
That first little sheet of Der Bay in 1991 could not possibly foretell that 20 years later it would be an international Anglo-Yiddish newsletter that would spawn a network of contacts in every state and 35 countries.

This has been a love and intense passion that has served as a tribute to my Mama and the many yidishe mames who made the unbelievable transition to far-off lands where the language and customs were foreign and tested their mettle.

As part of this journey, offshoots sprouted, and have made all the effort personally rewarding in the many wonderful friendships and experiences during these two decades.

Thanks to the effort of Dr. Harold Black, o"h and the Yiddish of Greater Washington, the forerunner of the International Association of Yiddish Clubs (IAYC) was established. After 13 wonderful conferences, our treasurer, Jerry Gerger is chairing the next conference, August 26-29, 2011 in Novi, Michigan, an upscale Detroit suburb.

IAYC has 100 members mainly in the US and Canada, but also in Israel, South Africa and Spain. The Board of Directors and Advisory Board are from academia, Yiddish club leaders, teachers, translators, and klezmer musicians.

About the same time that the premiere online list, Mendele was hitting its stride, Der Bay developed its website under the tutelage of Ari Davidow of Klezmer Shack fame. Found at www.derbay.org Der Bay's website has the only international calendar of Yiddish events. The world is divided into fourteen regions and updated regularly. It has the date, time, location, contact phone number as well as the title of each event.

Our briv fraynd list numbers over 460 worldwide. Thanks to the early efforts of Frida Cielak of Mexico City and Dr. Allan Blair of Columbus, OH, this free service matches Yiddish lovers by level of proficiency and hobbies. They communicate online and in hardcopy, and use Romanization or the Yiddish/Hebrew alphabet.

As Der Bay grew beyond North America, it soon became apparent that with the high cost of postage, we would need to have an online version. The free, abbreviated online version of this newsletter is growing rapidly, albeit mainly overseas.

Our policy has been to maintain the same cost and not accept any paid advertising. Thus we are doing a service as well as not having to compromise our standards in reviewing books, CDs, DVDs and other events.

In this issue we travel down “memory lane” and sample some of the articles that received much attention by readers, especially in the most popular column, Oystsugn fun briv in der redaktsye.

Included in this issue are articles that were part of a series including: Ed Goldman’s comic bible scenes that have been very popular in club programming. Then there is Goldie A. Gold’s Shayles un Tshuves in “Hilkhes Libe”, and one of the 90 stories of Mama from the book, Hrabina of Hunterdon.

We cannot predict the future, but Der Bay has seen scholarly publications pass from the scene and we keep rolling along—with your help.
HAVANA: It is the capital of Cuba. There are three communities that share the aid and work together to educate and strengthen themselves. Dr. Jose Miller is the leader of the entire Jewish Community, as well as President of the All-Island Community Council. Adela Dworin is the Vice President of the All-Island Community Council and librarian at the Patronato.

GRAND SYNAGOGUE - BETH SHALOM: It is the largest one of the synagogues and its affiliation is with the Conservative Movement. The Patronato is the center for distribution of aid to all the needy Jews in Cuba and for development of educational, social, and cultural programs throughout the Island.

Most of the 300 families participate in one way or another. Sabbath services—Kabalat Shabbat is a youth led service, while Shabbat morning is adult led. Also there is a group ranging from youth to young adult. Religious school - JDC bus to bring students of all ages on Sunday morning. Simcha Group - Active seniors have formed a group led by a member of the community council and supported by JDC.

Building has been maintained best in the most used areas, like the social hall, office, and small sanctuary. Main sanctuary - birds, broken ceiling and windows, many seats broken, termites, makeshift classrooms behind the balcony, on entryway floor and social hall

Organizations using this are: Hadassah, Havana Jewish Women’s group, Simcha (with members who are over 55) Maimonides Chapter of B’nai B’rith

ORTHODOX CONGREGATION ADATH ISRAEL: Mr. Tache is President in the old city, and receives support from Lubovitzers. It is a small, but active community of all ages that holds daily services, and has small English classes. The total restoration of the building has been sponsored by the City Restoration Office under the supervision of the City Historian. The Havana mikvah is located here.

SEPHARDIC CENTRAL SEFARDI: Mr. Jose Levy Tur is president of this small community that holds Shabbat morning services in their large building in Vedado area (near the Patronato). They also have a women’s group which plans to encourage and teach Sefardic traditions to its members.

SANTIAGO DE CUBA: Eugenia Farin Behar, is President of the Communidad Hebraica Hatikvah de Santiago de Cuba. There are 26 member families having 102 people, and their affiliation is with the Conservative movement. The youth group (Atidim) ranges from the ages of 15-23 years. There is also an Israeli Dance group. The congregation was re-established in 1993. They have transliterated prayer books.

In December of 1996 They had a celebration for two B’nai Mitzvah—first since the revolution. Their building was returned by the government in 1995. A Hebrew school is held Saturday afternoons — emphasis is on classes and discussion for adults. A youth group meets Sundays for programs and Israeli dancing.

GUANTANAMO: David Mizrachi is President of the group of about 40—mostly descendants of one couple from Turkey whose family name is Mizrachi. There’s a small religious school and an adult Israeli dance troupe.

MANZANILLO: This is a very new group estimated at 100. They are not fully organized.

CAMAGUAY: This generally is a poor community of 28 families. Recently the government allowed the purchase of a house. In 1995 it became a sister city with the Jews of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

SANTA CLARA: A new community of about 40 that meets in private homes on erev Shabbat. It is the physical center for four very small groups, within a 60 mile radius of Santa Clara.

CIENFUEGOS: Six or eight families are here and they are seemingly in good shape, but have no building. Liaison is being developed with Santa Clara which has the nearest cemetery.

SANCTI ESPIRITU: It is a very small community with no activity.
The first record that we know of Jews in Finland are of Sefardim from Hamburg, Germany at the end of the 17th century. They were magicians who were allowed to perform. At that time Finland belonged to Sweden and no Jews could settle here, if they had not converted to Protestant Christians.

During the 18th century at least two German Jews who had converted are known to have settled in Finland, one was in Oulu, the largest city in Northern Finland. He was the grandfather to one of our most famous authors and cultural Gestalts, Zacharias Topelius, who lived during the 19th century. At that time Finland was part of Russia, a Grossfurstentum [grand-princedom].

During the 19th century the first Ashkenazim came to Finland to serve in the Russian army. All of them came from the Pale of Settlement, i.e. from Poland ruled by Russia, White Russia, the Baltic and that St. Petersburg area which was inside the Pale. No Jews were allowed to settle outside the Pale, with the exception of those Jewish soldiers who had fulfilled their service in the army -- they were allowed to stay in those places where they had been based and while still serving in the army.

When Russia had taken over in Finland, the New Crown didn't want to change too much thus to have the Finnish people pleased with the new government -- so the old Swedish Law was still in power here. That included the forbid for the Jews to settle here. But the Russian army allowed retired soldiers, against the Finnish officials xenofobiatic will, to stay if they so wished in the countries where they had been serving, whether they were Jews or of whatsoever nationality -- with the exception that Jews were forbidden to settle outside Viborg or Helsinki.

Jews were not allowed to marry or to have free trades in Finland, only to sell worn clothes and alike in their own markets, called 'narinka'. The situation was still much better for them than it was in Russia. In spite of restrictions and forbids, Jews did marry and have children, the laws only had to be dodged and evaded, so they stayed.

Jews didn't know the Russian language very well – the men had learned some while serving in the army – however, the Jewish women did not know even that little. So in the beginning Jews spoke only Yiddish. Yiddish was spoken still in the 1930s, because after the revolution there came more Jews from Russia.

One by one Jews switched to speaking Swedish because it was much easier to learn than that difficult and strange language of the majority, Finnish. But still, officially Swedish speaking, Jews as multilingual people—like so often before in other countries—adopted the majority language. I must point that Swedish was the official language —with Russian—till the last half of 19th century, and still quite strong until the independence.

After Finland became independent in 1917 Jews got full citizenship. One reason why so many so quickly changed their language into Finnish was the growing "fennomanism", the strengthening Finnish nationalism, which was at its worst during the thirties. The other reason must have been that Jews already were capable to use Finnish as well as Swedish. During only nine years (from the beginning of the 30s till the beginning of 40s) The Jewish School completely changed its language from Swedish into Finnish.

It looks like Jews today are not very much interested in Yiddish. It never was taught in The Jewish School, only Hebrew, but it is quite understandable with the background of special Finnish circumstances. Finns are still quite suspicious towards strangers. But also Jews are rather astonished if they find someone to be interested in Mameloshn, which still is known by some 20-40 people.

It has been told that while building some new houses beside the synagogue, some volunteer workers spoke Yiddish. But I’ve spoken Yiddish with only three persons here in Helsinki: the oldest of the Helsinki Community, the librarian of the Synagogue Library and a lady who happened to work there one zuntik abend. The Yiddish we spoke was strongly influenced by German. With the lady I started the conversation in Yiddish, then we switched into Swedish, and concluded it in English.

**Editor’s note:** *TYN contact (The Yiddish Network) contacts are individuals who are available for travelers, or those who relocate, to inform them of Yiddish activities in their area. They are in every major US city and Canada (except Quebec City) and in 35 countries.*
The Jewish Community in Mexico City
By Roman Ajzen
Appeared in the September, 1998 Issue

The Jewish community in Mexico is an intricate combination of diversity and interesting juxtapositions. Although it neighbors the United States and has intimate relations with its Jewish community here, the Mexican community is different from its most elementary to its most complex components. This can be attributed to its diverse make-up that the American community lacks.

Of the approximately 40,000 Jews residing in the Mexican capital, half are Ashkenazic, about one-seventh Sepharadic, and the rest are Arabic. This blend of cultures has led to an array of customs unseen in America. Also stoking this fire of difference are the 13 sectarian day schools in the city that aim to impart a more secular education in the history and customs of Judaism rather than its more religious view. These schools serve to positively increase the divisions between the sects by increasing one's knowledge of, and pride in, their own history and informing them about their heritage but not to degrade or attack the others.

This pride is what makes the Mexican Jewish community inherently different from the American one. It polarizes their differences so that they remain separate and distinct rather than becoming a jumbled mush of ambiguous traditions that eventually become so cumbersome that they are abandoned. This allows the Mexican Jewish community to have few assimilated traditions, conversions, or inter-marriages.

Traditions, thus, begin to transcend the ephemeral consideration of being something that your parents have done into something your great-great grandparents did and gives one that all-important perspective and respect for the traditions that they deserve and require. The Mexican schools help create and further this process by being sectarian. Sending an Ashkenazic child to an Ashkenazic school where they teach Yiddish and Ashkenazic values and traditions will be greatly beneficial.

Although there are some Hassidic schools, this system is basically lacking in the United States and, as such, being Ashkenazic or Sepharadic has no meaning or relevance. This pride has caused the individual communities to band together and set up their own organizations to direct their community activities and other such events. These kehilas do much more than simply organize social events; they set up funds to help the less fortunate or affluent members and actively pursue the best interests of the community. In other words they are analogous to the UJF except that their benevolence is directed toward a specific group of Jews rather than all Jews.

There is another organization that dominates Mexican Jew's daily activities. The “deportivo” is, as its name indicates, a center for sports and congregating. Although similar to the Jewish Community Center of the United States in its theoretical purposes, the comparisons end there. It has Olympic caliber installations for almost any sport imaginable including diving, swimming, racquetball, tennis, gymnastics, baseball, basketball and soccer. However, its purposes extend much further than solely sporting activities.

As evidenced by its four-story parking garage it can accommodate huge numbers of people in not only its sporting installations but also in its several ballrooms big enough to even house weddings. It also is used as a gathering place by Jews from all over the world. They sponsor an international Jewish dance competition attended by teams from San Diego to Miami to Israel to Argentina and almost any country where there is a Jewish community. The breadth of all these activities becomes even more impressive when the fact that they are organized and run by a fewer number of Jews than those in San Diego. The same spirit is found in the creation of the “Deportivo” as in that of the schools.

It is exclusively for Jews and as such has become a place where a father can send his daughter to find a boyfriend or even husband and be assured that he will be a Jew, something that cannot happen at the Jewish Community Center in the United States. This exclusivity also serves to foment a feeling of togetherness within the Jewish community as they have a place to call their own not just a place where some Jews go.

I believe that Jewish American communities would gain a great deal if we were to borrow several of the practices that are carried out in the Mexican Jewish community and its institutions.
The Joys of Yiddish: Short Wave
by Irv Marder

When we were kids in the 30s, we tinkered with tiny crystal sets with 7 separate ear-phones? The thrill of hearing Cincinnati direct (was it KDKA?). Now in the age of transistors and computer chips the world opens up to you via short-wave radio.

With sets as small as a pack of cigarettes you're able to hear all the capitals of the world in English—static and commercial free! But the greatest joy for me is tuning in Kol Yisroel from Jerusalem which broadcasts in many languages. This includes Bucharian and Yemenite as well as Hebrew.

The Yiddish program comes on daily (not on Shabes or major holidays) at 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Pacific Standard Time and lasts a half hour; and what a shayne Yiddish it is; some world and local news (the weather in the Negev), some Klezmer music, bobe mayses, and commentary. Some days reception is quite good other days there is some static. For a transmission schedule send a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) to:

George Poppin
2654 17th Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94116

The schedule changes every three to four months. Get a short wave radio and enjoy. Maybe you'll be lucky enough on Thursdays to hear Shoshana wish you, "A zisine Shabes fun Yerushalayim".

For beginners, and even advanced listeners, the book recommended is Passport to World Band Radio—International Broadcasting Services. It may be ordered locally or send to Larry Magne International Broadcasting Service, Box 300-D Penn's Park, PA 18943. You can order by phone (you will speak only to a recorded message) 215-794-8252.

For beginners, remember that you will be dealing with Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) which is Coordinated Universal Time (UTC). This runs from 0100 Hours to 2400 Hours and based on the time at Greenwich, England.

There are four time zones in the 48 contiguous states. Midnight is 2400 Hours and the end of one day and the start of the next. In San Francisco you use Pacific Standard Time (PST), and 4 P.M. here would be midnight in Greenwich. New York uses Eastern Standard Time (EST) and is three hours later than San Francisco. Midnight in New York is 0500 Hours. Central Standard Time (CST) is one hour earlier than New York and Mountain Standard Time (MST) is two hours earlier than New York.

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Transmissions are targeted to North America and Western Europe. If I get too much static on a frequency, I just shift to another. It takes patience, but results are rewarding. I have a very small Sony (cost $120). It does a satisfactory job.

Editor’s note: Irv Marder was a semi-retired Optometrist in Redwood City, CA. Rich Stiebel has updated the article.

Kol Israel International has 15 minutes of news in Yiddish. See: www.intkolisrael.com/ Check out http://www.iba.org.il/index.aspx?clasto=contactUs&lang=English to see the email addresses where you could write to ask about Yiddish programming available either on the web or via short wave.

Look for Google “Yiddish Broadcasts” or “Yiddish on the Internet”.

P.S. If you can borrow a 2-meter handie talkie, you can listen in on the 9 AM talk net on 145.230 MHz, minus offset, 100 Hz PL. It’s on Mon. – Fri. at 9 AM from 1-2½ hours. The repeater is in Palo Alto, but HTs all over the Bay Area can hit it.
On April 21, 1910, Maxim Gorky wrote a letter to a writer, which reads as follows:

"My dear colleague,

Your book has been duly received. Having read it, I could not help laughing and crying. What a fantastic book! The translation seems to me to be quite well, and it was done out of love for the author though in some places, the difficulty to convey in Russian the sad and touching humour in the original is felt. I mean it is just felt.

I like this book very much. I would say again that this is a great book. It is full of noble, kind and sincere love for the people, which is so rare in the present day.

I sincerely wish your book success, and I have no doubt of it.

Shaking your hand.

M. Gorky

Capri, April 21, 1910"

The colleague who received this letter was Sholom Aleichem. The book in the letter was Sholom Aleichem’s famous work THE ADVENTURES OF MOTL, THE CANTOR’S SON whose Chinese version was published in Shanghai in 1957.

"The sad and touch humour" is an important feature of Sholom Aleichem’s works.

"The noble, kind and sincere love for the people” is the starting point of Sholom Aleichem’s creation.

As the translator of the Chinese version of THE ADVENTURES OF MOTL, THE CANTOR’S SON and the researcher of Sholom Aleichem, I would like to brief about Sholom Aleichem first and then go into his influence in Shanghai and in China as a whole.

Life and Creation of Sholom Aleichem.

Sholom Aleichem--that is to say, "Hello There!", which is the pen name of Sholom Nohumovich Rabinovich, means literally 'peace be upon you'. The phrase is used among Jews as a popular greeting. He was born in Ukraine on March 2, 1859 and died in New York on May 13, 1916. He was only 20 when his first book was published in 1879.

During his 35 years of writing, Sholom Aleichem worked very hard and wrote more that 30 volumes of literary works, which include novels, short stories, dramas, poems and commentaries. His works such as TEVYE THE DAIRYMAN, MENACHEM MENDL and THE ADVENTURE MOTL, THE CANTOR’S SON were written in the form of series of short stories.

These short stories were mainly written about people of no importance in humourous language. The force of his humour lies first and foremost in the fact that it has enabled those people to despite the evil and surmount hardships, and convinced them that truth would prevail.

In his speech at the tenth anniversary of the death of Sholom Aleichem, Russian writer Lunacharsky pointed out: "Sholom Aleichem’s laughter and that of others excited by him were a genuine one, a victorious one...Sholom Aleichem was one expressive of the humorous nature of the Jewish public...Together with his heroes, he frequently solved contradictions in life amidst laughter."

As a writer of humour, Sholom Aleichem, just as Dickens, Mark Twain and Chekhov, enjoys great prestige in the world of letters. His works have been translated into many languages and are very popular all over the world. He and his works were also introduced to Chinese readers long ago. The first writing about Sholom Aleichem was published right in Shanghai 73 years ago.

Shanghai, China, Sholom Aleichem was first introduced and in the greatest numbers.

In June, 1921, a report on Sholom Aleichem was carried in the literary supplement CONSCIOUSNESS of Minguo Daily. It reads: “Contemporary Jewish writer Aleichem is called Jewish Mark Twain because his works are very much like those of Mark Twain and their ideas are very similar to each other.” The report was written by Mao Dun, a great Chinese writer, under the pseudonym of “P Sheng” when he was only 25. He wrote to me to confirm this in 1979 in his later years.

Mao Dun was not only the first person to introduce Sholom Aleichem to China, but also the first to trans-late his works. His translation of Sholom Aleichem’s fiction, THE MAN FROM BUENOS AIRES appeared in the Fiction Monthly No. 10 of 1921 published by Shanghai Commercial Press.
Later on, it was incorporated into Fiction Monthly Series No. 54 THE ANTHOLOGY OF NEW JEWISH FICTIONS (1925), and then into Collection of Mao Dun’s Translation of Short Stories entitled SNOWMAN published by Shanghai Kaiming Publishing House. (First edition appeared in 1928, and by 1931, the book reached its third edition.)

During the following years, on the initiative of Mao Dun, Sholom Aleichem’s works were translated into Chinese and spread far and wide in China.

The late famous writer and translator Lu Yan made great contributions in this field. He began to translate Sholom Aleichem’s fiction from Esperanto into Chinese quite long ago, and his translations of Sholom Aleichem’s CRABCHIK and MIRACLE HASHONO RABO (THE SLOWPOKE EXPRESS) were published in Eastern Miscellany in Shanghai in 1924 and 1925 respectively. In 1926, Lu Yan translated THE SELECTED JEWISH STORIES with great enthusiasm, which was published by Shanghai Kaiming Publishing House. To meet the demands of the readers, the second edition of the Collection was brought out in 1927 with a fine cover of new design. Six pieces of Sholom Aleichem’s works were included in the Collection, which made up more than a half of the total.

After that, more translations of Sholom Aleichem’s works appeared from time to time in Shanghai and the rest of China. The veteran writer Lou Shiyi translated the short story THREE LITTLE HEADS which Sholom Aleichem had written for children. The translation was first published in the Sea Wind Weekly of 1929 in Shanghai and then included in Selections from Rising World Literatures entitled THE BRIDGE brought out by Literature Publishing House in the same year. At least three Chinese versions of THREE LITTLE HEADS have appeared in China.

Almost at the same time when the BRIDGE was published, Zhou Zuoren’s translations of Sholom Aleichem’s two short stories A PITY FOR THE LIVING and PASSOVER IN A VILLAGE together with the translator’s very long postscript appeared in the Fifth Volume of Yushi in 1929, a weekly published under the direction and editorship of Lu Xun.

In the 1930’s the famous translator Fu Dughua published his translation of one of Sholom Aleichem’s short stories in Life Publishing House in Shanghai and included it in his Collection of Translated Short Stories entitled OUTLAWED which was published by Shanghai Commercial Press.

In 1947, Shanghai Cultivation Publishing House republished Sholom Aleichem’s short stories under the title of THE HAPPIEST MAN IN ALL KODNY translated by Liu Wugou, the daughter of the famous poet Liu Yazi. The first edition of the collection had been printed in Guilin during the War of Resistance against Japan. It was the first book of selected works of Sholom Aleichem ever published in China.

There was a thing worth mentioning in the 1940’s. The Jewish friends coming to Shanghai as refugees during World War II published Sholom Aleichem’s works and wrote articles about him in Russian. I have two books in my library: Sholom Aleichem’s THE RAILROAD STORIES, TALES OF A COMMERCIAL TRAVELER Published by Gong Publishing House and JEWISH WRITERS published by Jewish Publishing House in 1942. The first piece in the second book is a 28-page long treatise on Sholom Aleichem under the title of SHOLOM ALEICHEM--PEOPLE’S TALENT. There might be other books not yet discovered. The fact that the Jewish friends tried their best to get Sholom Aleichem’s works published in spite of their hardships and difficulties in exile shows how deeply the people loved their writer.

After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, efforts to introduce Sholom Aleichem gained new momentum. There was enormous publicity on Sholom Aleichem. In 1959, while the people of various countries were marking the centenary of the birth of Sholom Aleichem, solemn meetings were held in Beijing and Shanghai to commemorate this outstanding writer. At the meeting in Shanghai, I spoke on the life and creation of Sholom Aleichem. I held an exhibition of Sholom Aleichem’s works and related materials from my collection. Newspapers and magazines like People’s Daily (Beijing), The World Literature (Beijing), Guangming Daily (Beijing), the Liberation Daily (Shanghai), Wenhui Daily (Beijing), Children’s Epoch (Shanghai), Academic Journal of Zhongshan University (Guangzhou) carried articles or translated works of Sholom Aleichem.

Chinese Versions of Sholom Aleichem’s Works.

TEVYE THE DAIRYMAN came out in Shanghai in 1964 and the second edition consisting of 42,000 copies was printed in 1983.

Continued on next page
THE ADVENTURES OF MOTL THE CANTOR’S SON was published by Shanghai Children Publishing House in 1957 and republished once again in 1982 with a circulation of 36,500. The first edition of MENACHEM MENDEL which had 70,000 copies was brought out by Jiangxi Publishing House in 1980. The autobiographical novel of Sholom Aleichem BACK FROM THE FAIR and the novel WANDERING STARS have also been translated into Chinese in full.

Moreover, several collections of Sholom Aleichem’s short stories have appeared, such as; SELECTED SHORT STORIES OF SHOLOM ALEICHEM, TEVYE BLOWS A SMALL FORTUNE, THE OLD COUNTRY, etc.

Sholom Aleichem in Varied Forms.

Since 1980’s, Sholom Aleichem’s works have been included in various collection and reference books with a large circulation. For example, TRAPEZA and THE PENKNIFE have been entered in translation series published by Shanghai Publishing House. THE PENKNIFE has also been included in Children’s Library-The World Children’s Stories. I AM WELL, I AM ORPHAN has been made an entry in the Dictionary of Foreign Short Stories for Appreciation and was broadcast more than once by Shanghai Broadcasting Station in the Appreciation of Literature Program.

The lexicographical work SEA OF WORDS, a medium sized Chinese dictionary compiled in Shanghai, has a special entry of Sholom Aleichem. The dictionary has a circulation of 20 million and is almost an indispensable reference tool for families of culture in China. The above work has been mostly carried out in Shanghai and I have also played my humble part.

I was just a young man when I began to study Sholom Aleichem. How time flies! Now, I have already become an old man with grey hair. It is my great pleasure, however, to introduce in my declining years directly to our Jewish friends the initial results in my study of Sholom Aleichem, especially in the memorable year of the 135th anniversary of the birth of the writer. I am eagerly looking forward to the opportunities to give a full presentation of Sholom Aleichem’s influence in China to more Jewish friends and show them my collections of Chinese translations of Sholom Aleichem’s works and other materials I have about him.
California was formed in 2000 (and incorporated in 2003) to celebrate klezmer music and Yiddish culture in the San Francisco Bay Area. Our focus is on the cultural heritage of Eastern European Jewry, as embodied in its music, literature, and the arts. KlezCalifornia events enable people of all ages to engage actively and intensely with Yiddish culture — participating, not just watching others perform as a passive audience.

When we formed, we called ourselves “KlezCalifornia” as a “tip of the hat” to KlezKamp, the “mother” of Yiddish Culture “camps”, and a model we were hoping to replicate in Northern California. It also seemed a good name because we believed that klezmer music would be many people’s entrée into Yiddish culture. Now, a decade later, Yiddish culture is attractive directly to people of all ages and many interests.

No-one else does what we do:

- **Yiddish Culture Festivals**, where hundreds get together here in the Bay Area to enjoy participatory Yiddish and klezmer workshops, classes, and music. In 2003 and 2004, we held six-day festivals at the Jewish Community High School of the Bay. Subsequently, we held Saturday evening through Sunday late afternoon festivals at Jewish Community Centers in the East Bay in 2005, Palo Alto in 2006, and San Francisco in 2007, and a three-day festival in Palo Alto in 2010. We also produced afternoon festivals in West Marin in 2007; and with five East Bay congregations on December 25 in 2007 and 2008. Our events have grown from 120 participants at first to 450 in February 2010.

- A colorful monthly newsletter is sent to more than 1,500 subscribers, with the only region-wide calendar of events covering all aspects of Yiddish culture and klezmer music.

- Tastes of Yiddish Culture such as Yiddish sing-alongs, dance parties, Yiddish conversation salons, master classes for musicians, and klezmer jams, which engage smaller groups of people of all ages and backgrounds for several hours.

- KlezCalifornia Gele* Pages (*yellow), 40-page directory of classes, choruses, klezmer bands, singers, lecturers, dance leaders, book sellers, museums, and more that is invaluable to those searching for Yiddish cultural resources in the Bay Area.

KlezCalifornia’s vision is of a San Francisco Bay Area in which:

- Yiddish culture is part of the lives of an increasing number of individuals and families who engage in Yiddish language arts, klezmer music, Yiddish song and dance, and enjoy East European Jewish food.

- Yiddish cultural activities are regularly part of community centers, synagogues, and ethnic/folk music and dance gatherings.

- Klezmer music is presented regularly in community arts venues and considered one element of world music.

- Yiddish cultural events attract people of all ages, from all parts of the region and many ethnic groups.

- A growing number of people steeped in Yiddish culture are enthusiastically teaching it.

- Bay Area Jews who do not find fulfillment through religious activities have meaningful Jewish experiences via encounters with Yiddish culture.

- Jewish youth are introduced to their Yiddish heritage through cultural and religious education.

- KlezCalifornia continues to play a significant role in building a vibrant region-wide community to promote and celebrate Yiddish culture.

