The Invention of the C.H.E.L.M.
by Philip *Fishl* Kutner

Word reached the outside world that the third most marvelous invention of all time had been created in a distant shtetl in a remote section of Eastern Poland. It was third only behind the invention of the wheel and the zero in the Arabic Number System.

There were full-page ads in all of the newspapers, and in the New York Tsaytn it had a full centerfold spread. T.V. ads extolled the virtues of the C.H.E.L.M..

It was such a hot ticket item that requests were flooding in—how could one buy stock in the C.H.E.L.M.? Dealers in equities searched for the company symbols on the NYSE. They learned that CHE is for Chemed Corp., and it provides hospice care. No, that was not the company. CLM was a company in Chile.

Cohen, Cohn and Coan decided that the investment companies needed to know what symbol to use for C.H.E.L.M., so they decided to call Chelm and ask the Wise Sage of Chelm. The response was swift and showed the reason why she was called the Wise Sage of Chelm. "Since YIVO uses KH instead of CH, call it KHM." Everyone was elated.

There is always a dark cloud in every silver lining. It came suddenly in an e-mail message from a young child in La Paz, Bolivia. "What is the C.H.E.L.M., and what do the letters stand for?"

Frenzy overtook Vant Gas and the phones began to ring in Chelm. The response was, "The C.H.E.L.M. is a machine and that is what the M stands for." Joy hit Manhattan and there was revelry in all of the pubs.

It was not long before someone asked, "But what kind of a machine is it?" The answer over the phone was loud and clear, "A Language Machine."

This time the callers were not satisfied with partial answers. They wanted to know what the rest of the words were for the letters in the C.H.E.L.M. acronym.

"What kind of a language machine is it?" This answer brought many, "Of course what else could it be?" So that *Der Bay* readers are not left in the dark, the answer was—English. The E stands for English.

Further prodding gave the reply that H stands for *heuristic* (of or constituting an educational method in which learning takes place through discoveries that

result from investigations made by the student). Of course the C is for the name of the shtetl Chelm. Now the whole world knew that the C.H.E.L.M. acronym stands for the Chelm Heuristic English Language Machine.

While the mystery had been solved, the questions started coming in faster and faster. In general they centered on—how does the machine work?

Cohen, Cohn and Coan realized that they would need to hire a team of tech writers to explain the operations of the C.H.E.L.M.. A search was begun in Silicon Valley for the best tech-writing firm. With all of the expertise in the Greater San Jose Area the search team still was not satisfied. It was decided to broaden the search and ask Microhard for advice.

After much delay they were able to reach Velvel, the Microhard CEO (Commander of the English Organization). His advice was, "Since a Chelmer invented the C.H.E.L.M., have a Chelmer write the tech support for the tech manual that would accompany the C.H.E.L.M.."

When word got out of Velvel's advice, the speculation in the speculative C.H.E.L.M. stock skyrocketed. The IPO (Initial Public Offering) of the stock had been $1,000 and had split twice in the first week, because of the speculative-driven market. The stock changed the financial situation from a ber to a bik market.

At this point let us return to our shtetl Chelm and see what is transpiring in the international headquarters and the manufacturing plant where the beta phase of C.H.E.L.M. is just closing and mass production is about to begin.

The C.H.E.L.M. international headquarters is located in downtown Chelm in bobes kikh. It all started when Fisheles bobe said, "Ya shud loyn eynglish." Being highly creative, he contacted Yankl Halpern in Japan. Yankl, a lexicographer, devised a system for looking up words in kanji and with Roman letters.

Then a study was made of Ludovic Zamenhof's Esperanto—Zamenhof was born in Bialystok in 1859? He developed Esperanto, a universal language.

The manufacturing plant was bobes old barn where the cow, 2 goats and a horse had been stabled. It was now cleaned and even had a concrete floor.

To purchase C.H.E.L.M. stock or the latest model of the C.H.E.L.M., send 100 rubles to Fishl, c/o *Der Bay*. He will forward your request to Chelm and your good-natured local psychiatrist.