in the 1930s and 40s in Buenos Aires by European Jewish immigrants, in New York for the Yiddish theatre, and in the ghettos and concentration camps during WW II.

Tangele was conceived by **Lloica Czackis**. The project was awarded a JMI Millennium Award leading to workshops, illustrated lectures and concert engagements. These have included, in the UK, London's ArtsFest (The Spitz), Klezmer Beats on Upper Street (Union Chapel), Ot Azoy!, KlezFest, Klezmer in Sheffield, Brighton Festival of Jewish Music, Limmud and National Holocaust Memorial Day (The Dream Factory, Birmingham); in Paris, Klezmer Week and European Day of Jewish Culture (Maison de la Culture Yiddish-Bibliothèque Medem); Jewish Museum in Vienna and Centre Communautaire Laïc Juif, in Brussels.

This is the first time this repertoire is performed by Argentinian musicians of European Jewish descent. **Lloica Czackis** is a singer of Yiddish tango, and performer of art, cabaret and folksongs. **Juan Lucas Aisemberg**, a viola player in the Deutsche Oper, Berlin, was reared in the tango tradition. **Gustavo Beytelmann** is a renowned composer and pianist.

A little history...

The tango was born just before the turn of the 20th Century in Buenos Aires as the blend of Italian, Spanish, French and Eastern European Jewish immigrant cultures, and Afro-Argentine rhythms. In the 1910s the tango took Western Europe by storm, soon reaching Eastern Europe. Ballrooms and cabarets featured this Latin American import. Jews started to write new tangos. During the Holocaust it became part of the life of ghettos and concentration camps, where tango, in Yiddish, was adopted as a vehicle to express the experience of inmates and their hopes for freedom. Not only did the Nazis allow this music, they forced Lagerkapellen, the camp orchestras, to play the Tango of Death to accompany prisoners as they were marched to the gas chambers. In happier circumstances, Jewish musicians in Buenos Aires and New York wrote Yiddish Tangos for the Yiddish Theatre, musicals and Jewish revues. The mixed nature of tango may explain why it was embraced and transformed around the world. Yiddish Tangos are an example of the Jews' tendency to adapt to their adoptive countries.

Let Justice Well Up Like Water:

Progressive Jews From Hillel

To Helen Suzman

by Bennett Muraskin

It was published by the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations and The Center for Cultural Judaism.

Progressive secular Jews need heroes—here are sixty-two! Biographies of anarchists, Bundists, socialists, social reformers, communists, Zionists, journalists, labor leaders, anti-fascist resisters, feminists, writers, performing artists, and historians across the Jewish world and timeline. Here are Heroes, but not hero worship, rather, critical assessments of their life and work.

Muraskin includes profiles of nineteen women and eight architects of Yiddish culture, four pre-modern figures, and five modern religious Jews. What ties the sixty-two together? It is a commitment to universal human rights and social justice, within a Jewish context.

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Social Reformers: Lillian Wald, Janusz Korczak, Justine Wise Polier

Labor Leaders: Baruch Charney Vladeck, Rose Schneiderman, Rose Pesotta

Communists: Mossaye Olgin, Clara Lemlich Shavelson, Rose Pastor Stokes, Solomon Mikhoels

Women's Rights Advocates: Ernestine Rose, Betty Friedan, Henry Morgentaler, Irena Klepfisz

Political Leaders: Leon Blum, Joseph Zuken, Bella Abzug, Helen Suzman

Architects of Yiddish Culture: Morris Rosenfeld, S. Ansky, Itsik Manger, Chaim Grade, Max Weinreich, Ruth Rubin

Bennett Muraskin is a frequent contributor to *Jewish Currents*, *Humanistic Judaism*, and *Outlook* (Canada). The Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO) has published his *Yiddish Short Story Sampler*, *Secular Humanistic Shabbes Reader*, and *Celebrating Jewish Holidays* (co-authored with Judith Seid and Lawrence Schofer). His most recent book is *Humanist Readings in Jewish Folklore* (International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism, 2001)

Copies @ \$14.50 includes postage and handling
Make checks payable to CSJO.