KlezCalifornia has an expansive vision and a track record of successful events. We operate with a 12-member Board of Directors, 19-member Advisory Council, dozens of committed volunteers, and a part-time executive director. We welcome your involvement. Become a member simply by subscribing to our free e-newsletter at www.klezcalifornia.org.

Come celebrate Yiddish culture at our next Festival in Santa Rosa on February 27, 2011, in conjunction with JCC Sonoma County’s Simcha Sunday.
The League for Yiddish, Inc., was founded in 1979 by Yiddish linguist and professor Dr. Mordkhe Schaechter to provide organizational support for the modernization, standardization and use of the Yiddish language. With members on six continents, the League is one of a few organizations in today’s Yiddish cultural and linguistic world that conducts its activities almost entirely in Yiddish.

Mission Statement
The goals of the League for Yiddish include:
• to encourage people to speak Yiddish in their everyday life;
• to enhance Yiddish as a living language, in and outside the Yiddish-speaking community;
• to promote the modernization of Yiddish.

How do we accomplish these goals?
• We publish Afn Shvel, under the editorship of Dr. Sheva Zucker. Now in its 65th year, the magazine features articles of Yiddish cultural, literary, linguistic, and communal interest, with a beautiful, modern layout, high-resolution photos, and extensive glossaries to help newer readers. Its advisory board includes the poets Beyle Schaechter-Gottesman (NY), Itche Goldberg (New Jersey), Simkhe Simchovitch (Toronto), as well as the linguistic and literary scholars Paul (Hershl) Glasser (NY) and Sholem Lurie (Merhavia, Israel).
• We are engaged in a film project, A Velt mit veltelekh (Worlds within a World), that records interviews with Yiddish writers. The films are directed and edited by Josh Waletzky, director and editor of Image before My Eyes and Partisans of Vilna. Josh is the recipient of the Silver Ducat at the Mannheim International Film Festival for Image and First Prize at the Anthropos International Film Festival for Partisans. Thus far we have filmed poet/songwriter Beyle Schaechter-Gottesman, literary critic/editor/educator Itche Goldberg, and writer/painter Yonia Fain. The interviews are in Yiddish with English subtitles.
• We plan and conduct special public programs on Yiddish cultural and literary topics.

Our publications include:

Textbooks


Linguistics and Terminology


Literature and Music


Beyle Schaechter-Gottesman, Zumerteg (twenty original songs with music, English transliteration and translation), 1990; second edition, published jointly with the Congress for Jewish Culture, 1994 (accompanying tape and/or CD available).


Currently in the planning stages are:
• Graded readers for students at various levels, structured by the level of vocabulary and the difficulty of grammatical construction;
• A series of video-recordings illustrating the regional varieties of spoken Yiddish;
• Audio-recordings of a series of everyday Yiddish conversations on specific topics

Dr. Sheva Zucker, professor of Yiddish, author of Yiddish educational materials, and translator, is executive director of the League for Yiddish and editor-in-chief of its publication Afn Shvel.
Yiddishkayt

Yiddishkayt strives to ensure the survival of the Yiddish language, culture and history. With language education, cultural programs, large-scale events, partnerships, and online communications, Yiddishkayt promotes and Yiddish as a vital part of the mosaic of Los Angeles cultures.

Since 1995, we have embraced the multicultural richness of Los Angeles to strengthen consciousness — and foster the growth — Yiddish, connecting generations with their priceless cultural heritage. Yiddishkayt charts a new way for Yiddish to evolve and adapt in the twenty-first century.

Named the “spearhead” of the Los Angeles Yiddish Revival by the Jewish Federation’s “Mosaic Magazine”, Yiddishkayt celebrates Yiddish within the framework of contemporary multiculturalism. Since 2008, Yiddishkayt has twice been named one of the nation’s 50 most groundbreaking Jewish nonprofits for “bringing Yiddish culture into mainstream consciousness” and “breaking new ground in Los Angeles and forging new forms of intercultural encounter and engagement” by Slingshot, the resource guide for Jewish innovation. Yiddishkayt is the largest organization of its type west of the Hudson River.

Inspired by contemporary artists working within Yiddish cultural themes, cultural festival producer Aaron Paley organized a one-day festival of Yiddish culture that attracted close to 6,000 people in 1995, launching Yiddishkayt as an organization. Yiddishkayt has grown into a full-service nonprofit organization comprised of large and small cultural programming, community development and outreach, major educational programs, and a web presence reaching tens of thousands.

We offer a Yiddish language education program, two four-month fellowships dedicated to Yiddish culture, diverse artistic and cultural offerings, large-scale events and online communications at all levels of Yiddish language, history and culture.

Sign up for Yiddishkayt’s monthly newsletter at: www.yiddishkayt.org and click on ‘newsletter’ on the left side, or e-mail: info@yiddishkayt.org.

Find us at facebook.com/yiddishkayt or on Twitter (@yiddishkayt) or phone (213) 389-8880

3780 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1000
Los Angeles, California 90010

The Yiddish Book Center
By Aaron Lansky

Since its founding in 1980, the Yiddish Book Center has recovered one million Yiddish volumes and made most available online, free of charge, at www.yiddishbooks.org.

In the past 18 months these books have been downloaded an astonishing 100,000 times — by scholars, readers and, increasingly, by young people who, growing up in a multicultural world, are eager to explore this vast literature and the culture it represents. Thirty years ago, Yiddish literature was in danger of extinction; today it’s the most accessible on earth.

While we continue to rescue and distribute Yiddish books, our focus is shifting increasingly to education: drawing on the books we’ve saved (and their progeny in English and other languages) to train a new generation of well informed Jewish teachers, scholars, and cultural leaders and activists.

Our flagship programs include a highly competitive, year-long Fellows Program for college graduates, and the seven-week Steiner Summer Program. We encourage our fellows and students to learn by doing; they play a central role in a wide range of initiatives, including oral history, ethnography, the development of online Yiddish language resources, translation, exhibitions, campus outreach, a magazine and other publications, a lively web site, and an annual Yiddish Arts Festival.

In 2009 we opened the Kaplen Family Building: a $7-million addition that doubles the size of our Amherst, MA “shtetl” with a fully-equipped student center, a performance hall, and a state-of-the-art book repository. Our non-profit organization is supported by 20,000 members worldwide, and participation by young people has never been greater.

The contact information for the Yiddish Book Center is:

The Yiddish Book Center
Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Building
1021 West Street
Amherst, MA 01002

Telephone: 413-256-4900
Fax: 413-256-4700
International Association of Yiddish Clubs (IAYC) in Action!
by Philip Fishl Kutner

IAYC is an organization of local groups, and individuals who live far away from an organized Yiddish group. As such, its primary purpose is to serve the needs of the “clubs” and folks in their striving to foster, learn and enjoy our mame-loshn. A close secondary goal is to assist other Yiddish organizations in promoting common goals. IAYC’s motto is, “Cooperation is the basis of success.”

IAYC Conferences

By holding each of these meetings at a different location, IAYC has been able to foster and service a broader group of members and to offer programming, throughout the United States and in Canada. This year’s conference will be the 14th and will be at the Sheraton Novi in Novi, Michigan, an upscale Detroit suburb.

Previous Midwestern conferences were held in Milwaukee (WI), Minneapolis (MN), and Warrensville Heights (OH). IAYC’s first California conference was in Los Angeles at UCLA’s International Conference Center and the site of the last two conferences were in La Jolla (San Diego suburb) and (Millbrae (San Francisco suburb). The first conference (pre-formation) and two others were held in different locations in Maryland. Teaneck (NJ), Miami (FL), Fairfield (CT) and Toronto, Canada were the other sites. Conference sites have been at hotels, universities and conference centers.

Triennial Yiddish Programming Materials

Three times a year Troim Katz Handler and her committee select books, CDs, DVDs, stories and Yiddish learning materials. These have been in combinations of Yiddish, English and Romanization (transliteration). The upcoming mailing uses all three aforementioned formats.

In addition to the president’s message, conference registration form, IAYC renewal form, the package will have Blume Lempel’s NIT-DERZUNGENE GEZANGEN (Taken from Yidish Proze un Lider compiled by Leah Robinson for the Oxford, England, Summer Yiddish program of 1988), Transliteration by Troim Katz Handler and the original Yiddish (Hebrew oysyes), encyclopedia entry with 1959 photo, Troim’s Blume Lempel poem from her own book and a 1992 photo.

Der Bay

In this hardcopy, in the abbreviated edition online, and at the website (www.derbay.org) IAYC news reaches out to every state and in 35 countries. While we ask for a contribution to support the work of Der Bay, overseas readers are encouraged to sign up for the abbreviated, free edition on the homepage.

Website resources include lists of transliterated words, Yid-Eng and Eng-Yid lists of Yiddish organizations, teachers, translators, klezmer bands, and Der Internatsionaler Kalendar.
This is the story of our family’s “exodus” from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and our adaptation to a new life in Canada. We hope that this story will help North Americans in general, and the Jewish population in particular, to better understand the problems which the immigrants from the FSU have been experiencing during their first years in a new country. By the same token, we hope that this story will facilitate the difficult adaptation period for new arrivals from the FSU and will help them to better understand the dilemmas that their hosts may face.

There has always been a strong prejudice against Jewish people in Russia. This has been a tradition dating way back in time which carried over into the “new” Soviet state and resulted in special problems for the Jewish people, at one and the same time maintaining the discrimination against them yet keeping them alive as a people, always there as potential scapegoats, just in case they were needed.

From the point of view of an immigrant, it is difficult enough to learn and adjust to the life in a new country when the place you come from has a similar political tradition: then you only have to struggle with matters of language, local habits and customs, etc. But when you also have to come to grips with great differences in political habits and culture, as was our case in coming from the tradition of oppression of the FSU, then the adjustments are even more shocking. We knew that we were heading toward “freedom” when we left the FSU for Canada, but learning what that meant in practical everyday terms was a shock.

There is an old, partly a “joke”, partly a true story from my old country, about one man who left Russia and wrote back to his relatives, “You are very lucky that you don’t know how unlucky you are”.

Sixteen years ago, in spite of tremendous difficulties and hardships, we left Russia and came to Canada. This fact, of leaving a country of oppression, brutal force and denial of basic human rights, was a miracle.

Just by applying to leave, we put our well-beings, careers and even our lives on the line. But, deep in our hearts, we knew that G-d would answer our prayers and would take us out from a country of spiritual bondage and with his right hand bring us to freedom.

Within our first two or three months in Canada, we began to realize how sweet this world of freedom is. We dreamed along with our parents and grandparents, that one day our children would be able to learn the language of our ancestors, to pray and openly practice the Jewish religion and because of G-d, this dream came true.

In his memories, my husband Isaac goes quite a few years back and remembers his Bar Mitzvah.

One day Isaac’s father secretly brought a Russian transliteration of the prayer Shema and Brachot and asked him to learn them by heart. He also begged Isaac not to tell anybody in school or his neighbors about it. At that time, if the authorities had found out about this “Zionist propaganda”, Isaac’s father would have faced imprisonment or, in the best scenario, lost his job. Isaac learned those prayers and on the Bar Mitzvah day, early in the morning, his father took him to shul.

In Kishinev, a city of half a million people, the Jewish population was, at that time, about 100,000. However, the only shul in the city was in a tiny, worn out hut, in a dangerous, dirty neighborhood of the city. Kishinev, the capital of Moldova, was part of the FSU from 1940 to 1989. Now it is the capital of an independent country.

Only some old men gathered twice a day for prayers there in this shul. On the morning of the Bar Mitzvah, only Isaac’s very close relatives came to the shul. For the first time in his life, Isaac was taught how to put on t’filin—then he was called to the Torah for an Aliya. After the Aliya, there were tears of joy and also of sorrow in his parents’ eyes. They brought along some vodka and sponge cake and everybody participated in a little celebration. Everybody wished them Mazel Tov and that was it. Isaac had this indescribable feeling of belonging to the Jewish people, a feeling which has never left him.

Then I vividly remember our wedding Chuppah. Again secretly, we gathered on Sunday afternoon
in Isaac's elder sister's house and again only our close relatives came. Kishinev’s elderly Rabbi Cogan, of blessed memory, provided a moving ceremony.

When our son was born, we had a tremendous problem to find a Mohel, to fulfill the mitzvah of Brit Milah and again, secretly, we did it in Isaac parents’ home. We always managed to have matzah for Pesach, we fasted on Yom Kippur and tried to be as close to the shul as possible on the day of Yom Kippur, in a place where we couldn't be spotted by KGB agents. We celebrated Rosh Hashanah, Simhat Torah and all the other Jewish holidays. As children, we didn't know exactly what all of these holidays were about, but very deep in our hearts, we felt the presence of G-d and later with a strong determination, we kept the traditions and the light of Yiddishkeit alive. This feeling of Jewish identity helped us to more easily integrate into the Ottawa Jewish community.

When we were leaving Russia, we will never forget how one of the KGB border guards told us 'Don’t think, you traitors, that we won't get you. Pretty soon we will be all over the globe and we will show you what freedom is all about.’ The collapse of the Soviet Union and the exodus of many of the Jews to Israel and to other places have shown us what freedom is really about. It is the time that we don't have to ask others for our rights to exist, to emigrate or even to breathe. Thanks to G-d, our destiny is in our own hands.

I also remember when we took a taxi to get Isaac’s parents to the office, in Russia, where they had to formally grant permission to us to leave the country. This was one of the many bureaucratic obstacles set up by authorities to hinder the immigration process. Isaac's mother, of blessed memory, was sitting in the back seat. When I turned my head, I saw her quietly crying and she told Isaac: “You know how much your father and I love you, your wife and especially your children. I know that I am going to sign now my own death sentence, but I have to do it. You have an obligation, with G-d’s help, to get out and save your children, save their souls and at any cost, to bring them up Jewish.” Isaac parents’ dream has been fulfilled.

On the evening of October 27, 1980, we arrived in Ottawa. We didn’t know anybody, we did not have any family or friends and we couldn’t speak English. We met a lot of people in Ottawa, volunteers of JFS, who gave us moral support and encouragement in the most difficult period of our adaptation to a new life. Some of them have treated us as a part of their families, and to this day they invite us for family simchas or celebrations of Jewish holidays. We are very thankful to them and will never forget what they have done for us.

We, as a family, gradually built a very special and strong relationship with the Jewish Community of Ottawa at large, and with Jewish Family Services in particular. Upon our arrival, we visited the JFS, met with the settlement worker and were introduced to the former Director, Elaine Rabin. Elaine and her husband Eli subsequently played a very special role in our lives.

JFS helped us to get in touch with people in the community, helped us to find an apartment, to start our 8 year-old son, Sam, in Jewish school and our two year-old daughter Paulina in kindergarten. The Canadian government sponsored our ESL courses. Later on, people helped us to understand that we ourselves are in charge of our lives. Coming out of the FSU, we had to learn from scratch how to live our lives in a free society without carrying passports, permits for residence, fear of KGB, any government control, etc. For example, upon arrival in Ottawa, which was chosen for us by a counselor in the Canadian embassy Rome, our friend who had left the FSU a year earlier us and had settled in Toronto, came to visit us. Out of the blue he said if you want, you can move right now to Toronto and we’ll be together. We were shocked. We couldn't believe that we could freely move to another city. We were also very fortunate after approximately 4 months to find jobs in our fields of education and experience.

For the last number of years, I have been working for Ottawa JFS as an accountant and later as settlement counselor. I also try my best to help my colleagues involved in settlement and integration of the 4th wave of immigrants. A service that I feel is particularly important is the job placement that our agency is involved with. This entails helping to match newcomers with suitable jobs. I am proud to report that our agency helped 50 new Canadians find employment in 1996.

For the last 5 years our agency settled on average 100 families per year. With the help of our volunteers our agency provides: ESL classes in the homes of new arrivals, seniors club activities, workshops and mentoring programs for job ready immigrants, hosting New Canadians for holidays, communal seders and cultural events.
The agency believes that for successful integration into the (Jewish) community to occur it must include finding an adequate job to attain self-sufficiency and develop the ability to feel comfortable within the Jewish community.

If the physical needs are met through a Jewish vehicle, the new immigrant will have the opportunity to become a good Jewish citizen. In this light, the agency will create in partnership with the Jewish community and secular communities, job opportunities for new arrivals, and also is support for a short time for some financial assistance and a food bank that is kosher and affiliated with a synagogue. The social context is important. It is much easier to relate to other non-Jewish immigrants from the FSU than to the alien Jewish culture of Canada. It requires real effort on part of the local Jewish community.

I realize that from a modest organization primarily serving seniors and immigrants the JFS grew into a complex and sophisticated agency delivering a myriad of services to the Jewish Community. Not only has our clientele grown but the original staff of three in 1980 has expanded to the current staff of sixteen.

As a family, we have been trying our best to pay back to the community by participating in volunteer activities, such as inviting new immigrants to our house, by helping to organize a club for senior immigrants, by providing entertainment in old age homes, by delivering Passover baskets to new arrivals from the East European countries, by giving to charities, etc.

My husband Isaac learned Yiddish songs from his parents and now he sings them along with Hebrew, English and Russian songs. This brings a lot of joy to everybody especially to the elderly Canadians and senior people who arrive from the FSU and who understand the “Mama loshen”. For us it is tremendously important to involve our own children also in helping others and those less advantaged.

There is a saying ”If somebody loses money, he has lost nothing. If somebody loses health, G-d forbid, he has lost half. But if somebody loses spirit and hope, he has lost everything.” We hope that our children will pick up the torch of Yiddishkayt from us and carry it to the next generation with determination, perseverance, strong convictions and that always, they will be proud to proclaim ”Ikh bin a Yid” (I am a Jew).
Memories of My Childhood:
on Rue De Bullion
By Doris Resnik

Fifty-two years have gone by and it is only now that I can give a name, “Edwardian” to the architecture, of the tenement where I had lived during my childhood days. I lived there with my parents, my grandmother and two female boarders. In today’s terminology, it would be known as a "pied a terre".

Every few years I return to visit my old neighbourhood, on De Bullion St. between Napoleon and Duluth, never attempting to gain entrance into the house where I spent "mayne kindershie yorn" (my childhood). During my last visit, I saw an "a louer", (for rent) sign in the window and a light in the passage, (now known as the vestibule).

On one of these visits a man approached and identified himself as the superintendent of the building, asking if I was interested in renting the apartment at a very low rent of $600.00 per month. When I lived in that hovel the rent was only $15.00 per month including cockroaches, and four-legged boarders, mice and rats that lived in our midst rent free. When I explained my reason for wanting to see the house, the friendly superintendent graciously opened the door allowing me once again to enter.

What faced me was a tiny little house that seemed much larger to me than when I had lived there. To my right was the double parlour. The back parlour, which had been my grandmother's bedroom, had a built-in bath in what probably had been a closet at some time in the past.

In her room she crocheted the forms of dolls and stuffed them with rags. Those dolls were my toys, with one other toy that my father had bought me, a washbasin with a scrub board to prepare me for my future--as a wife and mother. In the bathtub my grandmother made pillows with goose feathers and put in two brand new shiny pennies that was supposed to bring good luck.

The front room of my childhood home was the parlour that was rented to two women who slept on a "longe" the g is pronounced like g in gin, (what is today known as a hide-a-bed). I used to hide there in order to drink my baby bottle of milk. It was behind the door that led into the parlor (age six).

My mother didn't want to upset my healthy eating habits nor did she have the heart to wean me off the bottle. On a trip to New York to visit my aunt, mother's sister, who would not allow me into her home with the baby bottle, I sneaked a sip while walking up the stairs to her house. She pulled the bottle away from me and handed me a bottle of Coke instead. Needless to say, the rest is history. I drank Coke until two months ago when I switched to Club Soda, in a glass, not in a bottle.

The parlour also brought back memories of the weddings of the boarders. Shloyme chose Mindel as his wife because he fell in love with her breasts that were so large that they turned the corner before she did. Her sister Yenta fell madly in love with Mendl who never worked a day in his life. She worked in a factory and gladly supported the "leydik geeyer" (idler). I never heard him say a word to her. He spoke with his hands and his eyes and she understood what he meant.

Further down the passage was the kitchen alongside another closet--two by four that contained the toilet, a very colourful room indeed. The walls were full of holes and were covered with outdated calendars. The toilet tissue was yellow and red, papers that had covered fruit when the fruit was shipped to Warshaw's fruit store on Main St, where all the women went to buy damaged fruit and vegetables late Sunday night.

On Thursday the ladies picked up lung, free of charge, for their cats, in the store next door which was the kosher butcher shop. I know that you can guess who ate the lung that was turned into a delicious sweet and sour stew.

The kitchen, with the one sink in the house, where hot water was available only during the winter months when the stove was on and the boiler was hot, was where my parents entertained their guests who consisted of shkheynim (neighbours), "landsrayt" (people who lived in the same village in The Ukraine as my parents) and shifshvester and shifbrider" (passengers who sailed on the same ship with my parents to Halifax from Rotterdam, Holland, in 1930.)

They drank tea with sliced lemon while holding sugar cubes in their mouths. These folks didn't have to worry about tooth decay---they all wore
dentures. They discussed politics, spoke about "di alte heym" (their old home in the village) with tears in their eyes, because they had left family members in Europe and knew they would never see them again.

In that little kitchen we celebrated holidays with our family occasionally visiting from New York. The women would sleep four in a bed in the bedrooms and the men would sleep on chairs in the kitchen.

When my mother wasn't working long hours in the sweat shop or sewing stuff that she brought home from the factory to earn extra money, she was washing clothes on a scrub board in the bath tub, cleaning the house, or cooking and baking. She made the best kishka (intestines from a cow, stuffed with a mixture of flour, eggs, shmalz, (chicken fat) and seasonings), heldzla, (skin from the chicken's neck stuffed with the same ingredients as the intestines), pitsha, (a type of Jewish Jello made with broth from the meat on shank bones mixed with lots of garlic, pieces of meat and egg slices.) Yummy!

Would you trade a tasteless salt-free tofu salad with spinach and bean sprouts for a piece of pitsha with a slice of homemade khale, knowing the high cholesterol count? I would! My mother also made potato and cherry varenyikes, kasha, potato knishes, kreplakh, pirogis, blintzes, etc, etc. These delicacies don't need any translations as today they are international treats in our society.

My mother constantly said to me "Ess" (eat) you'll be strong when you grow up. Now as I eat my salt-free salad with a piece of fish or chicken, the size of the center of my hand, I yearn for a few kasha knishes on the side as well as a bowl of chicken soup with eyelakh, (unhatched eggs) and home made "lokshn" (noodles).

Off the kitchen was a bedroom with a wall facing the outdoors, where icicles would form during the winter months. This was my parents' room, where I slept in a crib till I was almost eight. When my grandmother died and the boarders moved out, the back parlour became my bedroom.

During the hot summer, I would fill the bathtub almost half-full with water, put my pillow in the tub, and go to sleep. From the room off the kitchen I could see the shed through the window. It was an outdoor room that was used to store stuff and keep coal and wood for the stove that was supposed to heat the house during the winter. With the stove going full blast, living in that house during the winter was comparable to living out doors in a tent--FREEZING.

My father had an outdoor newspaper stand where he worked during the day. During the late night hours, when Montreal was in its heyday, he worked in an indoor stand, downstairs from The Beaver Club, not for fancy people, (nisht farfayn menshn).

My mother carried the wood and coal into the house at 5 am to start the stove that had died down during the night. She would do her morning chores, wake me, prepare my breakfast, and leave the house at 7 am to walk downtown to the sweat shop, where she worked as a finisher, in surroundings not fit for human beings.

My father walked me to school and then went on to open his newspaper stand, which was located on Sherbrooke, corner St. Denis, where I started working during the summer when I was eight years old.

When I look back on my childhood, which today would be considered highly unusual to say the least, I realize it is filled with sweet memories of my loving family, dear friends, and warm, friendly neighbours. The doors of our neighbours were always open for me as well as for the other children in the neighbourhood, who were left alone at a very young age because both parents had to work to make a living.

When I walked out of the house where I had spent my childhood, I felt as if I had come out of a theatre, knowing I would never see the actors again.

Editor's note: Doris Resnik is Chairperson of Mameh Loshn, an organization with members who are trying to keep Yiddish alive in Montreal, Canada as well as being the publicist for the Foundation of Yiddish Culture.

Her son Brahm is a political and business television journalist and her daughter Susan is a psychologist. Doris is the proud grandmother of four grandchildren who are attending university. In addition, she has a three-year-old granddaughter who is a brilliant nursery school student. Doris is absolutely certain, that one day this three-year-old granddaughter will become the very first Jewish, female Prime Minister of Canada.
New SFSU Course in Yiddish Culture

The San Francisco Bay Area branch of the Workmen’ s Circle/Arbeter Ring of Northern California has joined the Jewish Studies Department of San Francisco State University to announce a new course offering in Yiddish culture on the SFSU main campus, beginning Spring 2011.

The course, entitled “Yiddish History, Literature, and Society,” will introduce students to the literary and social background of Yiddish culture, including significant authors and poets such as Sholem Aleichem, I. Y. Peretz, and Kadya Molodowsky, and the relationship of this culture to Jewish and American history.

Yiddish language and its traditions, brought to America by East European immigrants, played a significant role in the development of the nation’ s social and artistic growth over the past hundred and fifty years. The course will be taught in English, using historic texts in translation.

Fred Astren, Chair of Jewish Studies at SFSU, proposed and designed the new course with other department faculty. A gift from the WC/AR will help finance this new offering, despite statewide budget reductions in the public university system. “I am excited about what this gift means for the Department of Jewish Studies at San Francisco State,” said Dr. Astren. “Over the years, we often have had requests from students for teaching on the subjects of Yiddish culture, language, literature, and history. Now, with this exemplary partnership between the University and The Workmen’s Circle/Arbeter Ring of Northern California, we are able to create a new course in this most important subject area. This is not only a welcome addition to the University curriculum, but a necessary and vital component of Jewish Studies. We are most grateful for this meaningful gift!”

Diana Scott, Chair of the Northern California Branch (#1054) of the national WC/AR, praised the new partnership. “One of our goals has been to keep Yiddish culture alive and renew it through education – to increase understanding of a language and traditions that have thrived in the arts. We are happy to support SFSU in these areas.”

“While the Bay Area is rich in Yiddish-rooted cultural offerings, including klezmer music, the contributions of secular Yiddish writers, artists, labor organizers, and other social justice activists, has awaited rediscovery,” she observed. “Now, in this centennial anniversary year of the founding of the first secular Yiddish school [shule] in the United States, we are delighted that the new SFSU course will introduce more of this distinctive cultural legacy to a wider public.”

The new course, JS 530, will be offered on the main SFSU campus on Monday evenings in the Spring 2011 term. Enrollment is open to all SFSU students and to non-matriculating community members who arrange to study through SFSU College of Extended Learning’ s (CEL’ s) Open University, Eldercollege, or the Over 60 Degree Program.

For more course information contact: Fred Astren at 415-338-6075 or Diana Scott at 415-566-7235. For registration, contact: www.sfsu.cel.edu, e-mail sfscel@sfsu.edu, or call 415-405-7700.

Jazz Jews Radio Hour
Mike Gerber - info@jazzjews.com

I’m Mike Gerber, the London-based author of the book Jazz Jews, as a result of which I’ve been asked to host a regular Jazz Jews show on UK Jazz Radio, an Internet station that is only one year old and already has more than 600,000 listeners worldwide because it is just about the best, most widest-ranging jazz station out there. My Jazz Jews hour adds to the mix, so I’m contacting Jewish press and other organizations that might be interested in publicizing this exciting development.

