

DISCOVERY OF A LOST CHELM MANUSCRIPT

By Philip Fishl Kutner

The *Der Bay* newsletter was the first to release a report of the news of the discovery of a heretofore, unknown manuscript entitled, *The Wisdom of the Chelm Sages*. It was initially reported at the first meeting in Yenemsville of (OYC) Our Yiddish Club after the Club had returned from its fact-finding visit to Chelm, Poland.

It seemed that the Head Librarian of The Higher Vocational State School in Chelm had heard from his dying grandfather the rumor that a time capsule had been buried many years ago in the deep recesses of a cave under Chelm. This information was relayed to **Leybl the Librarian** when Leybl had met the head librarian.

Well, it seems that one night while everyone was asleep **Leybl the Librarian** sneaked down into the cave and after much searching found the long-lost Chelm Time Capsule. Upon opening it, he found only a single item—the tome, *The Wisdom of the Chelm Sages*. He quickly shut the time capsule and returned to the Kamena Hotel where the rest of Our Yiddish Club members were sleeping.

Leybl had stored the manuscript in the bottom of his valise and did not open it until he returned to Yenemsville. When he opened it, much to his surprise, he realized it was written entirely in Yiddish. It was organized in sections or chapters.

The first section dealt with plants. It seems that the photosynthetic process has a counterpart in the albinosynthetic process. The substance chlorophyll has a counterpart called albinophyll. Photosynthesis is powered by sunlight while albinosynthesis utilizes the rays of moonlight.

The section went on to say that the seeds had to be sprouted in total darkness and then exposed to moonlight and placed in total darkness during periods of sunlight. If this procedure were to be diligently followed fruit trees and vegetables plants could be grown to maturity and bear edible produce.

Leybl then suggested that they write a grant for research and development (R & D) to NASA for use in spaceships traveling on long voyages to distant galaxies and to NOAA (National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency) for undersea exploration and the possibility of establishing an ocean bottom city.

The million dollar grant from NASA and the half million dollar grant from NOAA would be sufficient to purchase to purchase the cave property and

construct the geodesic dome. Thus **Rokhl di Raykhe** could make a very sizeable donation to the relief efforts of the great tsunami disaster.

The outline of the grants called for the seeds to be sprouted in the darkness of the cave and gibberelic acid placed on the tips of the sprouts upon beginning brought up to the dome after sundown. Each night the plants would be returned to the darkness of the cave until the next nightfall. An elaborate system of transport would be designed to move the plants swiftly and with minor disturbance.

By this time news of the discovery of the existence of *The Wisdom of the Chelm Sages* had reached the chair of the congressional appropriations committee. The committee decided if the information is correct that the Request for Proposal (RFP) should be altered and that the amount be greatly increased.

Because the manuscript was written totally in Yiddish, it was necessary to have a Yiddish-English translator at the hearings. Members of OYC took turns at this task, for the grueling by the congressmen and congresswomen was intense.

So it was. The hearings held in Washington were an instant news success. It matched the media coverage of the Lindbergh Kidnapping Trial, O.J. Simpson Trial or the Peterson Trial. It did more to foster the revitalization of Yiddish than any event in history. Universities clamored to establish Endowed Chairs of Yiddish Studies.

TV announcers and newspaper reporters constantly were urged to make this story their prime concern. Because of the vast public interest in the United States and the international community, the hearings were headlines day in and day out. Advertisers clamored for more time. Best of all, Chelm, Our Yiddish Club and Yenemsville tee-shirts became the fashion rage for teenagers. Income from their sales soared into the millions.

The OYC has been one of the founding members of the (IAYC) International Association of Yiddish Clubs. When the IAYC contacted the OYC about supporting the IAYC Conference to be held in Tel Aviv, the OYC voted to pay the transportation, registration and accommodation costs for the presidents of each IAYC member club.

This came from only the first section of *The Wisdom of the Chelm Sages*. Follow this series in *Der Bay* as **Leybl the Librarian** translates succeeding sections.