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From A South Africa Contact by Rochelle Winer

Es iz a fargenign tsu bakumen *Der Bay*. You must be a very special person to give us so much joy and to keep us in touch with so many people all over the Yiddish world. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

I was in Cape Town and the Bnoth Zion Society held a very successful fundraiser with me as the guest speaker. I did a talk on Sholom Aleichem, Mendele and Peretz. I mentioned a few of the characters they created, thus portraying shtetl life through the eyes of the *little people* who inhabited the shtetlekh of Eastern Europe. During tea everybody chats to each other and it is really wonderful to see how people discover where their families came from and there is so much to talk about. It is a nostalgic re-union for people who haven't seen each other for many years.

It is always so exciting to receive *Der Bay* and to see what is happening. I like the new format very much.

Jennie Freilich vil visn

Ikh vil aykh fregn oyb ir kont mir helfn mit an eytse. Ikh hob ibergezetst oyf yidish dos bikhl *A Carp in the Bathtub* (A karp in der vane). Ikh veys nit oyb es eksestirt ergets aza ibergezetsung oyb nit volt ikh zeyer gevolt dos aroysgeb'n. Ikh veys ober nit vi tsu ontsuhoybn. Ikh volt aykh zeyer badankt far ayer hilf in dem inyen.

Ikh bin 82 yor alt, un ikh leren dray klasn in yidish. Tsvey vokhlekhe klasn un eyn klas eyn mol a khoydesh. Es iz mir a groysen fargenign. Ikh hob zikh gelernt yidish in di sholem aleykhem shuln in di bronks nyu york. Di shule hot geheyst shul 10. Yetst breng ikh tsuzamen alerley mentshn vos viln oyfvekn dem tam fun zeyer yugnt.

Meyer Zaremba Writes

In Der Nister's book, *Di Familye Mashber* we read about a man talking to his brother and reminding him that his pursuit of things is not in keeping with the ethical teachings of our religion. He says, "What you are doing is not for us not for those who have received the warnings we were given in our father's will".

This is a reference to a genre of Yiddish "literature" ("tsvoeh literatur") in which parents communicated "ethical wills" to their children.

My wife, Helen, wrote a poem to our sons which, I believe, fits into this category. (See the next column)

TO OUR SONS by Helen Zaremba

To you, beloveds, we pass the baton
Given to us a generation ago
(And which you, and your peers, in time,
must pass on to the next generation)
Of an Experience, like none other
Of a heritage sweet and bitter
Proud and Painful
Passionate and Persistent
Still standing,
 albeit battered and bloody
But Strong
And Surviving Some 5000 years now!!
While other powers and empires
 have come and gone
The baton is still ours to pass on!

Remember always the courage
 of your grandparents,
To leave their homeland
To come so far
To begin again
To learn a new language
To orient in a new, confusing environ
To emerge
To place the priorities of their heritage
 into their lives
To prevail!!!

So now we, their children, bear the burden
 and the privilege
To excite within you, dear sons,
The wonder of this awesome heritage
To be thrilled with the knowledge
That when we celebrate a New Year
Jews all over the world are doing so too!!

That prayers we pray
Have been prayed the year before
And twenty years before
And one hundred years before
And one thousand years before!!!!

And so you have become part
 of this remarkable adventure.
Know that It will not be easy
Know that it will make you cry
Know that It will make you different

Finally,
Never forget who you are
Never forget from whence you came
Never forget!

The Zarembas are at: greenhucuzineh@aol.com

History of the Jewish Community in Alsace and Lorraine: Part V

by Pascal Curin

Confusion reigned on women's names because they were generally hypocoristic terms with dialectal consonance such as Pessele for Elisabeth, Ziberle for Deborah, or Sorle for Sarah. It's common knowledge that Jewesses in Alsace passed down Yiddish to the next generation. Often, they hardly spoke French, particularly at home where the Mammele was an emotional and linguistic reference. Since the French law for civil status was patriarchal, women in many instances were not forced to deeply change their habits. Many even maintained their original name identity, Pessele for example, wife of David Schwab.

Beginning with the Restoration and the July Monarchy of Louis XVIII, the legal normalization of the Jewish community was achieved. Gradually, the Consistories and Grand Rabbis asked their co-religionists to engage in the practice of common secular jobs to study and show interest in the sciences and the arts, and to avoid usury. Their slogan encouraged all Jews to embrace their new homeland by declaring, "Israelites, you are not wandering any more, you are not stateless any longer!" The rural communities grew rapidly between the years 1840 and 1860. During this period, synagogues were restored, transformed, and some even newly constructed. The administrative centers of these districts attracted an enormous segment of the Jewish population. From 1860 onwards, the rural communities began to empty in favor of the larger cities. The Industrial Revolution and the development of transportation made this rural depopulation possible.