My show can be heard at any time, anywhere in the world, via the station’s “Listen Again?” at: http://www.ukjazzradio.com/ListenAgain.html

It features Jewish jazz fusions, klezmer and other “rootsy” Jewish music, jazz standards based on music by the great Jewish-American songwriters, and Israeli jazz. Jews have figured in the history of jazz, and blues, both as musicians and facilitators, so my show also celebrates that contribution. I am a writer, journalist, broadcaster and a member of the National Union of Journalists (UK)

Listeners access the shows via the UK Jazz Radio website at www.jazzradio.com, or on an Internet radio set, or on their cellphone/mobile phone.

Information about my show and me is at: http://www.ukjazzradio.com/MikeGerber.html, and information about my book’s website at: www.jazzjews.com
New at Der Bay
By Fishl

Now that Der Bay has entered its third decade, it’s essential that it not fall back on just “the tried and true”, but open new vistas to meet a changing and increased readership—online and overseas.

YDate is the alternative to JDate. Just being Jewish is not enough! It will be the “Yiddish Connection.” Privacy is of the utmost concern, so no information will be placed on the website. The announcements will appear only in these hardcopies. The parties themselves will exchange Information by letter, phone, or e-mail. If you wish complete anonymity, you can take out a post-office box or have an email address that does not contain your name. Likewise it can be removed and a new one inserted without the two being connected.

Who should send in requests? It may be for yourself, daughter/son or granddaughter/grandson.

What are the requirements to be registered for this free dating service? The registrant must either know some Yiddish or be willing to learn.

How is this different from the Briv Fraynd (Pen Pal) list that Der Bay already has with over 460 listings? Briv Fraynd are matched by Fishl based on Yiddish proficiency and hobbies. It has nothing to do with age, geographical location or gender.

Your Letter of Application must not contain YOUR real name, or personal information—only YOUR wishlist of interests, age, location, gender of the lucky person and how you can be contacted.

You may hear from Der Bay readers for themselves or from those who wish to be a shadkhn for a friend or family member.

Abuse of this free service will automatically result in suspension. Be assured that the highest level of discretion will be used in the listings as well taking all means to guarantee privacy.

In such cases where this leads to a shidakh, and you wish to have an announcement in Der Bay, we would be honored to share in this blessing.

So, don’t hesitate, don’t be embarrassed, send in your request for that Mr. or Ms. Perfect. All proper information will be included. Do not send in any of your mayles—personal info will not be published.

Great Yiddish Websites for Clubs
By Fishl

While there are hundreds of Yiddish-related websites many list only local events, products, or services. To be included in this partial list, the site must have content that can be useful for club programming or learning Yiddish—and be free. Check the full list at www.derbay.org/links.html

Ari Davidow’s Klezmer Shack - #1 Klezmer site http://www.klezmershack.com/index.html
Copenhagen Yiddish Study Circle - Very good http://sites.google.com/site/kopjikinternational/
*Der Bavebter Yid - Higher level www.cs.uky.edu/~raphael/bavebter/index.html
Der Bay – www.derbay.org
Der Yidisher Tam Tam - Paris, Yiddish Newsletter www.yiddishweb.com/tamtam.htm
Der Yidisher Alef-Beys - Yiddish alphabet www.hum.au.dk/engelsk/engsv/alefbeys.htm
Di Velt fun Yiddish - http://yiddish.haifa.ac.il/
*Di Yidishes Shraybmaschine - www.cs.uky.edu/~raphael/yiddish/makeyiddish.html
EPYC - http://epyc.yivo.org/home.php
Forverts - http://yiddish.forward.com/
Robert & Molly Freedman Jewish Sound Archive http://sceti.library.upenn.edu/freedman/
In Moyl Arayn - http://inmolaraan.blogspot.com/
Internet Archives - www.archive.org/details/ nationalyiddishbookcenter
Jiddishe - www.jiddischkurs.org/
League for Yiddish - www.leagueforjewish.org/
Lebns Fragen - http://www.lebnsfragn.com/
Minneapolis Yiddish Vinkl – Great club site http://www.minneapolisyiddishvinkl.com/
Tanakh in Yiddish - Bible in Yiddish yiddish.haifa.ac.il/texts/yehoyesh/tanList.htm
Understanding Yiddish Information Processing http://www.uuyip.org/
Virtual Shtetl - www.ibiblio.org/yiddish/shtetl.html
Yiddish Dictionary - www.yiddishdictionary.co.il/
Yiddish Song of the Week – Worth Listening http://yiddishsong.wordpress.com/
Yidish Verterbukh afn web – Try it http://www.yiddishdictionaryonline.com/
Yiddish Word of he Week – Detailed use http://yiddishwordoftheweek.tumblr.com/
Yisroel Shtern Project - www.yisroelshtern.org/
YIVO Encyclopedia Jews in Eastern Europe http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/
International Association of Yiddish Clubs

14th Conference, August 26th–29th, 2011 Sheraton Detroit Novi, Novi, MI

“Yiddish ALIVE !!!”

A. REGISTRATION FORM:

Choose Option A or Any Combination of:  B, C, D, E
Breakfasts and Lunches are Dairy and/or Pareve, All Dinners Kosher-style, Glatt Kosher Dinners Available

[ ] A. FULL CONFERENCE = $350.00 Includes All Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner
[ ] OR FULL CONFERENCE = $380.00 With Glatt Kosher Dinners

[ ] B. Friday (D) = $80.00 or [ ] With Glatt Kosher Dinner = $90.00

[ ] C. Saturday (B L D) = $120.00 or [ ] With Glatt Kosher Dinner = $130.00

[ ] D. Sunday (B L D) = $120.00 or [ ] With Glatt Kosher Dinner = $130.00

[ ] E. Monday (B L) = $60.00

TOTAL CONFERENCE FEES ENCLOSED = $____________ (U.S. Dollars Only)

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: “IAYC 2011 Conference”

MAIL COMPLETED FORMS & CHECK TO: INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF YIDDISH CLUBS
P.O. Box 252314, West Bloomfield, Michigan 48325

[ ] Female    [ ] Male    [ ] Title:_____
Name:__________________________________

Additional Name You Would Like On Your Badge: __________________

Address ____________________________________________________________

City: ______________________________ State/Province: _______ ZIP: _______ Country: _______

Phone: ___________________ Cell: __________________ E-Mail: ________________

[ ] I Need A Roommate? _________ [ ] I Have Special Needs: ______________________

B. HOTEL: For Reservations call Sheraton Detroit Novi Hotel: 1-866-837-4180 (mention IAYC Conference)
Room Rates $89.00 plus taxes per night (double occupancy). Hotel Address: www.sheraton.com/detroitnovi

Stay Extra Days, No Increase In Rates: Rates valid for 3-days prior to & 3-days after conference.
Reservation Deadline – August 11, 2011

C. AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION: Metropolitan Airport Cars (www.metropolitanairportcars.com) See
Conference Web-Site for further information

D. POST-CONF. TOURS: Enjoy Dynamic Detroit! See Web-Site or call: Sharon Klein (248-338-3061)

E. QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? CONTACT:
Jerry Gerger (gerx33@comcast.com) or Larry Sabbath (lsabbath@ameritech.net)

F. CONF. WEB ADDRESS: www.derbay.org ->International Association of Yiddish Clubs ->Novi, Mi
Nu, vos tut men itst?
by Philip “Fishl“ Kutner

The 2011 New Year celebration has come and gone, Der Bay celebrated its 20th anniversary, we scouted the Boca Raton – Delray Beach, Florida area for a possible future IAYC conference site, and Stanford won the Orange Bowl game beating Virginia Tech. Nu, vos tut men itst?

Little did I know or dare dream, that when that baby girl, the little daughter, my young lady went down that marriage isle that it could get any better. To my surprise, when the eyniklekh came, it got even better.

So here I sit at my computer thinking, “What do I do now? How can it get any better? Is this the top of the mountain? Yes, the euphoria has settled down, I’m nursing a cold and it’s raining outside.

Mayne tayere fraynd, zog zhe mir, nu, vos tut men itst?
The Yiddish tshek
by Philip “Fishl” Kutner

Af eynglish it’s also a check. Mama said, “S’iz a modne vort.”

In English it has so many meanings.

He or she is someone from a European country.

If you want to be sure it’s okay, you … it out.

My grandson who is an ice hockey referee said, “Zeyde, that’s what you do to another hockey player on the ice.”

Then there is that mark you make when you want to show that something is right or finished.

It is a small crack.

In chess it’s an attack on the opponent’s king.

It’s a bill in a restaurant.

What you do when deciding not to start the betting in poker.

To hand your coat to someone to hold when you go into a restaurant.

Of course there’s that game of checkers.

You can even have a checkered pattern.

Now if you don’t live in the U.S, you have to spell it with a “qu”.

Aren’t you glad you speak Yiddish? It’s so simple.

Af yidish, a tshek iz nor gelt.

Much of Yiddish today is bobeloshn. The dynamism, creativity, youthful vigor and East European charm and culture have slipped away.

We live in a time of extremes. Yiddish was not taught in the great universities as it is today. The Ivy Leaguers can study Yiddish the proper use of tenses, declensions, etc., but have lost the simple beauty of the home, the shul and the marketplace.

On the other hand the vast majority of us belong to groups where Yinglish is the order of the day. Where bawdy jokes and songs take the place of real meaning and dialogue. We are afraid to speak Yiddish because we think others will correct and embarrass us.

Albert Camus said, “Don’t walk in front of me; I may not follow. Don’t walk behind me; I may not lead. Just walk beside me and be my friend.”


Mameloshn oder Bobeloshn
by Philip “Fishl” Kutner

My Mama was young, beautiful, vibrant, strong, charming, sharp, quick, decisive, and delightful to be around.

My Bobe was elderly, homely, dull, weak, boring, slow, indecisive, and not much fun to be around.
The Leksikon fun yidishn teater at the Museum of Family History
by Steven Lasky - Founder and Director - Museum of Family History
www.museumoffamilyhistory.com - steve@museumoffamilyhistory.com

The Museum of Family History (virtual, i.e. it exists only on the Internet) has now transliterated (“romanized”) the listings of the names of nearly 2,700 individuals once involved in the Yiddish theatre. These names can be found within Zalmen Zylbercweig’s six-volume “Lexicon of the Yiddish Theatre”, the last volume published over forty years ago. There are also over fifty theatrical organizations biographed within this six-volume set.

Not only has the Museum created an Excel spreadsheet listing each surname, given name, and alternate name(s) of the individual, but it has included the individual’s date of birth, death and place of birth (all when listed at the beginning of their biography). Another useful aspect of this newly created database is that the number of the page on which each biography begins is listed, i.e. not just the page in the original Yiddish-language Lexicon where the biography begins, but also the page within the online pdf version.

It may surprise you to know that you now can view any of the six volumes of the Lexicon for free online at www.archive.org. Simply search under the words “leksikon fun yidishn”, and you will find links to all six volumes. The Lexicon was digitized by the Spielberg Digital Yiddish Library. Actual copies of the books may be purchased at the National Yiddish Book Center at www.yiddishbookcenter.org, though they might just be copies of copies or the digitization; you should check on this with the Book Center if you’re interested.

If you would like me to ‘look-up’ someone you believe would be on my master list, send me the particulars at steve@museumoffamilyhistory.com.

I also have translated (more or less) the captions to the nearly four hundred photographs (this number does not include the individual photographs that sit next to the person’s name at the beginning of their biography), but other photographs such as actors in costume, scenes from plays, organizational group photographs, not to mention the many drawings and illustrations that are included aplenty within the six volumes.

YIVO orthographic (name spelling) standards have been used most often in compiling this major database, though this was a daunting task and the spellings at times are imperfect. Sometimes a choice had to be made as to whether to list an individual according to the YIVO spelling of their name, or the name that they are better known as.

The city (or town) of birth most often mentioned as an individual’s town of birth is not unexpectedly Warszawa; the number who were born in Warsaw is 213, double the number of the second most frequent, Lodz; then farther down the list but close behind comes Odessa, Lemberg, Vilna and Iasi.

VOLUNTEERS

The Museum is seeking with some importance and haste volunteers who would be willing to translate individual (or organizational) biographies found within the Lexicon. To date, the few volunteers that have stepped forward have translated over 100 short biographies for the Museum. Ideally I’d like to have all six volumes translated completely, but I don’t think there are enough volunteers to reach anywhere near that goal. I’d like to be presently surprised though, especially when it comes to all those Der Bay subscribers who love Yiddish.

Certainly if you have a working knowledge of Yiddish and would be willing to do some translations, please contact me at the above e-mail address. I will send you a jpeg of the original Yiddish biography, and once you’ve translated it into English, you will e-mail it back to me.

Help preserve Yiddish history and culture for all of us, more specifically the history of the Yiddish theatre. If we don’t do it, then who will do it? Not the next generation, that’s for sure.

I am working on having the translations done for those who once appeared in Maurice Schwartz’s Yiddish Art Theatre, though in a similar vein I would also like to do the same for all those who once worked in the Yiddish theatres of Warsaw before World War II, trying in some unique and special way to ‘recreate’ this rich time in Jewish culture and Warsaw Yiddish theatre as a whole.

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE LEXICON

Zalman Zylbercweig edited these six volumes which were published in New York City, Warsaw or Mexico City between 1931 and 1969. The six volumes are in Yiddish. The fifth of these volumes
serves as a memorial book to those once involved in the Yiddish theatre who were killed during the Holocaust (as well as many theatrical organizations that became ‘defunct’ during this time).

Many people volunteered to collect the information for the Lexicon and wrote these biographies about these few thousand individuals. Each author had his or her own style of writing, though the content of each biography often follow a pattern.

Except for the Holocaust edition (where less was mentioned about the individual then in other volumes, especially the date of death which was most often not listed), one would find the following for many of the entries:

--Name of the individual, dates of birth, death and place of birth (all when available).

--What their father did for a living.

--What kind of education the person biographed had during their childhood (public, state, private, ‘folk shul’, acting, art, dance, etc.).

--How did they get started in “the business”? Where did they find their motivation to get involved in the theatre? Did they become enamored with the Yiddish stage during a performance they attended?

--Did they begin work the theatre in Europe or once they immigrated? When did they immigrate and where to?

--Where did they find work? Did someone bring them over to act in their troupe? What troupes did they play with? Years and towns in which they played are often listed.

--What plays by what authors did they act in?

--What were the types of roles they given?

--Did they tour, and if so, where? The United States? Europe?

--Also at times footnotes are created and articles about the individual are mentioned and cited.

This gives you a general idea of what each biography contains. The biographies vary in size from a simple paragraph to many, many pages, and contain more or less information.

Not everyone involved in the Yiddish theatre is mentioned in these volumes, though this is quite a representation. There are also some who are listed in a particular Lexicon’s index (some volumes have a master list of names and some don’t), but who actually don’t have a biography where it is stated they do. Conversely, there is the occasional biography represented within these tomes that aren’t listed in a particular volume’s list but are there nevertheless. I have done my best to list everything accurately and without omissions. The Lexicon is indispensable to those interested in Yiddish culture and the history of Yiddish theatre. To have these volumes freely online is a blessing, and the possibility of making translations to many of these biographies available in English to the general public is a wonderful opportunity.

Volume 1 of the Lexicon is, more or less, in alphabetical order by the first letter of the surname, i.e. from alef to khes. Volume 2 begins with the letter tes and ends in ayin. However, as one might expect, omissions did occur, so during subsequent volumes these missing biographies were often inserted with little regard to alphabetical order.

I hope to visit YIVO at soon and see the galleys for the proposed seventh volume of the Lexicon. If I am given access to them, I will add the information gleaned from these galleys to my master database, as I have the already published six volumes.

Please do volunteer to translate. The Museum is always working hard to preserve the history of our Yiddish culture and needs your help to further its aspirations. Please visit the Museum’s Yiddish World by using the links found within the Museum’s Second Floor interactive floor plan (find link on site’s front page) or by clicking on the link to “Yiddish World” on the Museum’s main page found at www.museumoffamilyhistory.com.

Here are the links to the Lexicon translations:

Main Biographical index:
www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/yt/lex-biography.htm

Maurice Schwartz’s Yiddish Art Theatre:
www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/yt/lex-yat.htm

Please check the aforementioned pages from time to time to check for new translations.

Also visit the Museum’s “Greats of the Yiddish Theatre (and the roles in which they played)” exhibition, a representation of actors and actresses in their roles. Go to www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/pl/roles-01.htm and follow the links.
(Questions and Answers in the Matter of Love) – Fun der khaznte Khane Slekt
[transliterated and annotated by Goldie Adler Gold]

Tayere khaznte,


Mayn khaver hot 2 goldene hent un hot shtendik naye ayfnaln [always…ideas]. Er iz a leter un shfer keseyder matones far zayne talmidim, bilder far klatsimer [classroom], oden farsheydene shpilkheleh far di kinder. Ikh bin a kinstler [artist] un shaf kolerley verk. Vi iz zet, zenen mir, danken got, gliklekhe mentshn.


Vos un vi tuit men dos?

A frustrirter kinstler

Tayerer frus…kinst…

Ir zent beyde shufershe kinstler, darft ir makhn dos oyfrezmen far ayer kinstlerisher aktivitet, iz zolt beyde haneo hobb. Punkt vi ayer khaver trakht oys shpiln [games] far di kinder un talmidim, ven zey hobb problemen in klas, kent ir dos bahandel ven a shpil far ale doyres. Halt fray a gevshe tsaytn vokh tsy reynikn di shtub tsuzamen. Oyb ir arbet in eynem, vet eyner fun aykh nisht makhn bazundere plener ergets andersh.

Efszer zenen di 2 sho far shabes a gute tsayt? Ir kent hern muzik beshas ir arbet un mit-zening.

Koyft gefarbte polites [painted shelves], shuflohdn, un kestlekh. Bashimt an ort far ale ayere zakhn – bikher, kunst-proyektn, alte “Forverts” numer!

Avadet eyn mol a vokh nisht klekn [suffice] oyftsurahan alts un haltn di shtub reyn; to tut dos 10 minut yedn ovnt eyder me leygt zikh shlofn.
Der iker iz, ir zolt ramen tsuzamen un hobb hanoe, un hobb a zikhker ort far di zakhn. Ikh bin nisht ibertsaygt [convinced] az ir zent ‘nisht mesugl’ di shtub tsu organizirn. Shraybt mir tsurik in etlekhe khadoshim un lozts visn, tsi di shite [system] arbet!

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Tayere khaznte,


Tsemisht

Tayerer tsemisht,


Fun der anderer zayt, oyb me ken nisht dergreykhn [reach] eynem tsum tsveytyn, zaynen azoyne masn-makhile-briv nisht geferlekh. Oyb ikh hob baavlt oder baleydikut, oder geven tsu sarkastish tsu mayne leyener, zayt mir moykhl [forgive me] un shikt vayter ayere frages inem nayem yor.
Shayles un Tshuves in “Hilkhes Libe” - “Forverts” – 11/26-12/2/2010
(Questions and Answers in the Matter of Love) Fun der khaznte Khane Slekt
[transliterated and annotated by Goldie Adler Gold]

Tayere khaznte,


Er iz under zun un un mir viln im helfn, ober vi lang darf a 37-yoriker man voynen mit zayne tate-mame? Vi ken ikh tsum bestn helfn undzer zun vern umophengik [independent]

Tate

Tayerer tate,


Tayere khaznte,

Di tsol toyves [favors] vos mayne “fraynd” betn bay mir iz shoyn nisht oystsuhaltn [unreasonable]. Ikh


Krankn-shevster-tekhnikerin


Tsveytns, kent ir poshet redn mit di fraynd vos klingen tsu oft far di “toyves” un zey zogn az “ir volt gedarf onklingen a kinder-dokter, nisht mir” oder zey zogn az ir hot nisht keyn tsayt tsu farrikhtn [fix] zeyer kompyuter, un me zol vayter nisht klingen. A bisl erlekhkeyt tsuzamen mit a bisl ordenung [honesty+order], vet farzikhern [ensure] az ayere fraynd veln farshteyn ayere gefiln.

Tayere khaznte


“Zayn khaverte”

Tayere khaverte,

Vos iz yo viktik, zenen ayere gefiln. Oyb, mit di oysdrukn vos er nitst, filt ir zikh gelibt – iz gut. Oyb ir filt zikh umbakvem, darft ir im zogn vegen dem. Mistame trakht ayer khaver afile nisht, az er ruft aykh oyd aza “khaperishn” oyd; er iz aponem shtolts vos er hot aykh vi “zayn khaverte”.

************
We will focus on the great writers of Yiddish during the Yiddish renaissance that occurred from approximately 1890-1920 (I.L. Peretz, Sholom Aleichem, and Sholem Asch) and in more recent years (I. Bashevis Singer and Chaim Grade), reading their works against the social history of the time. Our approach will be to read the key short stories. We will discuss Yiddish theater, both from text and from video tapes and in the last lecture we will discuss Yiddish poetry. In some cases to broaden your exposure, I will lecture on a writer's longer works, particularly The Slave by I. B. Singer and The Agunah by Chaim Grade. Although we will not have the time to read the longer works during the course, you may wish to read them subsequently.

The structure of the course follows. Note that in some weeks, after the lecture during the lunch hour, I will show video tapes of key Yiddish plays. Try to make time in your schedule so you can stay for these tapes; it will enrich your experience of the course considerably.

**Week 1 - I. The Development of Yiddish as a Language for Ashkenazic Jewry: The Religious and Social Context** (Lecture and discussion only)

A. The Structure of the Language
   1. Relation to German
   2. Relation to Hebrew

B. Influences on the Language
   1. Orthodox Judaism
   2. Socialism and Communism
   3. Hasidism
   4. The Haskalah movement
   5. Zionism

**Week 2 - C. The Pale: The World of Russia & Poland**

D. The Theme of the Fool and the Anti-Hero
   1. Mendele Mocher Sforim
      a. Fishke the Lame (Discussion only)
      b. The Little Man, or the Life Story of Yitsik-Avrom, the Power Broker
   2. Recommended Reading
      a. Woody Allen
      1. Mere Anarchy (Excerpt)
   E. The Dissolution of Soviet Jewish Life
   1. Sholom Aleichem
      a. The Tevye Stories
         1. Tevye Strikes It Rich (Excerpt)
         2. Hodel
         3. Chava
         4. Tevye Leaves for Palestine
         5. Get Thee Out

**Week 3 - II. The Social Context**

A. L. Peretz
   1. Three Gifts
   2. Conversation on a Hilltop
   3. The Sacrifice
   4. The Fast

B. Sholom Aleichem
   1. On Account of a Hat
   2. Dreyfus in Kasrilevke
   3. High School
   4. Menahem Mendl (Excerpt)

**Week 4 - III. Orthodox Jewry**

A. The Orthodox World
   1. Chaim Grade
      a. The Oath
      b. "The Quarrel" (Video tape)
   B. The Role of Women
      1. I. L. Peretz
      a. A Woman’s Rage
      2. Dvora Baron
      a. Kaddish
      3. Rachel Korn
      a. The Sack with Pink Stripes

**Week 5 - IV. Hasidism**

A. Martin Buber
   1. The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism (1989 reprint) - Excerpts
   B. Elie Wiesel,
      1. Souls on Fire: Portraits and Legends of Hasidic Masters (1972) - Excerpts
   C. L. Peretz
      1. Bontshe Shvayg
      2. Between Two Mountains
   D. The Parable of Reb Yisroel
   E. Stories of Levi-Yitzchak of Berdichev
   F. The Boy Who Blew the Shofar
   G. The Prayer Leader
   H. The Tale of the Kugel
   I. Recommended Reading
      1. Elie Wiesel
      a. Testament of a Jew in Saragossa

**Week 6 - V. The Cabala**

A. I.B. Singer
   1. Gimpel The Fool
   B. Nahman of Bratslav
      1. The Loss of the Princess
      2. The Seven Beggars (Excerpt)
   C. S. Ansky
      1. The Dybbuk and on (Video tape)
   D. Recommended Reading
1. I.B. Singer  
a. The Kabalist of East Broadway

Week 7 - VI. Realism  
A. Sholem Asch  
1. Sanctification of the Name  
2. A Jewish Child  
3. God of Vengeance  
4. The Christological Novels  
a. The Nazarene  
b. The Apostle Mary (discussion only)

B. I.B. Singer  
1. Spinoza of Market Street

C. Recommended Reading  
1. Peretz Hirschbein  
a. Green Fields

Week 8 - VII. Yiddish Theatre  
A. Peretz Hirschbein  
1. "Green Fields" (Video tape)  
2. Discussion of "Green Fields"  
3. In the Dark

B. Dovid Pinsky  
1. The Treasure

Week 9 - VIII. Comparative Jewish Literature  
A. American Jewish Literature  
1. Lamed Shapiro  
a. The Kiss  
2. Anzia Yezierska  
a. The Fat of the Land  
3. Tillie Olson  
a. Tell Me A Riddle  
4. Grace Paley  
a. Goodbye and Good Luck

B. Russian Jewish Literature  
1. Isaac Babel  
a. The Story of My Dovecot  
2. Dovid Bergelson  
a. When All is Said and Done

C. Recommended Reading  
1. Israel Zangwell  
a. The King of the Schmoozers (Excerpt)  
2. Nathan Englander  
a. "The Gilgul of Park Avenue" in For the Relief of Unbearable Urges  
3. "Second Avenue Yiddish Theater" (Video tape)

Week 10 - IX. Jewish Poetry  
A. Yiddish Poetry  
1. Morris Rosenfeld  
a. "My Boy"  
2. Abraham Sutzkever  
a. "On My Wander-Flute"

b. "1980"  
c. "My Rescuer"  
d. "I Am Lying in This Coffin"

3. Jacob Glatstein  
a. "Like Weary Trees"  
b. "Without Jews"  
c. "My Fellow Wanderer"  
d. "Good Night, World"  
e. "Memorial Poem"

4. Kadye Molodowsky  
a. Women's Songs

5. Rachel Korn  
a. "A New Dress"  
b. "Lot's Wife"

B. German Poetry  
1. Paul Celan:  
a. "Death Fugue"  
b. "Psalm"  
c. "There Was Earth Inside Them"  
d. "Once"  
e. "Just Think"  
f. "To Those Who Stood Before the Door"

2. Nelly Sachs  
a. "Smoke Stacks" (Excerpts)

C. Hebrew Poetry  
I. Chaim Bialik  
a. "Alone"  
b. "A Twig Fell"  
c. "In the City of Slaughter"  
d. "After My Death"

2. Yehudah Amichai  
a. "In the Middle of the Century"  
b. "Wildpeace"  
c. "The Way It Was"  
d. "Instead of Words"  
e. "Little Ruth"  
f. I want to Die in My Own Bed"  
g. "Not Like a Cypress"

Editor's note: This course is part of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and is scheduled for the Spring 2011 term at the Temple Baptist Church. It will run for ten Friday mornings, 10-11:30am starting March 4, 2011. Knowledge of Yiddish is not a prerequisite.

The above syllabus for the course was created by the instructor, Arnold H. Leibowitz, who is also a practicing attorney. He is a graduate of Yale Law School and Columbia College, where he was Phi Beta Kappa.

Arnold has been active in refugee and immigration matters for over 25 years. For ten years he was Washington Representative for the (HIAS) Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.
"ZAY GEZUNT"

In writing letters, Jews are wont
To sign off with a zay gezunt
These two brief words, to our delight,
Are much employed in Yiddishkayt.
They order people to excel
In all respects, at being well.

The phrase reflects affection, too,
A link connecting Jew-to-Jew,
For centuries a vital bridge
Supporting tribal heritage.

It parallels the word, shalom
Transmitted, like a chromosome,
For generations over time,
Hereditarily sublime.

It’s utilize like au revoir
As parting-time vernacular,
Quite similar to the refrain
Voiced elsewhere as auf Wiedersehen.
"Be well!" most Yiddish-speakers cry
When bidding other Jews good-bye.

These words affirm the Jewish thrust
Toward the healthful and robust.
This closing line, we hope, comes true:
May zay gezunt apply to you!

THE JEWISH NOSE

The Jewish nose! See how it grows,
The tribal trait Jehovah chose!
Semitic shnozes are de trop,
Just like le nez of Cyrano,
Suggesting in their plethora
The thrust of a peninsula!
By hook or crook or rule divine
This nose veers to the aquiline.

For pleasure it was never meant!
It serves more as an instrument
For pointing out the way to go.
(Remember Rudolph, all aglow?)
It also is unparalleled
When to the grindstone it is held
To tackle tasks and get them done
With no pretense at having fun.
(You can’t sneeze at proboscises
That speed up work in times like these.)

Like pinnacles of Poconos,
To great heights the shnozola goes.
The height acts as a Matterhorn

When one looks down ones nose with scorn.
(But noses out of joint can hurt,
Alarm, do harm, and disconcert.)
With ease a Jewish diplomat
Can thumb his nose at this or that.
(He should observe the Golden Mean
And keep his own proboscis clean!)
The Moses-noses we extol
Have proved effective, on the whole.

We recognize it made good sense
To grant the nose such prominence.
The Deity who this path chose
Sure hit it squarely on the nose!

IN PRAISE OF YENTAS

We hereby, with this verse, salute
A personage who’s seldom mute.
The yenta is the subject here,
A female wont to domineer
By dint of vocal amplitude,
Who’s nasty, vulgar, shallow, rude.

Though negative are all these traits,
Encomiums she also rates.
She’s somehow managed the ascent
To topmost rank of termagant,
A status reached by very few
Aspiring to be a shrew.

In Jewish lore, the yenta looms
Portentous, and high rank assumes:
The Yenta Telebende* theme
Persists, enjoying wide esteem.

Life would be dull, weak-spirited,
Without the scandals yentas spread.
As rumor-mongers, they are
The champions in this art, by far.
Their raileries make little sense,
They can’t respect a confidence.
They rant non-stop, they raise a fuss,
As blabbermouths, they’re odious.
In realm that’s best described as "bitch"
They merit their own special niche.

We hope that they, without dissent,
Accept this rhymed acknowledgment.
But if they do reject our verse,
We trust too loud they will not curse!

* A famous fictitious character created by humorist
B. I’Zovner, writing in the Forverts.
Ikh Farlir Mayn Rie
fun Morrie Feller

Lozmkh nemen dayn orem ven mir geyn ariber der gas
Zog mir ven mir dergreykhn di tretarshvel.
Velkhe kolir iz a likht, un vu iz di kalushe?
Vu iz der slup, un vu iz di tsvayg?

Vos ze ikh in dem muzey, oder dem matsh?
Vos ze ikh baym parad oder oyfn tee-vi?
Vos ze ikh bay filmen oder bay a forshtelung?
Ken ikh zayn men mehr eynikl oder di bilder?

Halt mayn hant, vayl ikh ken nit zen.
Kush mayn bak, k’dey ikh zol visn az du bist do.
Zog nit, " Zestu? "
Ven du makhst klor zakhn tsu mir.

Let me take your arm when we cross the street.
Tell me when we reach the curb.
What color is a light, and where’s the puddle?
Where is the pole and where is the branch?

I'm Losing My Sight
by Philip "Fishl" Kutner

Es iz normal tsu farlirn a bisl rie az men vert elter.
Es meg zayn a flek fun a katearekt vi a milkh-haytl zet
oys aribertsugeyn ariber undzer rie.
Es ken zayn der onver fun rie oyf eyner oder der
anderer zayt, oder es ken zayn an onver mamesh inem
tsender azoy az siz vi men kukt durkh a langn, engn
tunel, un mir ze’en nor di end oder bloyz vos iz
mekhuts dem tunel.
Siz glaykh vi shpatsirn arum dem hoyz bay nakht on a
kleyne nakht-lihtl.
Du shtoyst zikh in zakhn, un der shvartz un bloy simen
iz nit keyn "Royte Emblem fun Kurazh".

Problemen far di blinde, ober nicht far dir – dervayle.
Untershaybn a tshek - vu iz di linye?
Esfun a teler - du darfst onrirn dos esn.
Du kenst filn di greys fun a matbeye, ober vos far a
denominazie iz dos papir gelt?

Nutsn a kompyuter iz eyn oyfn vi azoy tsu zayn in
kontakt mit der droysendik velt. Far di vos zaynen visuel
kalye, luples un leyen mashinen zaynen helfn.

How do I pour the coffee without spilling it?
How do I match my socks and clothes?
How can I put my make-up on, or shave?
How do I tell a tube of toothpaste from a tube of
ointment without tasting it?
How do I tell a bottle of oil from a bottle of liquid
detergent?
How do I read a thermometer?
How do I thread a needle?
How do I shop in the supermarket?
How do I take a picture with a camera?
How do you know in which line to go?

Vi azoy ken ikh gisn dos kave on fargisn zikh?
Vi azoy ken ikh tsunoyfspasn mayne zokn un kleyder?
Vi azoy ken ikh ontom mayn kosmetik, oder opgoln zikh?
Vi azoy ken ikh untersheydn tsvishn a rer tsun-pap un a
rer zalt on zey tsu farzukhn?
Vi azoy ken ikh untersheydn tsvishn a flash naft un a
flash flisik loygvarg?
Vi azoy lez ikh a termomiter?
Vi azoy ken ikh aynfedemen a nodl?
Vi azoy ken ikh aynkoyfn in a supermark?
Vi azoy ken ikh nemen a bild mit a fotografisher aparat?
Vi azoy vestu visn in velkher rey tsu geyn?

There are things I can do with practice and new
deVICES. Thare is the white cane and a guide dog.
Leap for Life: A Story of Survival and Reunion
By Rut Wermuth Burak – Review by Philip Fishl Kutner

It is a story of survival and reunion by Rut Wermuth Burak who still lives in Poland. The author was a Jewish teenager who survived the ghetto and the frightening period in which she was alone in Nazi Germany. Her experiences and reconnecting with her long-lost brother, half a century later is the context of this fascinating book published in Poland and Germany.

Starting with a list of demeaning decrees for Jews and Bolsheviks, the book traces her life’s journey that started in Kolomyja in Eastern Poland (now located in the Ukraine). She escaped from a cattle truck to the forest and stumbled into a hut where an elderly couple gave her a wrap to cover her bare body.

People who had worked for her parents helped Rut to survive and get back to where her mother worked. Dressing as a “shiksa” Rut returned to Kolomyja where her mother passed as a gentile and became a cook for a wealthy family.

She could not stay there so adding two years to her age (making her 16) she “volunteered” to work in Germany in a shoe factory. After an accident, she was sent to forced labor in Speyer, on the Rhine River. Luckily they were looking for someone who could speak German. Having learned a little, she became a maid in Alsace and ran the household.

When the war turned against the Germans, Rut was sent to a labor camp. It was here that she met Witek who was seven years her senior, and after the War they were married. Repatriation brought them back to Poland to Lower Silesia near the Czech border in the Sudeten Mountains. As part of the Potsdam Agreement this area has been included in the transfer of German territory.

They had two daughters and after her younger daughter went to school Rut went back to finish her education and graduated from college. Later she had a job managing a bookstore. Her husband Witek died in 1980 at the age of 61.

One reason they had gone back to her hometown was to find news of her brother, but none was to be had. In 1992 she visited Rychwald, a retreat of the Lauder Foundation, where she met Israelis and the group known as “Children of the Holocaust”. All along she had been an atheist—this was her first Jewish experience.

Here she met a woman from New York who knew people from Kolomyja and that in Israel there was an association of these people. One of these was Prof. Dov Noy in Jerusalem who told her to research a Victor Zorza, and in addition that there would be a 50th reunion of Kolomyja survivors at the edge of the Szeparowce Forest.

This started the long journey of research and contact with a Richard in New York who turned out to be her nephew. He told Rut that his father was living in London and was Victor Zorza, the well-known journalist. After telling Richard about the family 50 years earlier she mentioned that his father’s name had been Salek. Richard called his father who was surprised and called his sister whom he thought had perished in the Shoah. They met in London at the airport and had a tearful reunion. The latter part of the book deals with their reunion and sharing the missing 53 years.

Victor had a different experience. Because of his interest in Socialism, he left for Russia just before the Germans invasion and became an expert on Communism. After being disillusioned and many ordeals, he was befriended by a famous Russian writer who advised him to join a branch of the Polish Air Force within the RAF in England.

He learned English well enough to became an interpreter and after the war had become a well-known broadcaster. His life changed when his 25 year-old daughter died of Cancer. Writing a book, A Way to Die, about the Hospice Program and palliative care helped him through his grief. As part of overcoming his grief, he opened a string of hospices in Russia.

Victor had been divorced from his wife after they had gone through the ordeal of their daughter’s death. Part of the estrangement came from his being away in India for eight years.

The book ends with a visit by Prof. Dov Noy and his wife Tamar. Dov was the key link in the reunion. Finally, he also brought news of the gentle woman who helped Rut to escape.

Editor’s note: Fishl wishes to thank Prof. Karl Maramorosch who sent this marvelous book to be reviewed and to Richard Zorza the nephew mentioned above. The effort is being made to have a new printing so we can have access to this gem.
Azoy vi a shpay afn yam
By Philip “Fishl” Kutner

So, how important is it? “Unless it’s a matter of my children’s or grandchildren’s health, it’s no big deal.” So said Mama.

To Mama there was a big deal and a really big deal when it came to our health. For all other matters, “Everything is okay and if it’s not okay, it’s okay too.”

When I have a major issue or problem, I shut my eyes and Mama looms as big as a mountain. “So, Mama, what should I do?”

Invariably I hear, “Erger nisht, s’iz nor vi a shpay afn yam.” You know, usually it’s no big deal.

So, dear readers, do you have a favorite saying that you remember your mama saying when things got rough? They went through really rough times. There was no Social Security, Medicare, or Unemployment Compensation before FDR.

If something pops into your mind, send it in. Let’s share with each other. In fact, maybe it’s a good idea for a Yiddish club program.
International Association of Yiddish Clubs

14th Conference August 26th – 29th, 2011  Sheraton Detroit Novi, Novi, MI

“YIDDISH ALIVE !!!”
SAVE THE DATES

Open to all, knowledge of Yiddish not a prerequisite, you’ll love it!!!
Begins Friday the 26th at 2:00 pm and runs to the 29th after lunch. (PLUS MORE!)
Price of the conference is $350.00

(Accommodations at the Sheraton Novi are $89.00/day +tax). The same rate is available 3
days before the conference and 3 days after.

Included in the registration fee are:

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Relax and schmooze in a spacious Hospitality Room. Enjoy Yiddish movies & specialty DVDs.

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And best of all………………

Shmooz to your hearts delight with yidn with
Yiddishe neshomes from the world over.
Make new friends and greet old friends, all
who have a love of Yiddish.

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IAYC - POB 252314, West Bloomfield, MI 48323

Find the Registration Form on page 15.

Check the website: www.derbay.org/novi
Yiddish Prefixes

Just as prefixes (placed before a root of a word) change the meaning of word in English, so does it in Yiddish. Learning these will help if you know the root of the word. It is not 100% accurate, but it does help.

Over half of the list of prefixes below start with an aleph. Remember that all Yiddish words that start with a vowel sound have a shtumer (silent) alef as the first letter of the word with the exception of ayin. However, none of these prefixes start with an ayin.

Aheym homeward
Ahin over there
Aher over here
Avek go away
Oys completion of an action, undoing
Oyf completion of an action
Um return to prior state
Unter under, bottom, secretly, moderately
Iber complete action, repeat, excessive
Ayn change
On specifies the action
Ant negation, distancing from, undoing
Antkegn opposite
Anider down
Op completion of action
Afir out of
Arop down
Aroyt out
Aroyf upward
Arum around
Arunter down
Ariber over
Arayn in
Ba thorough action, bring into being
Bay by, at
Durkh through
Der completion of action
Hinter behind
Mit with
Nokh after
Far finish an act, start to change, debase
For anticipate, come before
Farbay past, by
Foroys before
Funander push apart, apart
Fir out, out of, out from under
Tsu to
Tsvishn between, among
Tsuzamen together
Tsunoyf bring together
Tse come apart, spreading out, undoing

Freg zikh, “Farvos nisht”.
by Philip “Fishl” Kutner

Mama was modern far beyond her peers. Barriers were made to be broken—for her kids. She told us always ask, “Farvos nisht—why not?” Usually the answers were the well-known contractions, can’t, don’t, and won’t.

Mama said that they all have NOT and it is like the other KNOT. You can tie yourself … or else you can unbind the ties that prevent you from opening the world.

Mama’s words resound each morning when I start each day looking forward to all the wonderful people with whom I’ll interact. There are all the sites to be seen. There are all the challenges to be met. There are all the things to be learned.

As I look into the computer screen in front of me, I can pull up the skies above, the far off mountains, the exotic lands, and “speak” with my “friends”. In fact with Skype we even see each other.

Dear reader, think of the self-induced self-inflicted barriers, those contractions, can’t, don’t and won’t stopping you from fulfilling those dreams you had and said, “As soon as I have the money, as soon as I have the time or as soon as I have the strength.”

Everything is before us and everything is available to us. My Mama never used the computer, but I can. Mama lived through the Cossack pogroms, thank you, I haven’t had to. Mama had to come to a land and learn a ridiculous language, but I haven’t.

My Mama gave birth to me in a wonderful land of freedom and so it is all before me to actually eat from the tree in gan eydn.

If you were to ask your self what are your unfulfilled dreams, your unfulfilled wishes, what would you say. What is stopping you from taking the first step? So what if you don’t have it all? You will have enjoyment and fulfillment in taking the route and who knows how far you can go.

My journey as a visually impaired person has only prevented me from seeing the sharp details of the scenery. In its place I have filled in the rest with the perfect forms. I leave out the blemishes and the unsightly objects. Even the women all look like movie actresses to me.

Mama, ikh ken, ikh vil, un ikh vel!
Shlekhte nayes fun Meksike
Frida (Freydl) Cielak from Mexico City

TAYERER FISHL,

Tzum badoyern hob ikh shlekhte nayes aykh tzu ibergebn!

Nokh 60 yor keseyerdike arbet vert undzer togike Yiddishe shul “Di Naye Yiddishe Shul in Meksike-LL. PERETZ, vert farmakht vern oyf dem kumendikn lern yor!

Di sibe vos der patronat fun der shul git: ‘veyznik talmidim!’ (fun 400, gevorn 200, dernokh 120, aynitkn-yor talmidim!

Zey zogn undz izter as tzulib talmidim fun gemishte khasenes say mit nisht Yidn un say tzulib porlakh fun ashkenazim mit Sfardim, un oykh, tzulib dem gresern interes in kenen beser English vi Yiddish,......

Fregt zikh:
- Farvos obn zey nisht aroysgeshikt a ‘SOS’ farayorn, oder mit 2 oder mit 3 yor tzurik?
- Farvos hobb zey zikh nisht modernizirt in kegnvart fun di sfardishe shules hoves hobb tzugetzoi gn azoy fil talmidim mit computeray-mashinen in kemat ale klasn, un mit naye moderne metodn tzum lernen?
- Farvos plutzlum aza psak din?
- Farvos hobb zey nisht tzugerufn gevezene talmidim un lerer bikhdey tzu gefinen an oysveg?

A vikuakh geyt on tzyvishn gevezene talmidim un lererkes mit zey ober der patronat nemt nisht kayn ontey in entferr fragesl Zeyer aroyslos, zeyer generaler tshuve iz:- ‘Azoy hobbn mir ba shmitum un undzere talmidim obn an oysveg zikh tzu farshpraibn in andere Yiddishe shuln: ”Colegio Israelita de Mexico-Ort” (vu me lernt shoyn nisht kayn Yiddish, nor traditzye un a bisl Yiddishe geshikhte oyt spanish).

Di “Yavne shul” (vu es iz vikhtiker ‘zikh oystzlernen davenen’ vi Yiddish). Oder di Sfardishe Shul “Colegio Sefaradi de Mexico” (vu nor Spanish, Hebreish, English, Komputeray, Traditzye un Sfardishe geshikhte vert ibergebn!

Di hartz geyt oys, mayn shul vu ikh bin geven a talmide, a lererke, a mame fun talmidim, grinder fun dem Audiovizueln tzenter un di kinder biblitek, oytorn fun dem Yoibl bukh “40 yor-Naye Yiddishe shul”, mayn libe shul far velkhe mayne eltern, (tzyvishn di grinder), hobb mit ibergebnkayt, mit zeyer shtitze un arbet, geharbet far ir ariber 20 yor, di dozike shul vert itzt farmakht?, a shul vu me ot gelernt Yiddishkayt (humanism), Yiddishe geshijhte, traditzye un Yiddish un Spanish?

-Vos vet vern fun undzer Mame Loshn?
Vos vet vern fun undzer ashkenazisher kehile?

oyf velkhn veg ‘shteyen mir izter’?

Az okh un vey!!!!

Mit fil faribl, umet, zorg benegoye undzer mame-loshn un der tzu kunft fun undzer Yiddisher-ashkenazisher kehyle, mit tzar, agmas-nefesh, antoyshung un azoy vayter, hob ikh zikh farbundn mit gevezene talmidim, trenn zayn nefaln, hartzike zikhroynes, fil agmas nefesh ober- s’iz shoyn shpet, di shlekhte nayes zaynen farshpreyt gevorn ven di umayngenemene offitzyele nayes ot dershiynem farn oylom!!!

Mit groys badoyer, ayer frayndine

Frida (Freydl) Cielak from Mexico City

= ======= =

Editor’s note: Vos ken men ton?

What makes this message so painful to me is the longtime friendship that we have had. The hurt that Freydl expresses is deep from the heart.

As I think back over the years of the many beautiful contacts we have had and the assistance she has given to foster Yiddish, Der Bay, and to me personally, it is even more painful.

First, Freydl was one of the earliest members of TYN (The Yiddish Network). These unselfish lovers of our mame-loshn give freely of their time and advice to travelers and those who relocate.

Second, Freydl was instrumental in fostering the growth of Der Bay’s Briv Fraynd (Pen-Pal) service. Over 460 men and women from all over the world have been matched by level of proficiency and their hobbies.
Jewish Folk Chorus of San Francisco
by Judith Kennedy

You are invited to join The Jewish Folk Chorus of San Francisco, under the leadership of President Gail Rubman and renowned concert pianist and very able conductor, Stephen Varney. Mr. Varney works equally well with chorus members that have musical backgrounds and those that are beginners. So neither auditions nor experience is required.

For 85 years the Jewish Folk Chorus of San Francisco has been singing Jewish songs, mostly in Yiddish, with a sprinkling of songs in Hebrew, Ladino, Russian and English. Today the JFC is comprised of about 25 people ranging in age from early thirties to late eighties. We rehearse weekly in San Francisco from September to June, and perform in various senior residences during the year. We also sing at the Holocaust Remembrance at Temple Emanu-El and in 2010 we performed at the Conference of the International Association of Yiddish Clubs in Millbrae. Every year we give a concert in June, open to the public at large.

Read about our exciting history in the following paragraphs, originally written by Nathan Seres, and updated by Renee Enteen and Judy Kennedy.

The period of the late twenties and early thirties witnessed remarkable development of Yiddish culture in America. Many Yiddish writers and musicians had emigrated from Eastern Europe, and began to create in their respective fields. They found a fertile soil among the workers in shops and factories, who had a yearning for the freedom of spiritual and cultural expression.

In the Bay Area, the initiative came from members of the Freiheit Cultural Club to create a people’s chorus. The impetus came from a group of progressive workers. With help from the Jewish Music Alliance in New York, music as well as conductors were found. Leon Malamut was the first professional musician to lead the chorus. The Petaluma, the Oakland Freiheit, and the Jewish Folk Chorus of San Francisco were all organized under the slogan of the Jewish Music Alliance: A PEOPLE WHO SING SHALL NOT PERISH.

On May 15, 1938 a full concert, Jacob Schaefer’s folk operetta, “A Bunt Mit A Statshke” was presented at the Veteran’s Memorial Auditorium to a fully packed auditorium. In 1939 the next conductor Gabriel Sunshine along with the chorus and a dance group presented a choral play, “The Yiddish Folk Album” before an audience of 1800. This concert was repeated at the 1939 San Francisco World’s Fair on Treasure Island. The enthusiastic public reaction stimulated the growth of the chorus, which numbered a membership of over 80.

In an introduction in the program in May 1939, this poignant statement was made, “In these trying times of Jewish persecution the Jewish Folk Chorus is ready to demonstrate that the Jewish people possess inner resources of humor and courage that will enable them to survive their persecutors.”

During the war years, Zari Gottfried became the conductor in the Bay Area as well as the chorus in Petaluma, and the two groups frequently would cooperate, presenting the same annual choral program in San Francisco, Oakland, and Petaluma. However, Gottfried was drafted into the military. Many changes occurred and the chorus dissolved for a period of time. By 1950 the San Francisco chorus was once again back on its feet and under the direction of Gabriel Sunshine performed joint concerts with the Petaluma Chorus.

From 1954 to 1971, Zari Gottfried was the conductor. Much had been accomplished during this period by way of enriching the repertoire of the chorus - folk songs, Israeli songs, new cantatas, all of which were presented before mixed audiences all over the Bay Area. It was during this time that the chorus established its home at the San Francisco Jewish Community Center where it remained for almost 50 years. It then moved to Congregation Beth Shalom and in 2006 began rehearsing at Menorah Park.

Nathan Seres wrote the following statement in 1976, but it is still pertinent today.

“With pride in our achievements we celebrate our existence as a musical organization built by the people to express through song, the deepest yearnings, hopes and aspirations of the Jewish ‘folksmentsh’, the Jewish worker and toiler, the dreamer of a just world, and a fighter for that cause. We hope to continue singing and to attract young people to the chorus, so they may carry on the musical and cultural heritage as we, the older generation, have done. Let us keep singing!”

For more information about our chorus, go to our website: www.jewishfolkchorussf.org.
A Friend of Old – Ben Giladi
By Arthur Poznanski (Excerpted from The Voice, Issue Number 22)

This is the first in a series of Der Bay readers who have led remarkable lives—some in the Shoah.

Ben Geladi was very popular because of his good looks, quick wit and musicality. Ignoring a curfew, we would vault over many back garden fences and swiftly dart across dark, deserted streets to meet, exchange views and, ignoring empty stomachs, sing and play games or make music until late at night.

This relative calm was shattered. Rapes, murders of Jews, and reports of deportations circulated and depressed our community. We knew nothing of the Wannsee Conference (Jan. 20, 1942). Jews were deported, not only from the territories of the German Reich, but from the whole of occupied Poland. Gloom and foreboding pervaded our group when we discussed where thousands of deported Jews were sent and wondered why none returned or sent back any messages—we were naive.

It was impossible to believe that meticulously planned genocide on such a vast scale could have been conceived and carried out by a nation whom we regarded as civilized and cultured. Our group was suddenly broken up. Deportations, internment and enslavement in diverse places separated and scattered the few of us who remained alive.

Ben was born in Piotrkow the 15th of August 1925. He went to a state run public school and then in the ghetto continued his education in private, clandestine, “gimnazium” classes. When the Nazis came, he became a slave laborer in the Hortensja glassworks. It was his first taste of physical labor alongside and under the supervision of rough Polish workers, who imparted profane phraseology in their colorful speech. To avoid being considered soft Jewish sissies, Jews learned to use their own vernacular and out-cussed the best of them.

Ben’s father and thousands of other Jews were sent to their doom in Treblinka. Only the slave labor force, a tiny remnant of the great Jewish community of Piotrkow, was left. Jews were at the mercy of the Nazis, Polish foremen, and anyone who disliked them, for any reason—Jewish life was cheap.

Soon after the encampment in Hortensja, Ben was transferred to a glass factory, Kara, infamous for the use of the Jewish workgroup to erect a new glass furnace without using any mechanical implements. Because of the many casualties at work, the assignment was termed the Circus. He had the backbreaking task of assisting the masons in building the new furnace. This work put hair on his chest, calluses on his palms and hardened him for the next task of producing plate-glass.

In November 1944 all Jews from the glass factories were deported to Czestochowa. Ben was put to work in the munitions factory there, which specialized in the production of steel bullet tips. From the veterans already there he learned how to avoid painful lesions caused by putrid oil lubricants mixed with noxious chemicals.

In January 1945 he was transported with many others by rail in cattle-trucks to Buchenwald, the world renowned beauty spot in central Germany, where he was prisoner #113653. After quarantine, shorn deloused, and re-dressed in approved prison garb, he was consigned to Dora Mittelbau in the Hartz Mountains. Here the V1 and V2 rockets were being produced. This camp was run with the utmost cruelty by German criminals, who had the approval and blessing of the SS guards and officers. When, in the middle of the severe winter he was picked for a working party engaged in constructing a new train route, Ben came to the end.

In conditions which defy description and on a starvation diet, his health deteriorated and he collapsed. He became one of the walking skeletons referred to as “musulmen”. No longer able to work because of total debility, he was sent to a nearby extermination camp, KC Nordhausen. Helplessly awaiting the end, he survived for over two weeks only because the camp was being repeatedly raided in error by the allied air force. Constant air alerts caused a lapse in security, during which Ben ran out and hid in the surrounding fields for several days.

On 11th April 1945 the American infantry liberated him, and the other prisoners. In June, after a period of recuperation in an American army field hospital, he went back to Buchenwald, where he discovered the names of his three sisters on the list of survivors in Bergen-Belsen. Overjoyed at finding some family still alive, he decided to join them. In September 1945 with two of his sisters and his niece he returned to Piotrkow. To his great sorrow he learned of his mother’s death in Auschwitz.

He expected a warm welcome, but was sorely disappointed. The effect of gloom and shabbiness were only secondary to a rampant anti-Semitism encountered by the few survivors who dared to return to Piotrkow. Marauders parading in the uniforms of Polish militia, armed with confiscated German rifles and bayonets and ably assisted by a horde of local yobs (thugs), showed their readiness...
to murder any Jew. Demoralized and unable to seek protection of the law, which they thought the armed men represented, they fled. Ben went to Lodz, but was unable to find accommodation or suitable employment. He took a train to Piotrolesie in Lower Silesia to join a kibbutz, run by Meir Zarnowiecki, his former Madrich (leader) from Shomer Hatzair.

In 1946 Ben led over 100 children from Poland through “the green border”. With the help of two madrichot, he headed into Czechoslovakia via Bratislava to Prague through Ash and Rehau in Germany into a DP camp in Hoff. From there the children went to Bad Reichenhall and then to Jordanbad in the French zone. Ben loved his role as Madrich and excelled in organizing lessons, games and songs. With the aid of a piano accordion, he initiated singing of popular Hebrew folk songs.

The music helped to enliven the long dreary hours spent on trains. When they finally reached a camp, Ben started productions of short plays and revues, which developed into political satires, to the amusement of the participants as well as the audiences. Freshly out of hell he was able to identify and empathize with the feelings of the children. Shomer Hatzair put him in charge of what they called “a nest” of children in the DP camp.

In May 1947 he returned to Lodz where his sister, Pola Glatter, lived with her husband, a dentist. Two of his former teachers verified Ben’s secondary school education to matriculation standard, which enabled him to enroll at the university on a course to dentistry. Ben worked part-time in the dental laboratory run by his brother-in-law. He kept up an active link with the Zionist group and composed witty lyrics to popular melodies. Some of his songs were performed in a revue, "Prosto z Mostow" sponsored by the Zionist weekly, Mosty (Bridges).