The annexation of Alsace and Northern Lorraine to the German Empire in 1871 was the single significant political event that most rapidly increased the rate of depopulation. Numerous young Jews emigrated to France (particularly to Paris and neighboring towns), but also to the colonial territories of Northern Africa, and eventually onto America. Depending on the level of assimilation into French society, many urban Jews emigrated to avoid the Prussian way of life or having to serve in the German Army. For those Jews that spoke Yiddish and Galleres-Daytsh, and had regular contact with German Jewish centers for study at famous Yeshivot, the banned French language and German way of life was bearable. Alsatians were forced to turn to the East again.

Author Max Warcharwski explains, for instance, that Alsatian Jews didn't know the Yizkor that German Jews introduced after 1870 for the high

holiday Yom Kippur. They were accustomed to reciting the Memmere, a prayer in favor of the martyrs of the region. The Alsatian Selikhot were recited in a different order than German Ashkenazim were accustomed to between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

While Alsatian Jews emigrated to the west or abroad, Eastern European and German Jews came to Alsace. Even though Germany had declared Jews to be full nationals a few years earlier, most Jews remained partisans of France in their hearts and minds, but tended to never show it to excess.

The Jewish population dropped by 20% in some regions of Alsace and Lorraine. The urban centers of Strasbourg, Colmar, and Mulhouse, consequently became more and more influential, while the rural communities progressively became unable to find candidates for the rabbinate or maintain rabbis and officiates. Regarding the cultural and social status of the Jews in the late 19th Century, there is a huge discrepancy with the situation in 1806 when Napoleon tried to federate the French Jews. The illustrious Berr-Isaac-Berr, from Lorraine, complained that heads of families in villages and small towns were totally uncultured; the traditional teaching at the synagogues had disappeared after the Revolution and religious practices were disorganized and disrupted by the secularization and centralized politics of Napoleon. However, the situation gradually improved even though Eastern Jews often criticized that religious practices declined under the influence of the capital.

There wasn't any liberal schism in France, contrary to Germany. A simplification of the ritual had been aimed, perhaps at reform to more liberal Jews, but this failed because of the vehement resistance of the Rabbinate of Alsace and Lorraine that were reputed to be more conservative. Moreover, the rural communities in the East sided with their representatives against in depth reforms without necessarily moving to the other extreme, such as radicalization or opposition to change. The fact remains that the Yeshiva of Metz in Lorraine became a National Theological Seminary for a period, but was transferred to Paris to avoid the traditionalist influence that reigned in the reformist elements in Metz. However, Metz could take pride in having received illustrious leading rabbis from all over Europe. They tended to reflect the rather conservative nature of the Lorraine Jews.

Jonathan Eibeschutz came from Prague arriving in Metz in the middle of the 18th Century. He was a conservative, and his influence was disputed during a period where the notables began to take an interest in the ideas of the Enlightenment. Eibeschutz remained for eight years in Metz before moving onto Hamburg.

Another illustrious rabbi of the age was the conservative Rabbi Arie Loeb, also known as Cha'agath Arie, from Lithuania. Loeb came to Metz in 1765, and stayed there until his death in 1785. He contributed to the renowned Yeshiva of Metz, and promoted Hebrew printing in and around town.

On August 21, 1829, the Central Rabbinical School was founded in Metz ensuring the continuity of the ancient renowned Yeshiva of Metz that had been in operation since the Middle Ages. The Central Consistory had converted it into the Central Theology School in 1827 and was authorized to bestow a National Rabbinical Diploma on its students. Until the middle of the 19th Century, the school welcomed many foreign students. They were then in the homes of local families using a coupon system called Pletten. Other Theological Seminaries were created in Middle Europe in the 19th Century, which were also important for the peoples of Alsace and Lorraine who attended these rabbinical seminaries in Germany, particularly those located in Breslau and Berlin.

Jean Daltroff deals with this topic in his article about the comparison between Theological Seminaries in Metz and Germany, and documents that numerous Alsatian students decided upon following the orthodox tendency of the Rabbinical Seminary lead by the renowned Azriel Hildesheimer.

Other Alsatian notables, such as Victor Marx, received their education at the famous conservative Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminary in Breslau, which was responsible for the education and training of numerous rabbis and Doctors of Law who subsequently disseminated their acquired knowledge throughout Germany and the United States. This occurred up until 1938 when it abruptly ended with the rise of the Third Reich.