In 1950, when legal Aliyah was a reality, Ben went to Israel and, not waiting for the mandatory year of grace, joined the army. After intensive training, he was selected for a group trained to perform martial arts at the opening of the first Maccabiah. He was assigned to the main training base for artillery in Sarafand and sent to an ulpan to learn Hebrew.

After perfecting Hebrew, he wrote his first satirical revue, 'Life on the Base'. This gained a promotion and put him in charge of organizing entertainment which enabled him to utilize his artistic interests and use his creative abilities. His commanding officer felt that, in view of the prevailing conditions, he should not forego combat training. Taking into account his studies at Lodz University (however scanty), he was put on a program of paramedic courses.

While on leave in October 1950 he attended the first Piotrkover Hazkara in Tel Aviv and there met Guta, a kindred soul, whom he had known since childhood. She had blossomed into an attractive 19-year-old girl, who was about to be drafted into the army. Mutual attraction grew. They met again while she was in the army uniform. They were married on the 19th April 1951. Guta was demobilized and in April 1952 their daughter Iris was born.

After release from the army in June 1952, they lived in Gan Hashomron near Hedera, where Ben worked in the post office. They moved to Givataim in 1955 and Ben was employed in the Social Security Office. But, in 1956, during the Sinai campaign, Ben was recalled to the army and assigned to the "red berets" unit of parachutists. After a stint near Mitla, he decided that he had had enough of bloodshed and war. As a husband and father, he craved security for his family, and in 1959, he left for the USA.

In America it was not easy; he worked for a liquor store, delivering bottles of alcohol around the East Side of Manhattan. The clients were wealthy and generous, and their tips compensated for his meager salary. Later Guta and Iris were able to join him. Ben attended evening classes at City College to take courses in English, business administration and accountancy. In 1961 Ben was recruited to the head office of the (ILGWU) International Ladies Garment Workers Union and later headed the Benefit Funds Department of the Union until retirement.

Ben wrote songs, poems, and short articles. From 1967 he was with the Piotrkover Association writing articles and essays for their Bulletin. Later he became associate editor. In 1981 single-handedly Ben produced the New Bulletin. Ben devoted himself entirely to the project of remembrance. All of his time was spent recording the painful past and progress of the survivors from Piotrkow. In 1987 he took early retirement, concentrating on editing The Bulletin and cajoling others to write of their impressions and reminiscences.

His fluency in Polish, Hebrew, and Yiddish helped greatly. It reflected the views and problems of the survivors scattered all over the world. The acme of his achievement was Tale of One City published in 1991 a graphic history of the Jews of Piotrkow— most of which consists of survivors testimonies. His style of writing is colorful, using expressions most Jewish refugees identify with, and interlaced with idioms in Hebrew, Yiddish and German. Polish.

**Editor’s note:** My quite remarkable friend: Ben Giladi, publishes The Voice of Piotrkow Survivors. E-mail: voicebentov@juno.com 135-30 82nd Ave, Kew Gardens, NY 11435
"The Yiddish Art Theatre in America" - Announcement
by Steven Lasky - steve@museumoffamilyhistory.com

Zalmen Zylbercweig, the editor of the six-volume "Leksikon fun yidishn teater (Lexicon of the Yiddish Theatre)" halted work on one of his proposed books, a Yiddish-language history of Maurice Schwartz’s NY "Yiddish Art Theatre" troupe. The reason for this stoppage is unknown, and little else is known about this venture except that the galleys of his unpublished work are hidden within various archives throughout the world.

"The Yiddish Art Theatre in America" (YATA) is a history of New York City’s Yiddish Art Theatre ("YAT") during its first five years of existence (1918-1923). Within this volume there are 742 pages. It is unknown if more pages exist, but at the virtual Museum of Family History, we are making these book galleys available in the hope that it will serve to help you not only research your family if they were involved in the Yiddish theatre within the last two centuries, but more importantly to preserve part of the valuable history of the once-popular Yiddish theatre and culture as well. Many of our ancestors at one time, whether living in the United States, Europe, Argentina, or elsewhere, attended the Yiddish theatre and found pleasure in it.

Why should we care about the Yiddish theatre? We should learn more of a cultural activity that gave our ancestors enjoyment, that served as a pleasant diversion after a long day at work that made them think of the hometown they left in Europe, that at times made them both laugh and cry?

Within this book's PDF file, you can search among these pages for information on nearly 100 the YAT productions, and read many reviews written by critics and others, of most of these performances, as well the troupe's actors and actresses.

As these pages are from galleys and published book, there are imperfections, e.g. missing or inverted page numbers, the inverted piece of text or the missing photograph. There are missing pages, but this is unavoidable. It should be noted that there is no English translation of this book.

The Museum strongly suggests that you also visit the Museum's webpage of YAT productions (http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/yt/yat/yat-D.htm) which includes a listing of most of the plays performed by the troupe. This may serve as a finding aid or guide for you in your quest to learn more about the YAT. These listings include the name of the play (given in both English and transliterated Yiddish), the date of the first performance, the author of the play, the names and functions of those who worked behind-the-scenes and the theatre location. Also included are listing of cast members and their roles for more than seventy percent of the more than one hundred YAT productions. You will also enjoy seeing photographs of the actors in their roles, as well as scenes from plays, during your visit to this "Casts and Characters" page. Listings of more of the YAT productions will be added over time.

The Museum is in the process of translating the more than 2,800 individual biographies as found within Zylbercweig’s "Lexicon of the Yiddish Theatre". There are six volumes that have been published (in New York City, Warsaw and Mexico City) between 1931 and 1969. There are also galleys of parts of an unpublished seventh volume. These will be presented to you at some time in the future.

We have a database with information on 2,800 individuals (and over fifty theatrical organizations) and include: Surname, given name, other name(s), town, and country of birth, and date of birth and death. Each entry, has two page numbers: one on which the biography begins within the original hardcover Yiddish version; the other is the beginning page number of the biography as it is on the PDF file, which makes it infinitely easy to locate a particular page. It is hoped that in the future a free, searchable online database can be created.

In the near future English translation for hundreds of bibliographies from Zylbercweig’s "Lexicon" will be available. The Museum seeks volunteers to help in translating from Yiddish to English, of YATA and the seven volumes of Zylbercweig's "Lexicon". If you wish to volunteer, contact the Museum at yiddishtheatre@museumoffamilyhistory.com.

To skip the introduction and view Zylbercweig’s "Yiddish Art Theatre in America", click on the link www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/yt/yata.htm. The speed of download of this 180 MB PDF file will vary, depending on the speed of your computer. Also the PDF search function on this file does not search Hebrew / Yiddish fonts, and it will only be useful to search for a particular page number as found within the original Yiddish book.

Website: www.museumoffamilyhistory.com
Yankl’s Yiddish Yaking and Yodeling
by Philip Fishl Kutner

Chelm has had its share of unusual citizens. Some were internationally renowned rabbis, cantors, and merchants, and some were thieves. None was more unusual than Yankl the Yiddish Yaker and Yodeler.

Yaking came naturally to Yankl, for his father Yosl was the town crier. He would call in front of each house to be sure the men attended services. For this he received a special seat at the eastern wall but no money. This made his wife, Yentl, angry and she told him so—as well as the rest of Chelm. The only answer Yosl gave was that he did it for the koved.

This explains Yankl’s natural ability to yak. Often it got him into trouble in kheyder with the resulting blows on the knuckles or across the back of his head. Once in a while it got so bad that the melamed even went to speak to Yosl and Yentl.

Ha, ha, ha, like as not the melamed left with a headache and with little result for his effort. Usually it was the new melamed in Chelm who fell into this trap. For weeks afterwards he was the butt of jokes by all the women and boys.

If word got out that the melamed was going to visit Yankl’s house, there would be a group of boys who followed him at a distance. The boys quietly waited nearby until the voices inside Yankl’s house became louder and louder. It was so loud that it could be heard halfway around Chelm.

Then the laughter of the boys drowned out the melamed, and he quickly left entirely embarrassed.

Yankl’s keen ability to yak obviously was inherited. There was no couple in town that could match his parents. Even Yankl’s brothers and sisters avoided any long discussions with him. This was likewise true for uncles, aunts and cousins.

There was, however, one person in Chelm who was a more astute yaker than Yosl, Yentl, or even Yankl. She was Gendzl, Yentl’s mame, the shviger of Yosl and Yankl’s bobe.

Although in her mid seventies, she was still a formidable foe. What she had lost in loudness, she made up in a sharper tongue, deep piercing eyes and curling the outer edges of her lips. It quickly subdued anyone who displeased her. This was Yankl’s heritage.

How Yankl Learned to Yodel

Once some of Yankl’s friends went into a cave under Chelm. These were made from the removal of chalk. Chelm is famous for its chalk caves.

As the boys walked along the tunnel of the cave, the damp, cool air felt good, but the sight of bats hanging from the rood of the cave frightened them. Yankl decided to sing, and an echo bounced back off of the cave walls. This was the beginning of his wanting to learn how to sing.

At the same, there was a stranger in Chelm who told stories about foreign lands. One of these stories was about the mighty Alps, the St. Bernard rescue dogs and all about yodelers and yodeling.

When Yankl finished kheyder, he decided to run away to see the Alps and visit Franzl Lang, the yodel king in Germany. Franzl had 40 albums.

Dear reader, we must define yodeling. It is a type of singing form where the notes are extended and the pitch is changing all along. This results in an alternating high and low pitch.

Yankl loved this type of music and quickly excelled. After yodeling in various countries surrounding the Alps, he became homesick for his parents, brothers, sisters, and his childhood friends. He decided to return to Chelm, but what would he do in Chelm?

Why not sing for a living? This thought came to him while he was walking one day along the Danube. How could a singer make a living in Chelm? Aha, why not become a cantor!

No one had ever sung the Kol Nidre Services, on the evening before Yom Kiper, using the yodeling form.

When Yankl returned to Chelm and yodeled the Kol Nidre Services, everyone was amazed and pleased. Every year, and still today, Yankl chants (yodels) the service.

If you are unable to be in Chelm for Yom Kiper, you may wish to purchase Yankl’s DVD of his yodeling the Kol Nidre Service. Send a money order to Yankl for fifteen Israeli shekels.
Circle Lodge Summer Programs

June 27 – July 1 (Mon-Fri)

A Yiddish Club for Everyone!

If you love Yiddish, if you want to enrich your Yiddish club experience with new and exciting resources, if you have dreamed of organizing a new Yiddish club – this is the program for you.

Among the presenters:

• Troim Handler Katz – Instructor for Advanced Yiddish Shmueskrayz
• Nikolai Borodulin – Instructor for Beginners & Intermediate Shmueskrayz
• Hilda Rubin – Yiddish Theater Workshop
• Adrienne Cooper – Yiddish Songs Workshop
• Frank Handler – Yiddish Culture and East European Jewish History

July 11 – 17 (Mon-Sun)

A Week in Yiddishland

Master instructors Nikolai Borodulin, Miriam Hoffman, Chava Lapin, and take you through a week of mame-loshn, films, games, music and theater with Motl Didner.

All levels welcome. Register soon, this week sold out last summer.

July 18-22 (Mon-Fri)

Folksbiene: A Week Of Yiddish Theater

Spend a week with America’s most historic and dynamic Yiddish theater. The new Folksbiene, under the leadership of Zalmen Mlotek, engages multiple generations and Jewish communities in its dynamic future.

This week will be filled with entertainment, participatory experiences and multi-media presentations by the Folksbiene Theater’s young vibrant artists.

***************

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Oysergeveyntlekh
by Archie Barkan

My Yiddish Literature class, numbering 20-25, at Santa Monica Emeritus College and reading Yiddish books in the original, goes “on like the “Energizer Bunny”.

Now in my tenth year, with my predecessors Abe Friedman and Marion Herbst z”l having spanned about twenty years before me, I am continually amazed. Just when the class begins to suffer losses via natural attrition, new enrollees seemingly appear, out of the woodwork and the beat goes on.

We are reading a novelette of I. Roboy entitled “Di Vayte Vest”, written in 1918. It seems to have been a forerunner to Roboy’s more widely acclaimed “Yiddisher Cowboy”, written later, lengthened, with a new storyline, formulaically alike.

I am getting somewhat “long in the tooth” and am asked: “When are you giving it up, retiring?” and the answer is quite simple: “I can’t!...I’ll go on as long as I possibly can! Too many longtime friends and, most of all, to much sheer nakhes!

Dr. Jack Berger Replies
to Murray Meld’s Article in Last Month’s Issue

Despite Fishl’s plaint on page 1, I will take issue with what I think is a ‘usage problem’ in your Yiddish Lesson, having to do with taking a market chicken to the rabbi.

I believe what the lady of the house is doing, is she is coming to have the rabbi ‘pasken a shayle.’ She is asking him to RULE (act in his role as a Posek), with regard to the question (Shayle) of whether or not the chicken is kosher.

This does not mean that one does not come to the rabbi for advice (eytse), but that will normally not involve a matter over the acceptability of an item of food.

What I have found, in my ongoing translations of Yizkor Books, is that the normal strategy was to send the questionable fowl to the rabbi in the hands of a younger daughter, preferably a child. The strategy assumed that the rabbi was likely to be more lenient to a ‘klayne maydele’ than to an adult. However, your observation is entirely correct. The rabbis, more than most, understood the financial implications for those constantly at the financial margin, were they to rule on the strict side.
My current talking book is “Travels in a Blue Chair: Alaska to Zambia, Ushuaia to Uluru.” It is about Walt Balenovich, a man from Toronto, who from the age of two could not walk, yet has traveled alone all over the world. His adventures are from the Great Coral Reef of northern Australia to Croatia, his mother’s homeland. His challenges came from traveling over a newly-tared road (his hands became full of tar from turning the wheels) to deeply rutted and muddy roads where travel was literally at a snail’s pace.

This gave me the idea for writing this article. So, when is someone Yiddishly disabled? It depends on whom you ask. To some, if she cannot speak, read, or write Yiddish “correctly”, then you have the condition known as “YD”. Others might say, if she cannot sing Yiddish songs, play Jewish/klezmer music or tell Yiddish jokes/stories then she has the “malady”.

In one's travels one meets those who will lend a hand and those who will mock you. In most cases my experience has been that the more one is a “mentsh” and the more knowledgeable one is, the more likely that you will receive a receptive ear.

Just like a child needs help when learning how to ride a two-wheeled bicycle, so do we, who are not native speakers, need mentors. Remember that a mobile blind man can safely push the wheelchair of a sighted physically handicapped person.

Just as we help the financially disadvantaged with monetary assistance, just as well should we help our Yiddishly Disabled in a constructive manner. Great comedians make fun of themselves. It is only the insecure or egotistical who need to mock another person.

I feel honored when someone asks for my advice. I have never failed to answer a question. Often my response is, “I don’t know, but I’ll find out.” Remember, not all questions can be answered specifically because:

a. there may be a difference of opinion.

b. there may be several correct answers.

c. no one knows the answer.

Ask freely, but give information carefully. It is not a mark on your character to say, “I don’t know.” Giving a poor answer damages your credibility.

Editor’s note: You can visit the blog of “Travels in a Blue Chair” at: http://www.blogcatalog.com/blogs/travels-in-a-blue-chair
My Mama Was a Spring Chicken
by Philip "Fishl" Kutner

Papa said, “Mama was a Spring Chicken.” He never said that she looked like a Spring Chicken or acted like a Spring Chicken.

To Papa, Mama was not that sexy siren whom he had married, or that strong farmwoman who tossed a feedbag on her shoulders and walk up a flight of stairs to the second floor of the chicken coop. To Papa, Mama was a Spring Chicken.

I think back to our time on the chicken farm near Flemington, NJ and what it was like. Every year in late winter we bought baby chicks from the hatchery and during the spring they were kept inside the chicken coops until early summer when we took them out to the range. Then in very late summer, when they were just getting ready to come into egg-production, we took the pullets back inside to the chicken coops.

I now realize what Papa meant. He had four boys, and Mama was the daughter that he had never had.

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IAYC Conference XIV - Star-Studded Speakers Line-up

The 2011 dream team of breakout-session speakers matches the caliber of the plenary speakers. Each morning starts with a plenary speaker, followed by four concurrent presentations (some with several on a panel). After lunch there will be two more sessions with a break before dinner. Each evening will have wonderful Yiddish entertainment.

PLENARY SPEAKERS

Eugene Driker is Vice-Chairman of the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Mass. His parents, Charles and Frances Driker, were founders of the Sholem Aleichem Institute in Detroit in 1927 where he attended the Sholem Aleichem Folk Schule. He is in his ninth year on the Board of Governors of Wayne State University, which houses the Cohn-Haddow Center for Judaic Studies. Driker is an attorney at law with a practice in downtown Detroit.

Prof. Sarah Moskowitz has a Ph.D. from Yeshiva University, and was at Cal. State U. Northridge. She wrote, Love Despite Hate: Child Survivors of the Holocaust and Their Adult Lives, and writes poetry in Yiddish. As a Visiting Scholar at The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, she translated the Yiddish poetry buried in the Ringelblum Archives. They were in two milk-cans and tins during the Holocaust and unearthed after WWII.

Prof. Kenneth Waltzer is Professor of History in James Madison College at MSU, Lansing, Director of MSU’s Jewish Studies Program, was Dean of MSU’s residential college in public affairs, and is a Holocaust scholar doing path-breaking research on youths in the camps for a forthcoming book, The Rescue of Children and Youths at Buchenwald.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS (PARTIAL LIST)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shirley Benyas</th>
<th>Michigan</th>
<th>Prof. Hy Berman</th>
<th>Minnesota</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cookie Blattman</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Kolye Borodulin</td>
<td>New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jack Boxer</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Douglas Cole</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
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<td>Judith Eisner</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Adrienne Cooper</td>
<td>York</td>
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<td>Alva Dworkin</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Prof. Al Feldman</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vivian Felson</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Jim Grey</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
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<td>Frank Handler</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Troim Katz Handler</td>
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<td>Prof. Yoshiji &quot;Yoshi&quot; Hirose</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Philip &quot;Fishl&quot; Kutner</td>
<td>California</td>
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<td>Susan Leviton</td>
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<td>Sharon Love</td>
<td>Canada</td>
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<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Cindy Paley</td>
<td>California</td>
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<td>Bill Primear</td>
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<td>MarylandAliza</td>
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<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Dr. Charles Silow</td>
<td>MichiganLori</td>
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<td>Ohio</td>
<td>Harold Ticktin</td>
<td>Ohio Dr.</td>
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<td>Asya Vaisman</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>Prof. Iosif Vaisman</td>
<td>Maryland</td>
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<td>Rochelle Zucker</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Dr. Barney Zumoff</td>
<td>New York</td>
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The official registration form is on page 15 and on the website at: www.derby.org/novi where you will find information about the hotel and up-to-date bios topics, trips, etc.
A Seder Night Without Matzos in a Soviet Prison in Baranovich
By Fishl Ludmirer

Editor’s note: This is Dr. Jack Berger’s translation from the Baranovich Yizkor Book, Volume I, gathered, compiled, and edited by Joseph Foxman, the father of Abraham H. Foxman (one of Jack’s classmates)—National Director of ADL (Anti-Defamation League). The book was published by the Baranovich Society in America, New York, 1964. This yizkor book contains the “Memoirs, Documents, and Eye-Witness Accounts, Dedicated to the Sacred Memory of Our Martyrs & Heroes, from Baranovich and its Environs, Who Perished During the Period of the Holocaust.”

Dr. Berger is on a mission to translate as many yizkor books as his health permits. He has already finished eight books. This is apropos for peysakh.

********

On 12 Nissan, it became 4 months that we were incarcerated in prison. God in heaven – how many incidents of imprisonment did we already go through in these short four months. In Mockiszky and Sołećzynek near Lida, we still believed that we would only be detained for a few days, as some of those who tried to cross the border before us, and we would be summarily released.

In the Lida prison, we were still being assured: you Torah scholars will certainly be released, but in the second pavilion of the Baranovich prison, in cell number 81 (55), there we were, 38 people, for more than three months, and tomorrow is the day to clean out the Hametz, and the day after, in the evening, is the night of the first Seder.... we are prohibited from eating any Hametz. And so, what is to be done about matzos?

Ach! If those dear Baranovich Jews only knew, that here in the prison, in their own city, there are 25 Jews, among them ten Torah scholars, and that all, as one, including Yank’leh the Communist from Kovno, decided that on the first Seder night, they will eat no Hametz, they would most certainly have sent in matzos. But the Baranovich Jews do not know, and they are kept from being informed as to who is languishing in their city, behind the walls of the prison....

We have no contact with the outside world. For us, only number 31 exists, where there are 17 cots, where in the old days, 17 genuine criminals would sleep, and here 38 people are crammed together, who wanted to leave this ‘liberated Garden of Eden’...

[It is] the Eve of Passover. Through the bars in the elevated prison windows, that reach practically up to the soffit, the bright rays of the sun shine in, and a piece of the blue sky can be seen.

Leib’eleh Ber’ish from the Bialystok Yeshiva is still certain, that the Creator of the Universe can still perform a miracle, and have all of us Jews set free. It will be, he says, our genuine festival of liberation. But the day moves on. On the western wall one can see the shadows of two large barred windows. It becomes evident... Leib’eleh’s confidence is not justified, and not even the belief that we will get matzos sent in at the last minute. It was yet another miracle, that we had, early on, sold off our ‘bundles’ of bread to the gentiles for eight portions of sugar (Leib’l among us), and were it not for that, we would have transgressed in possessing Hametz by default...

Night begins to fall. Spontaneously, all 25 of the Jews gather on two of the beds, on which the Torah scholars are sleeping. The Lawyer, Marek Cahan (a former syndic of the Polish periodical ‘Moment’) and Yank’leh Riback, also come over, and set themselves to begin the Maariv prayer for Festivals.

As the oldest of the Torah scholars, it falls to me to have the honor of leading the services. The heart is pained by a heavy weight of suffering, oppression, and indescribable feelings of sorrow; a minute earlier, I noticed that the perpetually hopeful young lad from Rawa-Ruska – Moshe Gruber, dissolved into whining tears...

I quickly run over to his bed, on which he had thrown himself, and buried his head in the prison-issued blanket. ‘What is the matter, Moshe?’ – I ask him – ‘Are you too beginning to break down? You, who are the one to always be the one to cheer us up? Is this what your Rebbe of Belz taught you?...’

Moshe quickly raises his head, wipes away the last of his tears, from his tear-stained face, and slightly embarrassed replies – ‘I reminded myself of my father’s Seder. And as you can see, it possessed me
entirely. But it’s over. ‘Well, pick yourself up, we are getting ready to pray,’ I say to him, and I immediately begin the prayer using the Festival melody: ‘Barchu et HaShem HaMevorakh,’ and the congregation responds ‘Baruch HaShem HaMevorakh LeOlam VaEd.’

The guard then raps on the door to cell number 31, and shouts out loud: ‘Prekatitye Shum!’ (*56) We pray more quietly. We recite the Hallel in unison, Hallel behind prison walls... a wellspring of tears erupts from each of us. The Jewish heart [in each of us] is crying, which in no way can encompass the suffering that his people have endured innocently, and beseeched the Father in Heaven – Oh Lord, deliver my soul, compassionate God, who is righteous....

The Jewish mind takes pride in the words of – the very stone, rejected by the builders has become the keystone – in the Lord’s name, we will cut them down and we will live through this. The congregation repeats, with great fervor, praying louder and louder... and we take no note of how, through the peep window, the guard is looking in, and immediately unlocks the heavy iron door, and remains standing there, agape.

It is truly a rare sight! Jews praying in a Soviet prison... ‘What is going on here?’ he asks. The lawyer Cahan steps out of the throng, and explains something to him in Russian. The guard heads for the exit, and the words ‘Tolko Bez Shumu’ (*57) reach my ears, along with a strong scraping sound of the keys in the iron door.

After wishing each other ‘Gut Yom Tov,’ we sit down to the Seder. We all seat ourselves about on our cots, which are in the southeastern corner of the cell. ‘My dear brethren in common woe’ – I say to them – ‘In this year, we will emulate the Seder of Mordechai’... I explain to them more precisely. We read in the Megillah, ‘And Mordechai passed – so what exactly did he pass over? – Our Sages tell us that – he fasted on Passover..., and we now face the need’ – I say further – ‘to perform such a Seder, but without matzos.... children!

Whoever knows the Haggadah by heart, should begin, and we will listen’. With a quiet whispering from all the surrounding Jews, and from the entire gentile cell, all of whom are looking at our corner with bated breath, Leib’leh begins the recitation of the Haggadah, with a strong complaint to Our Father in Heaven: ‘Why is this night different from all other nights? In our minds, all of us ask this same very pressing question – why is this Seder-night different from all other Seder-nights, that we have already lived through?... And so comes that ancient response, ‘We were slaves...’ slaves to alien Pharaohs... and we feel that this, indeed, is the appropriate reply. This is why our ancestors suffered, and this is why we suffer... our eternal tribulation, slaves and servants to foreign rulers, in alien kingdoms, but not in our own land, for ourselves...

Leib’leh reads the Haggadah continuously, as if it came straight out of the Siddur, and we hear this, and get lost in our own thoughts. But with a start, Leib’leh awakens us from our daydreaming. He is already at the end, the completion of the Passover Seder... Liberated to Zion, your city, in song – he ends. All of us awaken, even Yankl the Communist shouted, literally shouted: ‘Next Year in Jerusalem!’....

The door to the cell is vigorously opened. The guard runs in with a shout: ‘Go to sleep already, if not, you will all go into the dungeon.’ But who is listening to him at that moment. As soon as he leaves, we all begin to sing ‘Adir Hu...’ May he build His House Soon... Quickly...Quickly... In Our Day...Soon... Lord, Build....’

Mendele Gersztner, from Tarnow, sings all of the Passover songs: – Ekhad Mi Yodea, Chad Gadya, and just plain other cantorial pieces. We all feel a little more lively. We have gotten ourselves drunk on hope, on this very Seder-night, without matzos. We have a goal before our eyes... the future is so close, and lit by a clear and shining sun... and so who is really missing the matzos on this very Seder-night in prison, seeing that here, at hand, we have that very day that God has given us, so let us be happy with it – This is the day that the Lord hath made, let us be happy and rejoice in it....

Let us make a very significant point: On that Seder-night, Yankl Riback the Communist became a Zionist, a religious-nationalist Jew...

*55. Seemingly a typo, since it is subsequently given as Number 31, more than once.

*56. 'Cut out the noise!'

*57. 'Do this without noise'
Winner of the CIYCL Yiddish-Into-English Poetry Translation Contest
By Miriam Koral

This year’s winner is Dr. Joan Braman, of Bronx, NY, for her translation of the introduction to Elia Levita Bokhur’s poem, “Bove-Bukh (The Book of Bovo)”. Leah Zazeluyer of Rochester, NY honorable mention winner translated Los Angeles by Israel Emmiot.

The $360 prize is cosponsored by CIYCL and IAYC. CIYCL Director, Miri Koral, announced the winner and read the translation at CIYCL’s “Celebration of Yiddish Poetry Event” in Los Angeles, April 10, 2011.

The contest had seven entries from Australia, Canada, England, Scotland, and the US. Entrants ranged from seasoned Yiddish experts to newcomers who tried their poetic and Yiddish language skills on everything from well-known ballads to unfamiliar gems. Dr. Kathryn Hellerstein assisted the judging. She was a 1st-place winner of the 2nd CIYCL translation contest and the editor/translator of books of Yiddish poetry, including the Paper Bridges: Selected Poems of Kadya Molodowsky.

Elia Levita (1469 –1549), also known as Elijah Levita, Elias Levita, Eliahu Bakhur (“Eliahu the Bachelor”) was a Renaissance-period Hebrew grammarian poet and one of the first writers in the Yiddish language. His Bovo-Bukh, the most popular chivalric romance written in Yiddish, is "generally regarded as the most outstanding poetic work in Old Yiddish". It was written in 650 ottava rima stanzas, based on the popular Italian romance Buovo d’Antona, which, was based on the Anglo-Norman romance of Sir Bevis of Hampton.

Our winner, Dr. Joan Braman of Bronx, NY, holds a Ph. D in Clinical Psychology from Columbia Univ. With undergraduate and graduate degrees in English literature, she is well-versed in classic poetry. She has a background in Yiddish from attending the Arbeter Ring schools as a child. Her mother was a professional translator of Yiddish and Russian. She is retired and is working on a translation into Yiddish of Alice in Wonderland and on an original all-Yiddish musical comedy based on Alice in Wonderland. Dr. Braman was also the winner of CIYCL’s 2006 Poetry Translation Contest.

To read the winning translation and the Yiddish original, please visit www.yiddishinstitute.org.

Fishl’s Favorites (khshuvim)

The idea came while listening to the digital book recording of America’s Best Zoos: A Travel Guide for Fans and Families. As a visually impaired person, my “reading” is mainly limited to a computer where the print and contrast can be adjusted. So listening is an alternate source of information.

In hearing or seeing something new I switch into gear as how this information can be applied to my Yiddish or blind club interests/activities. This is the creative side I would like to share with you.

Using favorites as a Yiddish club program is an exciting idea. It is simple and gets everyone involved. Use all the categories, just some of them or add your own. Compile a list from your group and see what are the overall favorites. Use the third column as the Yiddish or transliteration. Der Bay’s website will have a new page with this terminology.

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Avner Yonai Recreates The Ger Mandolin Orchestra of the 1930’s
by Philip “Fishl “ Kutner

The concert was fantabulous (I coined a new word, a combination of fantastic and fabulous). In addition to the magnificent concert, meeting Avner’s parents from Israel was very, very special. We hope to have Avner as a presenter at the IAYC Conference in Novi.

I first met Avner Yonai at the last IAYC conference and he started to attend the Wednesday evening classes. Little did I know of his mission until he enthralled us about his effort to recreate the mandolin orchestra in which his grandfather played in Góra Kalwaria (Ger in Yiddish), Poland.

It all began when Avner saw a photo of the mandolin orchestra in which his grandfather performed. This inspired him to recreate his own orchestra and begin the hunt to locate the music that the orchestra might have played back in the 1920’s and 30’s.

Avner was born in Israel and came to the United States after his three-year stint in the IDF—a requirement for boys after finishing high school. His friend suggested that he come to the U.S. and drive tractor-trailers cross-country. After a while, they started a moving and storage company in California. Avner’s successful business venture has permitted him to travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina where he acquired the original picture of the orchestra.

Going back historically, in 1932 his father’s family emigrated from Poland to what was then Palestine. The only members of his mother’s family came three years later. The other relatives on his mother’s side perished in Treblinka, along with the other Jewish residents of Góra Kalwaria (Ger).

Ger is located on the Vistula River approximately fifteen miles southeast of Warsaw. This shtetl was famous as the seat of the Hasidic Ger Rebe. It had almost 4,000 Jews at the beginning of WWII. Jews represented almost half of the population.

The awakening of interest in recreating the orchestra came while Avner was viewing a film in which Elijah Wood was playing the part of a man who had returned to the shtetl where his family had been massacred. The date shown on the monument that commemorated the annihilation was identical to the month and day of his birth. This unusual coincidence started him on his remarkable journey.

He decided to learn about his prewar family. After viewing the film, he traveled to Góra Kalwaria to gather information about his ancestors. A Holocaust survivor showed him a Yizkor book with a photo of a mandolin orchestra in which his maternal grandfather, two great uncles, and a cousin, were players. The photo was circa early 1930s. From this he found long-lost relatives in Israel. Much of his genealogical research has been from attending genealogical conventions, the JewishGen website, and from the archives at YIVO in New York.

At this point Avner began looking to locate the sheet music that the orchestra might have performed. He scoured the music stores and libraries in the area and hired a researcher to delve into the archives in Warsaw and surrounding areas.

His goal was to have a concert that performed the music played eighty years ago. After locating sheet music the next steps were to organize a mandolin orchestra and find the venue for the performance.

He convinced Ellie Shapiro, festival director, to have the performance be a part of the 26th Annual Jewish Music Festival in Berkeley, California. It was held on March 6, 2011 in the beautiful 450-seat theater with the unusual name, Freight & Salvage (the sign is shown in the picture on the next page).

Mike Marshall, a world famous mandolin player, was convinced to direct and search for top-notch musicians to be part of the new Ger Mandolin Orchestra. By chance, the number of eleven turned out to be the exact number of the original orchestra.

The new group back row l-r are; Chris Acquavella, Radim Zenkl, Adam Rozkiewicz, Eric Stein, Dana Rath, Avner’s mother and dad (Israeli farmers), Avner, and his uncle Yitzhak Ribak. In front from l-r; Avi Avital, Brian Oberlin, Sharon Gilchrist, Jeff Warschauer, Tim Connell, and Mike Marshall.

The photo of the original orchestra shows the three Ribak brothers—bandleader, Berl, standing, his brother, Shlomo (in front, 4th from left) and Avner’s maternal grandfather, Dovid (2nd row far right).

The Orchestra is selecting, from their options, future performances in Europe and the U.S.
Arriving in Canada

My mom and dad came to Canada in the late 1920’s. The story of how this came about is an interesting one told in my booklet.

Mr. Greenblatt, a Mezritcher businessman living in Detroit, had a mission to bring orphans from Mezritch [Miedzyrzec Podlaski in Poland 40 miles east of Warsaw] to Canada, where Eastern European orphans were allowed in as agricultural workers. Greenblatt contacted Mr. Saxe, a prominent philanthropist from Toronto who volunteered to convert his large dairy farm in Georgetown, Ontario into an agricultural training school for orphans. He negotiated an agreement with the Canadian government to allow seventy-nine orphans into the country. My parents were among them.

My parents spent their first two years in Canada on Mr. Saxe’s farm taking care of cows, chickens, and horses. Mom kept a diary. In it, she described how homesick she felt during the dark winter months on the farm. But when spring came and everything came alive, her spirits rose.

Seventy years later, David Fleishman, Mr. Saxe’s grandson, a Toronto architect, made a documentary film to honour his grandfather’s work. It was called “A Man of Conscience.” My sister Rosalie and I watched it on CBC television. We couldn’t believe our eyes when we saw photos of my dad as a handsome young man of 15 on the farm. Then, in a live segment, I got excited again, there’s Mashe-Leah, Sure-Libe, Dovid Goldfarb,” only to realize that the people on screen were in fact the middle-aged children of old familiar faces with whom we had grown up. They had been brought together for a reunion on the farm.

Meeting and Marriage

After two years, the orphans dispersed. My mother settled in Windsor, to be near her aunt, Tante Roise in Detroit. Sadly, Tante Roise died soon afterwards. Mom worked in a sweatshop making sacks, and was surrounded by good friends, landslayt un shifbrider (friends from her hometown and from the boat), and other grine (immigrants) with whom she worked and socialized.

My father went to Toronto and got a job as a barber. A few years later, he visited Windsor, and met Sheyndl again. They had known each other from Mezritch, where his sister Esther and my mom’s sister Masha had been best friends. He was dark and handsome—gorgeous in fact. She was cute, lively, honest—a Mezritcher, “an eygene” (one of his own). Both my parents were fundamentally alone and lonely. He was very attracted to her and remained so all his life.

They were married two weeks later, on December 2, 1934, and I was born exactly nine months and a day afterwards. "I didn’t lose any time," my dad used to say, "I took action!" I remember that he loved to sing the Yiddish song, Sheyn vi di levone.

About My Parents

My Mother

Mom was a brenfayer (a ball of fire). She loved to walk, swim, be with friends, and raise money for various causes. Like her father, Leybl, Sheyndl was active in a Yiddish theatre group, played leading roles, and had a beautiful singing voice. Dos epele falt nisht vayt fun beymele—she followed in her father’s footsteps.

My mother was passionate about singing. The house was filled with song. I was told that as a toddler of six-months, before I could speak, she would take me out of bed to sing for visitors. My specialties were “Meadowland” and “A brivele der mamen.”

My mom had been a soloist whenever she sang in a choir. However, sadly, in her fifties she came down with the flu. When she finally recovered, her vocal cords had suffered permanent damage—her speaking voice became heyzerik (hoarse) and low pitched and her singing voice was all but gone.

My mom was not about to let a minor detail like this stop her from her beloved singing. So when the Windsor Jewish Community Council formed a choir, Mom sang with the basses—all of whom were men of course! She couldn’t sing solo, but was still delighted with her new role of singing in the choir.
My Father

My father’s temperament was very different. He was more of a loner, a homebody. For him everything had to be “mit a tolk un a rekhenung” (weighed and measured)—the opposite of my mom.

He was very devoted to me and Rosalie, and proud of us. He took me to see wonderful Russian films in East Windsor. I sat on his shoulders at political rallies in the Windsor market. He loved classical music and always had the CBC on in his truck. Once he took me to hear the opera singer Alexander Kipnis in recital in Detroit. This was an unusual thing for him to do—he wasn’t a big “goer” in general, and who had money for such things? He never missed taking me and Rosie out whenever a fair or amusement park came to town. His life was his work and his family.

Social Justice

After two years on the farm, my father worked as a barber in Toronto. When he tried to get time off to go to school, his boss refused. Between his anger at the boss and his strong sense of justice and workers’ rights, Dad became a linker (left-winger). He marched in picket lines, and helped recruit workers in the garment industry to join the union.

After a day of barbering, my father would go out on foot peddling smallwares long after dark.

[Editor’s note: Small wares may be used as one words or two. “It refers to small kitchen and bar appliances, glassware, tableware, and flatware that today is sold to restaurants, cafeterias, caterers, mobile food servers, bars, taverns, food or beverage services in grocery stores, hotels and motels, amusement parks, theaters, casinos, country clubs, and similar social or recreational facilities.”]

Mom used to bring his supper to the barbershop. He was afraid to come home to eat, for he might be tempted to stay. Years later, he gave up barbering altogether and became a one-man wholesale jobber. He worked very hard—Saturdays and Sundays too—either on the road or unpacking stock in our basement.

Social and political issues were the order of the day in our house. His leftism had a strong influence on me. This resulted in a couple of amusing incidents. In the third grade the teacher opened a discussion on, “Who is the greatest man in the world?” King George was offered up, Churchill, and others. I raised my hand and said, “Stalin.”

“What?!” my teacher said. “I think the greatest man in the world is Premier Joseph Stalin of the Soviet Union,” I repeated. Needless to say, it went over “big.”

On another occasion, I brought my piano teacher, a nun at the Ursuline Convent School of Music, a book of Songs of the Red Army Chorus. Need I say more.

My father was an exceptionally generous person, and would give the shirt off his back to anyone who was in need. If someone came privately to our home for help, he never refused—no note, no interest. Honesty and integrity were very important to him. But he didn’t trust public campaigns for money.

Dad said, “Der oylen iz a goylem (people are fools). You can convince them of anything.” He recognized when “the emperor was naked,” no matter what others thought.

My dad always said he was the richest person in the world. Why? “I can wear only two shoes at a time—right?”

"I can sleep in only one bed at a time—no?"

"I can eat only one meal at a time—yes?"

"I have everything I need and then some. No one is richer than me."

Although my father was not at all a religious man, he lived by the fundamental principles expressed in the Talmud. Life is built on three foundations—learning, work, and good deeds.

About the Author: Pearl Levy, grew up in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. She then moved to Montreal, where she resides with her husband, Sam. They have two daughters, Bronna and Naomi.

Pearl taught English and Yiddish in elementary schools in Montreal. She also spent thirty-six years with the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theater, performing in numerous productions.
International Association of Yiddish Clubs
14th Conference, August 26th–29th, 2011 Sheraton Detroit Novi, Novi, MI
“Yiddish ALIVE !!!”

A. REGISTRATION FORM:

Choose Option A or Any Combination of: B, C, D, E
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[ ] B. Friday (D) = $80.00 or [ ] With Glatt Kosher Dinner = $90.00
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TOTAL CONFERENCE FEES ENCLOSED = $ ______________ (U.S. Dollars Only)

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: “IAYC 2011 Conference”

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B. HOTEL: For Reservations call Sheraton Detroit Novi Hotel: 1-866-837-4180 (mention IAYC Conference)
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F. CONF. WEB ADDRESS: www.derbay.org ->International Association of Yiddish Clubs ->Novi, Mi
When Mama said that someone was *mies*, she never referred to his or her physical appearance. “God made people different—the ugly ones were the complainers.”

Mama hated complainers. “If something can be done about it, go ahead and do it—if not forget it.”

Mama’s philosophy was, “Everything is okay, and if it is not okay, then it’s okay too.”

*Krekhtsn* besides meaning to complain also means to groan in pain, *kvetshn* also has another meaning, to squeeze. Do not mistake it for *kvitshn* meaning to scream.

I learned my zest for life from Mama. She did not have much formal education, but she was a natural born philosopher. “I can still hear her words in Yiddish saying, “Az es iz nisht vi azoy du vilst, tu epes, ober krekhtst nisht un kvetsh nisht.”
Dr. Harold Black, o”h 1919 -2006
IAYC Lifetime Service to Yiddish Award Recipient for 2011
14th Conference, August 26th–29th, 2011 - Sheraton Detroit Novi, Novi, MI

Dr. Harold Black o”h, “Harold” was born Aaron Hershel Schwartz in Goniondz, Poland in 1919. His family fled in the 1920s living first in Mexico, where he attended the first Jewish kheyder in Mexico City.

When entry into the United States was available, the family came to Detroit. At this time, Harold was 10 years old. Being fluent in Spanish and Yiddish, he quickly learned English. At Northern High he was on the debate team, and went on to Wayne State University, earning a B.A. and Masters Degrees in Urban Planning and Sociology. He earned a PhD in Urban Planning from the University of Michigan. While in Detroit, he was a pioneer in the Jewish Humanistic movement through The Jewish Parents Institute.

In 1974 they moved to Washington, DC, where he spent his working life as an Urban Planner, but his passion was writing. He wrote poetry and short stories, most of which had a Jewish theme. Many were published in periodicals and magazines. His wife, Ann, and he were founding members of Machar, The Washington D.C. Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism.

His love and devotion to Yiddishkayt led him to join and become President of Yiddish of Greater Washington. He organized the first national conference of Yiddish clubs at the University of Maryland in 1993. Later, along with Elaine Mann, he chaired the IAYC conference held in Chevy Chase, Maryland at the 4H International Conference Center.

In 1996, Jonathan Sunshine, Arnold Kuzmack, Karl Girshman, and Harold incorporated IAYC in Maryland. The Articles of Incorporation state: “To encourage, support, and spread the teaching and knowledge of Yiddish, and to foster Yiddish-oriented study of history, culture, and traditions of the Jewish people.” IAYC has brought thousands of like-minded to expand their knowledge and love of their Jewish heritage and “schmooze”, as Harold said, with their “brothers and sisters” at the conferences or partake of the information sent to the clubs.

Harold and Ann returned to the Detroit area in the Spring of 2005, to The Park at Trowbridge Senior Retirement and Home in Southfield. Harold passed away in 2006. In his honor Ann will accept the award at the conference.

Editor’s note: Friends, family and other lovers of Yiddish who wish to honor Harold may send a contribution to the IAYC, which is establishing a scholarship in his honor. Checks should be made out to IAYC and sent to Gerald Gerger, 6820 Oyster Cove, West Bloomfield, MI 48323-2051.
A Calculating Man
By Alva Dworkin and Jack Boxer

A local United Way worker realized that the organization had never received a donation from the town’s most successful Jewish lawyer. In charge of contributions, the agent called the attorney to persuade him to contribute. “Our research shows that out of a yearly income of around $500,000, you give not a penny to charity. Wouldn’t you like to give something back to the community?”

The lawyer mulled this over for a moment and replied, “First, does your research also show that my mother is dying after a long illness, and has had medical bills several times beyond her annual income?”

Embarrassed, the representative mumbled, “Umm…….no.” The lawyer then interrupted, “Or that my brother, a disabled veteran, is blind and confined to a wheelchair?”

The stricken representative again began to stammer out an apology, but was interrupted again, …. “Or that my sister’s husband was killed in a traffic accident leaving her penniless with three children?”

The humiliated Rep., completely beaten, said simply, “I had no idea.” The lawyer made his point, “So, if I don’t give any money to them, why should I give any to you?”

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Alva Dworkin

Alva graduated from the Detroit, Michigan Workmen’s Circle Mitlshul. Her parents spoke Yiddish and were active in the Workmen’s Circle. She has Master’s Degrees in Art education and Human Development and was a nursery school teacher in two Jewish schools.

Alva taught Yiddish at the Workmen’s Circle / Arbeter Ring shule, Haddassah adult Yiddish classes and facilitates a Yiddishkayt group at the Jewish Center for the Institute of Retired Professionals. She is a member of ”Freylekhe Fraynd” a Yiddish speaking women’s group. It meets monthly on Saturday at noon.

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An Oysgerekhnter Man
Fun Alva Dworkin un Jack Boxer

A lokal Fareynikte Veg arbeter hot realazirt az der organizatsie hot nit gekrogn a matone fun ded shtetl’s mershtn Yiddishn advokat. Der firer fun matones hot im geklingt un hot im gebetn tsu shytayeren. “Es iz farshribn, un mir veysn az mit an untershtand fun arum $500,000, ir hot gorntsht gegebn far tsedoke. Volt ir nisht gevolt tsurikgebn tsu der klal?”

Der advokat hot getraekt a moment un hot im geentfert, “Tsum ershtns, iz es nisht ongeshribn az mayn mamme shtarbt nokh a longe kronkayt, un hot meditsinen vos kostn efsher a por mol mer vi ir yorlekhe untershtand?”

Farshemt, der Rep. hot gebeblt, “Um…neyn.” Der advokat iz ongegangen, “Un az mayn bruder, a farkriplter veterin, iz a blinder un blaybt in a redershtal?

Der farshoflter Rep. hot ongefangen tsu beblen nokh vider un zikh antshuldikt, az der advokat hot im ongezogt nokh amol…. “oder az mayn shvester’s man iz derharget gevorn in a farkerter tsufal, un zi iz geblibn on gelt mit dray kinder?”

Der Rep., in gantsn a dershlogner, in a poshet veg hot im gezogt, “Ikh hob dos nisht gevust.” Der advokat hot gemakht zayn punkt, “Az ikh gib zey gorntsht, farvos zol ikh dir epes gebn?”

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Alva Dworkin at the Conference

Alva along with her partner Jack Boxer will be presenting at the IAYC Conference in Novi, MI at the XIV Conference of the International Association of Yiddish Clubs. She is on the conference planning committee.

The presentation will be examples of jokes and stories from her new book, Gefrishte Mayses (it hopefully will be available in time for the conference. The title is a play on words from “gefrishte matses” (matse bray).

Alva lives in Southfield, Michigan and can be reached by e-mail at: alvadworkin@sbcglobal.net
Chelm’s Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra Ensemble
by Philip Fishl Kutner

It all started down by the river when Beylig was discussing the merits of her mishpokhe with Zisl while they were washing the family clothes. It was a beautiful Wednesday morning and the clothes would be hung to dry in the hot afternoon sun.

Just as on previous Wednesdays, each would brag about their relatives. Who knows how much was truth and how much was embellished. It seemed that both had second cousins who played in the Great Warsaw Symphony Orchestra.

It didn’t end there, for when the women went home they discussed the day’s events with their families at the supper table. Naturally the husbands told of their talented cousins. When the women met at the river the following week, they had new information to share.

It was too good to keep it a secret, and soon all of Chelm was chatting about the great musical talent in their families. If the cousins were musically gifted, then naturally the Chelm children had to possess some of this in their blood (genes).

When the topic of discussion had gone from just the women washing at the river banks of the Uherka River, to the blacksmith shop, to the grinding mill, and even following minkhe services, it was time to bring it up to the Chelm Shtot Council.

Everything was done fairly at Chelm Shtot Council meetings. Both sides always were given equal time. “Will all those who wish to speak in favor of Chelm having a Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra Ensemble please stand on the right, and those against it stand on the left.” So spoke the mayor. Eleven women rose and stood on the right. None stood on the left.

“Let’s use the shofer” interrupted Kolye the Cantor. “It’s not used most of the year and we already have it. Besides Shimonele already knows to how to blow it.” Thus the horn section was started.

Kolye’s wife Gitele helped by suggesting that gragers would be a natural addition for the percussion section.

Another percussion instrument was Pareve Pesah Pot Lids. Milkhedike and fleyshedike pot lids could not be used, in case they were mixed up.

Hymie’s daughter Hinkele said that her brother Heshy had a harmonica, and that he could play it.

“That gives me an idea,” said Ruvn. “I have a pair of children’s rattles. They make a lot of noise.”

“That gives us only 8 instruments and only two strings,” whispered Fishl der Fayfer.

“You’re right,” added Feygele di Fonforte in her funny voice. “Fishl, why not whistle? All you need is your mouth.”

“Mame doesn’t let me fayf,” was Fishl’s response. “She says that nice Jewish boys don’t whistle.”

To this very day Chelm’s Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra Ensemble has only eight musicians.
A ‘Donkey’s Burial’ in the Little Shtetl of Stalovicy
(Der Tog- Morgen Zhurnal, June 19, 1958)
Sent in with introduction by Dr. Jack Berger

An important aspect of Jewish folklore is the panoply of ‘old wives’ tales’ that festoons our traditions. The opening sentence of the one below offers a cautionary insight into where these ‘traditions’ come from, and how important it is to understand what is central to our faith, as opposed to the incrustation of barnacles that may have accreted because of our long history.

Wearing a shtrymel has about as much to do with Judaism as scourging one’s self with whips to expiate sins... .

A ‘Donkey’s Burial’ in the Little Shtetl of Stalovicy

Among the Slavic people, there is a belief that a person can sell his soul to the spirits of the underworld. Jews, who lived among the Slavic peoples for more than a thousand years, adopted this belief, from which is derived the expression: ‘he sold his soul to the devil.’

About a half century ago, in Byelorussia, there was a very famous miracle worker, the Rabbi, R’ Shlom’keh of Wileika. A faithful disciple of the first Rebbe of Ljahavicy, R’ Mordkheh’leh, who said of R’ Shlom’keh of Wileika, that he is a ‘man possessed of the Holy Spirit.’

One time, an apparition came to R’ Shlom’keh of Wileika in a dream about the Miller from Stalovicy, Chaim-Leib, who was already dead and buried, who said to him that in kasherhing his mill for Passover he was caught between the millstones and was ground up and killed.

Paying no mind to the fact that he had died while attempting to fulfill a mitzvah, because he was kasherhing the mill for the use of the entire Jewish community of the shtetl in general, the Hevra Kadisha in Stalovicy gave him a ‘donkey’s burial’ behind the wall of the cemetery.

R’ Shlom’keh of Wileika, who was born in Stalovicy, came there to the shtetl to investigate the matter, together with R’ Yekhiel’keh of Mys. The community presented the argument that Chaim-Leib the Miller consorted with underworld spirits and ‘no-goods,’ and that there were ‘bad forces’ at work within him, which merited that he should be given a ‘donkey’s burial.’

Rabbi Shlom’keh of Wileika, and R’ Yekhiel’keh of Mys invited a ‘third’ to join them, the Rabbi of Haradzišca, and as a [fully constituted] Bet-Din of three, they ruled, after hearing all the witnesses, that Chaim-Leib the Miller never sold his soul to the devil, and that he was killed while acting to perform a mitzvah, and therefore was deserving of a respected place in the cemetery.

The Hevra Kadisha then came to the cemetery and begged the deceased for forgiveness, in the name of the entire community of the shtetl, and moved the wall of the cemetery three aisles over from the grave, and in this manner, Chaim-Leib the Miller received his right and was absolved of a false accusation, that he had sold his soul to the devil and that there was ‘no good’ residing within him.

This story was recorded in the Pinkas of Stalovicy, and additional details are known to me from my family, who are descended from Chaim-Leib the Miller.

Editor’s note: Folklore is the overall category of storytelling that includes legends, oral history, proverbs, jokes, customs, and traditions of a culture.

The major Jewish folklore archives and research center is at Hebrew University and was founded by my dear friend Prof. Dov Noy.

Storytelling can be part of Yiddish club gatherings or an entire meeting can be set aside for it.

There is a national organization of Jewish storytellers. Their website is at: http://www.jewishstorytelling.org

They have a list of storytellers at: http://www.jewishstorytelling.org/biblio.html

In addition there is a selected and annotated bibliography of current Jewish story collections at: http://www.jewishstorytelling.org/directory.html
The League for Yiddish / Afn Shvel magazine is pleased and proud to invite all readers of Der Bay and all interested parties to a Special Opening Program and Exhibit in honor of several important anniversaries of great interest to lovers of mame-loshn. The program will be held Wednesday, July 6 at 6 P.M. at the Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16th St. New York City.

Seventy years ago, in March 1941, the first issue of the all-Yiddish Afn Shvel was published and it has been coming out continuously ever since! Not only are we celebrating the 70th anniversary of Afn Shvel but we are also celebrating the 30th anniversary of our current publisher, the League for Yiddish, and the 75th anniversary of the founding of our first publisher, The Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonization.

The bilingual (Yiddish/English) program will introduce people to the history and achievements of these three Yiddish entities. For over 30 years, the Freeland League worked to create a mass Jewish settlement outside the Land of Israel in order to rescue Jews and Jewish culture from Europe. Their most notable projects include attempts to establish settlements in Australia, Tasmania and Surinam.

In his talk, “No Land Without Heaven: Isaac Nachman Steinberg and the Freeland League”, Adam Rovner, Assistant Professor of English and Jewish Literature at the University of Denver, will briefly discuss the history and work of the Freeland League. Rovner has actually travelled to England, Israel, Kenya, Madagascar, Suriname, and Tasmania to trace the history of the Jewish political ideology of Territorialism through archives and on the ground.

Dr. Rakhmiel Peltz, professor of Judaic Studies at Drexel University, will speak on “The Yiddish Imperative: From Freeland League to League for Yiddish.” His presentation will focus on the history of the League for Yiddish. In addition to publishing Afn Shvel the League for Yiddish has advocated for high standards in Yiddish and has executed a number of important educational projects including the publishing of Yiddish educational materials and a film series on Yiddish writers.

The League is currently preparing an English-Yiddish dictionary that was started by its founder, Dr. Mordkhe Schaechter.

Dr Sheva Zucker, current director of the League for Yiddish, and editor-in-chief of Afn Shvel will speak on “The Changing Mission of a Yiddish Magazine: The History of Afn Shvel.”

A special treat will be a presentation by Naftali Ejdelman, “Yiddish Farm: A Modern-day Territorialist Project.” He initiated the Yiddish Farm Project commencing its first year of activity this summer. Naftali has organized a group of young people interested in founding a Yiddish-speaking farm-based community drawing heavily on the ideology of the Freeland League and the League for Yiddish, founded by his renowned grandfather Dr. Mordkhe Schaechter.

Rounding out the evening will be a musical program presented by Yelena Shmuelenson, star of the Yiddish scene of the film A Serious Man and Binyumen Schaechter, director of the JPPC (Jewish People’s Philharmonic Chorus), featuring a rarely heard repertoire of songs about Jewish settlements, realized and unrealized, including Birobdizhan, Argentinian colonies, Madagascar and Israel.

For more information on this unique program visit us at: http://leagueforyiddish.org/events.html

You may visit the exhibit June through October.