The successor of Arie Loeb should have been a disciple of Mendelssohn. Rabbi Hirschel Loeb Levin from Poland, the former Rabbi of London and Berlin, would have been a likely candidate, but he retracted. If he had to come to Metz, he supposed that this Jewry was more or less in favor of the Jewish Enlightenment, but upon closer examination, he probably came to the understanding that the common Jew of Lorraine was still basically conservative.

In conclusion, the Jewish population of both Alsace and Lorraine, despite small differences, had taken a huge step forward regarding its civic integration with French society. This period also marked the renewal of urban communities whose rabbis were paid by the State. Judaism became officially recognized both before and after the annexation of these two regions by Germany.

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IAYC Leadership

Harold Black, President of the IAYC was born in a shtetl, Goniondz, Poland. His father left for Mexico and Harold and his mother joined him a short time later. He attended the first Jewish Kheyder in Mexico City, but not for any length of time, because the family moved to the United States in 1929—just in time for the depression.

In the United States, he attended a kheyder and then a Hebrew school until his Bar Mitzvah. He was bilingual for a time, speaking Yiddish at home and English elsewhere. After marriage he spoke only English. Little-by-little he lost his interest in Yiddish until at age fifty four he began attending Yiddish programs at the JCC in the Washington, D.C. area.

The president of Yiddish of Greater Washington noticed his regular attendance and asked if he would like to be on the Board. He agreed and later became president. During one period he was in charge of writing proposals to the Maryland Arts Council for funding of various Yiddish of Greater Washington's programs. One year he had a bright idea, why not hold a conference of Yiddish Clubs so they could exchange ideas and share materials? So he wrote up a grant proposal for that and it was funded.

As the time came closer for the conference it looked like very few people would come, but at the last minute about 140 people registered. What a joyous time they had meeting each other. People danced in the aisles and sang to the wee hours of the night. This first conference was co-chaired with Sid Verner and Jonathan Sunshine

At the conference, Harold Black met Fishl Kutner and Dr. Allan Blair. The trio decided that we should organize the clubs and do the conferences on a regular basis. That's part of how the International Association of Yiddish Clubs was founded.

Later Harold was called upon to again run an IAYC Conference—the 6th one in Chevy Chase, MD at the 4H international headquarters. This time his co-chair was the very capable Elaine Mann.

Harold Black was a City Planner and he became an assistant to the Mayor of Detroit. He has two Masters degrees, one in Sociology and one in Urban Planning. He also has a Ph.D. in Urban Planning.

One thing he likes to point out is that in his family, every child was born in a different country, he in Poland, a sister in Mexico and another sister in the United States. He hopes to see all of you at the IAYC conference in Minneapolis in June of 2005.

The IAYC

We keep writing and talking about the IAYC, the International Association of Yiddish Clubs, but for the majority of us who may not even belong to a Yiddish club—why should we care? That is a good and fair question, and why should clubs belong?

First, there is strength in numbers. The larger your membership, the more you can do in fostering Yiddish—our main goal.

Second, IAYC has sponsored successfully eight conferences throughout the United States and in Toronto, Canada. Its next conference will be in Minneapolis. We are planning for the one after that possibly being on Long Island, NY.

Third, while there are:

- Quite a few colleges and institutes to take Yiddish courses,
- KlezKamp and others to sharpen your musical skills, and
- Weekend retreats to enjoy a Yiddish ambience—none combines all these areas for club members to come, share, be invigorated and take home ideas for their Yiddish groups.

Fourth, IAYC is a relatively new group with a dynamic growth pattern. Rather than competing with the older and established organizations, it augments them.

Fifth, like *Der Bay*, IAYC has no paid personnel, needs no funds for housing, utilities or insurance. No Board member receives reimbursement for traveling to prospective sites, phone or other expenses.

Sixth, Member clubs receive regularly free books, booklets, etc. This usually far surpasses the amount that is paid in dues. How is this done? Every conference has had a small net balance and this money is used for donations, scholarships and club handouts. Why is there a positive balance at the Conferences? Outside donations have augmented the income, and this helps keep the cost down and has left a small net.

Seventh, unlike other conferences that invariably are held in one location, IAYC Conferences have been held in: College Park, MD; Toronto, Canada; Miami, FL, Fairfield, CT; Los Angeles, CA, Chevy Chase, MD; Milwaukee, WI and Baltimore, MD.