Editor’s note: Dr. Sheva Zucker was a keynote speaker at the 13th IAYC conference in La Jolla, CA. She is the Executive Director of the League for Yiddish, and has taught and lectured on Yiddish language and literature on five continents, and at major universities including Columbia, Duke, Bar-Ilan, and Russian State Humanities University.

She is the author of the textbooks, Yiddish: An Introduction to the Language, Literature Culture, Vols. 1 & II college and adult education students.

For several years she was the translation editor of The Pakn Tréger, the magazine of the Yiddish Book Center. She writes and translates mostly on topics related to women in Yiddish literature.
Freidenreich, Fradle Pomerantz, Passionate Pioneers, The Story of Yiddish Secular Education in North America; 1910-1960, Foreword by Jonathan D. Sarna (Teaneck NJ; Holmes & Meier, 2010), with an accompanying CD

Reviewed by Lifsa Schachter, Professor Emeritus, Siegal College of Jewish Studies, Cleveland OH*

The story of Jewish Education in America has been told in many arenas but until the publication of this study by Freidenreich it has been largely silent about secular Yiddish education, not a minor and insignificant byway, but widespread and creative. Freidenreich, who grew up in this system went on to become a prominent Jewish educator in America as well as in Israel. Upon her retirement she decided to write about her roots and the yiddishkayt they nurtured in her and in countless others.

Expecting to find no more than twenty cities sponsoring these schools in the United States and Canada, she was amazed to find 160 communities with close to 1,000 schools and 39 sleep away camps during the heyday of this movement. The book is a comprehensive overview of these institutions including supplementary and day schools, the first Jewish language residential camps and the first Jewish pre-schools. She discusses the organizations that sponsored them, the largely immigrant population they served, the various ideological contexts in which they first flourished and then declined. It includes descriptions of the educational programs of camps and schools and many poignant stories about the institutions and people that were involved.

The book is important on two levels: it redresses an historical oversight in the literature of Jewish education and it tells a story of relatively undocumented educational creativity. It will come as a surprise to many that the Yiddish secular schools innovated many of the features that became associated with the best of education.

These were the first schools to educate girls and boys, to integrate the arts, music, dance, dramatics, and to advocate life-long learning (the schools sponsored classes for community adults), and to see the importance of camping for education (‘from camp to school and school to camp’ was the slogan) to advocate service learning (students participated in community projects, locally and internationally) and to see the importance of informal education, with children, as young as eight, belonging to shule clubs and traveling to regional and national conferences.

In connection with some talks I gave based on the book I interviewed a number of people now in their seventies and early eighties who attended the Yiddish schools—the shuln—in their youth. All had the same message: they loved the camps and the shuln; they vividly remembered the experiences, the teachers and their classmates, and they reported those years as their best years.

When I reported this to Ms. Freidenreich, she told me that she had interviewed dozens of people for her book and consistently got the same message. Not once did she, or I, hear the equivalent of the familiar litany, “I hated Hebrew school….”

* This review will soon appear in the Brandeis Univ. Network for Jewish Educational Research newsletter.

Editor’s note Prior to her Aliyah in 1989, she was the Associate Director of JESNA (Jewish Education Service of North America). During her 19-year tenure there, she was Director of Methods and Materials, Lay Leadership Consultant, and Director of Action Research and conducting community studies. She acted as JESNA’s liaison and education consultant to other national North American Jewish agencies and bureaus of Jewish education.

Fradle has worked as a teacher, principal, curriculum writer, camp director, researcher, lecturer, and consultant. Her many publications include a U.S. Pentagon sponsored nine-year project resulting in a zero-based curriculum for the U.S. armed forces. The Jewish Theological Seminary awarded Fradle the distinguished degree of Doctor of Pedagogy, honoris causa.

In Israel she taught at Bet Berl Academic College and Tel Aviv University, and was the Director of International Relations at MOFET, the Israel consortium of teacher training institutions.

Passionate Pioneers is a 530-page book that features photos of memorabilia, camp and shule brochures, diplomas, and excerpts from interviews. The accompanying music CD features 15 selected songs in Yiddish sung at the schools and camps. Both soft and hard cover editions are available online from: Amazon.com, Bookdepository.com, bookstores, and the publisher, Holmesandmeier.com
FOUR TRANSLATORS TRANSLATE SHOLOM ALEICHEM
Presented at Modern Languages Assoc., Toronto, Dec. 28, 1997
By Aliza Shevrin

Translating has been compared to the way a musician or an actor turns a score or a script into a performance. The translator takes the original text and 'performs' it in a new language. Just as the musician must make the score come alive for the audience, so must the translator turn a vibrant text from one language into a living text in another.

Like the performing artist, the translator must transform what is written and unavailable in one language into a viable performance in another and available language by means of technique, talent of interpretation, thorough knowledge of the medium, its authors' vocabulary and intent, understanding of the original and its place historically and culturally.

Gunther Schuller, the noted conductor, in his recent book, "The Compleat Conductor." Oxford Univ. Press) describes how he listened meticulously to dozens of recordings of eight works from the standard orchestral repertory to examine how closely their different conductors adhered to the scores.

He writes. "There... ought to be a moral obligation, a sense of unalterable respect for the great literature comprising our Western musical heritage; a sense that the art of conducting must be seen as a sacred trust to translate into a meaningful expressive acoustical reality, with as much insight and fidelity as is humanly possible, those musical documents -the scores, the texts - left us by the great composers."

The analogy can obviously be carried only so far by substituting the word author for composer, but it is a good model. In both cases, the score, read text, is the first and last word. The musical score provides certain prescriptions: the exact notes in an exact meter, metronome markings as a guide to tempo, and dynamic markings as the basis for further individual interpretive nuances. Only rhythmic flexibility, phrasing and color are left unresolved by the score.

By contrast, the written text provides nothing more than the words written by a particular author at a particular time in a particular language of a particular culture. Does this absence of markings then make it more difficult or easier for the literary translator? Does a translator have more choices, more leeway without the prescriptions provided by music annotation? What is the range of freedom given the translator to interpolate, interpret, or get into the very mind of the author in attempting to find equivalents.

While still needing to carry out that sacred trust advocated by Schuller, the translator must attempt to convey the original meaning in a new language whose words carry a multitude of new and different connotations with the unique structure of that language, its cultural usages, and its idioms as practiced in the past and in the present. In the end, we can only expect different "performances" from different translators.

Yet, are there criteria by which we can judge the aptness of a "performance", as we feel we can with a musical performance? Critics do judge whether the performer has remained true to the score. It even happens that a critic will compliment a performer for a unique interpretation that discovers something new in the score. Assuming on the part of musician, actor, and translator are mastery of the vocabulary of the medium, technique, fluency, and expertise.

Given the wide range of choices, clearly there can be no gross errors, no flagrant mistranslations, elisions, or gratuitous additions unless done for purposes of clarity and mentioned either in an introduction or footnote. Here is an example of a mistranslation bordering on the humorous from a recent Sholom Aleichem translation. The idiom, a farshlepte krenk, which refers to something unpleasantly long and drawn-out, like an unfinished thesis or an interminable kitchen remodeling, was translated as "a seven-year itch."

The translator did not know what the American idiom meant, nor had he seen the film of the same name. "Zi hot geveynt shhtilerheyt," can be translated as, "She wept silently," or, "She cried quietly," as they have the same meaning and as English has a larger vocabulary to choose from. Many other Yiddish words, notably curses and words of supplication to the Almighty, have fewer English equivalents. But what might some helpful criteria be? I suggest four, with some trepidation...
1. Wherever possible the literal meaning must be retained. Phrases and longer passages must not be omitted, a practice that is often followed by translators up against a tough section. All notes must be played.

2. Idioms, the bane of all translators, must find their equivalents, because they constitute the tight, compact linguistic springs that economically provide movement and coloration.

3. The literal meaning and idiomatic equivalents must be subservient to the writer’s style. It is the style that determines the diction or range of linguistic choices. The translator must enter into the writer’s mode of expression. Sholom Aleichem’s style, for example, is earthy, ironic, deceptively simple, and filled with the expressive gusto of characters who loved to talk. I.B. Singer’s style, on the other hand, is spare, his straightforward declarative sentences creating a powerful, forward-thrusting engine that quickly moves you into the story.

4. Most important, a great literary work, like all of the great art, it is intrinsically alive. This vitality must be transmuted into the new language. The new words must live on the page as they do in the original text.

These significans criteria might be used to judge how close one has come to performing the text in a new language.

While preparing a translation of a Sholom Aleykhem children’s short story, I had three other translations of the same story, “Gazlonim,” variously translated as ‘Murderers,’ ‘Bandits,’ and ‘Robbers.” Thus I was able to simultaneously track each translator word by word alongside the original. The differences were startling, more than the usual variations of a few degrees each way. This is especially true when, as in this case, the chosen text is quite idiomatic.

I distributed the first page of “Gazlonim,” in the original and as translated by four translators, myself included. Let me read a section in Yiddish and then the four translations, then I will give examples of where the translator failed to meet the criteria earlier described. If we were in a seminar, each phrase and sentence would be studied in great detail.

The story is narrated in first person by a young lad named Leybl. It is the day of Lag B’Omer, a Jewish spring holiday celebrated with outings and picnics. His schoolmates have come to pick him up for the celebration and find him asleep. They tease him for having overslept and make fun of his name. Leybl.

Editor’s note: Aliza Shevrin has translated eight volumes, from Yiddish to English, of Sholem Aleichem’s work, more than any other translator. She will be a lecturer at the IAYC conference in Novi, Michigan, August 26-29, 2011.

Aliza grew up in Brooklyn, New York in a Yiddish-speaking family—recent immigrants to America, as were all her relatives and neighbors. Till the age of 15, she attended after-school secular Jewish schools taught in Yiddish. She first translated several short stories and a novel of Isaac Bashevis Singer, which were published in the late 1960s. Aliza belongs to a leyenkrazv in Ann Arbor. She published A Treasury of Sholom Aleichem Children’s Stories, and has sold over 18,000 copies. Wandering Stars, Tevey the Dairyman, and Motl the Cantor’s Son are her ninth, tenth, and eleventh published translations.

Who is a Jew?
by Sonia Pressman Fuentes

This is to share with you an experience I had at the Jewish Federation at the first film of the Sarasota Jewish Film Festival called Saviors in the Night. It is a fictionalized story of a true story of how some German farmers hid Jews during the Holocaust.

During the Question and Answer period, a man in the audience asked if there had been any Jews in Hitler’s Army. The woman moderator said she had never heard of such a thing and another man in the audience who said he’d been in Germany after WW II with the government said they had looked for Jews who had been in Hitler’s Army, as they wanted to hire them, and found something like one.

I then mentioned to the audience the book called Hitler’s Jewish Soldiers written by my friend Bryan Mark Rigg some years ago, and said Bryan had found 100,000 (actually the figure is 150,000) Jewish soldiers in Hitler’s Wehrmacht, some in Hitler’s inner circle. You can read about it at: http://www.amazon.com/Hitlers-Jewish-Soldiers-Descent-Military/dp/07006135
Zane Buzby Honored with Local Hero Award

KCET and Union Bank Honored Zane Buzby with the Local Hero Award for her humanitarian efforts to help elderly Holocaust survivors.

"The real triumph for me is the discovery that one can dramatically change a person’s life with a simple act of kindness ... To have created a warm and loving family of strangers where before there was only isolation and hopelessness."

Zane’s award was conferred in recognition of her ten-year effort to sustain the lives of Eastern European Survivors of the Holocaust through her founding of (SMP) The Survivor Mitzvah Project.

Zane Buzby is a successful television director, producer, and committed humanitarian. She has directed over 200 episodes of network television including such hit comedies as "Golden Girls", "Newhart", and "Married...with Children". She has produced and directed television series and pilot programs for CBS, ABC, NBC, HBO, FOX, Columbia Pictures, Warner Brothers, Universal Pictures, Disney, Comedy Central and Paramount Pictures.

Ms. Buzby began her professional career as a classically trained actor in New York. After being discovered by Carl Reiner, she was cast in the feature films Oh God and the cult classic, blockbuster hit Cheech & Chong’s Up In Smoke. Her performance as hippie groupie Jade East received rave reviews from critics. Ms. Buzby co-starred opposite Jerry Lewis in Cracking Up, and she also appeared in Rob Reiner’s This Is Spinal Tap as the hip Rolling Stone reporter.

Ms. Buzby’s life took a dramatic turn during a "roots" trip that she made to Eastern Europe in 2001. Behind the "Iron Curtain", with help from Professor Dovid Katz in Lithuania, she connected with elderly Holocaust survivors in their eighties and nineties who were ill and alone, living in poverty. She was shocked to see their dire circumstances.

They were struggling to survive, lacking the means to buy even the most basic of human necessities: food medicine, heat and shelter. Zane felt compelled to help. In concert with Professor Katz, they expanded the search for other survivors in dire need. Her initial aid efforts served as the catalyst for the creation of "The Survivor Mitzvah Project".

Partnering with Chic Wolk, a local Los Angeles philanthropist, the SMP grew. In 2008, it became a 501c3 non-profit public charity that now helps over 1000 survivors monthly in seven countries in Eastern Europe. Ms. Buzby’s grassroots organization, The Survivor Mitzvah Project, is the only organization worldwide that provides direct and continuous financial aid to these last survivors of the Holocaust who receive no financial aid from any other organization. The Survivor Mitzvah Project is their only lifeline.

"There are thousands and thousands of Holocaust survivors living in horrific conditions, still waiting for aid. I have to believe that there are enough good people out there who will stand up for these survivors and say, yes, I will help."

Using her directorial skills and storytelling abilities, Ms. Buzby aspires to impart the history and the plight of these survivors to the local community, inspiring people young and old to participate in this urgent humanitarian effort. She is in constant correspondence with the survivors the SMP helps, and has created The Survivor Mitzvah Project’s educational archive of their life histories and Holocaust testimonies. Buzby is currently making a documentary, "FAMILY OF STRANGERS", about the survivors she visits on SMP’s humanitarian aid expeditions.

In a tireless effort, Zane Buzby and The Survivor Mitzvah Project help elderly Holocaust survivors live out their final years with dignity, and with the knowledge that people far away have not forgotten them.

"Together we can write a more hopeful final chapter to the Holocaust, one of friendship, love and kindness."

Please send checks to:

The Survivor Mitzvah Project
2658 Griffith Park Blvd. #299
Los Angeles, CA 90039

$150 supports 1 survivor for 1 month,
$1800 supports 1 survivor for 1 year.

Who saves a life saves the world entire ... www.survivormitzvah.org

The SMP is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
Di yorn flien
by Philip “Fishl “ Kutner

Mame, vu zenen di kinder-yorn? Ikh zukh zey in dem shpiglgloz un ze an altn man.

Ikh kuk af di hent un zey zenen geruntslt un geshvoln fun artrit.

Ikh tu on di shikh un koym vos ikh krikh arum.

Ikh kay dos esn un ikh kay, ober ikh hob nisht keyn sakh tseyner.

Ikh voyn in bodtsimer. Sho nokh sho zits ikh un vart, un vart….

Ikh ken nisht gedenken avu zenen di briln, ober zey zenen afn shtern.

Oy mamenyu, zog mir, vu zenen mayne kinder-yorn.

Fishele, dayne kinder-yorn zenen in dayn zikorn.

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Please make checks for chai, payable to Der Bay. If you’ve been blessed, please do send a LITTLE extra. Label date is when you LAST contributed.

Networking, Networking, Networking, is having others help you get what YOU want. Der Bay is a great networking tool.

Send a contribution in memory of a dear one, or send someone a Der Bay subscription.

All listings in Der Internatsionaler Kalendar in the hardcopy and on the website are free.

Send a notice of club meetings, lectures, classes, a DVD release, gigs, or your book publication.
**IAYC Conference XIV**

It’s just before the conference and Jerry Gerger’s committee is busy putting the final touches of what should be a super event. His team is a tightly knit group of high-performers and have pulled out all stops to make this conference one of the very best.

Each year the committee carefully studies the previous evaluations for suggestions on how to make the event even better, and again this year there are several exciting innovations.

Yiddish language classes at different levels are worked in among the lectures and workshops.

It has been a while since we have had tours. This year includes those on a par with our finest ever.

Michael Wex will be one of the plenary speakers. His last IAYC appearance was in Toronto at which time he appeared as an entertainer. Since then his books have catapulted him into a key figure on the international Yiddish lecture circuit.

Dr. Harvey Gotliffe is a new figure. His book brings Yiddish into an area never explored before.

Because the greater Detroit area has a rich history of Yiddish groups and key individuals, IAYC has had the unusual good fortune of tapping into this good fortune. This includes staff from both the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and Michigan State in Lansing. (Both are football powerhouses).

If you receive this copy before the conference and have not registered, you still may be able to go. See: http://www.derbay.org/novi/

**Der Bay’s Blog**

**Thursday, July 28, 2011**

**What I Have Learned**

Leave a legacy.
Forge friendships.
Mama, you were right.
Grandchildren are easier to raise.
Let other children play with your toys.

The more you train, the more you gain.
Men are animals and women are angels.
The Golden Rule - He who has the gold rules.
Stretching is going a little more than you would otherwise.
It’s not whether you win or lose, but how you place the blame.
You can’t postpone living—because time can’t be back-ordered.
About giving unasked for advice—don’t ask, don’t tell, and don’t think.
Success comes from high expectations coupled with brilliant execution.
Men don’t have clean hands—they shouldn’t be allowed to touch the Torah.
If you give more than you get, you’ll end up getting more than you give.
Levels of a situation: Interest – Concern – Apprehension – Anxiety - Panic
To get something you never had, you have to do something you have never done.
Winners do what they have to, when they have to, where they have to, and how they have to, even if they don’t feel like it.
"Be who you are and say what you feel—
Because those that matter...don't mind...
And those that mind... don't matter."
The Outstanding Man  
By Alva Dworkin and Jack Boxer

Moishe D. was feeling great after exhilarating sessions with the Rabbi and his broker. He stepped gingerly into the street to hail a cab. One came along and stopped for him to enter, and he seated himself.

Then Moishe declared to the taxi cab driver, “Thanks for stopping. I’m in a hurry, so I appreciate your timeliness. I don’t always make such perfect connections except with such exceptional people such as Shykie. Maybe you heard of Shykie…Shykie Bernstein?”

The driver turned around and asked, “Who is this Shykie guy you’re talking about?”

“Just wait. … I’ll tell you all about Shykie… the outstanding man. Shykie did everything very well. He was a great provider for his family, he played clarinet just like Benny Goodman, he was a singer in the synagogue choir, and in his golf game, he shot in the sixties, he knew all the new dance steps, and was an outstanding actor. Not only that, he was a wine connoisseur and could remember everyone’s birthday, and he was able to fix anything. He always was perfectly dressed. No one could measure up to Shykie…. He truly was the perfect man.”

“Already I don’t like him,” mumbled the driver. “Where did you find such a guy?”

“Oh, I have never met Shykie,” was Moishe’s answer.

“Then, if that’s the case how do you know so much about this person, Shaykie?” continued the driver.

“I have to tell you the truth, I am married to his widow.”

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Alva Dworkin grew up in Detroit in a Yiddish speaking family and graduated from the Workmen’s Circle Mittshule, earned a Masters degree in Art Education, a second M.A. in Human Development and then taught for 15 years. Yiddish has always been part of Alva’s life and she has been active in the local Workmen’s Circle branch as well as in several Yiddish groups in the Detroit area.

An Oysgetseykhunter Man  
Fun Alva Dworkin un Jack Boxer

Moishe D. hot zeyer gekvelt vayl er hot norvos gezesen mit zayn rebbe un zayn stock broker. Er hot tsu zikh aleyn geshmeikhl az er iz aroyos oyfn gas khan p a taksi. Eyne iz ongekumen, iz er arayngegangen un zikh avekgezetst.


Der trayber hot zikh arumgekert un gefregt, “Ver iz der mensht vegen vemen du redst?”


“Shoyn, Ikh hob im faynt,” hot gebeblt der trayber. “Vu host du im getrofn?”

“Oh, ikh hob im keynmol nisht getrofn,” hot Moishe im geentfert.

“Nu, oyb azoy, fun vanen veyst du vegen der mensht Shaykie?”

“Der emes iz, ikh darf dir zogn, az ikh bin farheyret tsu zayn almone.”

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Jack Boxer was born into a Yiddish speaking family. He grew up speaking Yiddish and attended a Workmen’s Circle Shul. During WW II he was a radar navigation instructor in the Air Force and later taught biology for 33 years. After retiring he became active in Yiddish speakers groups. Jack and Alva have co-authored the book “Gefrishte Mayses”, which will be the subject of their presentation.
Jewish Pioneers of the Black Hills Gold Rush
By Ann Stanton

There is a new Wild West story about Jews of the American frontier. After 20 years of research, countless hours spinning through decades of historic newspapers on microfilm, picking through yellowed records, scrutinizing old photographs, and interviewing anyone with a memory, finally the secret is opening up. I’ve pieced together the story of the Jewish Pioneers of the Black Hills Gold Rush.

I had to write this book. To me it was a shande that no one had written of them or even spoken of them before. Was their story going to evaporate into the ether? Could I allow that to happen? I knew that this would be my calling, my labor of love, and, in fact, part of why I live in the Black Hills of South Dakota. I promised myself I would tell their story so that future generations would know that Jews left a footprint here. We can take pride in who they were and what they accomplished.

Certainly, the California Gold Rush of 1849 got more acclaim, and the Jews of that epoch, such as Levi Strauss of blue jeans fame, got more attention in the literature and the media. But the Black Hills Gold Rush with its Jewish element still goes relatively unrecognized. This, despite the fact that the Homestake Gold Mine, purchased in 1877 by George Hearst is the longest continuously operating gold mine in the country, functioning for 120 years and producing untold billions in treasure. And the Jews were in that picture.

Arcadia Publishing saw the potential of the topic as “exciting” and offered to publish this in their Images of America series. However, they expected what seemed to me at first an impossible number of photographs and other images. Fortunately for me, I was well enough acquainted with the staffs at both the Adams Museum in Deadwood and the Minnilusa Historical Association at the Journey Museum in Rapid City that they opened their archives to me. They allowed me to select images to my little heart’s content—a dream come true.

I found a treasure chest of images. Various families and private individuals were only too happy to have their family’s accounts included and they contributed many photos and other documents that enhanced the narrative. Their generosity both of spirit and action were inspiring, and I am forever grateful to them all.

The HBO series “Deadwood” was wildly popular for a while. Although it was fictional, it was woven together with some incidents and characters that were based in reality. For example, Solomon Star, who was Jewish, and Seth Bullock, who was not, actual historical figures, were among the leading characters of the series. The two were business partners who had made their way from Helena, Montana, to Deadwood, Dakota Territory, in 1876, the earliest days of the Black Hills Gold Rush, where opportunity was limitless. Both had been prominent in government and business in Helena, where they met during a session of the Legislature.

They brought with them a stock of hardware so that they could immediately open a hardware store in a tent alongside a trail checkered with mining claims. Their stock included a plentiful supply of chamber pots, which were most welcome in a Dakota winter and gave their budding business a jump start (pun intended). Both men displayed that talent for leadership and bent toward civil law and order necessary to help bring stability to the region, and Bullock soon was Sheriff while Star soon was elected mayor. Possibly due to the ambiguities in the HBO series, some elements being fictional and others factual, it was natural for viewers to become confused, some concluding that Sol Star was the only Jew in Deadwood during the Black Hills Gold Rush. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

There were “hundreds,” of Jewish pioneers in the Black Hills; according to Blanche Colman, daughter of Nathan and Amalia Colman, who became the first woman to pass the bar in the State of South Dakota. Blanche should know; she was possibly the first child of Jewish pioneers to have been born in Deadwood, and she was unquestionably the last to leave. Blanche was one of the three surviving children of Nathan, Deadwood’s first lay rabbi, and Amalia Colman. Four of their siblings already lay buried in the Jewish section of Mt. Moriah Historic Cemetery, high above Deadwood Gulch. Blanche’s life and that of her sisters, their parents, their cousins, their friends, and many Jews like them, tell a story of a side of the Wild West that has been hiding in plain sight for over 100 years. Different accounts describe the scene in the Black Hills during the Gold Rush years. Allowing for the space of possibly 50 years between these two
excerpts, you could hardly find two perspectives more completely divergent, one conveying the wildness of the place, the other presenting the more peaceful, idyllic side of the picture:

"Upon looking closely I saw they were pursued by Indians. The horses ran to the barn as was their custom. As the horses stopped I rode along side of the coach and found the driver John Slaughter, lying face downwards in the boot of the stage, he having been shot by the Indians. When the stage got to the station, the Indians hid in the bushes. I immediately removed all baggage from the coach except the mail. I then took the driver’s seat and with all haste drove to Deadwood, carrying six passengers and the dead driver."

Calamity Jane, Autobiography

"Rising sharply out of the undulating prairies of South Dakota are the Black Hills, unique and majestic in beauty, imbued by nature with foundations of gold, studded with forests of pine and spruce, favored with sunshine, presenting a natural playground which affords a haven of contrast from the burdens and tense activities of the more populated sections of this beloved land. Nestled in the heart of the Hills, in the extreme Western part of Lawrence County, lies the little city of Deadwood, located by sturdy pioneers, lured by the discovery of gold in the early days of 1875 and 1876, approximately 14 years prior to the admission of South Dakota to statehood." Blanche Colman, last of the original Jewish pioneers

How did the wild root become such a peaceful shrub? And how really peaceful was it? This book is a good starting place. Now that Jewish Pioneers of the Black Hills Gold Rush has been released by Arcadia, and their stories are beginning to see the light of day, there is a much deeper, chronicle still needing to be related... but that’s for another day.

Jewish Pioneers of the Black Hills Gold Rush is available on Amazon. For an autographed copy, send $25 (includes tax, and S&H). Ann Haber Stanton can be contacted at: maswired@yahoo.com.

Editor’s note: Ann Stanton is a long time subscriber to Der Bay and our contact on the international list for The Yiddish Network. She represents not only Rapid City but also the state of South Dakota. In addition she is active in her 30-family temple.

Excerpted from: THE JEWISH POST & NEWS, Wednesday, December 1 2010 - Pg. 14

60th Reunion of I. L. Peretz Folk School Class of ’63, in Vancouver.

By SHARON LOVE

According to songstress Joni Mitchell "the weeks turn into years, how quickly they pass", is it really ten years ago that the I. L. Peretz Folk School class of 1963 celebrated their 50th birthday reunion? That was a May 2000 long weekend in Vancouver. Flash forward to November 12th, 2010. Vancouver again was the setting for a 60th birthday reunion. The "Kinder" who attended were: from Toronto, Guelph, Florida, Winnipeg, Calgary, and the Vancouver area. Greetings were sent from the IL, Peretz Folk School Endowment Trust.

Our exciting weekend events began with a deli dinner and we posed for a group picture. We spontaneously broke into a chorus of "Lomir Zingen", our school song. That alone told me why I was there and brought back so many memories. A letter from our teacher Chaverte Betty Warshawsky was read as written in Yiddish.

So how do we look? We concluded that we all look great. And we recognized each other, considering that some of us had not been in contact for years. We talked till the wee hours of each morning. At first we caught up with each other and our families. Then it was time to reminisce about school-related events and teachers. What happened in hidden places in the school such as in the cloakrooms, backstage, underneath the stage, etc.? People also wondered about what other friends were doing, who did go out with whom, and where they are now. Current events and politics were subjects that were conspicuously absent all weekend. Many of the "kids" shared experiences about growing up as children of Holocaust survivors, and a big topic of conversation was our mothers’ cooking and recipes.