Join IAYC—have your group send a dollar a member (\$25 minimum) to Seymour Graiver, treas. 212-08 15th Ave., Bayside, NY 11360-1106 Ph: 718-224-5497 seymour.graiver@worldnet.att.net

Yiddish Basics

This article is meant both for the absolute beginner who is looking for a roadmap on approaching the study of and about Yiddish language and culture, and as a checklist for those who have spent time and effort in becoming knowledgeable about Yiddish.

Yiddish is multi-faceted. To be able truly to say that you even have a grasp of Yiddish you should know at least a little about each area. If an area is omitted, your editor is sure that a reader will bring it to our attention.

- **Speaking:** Owning a car is great, but you want to drive or be driven in it. Can you carry on a basic conversation? Learn how to greet and say adieu. Do not worry about grammar and intersperse your English if necessary, but practice speaking. If you do not have someone around, get in front of a mirror and carry on a two-way conversation. Watch the motion of your lips. Attending a club or class is best.
- **Reading:** As soon as possible learn the Hebrew / Yiddish alphabet. There is a great reward in being able to read the great masters in the original. If this is too difficult, Romanization (transliteration) is second best. It is simple, for there are only a few simple rules. Learn the YIVO standard orthography (spelling).
- **Dictionaries:** Start with one having both your native language and Yiddish. Then advance to a larger one and eventually a Hebrew / Yiddish dictionary. **Learn the alphabet.** Not everyone who knows the letters can say the alphabet in its standard order. You will need it to use the dictionary without wasting a lot of time.
- **Music:** Many use the term Klezmer synonymous with Ashkenazi music. Besides being pleasant and enjoyable, it is a great way to learn new words and their pronunciation. If you are musically inclined, playing an instrument, or singing, is even better.
- **Publications:** Read as many different Yiddish journals, newsletters, newspapers, magazines as possible. If you can afford to subscribe to them that will be even better. They come in different formats—Yiddish, English and Romanized. Sharing with others gives you the opportunity to read more and get different views. Get your JCC, synagogue, temple, or Workmen's Circle Branch to subscribe.
- **Theater:** While Yiddish theater is rare, the next best to live performances are the many excellent videos. It is an effortless way to enjoy and learn. Remember, support Yiddish theater when it comes to town.

- **Writing:** Having a briv-fraynd (pen pal) is a great way to further your Yiddish usage and knowledge. It can be done using the H/Y letters or Romanized. You can correspond with a relative, a friend or find someone online. Each venue you use will help you to improve your Yiddish.

- **Attending:** Conferences, conventions, institutes, seminars and retreats are stimulating and rewarding. Experiences. Here is where you will meet and make friendships. Many of us look forward to seeing our newly-found friends at successive events and share our common love of mame-loshn.

- **Belonging:** Membership in a local group (shmueskrayz, leyenkrayz or shraybkrayz and attending on a regular basis are the bases of local sponsorship of Yiddish activities. Here is where programs from the outside get their support. Traveling musical, and theatrical groups, and lecturers bring outside stimuli, pleasure and knowledge. These new experiences add to the interest and development of local Yiddish interest.

Schooling: We all can benefit from attending a Yiddish class at our level. Fortunately there are many wonderful teachers. For those who have had the opportunity of sitting in a class of teachers like; Peysakh Fizman, Chava Lapin, Mordkhe Schaechter—and the many other fine teachers—you know the inspiration that they instill to make you want to learn more and more.

Role Playing: Each one of us should take every opportunity to extol the advantages of learning and fostering Yiddish. We have this chance when speaking to our friends, children and grandchildren. This can be in the form of interspersing a few Yiddish words, a proverb or a song. Teaching children a little song when babysitting or putting them to bed will leave memories of many years to come.

Tracing Your Roots: Developing a family tree means finding out about your heritage. In looking back to unearth the facts of your ancestors invariably will expose you to some memorabilia that has Yiddish. It may be on the back of photographs, in the form of letters or in the inside cover of a book.

In Conclusion: Yiddish must and can become a part of our everyday life. We need to take apart of every day and have Yiddish input in any of the forms listed above. We can listen to music while we walk; watch a video in the evening or read a story, newsletter or journal. The key is that Yiddish becomes an integral part of our life like dressing, grooming and eating.