We decided not to wait another 10 years to get together, and plan on 5 years from now for our 65th birthdays. Hilda Szternfeld Smith was in Winnipeg to celebrate her 60th birthday with family and friends at Kelekis restaurant. Who said that you can’t go back home again? Lunch at Kelekis, a day at Winnipeg Beach, a tour of the North End...
A Plea for a Translator

Sheva Zucker suggested I get in contact with you regarding translating my grandfather's Yiddish diary.

My grandfather, Solomon Langer, took some time in 1920 to write the story about his escape from Bendzin, Poland in 1914 to Paris and then to New York in 1920.

My mom gave me this very special journal (written in three volumes in notebooks -- approximately 300 handwritten pages) about seven years ago. I immediately tried to find translators but found them to be unaffordable at $25-30/page! Then, I was directed to Leo Greenbaum at the YIVO Institute in New York City. He told me about a particular "volunteer" who had been working for them for years.

I was very excited at the prospect of having this woman work on this project and then I would make a monetary contribution to the Institute. However, I would have to "wait my turn" as she was busy with other translation projects. Then, she became ill, recovered and moved to Israel. Leo has been unable to find another individual to replace her.

My Dad recently passed away and I would really like my Mom to read this while she is still able to do so.

Do you have any ideas as to how I can proceed with this project? Do you know any Yiddish students willing to take on such a project? I do have the first few pages translated and will be happy to send it to you if you are interested. I can also scan pages from the original text if you would like to see that as well. I have many, many photos and other documents as well. My grandfather ultimately had a wonderful life in this country, but he died too young (at 70) from complications of heart disease.

Thanks in advance for any thoughts you may have as to how I can get this project underway.

Sincerely,

Stacie Cahn Greenhouse
greenhouses@optonline.net

The Leon Malmed Archives

My gg-uncle Leon Malmed was heavily involved in Emma Goldman's Anarchist movement in the first quarter of the 20th century. The letters between him and Goldman were donated to the Schlesinger Library at Harvard University and are available for anyone who wishes to have access to them.

Leon was a packrat and kept every letter ever sent to him or his family. Beyond that specific series of letters from Emma Goldman, we have over 1,000 Yiddish letters dating as far back as 1889, many having been written in the 1890's and the first two decades of the 20th century. These letters were sent by a wide number of writers that include Leon's extended family, business associates, friends, and comrades in the anarchist movement. They were sent from shtetls and cities in Europe, South Africa, Argentina, Israel, and all over the U.S.

A small team of dedicated, volunteer translators have begun the massive work of translating these letters into English. I hope to create a database of the contents of these letters so genealogists and historians can use it for research. I would like other families to have their old letters be able to have them translated and included in the database.

We need volunteers who can translate Yiddish handwriting, grant writers, technical expertise for creating a database, and help to get the word out. I am consumed in my spare time with scanning and sending letters to the translators, organizing, archiving, and preserving them once they are translated. I would like to be able to pay volunteers who are professional translators and bring in more Yiddish experts.

While there are organizations that hold family archives, I don't believe there is currently anything quite like the database that I am proposing. As well as being a tremendous resource for researchers in general, this would be a important resource to help families to connect to their past and to other members of their extended families.

The Jewish Family History foundation has offered to provide tax receipts for any donations sent to this project from the United States.

Debbie Rose, Toronto, ON, Canada
bdebrose@rogers.com 416-756-9760
Tayere khaznte,


Ven ikh farbreng mit ir, vil ikh zikh nisht barimen [boast] mit di gute zakhn vos kumen for in mayn lebn; deriber redn mir vegn di shlekhte zakhn in lebn. Dos geshet [occurs] nokh a mol un i over and over, un es gefelt mir in gantsn nisht [doesn't please me at all]. Ikh vil nisht vern az aza baklogerte [complainer] vi zi. Vi ken ikh dos opshten?

Pozitive khaverte

Tayere poz...khav...


Oyb ayer khaverte baklogt zikh [complaints] vegn ir man, vet ir mistame [probably] oykh gefinen oyf vos zikh tsu baklogn vegn ayer man, kedeys avroystsuvayzn mitlayd un shtitse [to show compassion and support].


=====

Tayere khaznte,

Ikh hob tomid gevolt vern a krankn-shvester [nurse]. Itst, az mayne 3 kinder zenen shoyn oysgevakn, un hobn farlozt undzer hoyz, leygn zey for [propose], ikhol zol turik geyn un shtudirn tsu vern a krankn-shvester, Ikh hob zey gezogt az s’iz shoyn tsu shpet.

Tsulib di ale kursn, in velkhe ikh volt zikh gedarft farshraybn, volt ikh farendikt korev tsu close to 60 yor. Dertsu iz dos shtudirn aleyn mistame [probably] tsu shver far mir itst. Entfern zey az ikh darf nokhgeyn mayn troym. Zog ikh zey, az me darf dokh zayn realistish. Vi halt ir?

Krankn-shvester

Tayere krank...shv..., 


Oyb ir vet gefinen, az di klaas zenen aykh tsu shver, nokh dem vi ir hot take shver shtudirt in zey, volt ir gekent vi a breyre [alternative], vern a gehilf [aide] tsu a krankn-shvester [nurse], oder gefinen an andere pozitsye in der meditsin-profesye [medical profession].

Ober ven men makht nisht keyn pruv [if you don’t try], ken men dokh keyn mol nisht visn [you will not know]. Gedenkt: dos vert fun lebn iz nisht bloyz der sof-tsül [end result], nor oykh di ’nesie’ [trip] oyfn veg tsum tsil.
Shayles un Tshuves in “Hilkhes Libe”
Forverts – April 29-May 5, 2011
Fun der khanetz Khane Šlek
[transliterated/annotated by Goldie Adler Gold]

Tayere khaznte,


Tserisn [torn]

Tayerer tserisn,


Tayere khaznte,


Tayere Umbakvem,

Me ken nisht avekmakhn mit der hant [disregard] ayere gefiln vegn dem inyen [matter]. Gefiln ken men nisht haltn vegn dem, kedey “ven ir nemt mikh arum, ober oyfregn [upset]” or “ven ir bamerkt gornisht oyf regn [complains].” Oyb er nemt aykh say-zi-say [anyhow] arum nokh dem vi ir git im di hant, volt ir im gedarf epes zogn. Oyb er filt zikh nisht bakvem mit im, treft zikh nisht mit im ponem-el-ponem [don’t meet him face-to-face]. Nokh dem vi er nemt aykh arum, oder loybt ayer oyszen [compliments…appearance], darft ir im zogn: “ven ir nemt mikh arum fil ikh zikh umbakvem; s’votl beser geven, ven mir gibn zikh di hant”, oder “ven ir drukt zikh oys [express] mit azoyne gute reyd vegn mayn sheynekht, volt mir libersht geven [I’d prefer], ven ir bamerkt gornishet [don’t comment] vegn dem”.

Oyb er eytsey [advice] vezn nisht baytn zayn oyffir [change…behavior], darft ir opgebna a barikh [report] vegn di epizodn tsum prezident fun der sinagoge. Dos vet nisht laykht zayn far aykh, ober oyb er hot azoyne gefiln, hohn andre menshn oyzk azoyne gefiln, un dem rov darf men tsu visn gebn [let him know] vegn dem, kedey er zol zikh yo baytn.
Writing from Rochester, NY
by Boris Kopit

Reading accidentally about your biography (on Der Bay’s website at: http://www.derbay.org/bio.html and seeing you as a little boy on a pony triggered memories of my own youth.

I was born in Poland a few years after that country regained its independence in 1919.

They were difficult years then of deprivation, and I distinctly remember wearing hand-me-down clothes of my two-years-older cousin, sent to us by my aunt who lived in Brooklyn.

After having worn them a year or so and having outgrown them, they were given in succession to a younger of my cousins.

There was in our house a photo of my cousin in the same navy suit that I was wearing and a sailor hat with ribbons and an enigmatic inscription of some American ship. There was also one that always fascinated me, of my cousin on a pony with dark and white patches and a white mane.

It convinced me that my aunt must have been very rich, to be able to have a live pony for her little offspring.

After WW II, in my late twenties, I arrived in the U.S.A. Having tried my hand at a succession of different jobs, I finally settled in my present occupation of a slipcover cutter. My job took me to different households in the Polish section of Greenpoint where I used to live.

On one such occasion, my curiosity was raised by a photo on the wall of a little boy sitting on what else but my cousin Benny’s little pony with dark and white patches, and a white mane. Chagrined, I asked the lady of the house for an explanation. She revealed to me that an itinerant photographer had taken the photo, and that it was a local custom to have such pictures taken.

Imagine how downhearted it made me. The dream of a rich cousin in America came to an abrupt end.

Editor’s note: Boris lives part of the year in Rochester, NY and in Costa Rica during the cold winter months. This is his alternate home instead of following the Florida crowd.

Fishl Remembers

Thank you Boris for taking me back to those so-called “good old days”.

Hand-Me-Downs (HMDs)

Children today think that HMDs are things taken down from an upper shelf. On the other hand, we Depression babies knew these were clothes that had been worn by our older brothers/sisters.

The unfortunate children were the ones where brothers wore items that had been worn by their older sisters. One case comes especially to mind, where a friend was given his older sister’s red rubber boots. Boys would use only brown or black. My friend had to leave the house wearing the red boots, but took them off when he got around the corner. His shoes and socks were always soaking wet. He couldn’t stand the embarrassment of being mocked by the older boys for wearing those red girl’s boots. He hid them in his lunch bag.

When we had a hole in the sole of our shoes, we slid in a piece of cardboard. And when that wore out, we just put in another one. Today the children just toss their tennis shoes out and get another hundred-dollar pair.

In those days, having your own bed was a luxury and having your own bedroom was only for rich people. Even only two in a bed was considered good. What do kids today know about sleeping tsu fusns? I still can remember being awakened at night by a kick. The worst part was when one of the twins did not have his toenails cut!

Mama’s rule of the house was, “If you put it on your plate, you finish it.” Your plate was always empty at the end. If a slice of bread fell on the floor, you brushed it off kissed it and ate it. If you did that, supposedly G-d took care of the germs.

Mama always sewed the holes in socks. Today, ladies and gentlemen, do you remember the last time you did it?

Remember when there were very few parts of the chicken that weren’t eaten? The neck, gizzard (pupik), liver, heart, feet, wings, shmalts, and little yolks were all eaten.
"Honor Thy Father And Thy Mother"
Ray Davidson

This sentence that is read in the Gates of Prayer each and every Saturday Morning has been a problem since 1955, when I lost my Mother, and even more so when in 1964 my Father also joined those who were bound up in the Bonds of Life Eternal. It originates from Exodus 20, verse 16. As long as they lived, this Commandment was no problem for I truly honored both of them with love and affection - with my presence and my attention to their smallest need, never needing to be prodded or cajoled to comply. But once they no longer walked this earth - once they physically were out of reach for me—I was so at a loss to know exactly what I needed to do to continue to honor them.

As time passed and the years flew by, I found myself reaching my eighty-third birthday and a friend of mine was having his second Bar Mitzvah. As I sat spellbound listening to him go through the entire Saturday morning I kept thinking to myself how very nice this was and how much I too would like to have a second Bar Mitzvah.

Well March was six months away, and the Rabbi and I both figured that was plenty of time for me to get ready and even to write my own "Machzor" for the occasion. And so the die was cast and so it was done and I set about becoming proficient enough to "carry it off." I elected to call my Machzor "Memories to Live By," and featured pictures on the front of my Father, my Mother, and my Wife Frieda, also of blessed memory.

I thought of quotes to go under each picture, and it was automatic that those thoughts for my Mother and Father were in Yiddish, for that is how they spoke to each other and to me as a young child and as a young man and as I matured. If I came to my Father with a problem, he would listen carefully to what I said, go into a heavy thinking period, and then say to me, "Es vet shoyn git zayn," meaning, "It will soon good be" and if I questioned my Mother on some item she made for a meal that didn't come out the same as usual, she would say, "Ikh glaykh es azoy," or translated, "I like it this way." Under Frieda's picture the quote was - "Ray, you just don't know how to get old."

All of that occurred over five years ago, but recalling the Yiddish from my parents awoke thoughts of all the Yiddish they spoke to me and how much I loved the language, almost completely forgotten over the past forty-seven years since I lost my Father. Almost, I say, but not completely forgotten. Perhaps the correct word would be dormant. For as the months passed, I found myself thinking of that language and mentally once again speaking it.

I began to study the History of Yiddish, and last year presented an adult-education class on the subject. The response to that class was so positive that it encouraged me to form a "Yiddish Circle of Learning" which began just one year ago this past first week of June and has grown in one year to over thirty people who share my need to know more of our people's language and culture.

And above all, I now know how to "Honor My Father and Mother." Perhaps it is this feeling that courses through each of us that is responsible for the growth of the "Yiddish Circle of Learning."

Ray Davidson
9046 W 124th Street. Apt 194
Overland Park, KS 66213
Ph: 314-477-4309

Editor's note: Ray's inspiring letter truly moved your editor. Every once in a while the task of publishing a newsletter seems overwhelming. Then an inspiring letter comes along and you realize that there is meaning to all of this work.

Perhaps recently you have heard someone say, Why bother keeping Yiddish alive? We don't need both Hebrew and Yiddish."

What was your reply? Many good answers have been given ranging from the rich Yiddish literature of the great Yiddish writers, to the thousand-year culture of the Ashkenazim, to give meaning to the lives of those lost in the Holocaust

This is an excellent topic for discussion at a future vinkl meeting. When you are asked to verbalize your feelings it is not easy, but it will be very rewarding. If you would like to share it with us, it would be appreciated—also let Ray know.
It was the year 2011 and Chelm had just entered the 20th century. They had a telephone and a radio. No longer was Chelm a Third World Country. With these two new means of communication, they were now attached to the outside world.

Our story begins in the Chelm Shtetl Square. One morning, while Sheyne was on her way to Shmuel the Shnayder, she heard a baby crying. The sound came from a box. Inside was a little boy with a note. *Dos iz mayn kind Zygmund.* Because it was written in Yiddish, everyone assumed that the mother or father was Jewish. No one knew to whom the baby might belong—so Sheyne cared for him.

The gossip around the shtetl was that the mother was Jewish and had an affair with, or was raped by, a Cossack. Others were of the opinion that one of the Jewish men had an affair with a gypsy woman. Either way, they would never know.

As Zygmund grew up, it was evident that he was no ordinary child. Everyone called him Zindele or Zundele. He was a handsome child, dark of color with large piercing eyes. He was a head taller than the other boys. His physical prowess was far beyond the others. He was the fastest runner and out arm-wrestled any boy three years older than himself.

It was in kheyder that his talent really shone. It was said that he would grow up and be a famous rabbi. It was a problem for Sheyne and her husband, for they were plain folks with little religious training.

The time soon approached for Zindele’s bar mitsve. Word of his physical and intellectual prowess had reached America. A letter arrived offering to pay for a big event with all expenses paid. It was from the Coney Island Jewish Welfare Board. It read:

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WHEREAS Zindele is nearing his 13th birthday;
WHEREAS Jewish boys must have a bar mitsve;
WHEREAS his foster parents are not able to have an event fitting Zindele’s bright future, and
WHEREAS Coney Island is the second most holy place in the entire world next to the Western Wall, it is hereby suggested that Zindele have the bar mitsve service at the Coney Island Ultra Orthodox Synagogue and that the party be at The Glatt Kosher Famous French Fries, Frankfurter and Fricassee Emporium.
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There was no doubt that such an honor for a Chelemer would be accepted.

### Zindele’s Report Upon His Return

All of Chelm crowded into the Chelm Shtetl Square to hear “Zindele’s View of America”. Here is the text of his speech.

“All that the teenagers in America talk about is temperature and food. Everything good is COOL. On the other hand if the boys like a girl they say she is a HOT chick. If they don’t like her, then she is a COLD fish.

“When someone is not telling the truth they say, He is full of HOT air. There is HOT bed, Hot-blooded, HOT box, HOT cakes, HOT corner, Hot-cross bun, HOT dog, HOT foot, HOT frame, HOT money, HOT front, HOT pack, HOT pepper, HOT plate, HOT rod, HOT seat, HOT shot, HOT stuff and HOT-tempered.

“Of course then there is COLD: COLD-blooded, COLD chisel, COLD cream, COLD cuts, COLD fish, COLD front, COLD-hearted, COLD pack COLD patch, COLD snap, COLD shoulder, COLD sore, COLD storage, COLD sweat, COLD war, and COLD wave.

“When it comes to food, the Amerikaner really go out of their way to mention FOOD. Money is called LETTUCE. There is APPLE cart, APPLE polish, APPLE of one’s eye. Someone can be a good EGG or a bad EGG. If you do something wrong, you lay an EGG. If you are smart, you are an EGGhead. If you put all of your money in one investment, you put all your EGGS in one basket. If you are walking very cautiously, you are walking on EGGS.

“I am so happy to get back home to my fellow Chelemers and not have to think only about TEMPERATURE and FOOD.”

Dear reader, the next time you visit Coney Island in Brooklyn do be sure to stop over for a visit to the Coney Island Ultra Orthodox Synagogue and look for the plaque commemorating the event of the bar mitsve of Zindele the Chelemer. The plaque is displayed outside the study of the Chief Rabbi.
Fishele, vos iz a blog?
by Philip “Fishl” Kutner

Du zogst az s’iz afn kompyuter. Meynstu az a blog hengt afn kompyuter?

Neyn mame, siz ineveynik in dem kompyuter, un vi amol shrayb ikh a bisl vegn farshidene zakhn. Dos vort “blog” kumt fun tsvey verter, web un log.

Ver leyent dos blog?

Er oder zi vos vil leyenen vos ikh shrayb, leyent dem blog.

Un, Fishl, vegn vos shraybstu?


Mame, ikh denk, az efsher vel ikh koyfn an ipod.

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Prof. Iosif Vaisman Becomes the 3rd IAYC President

At its 14\textsuperscript{th} Conference in Novi, Michigan, The Board of Directors unanimously elected:

Pres. - Prof. Iosif Vaisman – Bethesda, MD  
V. P. - Prof. Raphael Finkel – Lexington, KY  
Sec. - Lenora Zimmerman – Skokie, IL  
Treas. - Jerry Gerger – W. Bloomfield, MI

Founding president Dr. Harold Black, o”h was awarded the covetous IAYC Lifetime Yiddish Service Award. His wife, Ann Black, and son accepted the honor. Outgoing president, Paul Melrood, made the presentation. Previous recipients were Chana Mlotek, Simon Swirsky Lilke Majzner, o”h, and Paul Melrood.

Keynote speakers were Eugene Driker, V. P. of the Yiddish Book Center, Prof. Ken Waltzer, Dir. of Jewish Studies at MSU, and Michael Wex author and the #1 speaker on the Yiddish circuit.

Among returning presenters were Prof. Yoshi Hirose, Hilda Rubin (the only one to have attended every IAYC conference), Vivian Felsen, Sharon Love, Harold Ticktin, Annabelle Weiss, Rochelle Zucker, and Dr. Barney Zumoff.

A few new presenters were; Dr. Murray Batt, Rosalie Beck, Cookie Blattman, Alva Dworkin, Judith Eisner, Jim Grey, Harvey Gotliffe, Daniella HarPaz, Susan Leviton, and Aliza Shevrin.

Featured entertainers were; Daniel Kahn, Neil Alexander and the Klezmer Fusion Band, Cantor Neil Michaels, The Purim Shpiel, Puppeteers, Cantor Michael Smolash, and Steve Weintraub.

**Professor Iosif Vaisman**

Prof. Vaisman was born in Czernowitz. He is a leading figure in Yiddish online having created the Virtual Shtetl website and moderated Mendele, the premier online Yiddish list.

As a board member of one of the premier Yiddish clubs, Yiddish of Greater Washington, he has been active in Yiddish activities in the Greater Washington DC area. Dr. Harold Black also came from YGW.

At his acceptance presentation he mentioned that one of his prime areas of emphasis will be developing a more interactive network with our associate membership and member clubs. “It needs to be more of a two-way street where the needs of the individual clubs are taken into account in sending out club programming materials.” An area of emphasis will be the use of teleconferencing for both the Board and member clubs.

His wife, Dr. Shura Vaisman, and his daughter, Dr. Asya Shulman, are fluent Yiddish speakers. Asya was a keynote presenter at the IAYC conference in Millbrae, CA. Her research at Harvard and IAYC lecture were on Khasidik Womens’ Songs

Professionally he is in the Lab. for Structural Bioinformatics Department of Bioinformatics and Computational Biology at George Mason University. His research focuses on developing computational methods for protein structure and function analysis. The main activity areas include computational geometry of protein structure and structure-function relationships.
Zalmen Zylbercweig was the editor of the six-volume "Leksikon fun yidishn teater (Lexicon of the Yiddish Theatre)", a compendium of over 2,800 Yiddish-language bios and histories of those once involved in with the Yiddish theatre.

The first volume of the Lexicon was published in New York in 1931, the sixth in Mexico City in 1969. Zylbercweig had completed work on a seventh volume, but due to his untimely death in Los Angeles in 1972, this final volume was never published and remains in galley form within various repositories around the world.

Zylbercweig had been working on another book about the Yiddish theatre, more specifically a Yiddish-language history of Maurice Schwartz's famed New York "Yiddish Art Theatre" troupe. The galleys for "Yiddish Art Theatre in America" also lies as galleys within various repositories around the world, until now "never seeing the light of day", so to speak.

The unpublished book entitled "The Yiddish Art Theatre in America" (referred to hereafter as "YATA"), is a history of Schwartz's Yiddish Art Theatre as it was during its first six years of existence, i.e. from 1918 to 1924. In YATA as we have it, there are some seven hundred and forty-two pages, but it is unknown whether there is more to this book. Inquiries have been made to another repository to see whether more pages do exist. If they do exist and can be obtained, they will be added to what the Museum currently presents to you.

At the virtual Museum of Family History, we are making these book galleys available to you, in the hope that it will keep the memory alive of those once involved in the Yiddish theatre. It is hoped that these two works will help you -- perhaps in your research on the Yiddish theatre, or perhaps simply to give you a glimpse into the history of this once-popular theatre.

This is part of the mission of the Museum of Family History, i.e. to keep alive the memory and enhance the appreciation of Yiddish culture, not only as it once existed, but as it exists today. The Museum also wishes to honor the memory of Lexicon editor Zalmen Zylbercweig, who had dedicated himself wholeheartedly to the preservation of Yiddish culture and the history of the Yiddish theatre.

Within these two books, each made available to you as a single PDF file, you may search among their many pages for information you are interested in. In "YATA", you may read about nearly one hundred of the YAT productions and many reviews that were written by critics and others in newspapers, journals, and books.

Both aforementioned books are in Yiddish, so be forewarned. A project to translate the seven volumes of the "Lexicon" into English is underway at the Museum. These translations will go online as the project proceeds. The availability of these translations will be announced at some time in the near future.

In the unpublished Volume 7 of the "Lexicon", you may read more than one hundred and twenty biographies, mostly of individuals once involved in the Yiddish theatre.

As these pages come from galleys that haven't had a final proofreading, i.e. not from any published book, you will find imperfections within some of the pages, e.g. missing or inverted page numbers, the occasional inverted piece of text or the missing photograph. Additionally, past PDF page 265, the page numbering changes, e.g. the first page after page 265 is labeled "2-F". There are also a number of missing pages, but this is unavoidable for the time being.

To learn more about Maurice Schwartz's Yiddish Art Theatre and the Museum, visit its webpage of YAT productions ("Casts and Characters"), which has a list of most of the plays performed by the troupe. This may serve as a finding-aid or guide in your quest to learn more about the YAT. These listings include the name of each play (given in English and transliterated Yiddish), the date of the first performance, the author of the play, the names and functions of those who worked behind the scenes, and the theatre location.

Also included are listings of cast members and their roles for more than 70% of the over 100 YAT...
productions. You will enjoy seeing photographs of the actors in their roles and scenes from plays during your visit to the "Casts and Characters" page, which can be found at:  

Listings of more of the YAT productions will be added. While the Zylbercweig unpublished book discusses only the first five seasons of the YAT, this list is all-encompassing.

As mentioned above, the Museum is in the process of translating the more than 2,800 individual biographies in Zylbercweig's "Lexicon of the Yiddish Theatre". Almost seven hundred biographies have already been translated. There are six volumes that have been published to date (in New York City, Warsaw and Mexico City), between the years of 1931 and 1969.

There are also galleys of parts of an unpublished seventh volume. A database, that is currently non-searchable by the public, has been created for these seven volumes. Hopefully an online, searchable database will be created in the future so that you personally may do your own search. It should be noted that the captions to the many photographs found within these seven volumes have already been translated, but are also not yet online or searchable by you.

This non-searchable database of more than 2,800 individual names (and more than fifty theatrical organizations) includes the following information: surname, given name, other name(s), town, and country of birth, and date of birth and death. Also, for each entry there are two page numbers: one is the page number on which the biography begins within the original hardcover Yiddish version of the book; the other is the beginning page number of the biography as it exists on the PDF file, which makes it infinitely easier to locate a particular page. It is hoped that at some time in the future, a free, searchable online database can be created so you needn't contact the Museum whenever you have an inquiry.

Look for an announcement about the availability of the English translations of hundreds of individual biographies from Zylbercweig's "Lexicon" at some time in the near future.

The Museum seeks volunteers to assist in the Yiddish-to-English translations of YATA and the seven volumes of Zylbercweig's "Lexicon". If you can volunteer, contact the Museum at: yiddishtheatre@museumoffamilyhistory.com. As we cannot pay to translate the biographies, we rely entirely on dedicated volunteers to do the many translations.


*** Note that the speed of any potential download of this 180 MB PDF file will vary, depending on your computer. Fully downloading this file may take ten minutes or longer. Also the PDF search function on this file does not search Hebrew/Yiddish fonts, and it will only be useful, in this instance, to search for a particular page number as found within the original Yiddish book. If you have any questions about any of the content of these two volumes, please contact the museum with your specific request.

To view Zylbercweig's seventh volume of his "Lexicon of the Yiddish Theatre", please go to http://www.museumoffamilyhistory.com/yt/pdf/l ex-V7.pdf. This file is 130 MB in size.

Zalmen Zylbercweig and his wife Celia had a Yiddish-language radio program broadcast from Los Angeles from 1949 to 1969. The Museum has obtained a number of these original recordings and will obtain many more. They will be remastered and eventually made available to the public (free of charge, of course) as part of the Museum’s “On the Air!” program series that will start in the not-too-distant future, presenting these Yiddish-language radio programs to you, each for a period of time, perhaps from one week to one month, until the next program replaces it.

Our anticipation is that we shall have simultaneous English translation to the radio programs for non-Yiddish speakers. We need volunteers to translate radio transcripts into English. The programs include commentary, news, and interviews with those involved with the Yiddish theatre, etc., and are very interesting. Contact me, Steve Lasky, if interested in helping.

E-mail: steve@museumoffamilyhistory.com
Website: www.museumoffamilyhistory.com
(Questions and Answers in Matters of Love) Fun der khaznte Khane Slek
[transliterated and annotated by Goldie Adler Gold]

Tayere khaznte,


Mir dakht az dos iz a vorenung legabe [regarding] undzher blaybn a porl in der tsukunft – ober er iz dokh azoy gut tsu mir, a tshirik _____ tsutsuleygn!

Er trakht shoyn vegn khasene hobn mit mir. Vos zol ikh ton?

Basmalke [princess]

Tayere basmalke,


Ven me hot khasene, shpiglt zikh op alts vos eyner tut dem andern mentsh [reflects on the other...]. Ir hot, yeder bazunder [individually], ayere eygene perzenlekhkeytn, ober zayn shlekhter oyffir un maysim [behaviour...actions] shpiglen zikh op oyf aykh. Der etsem fakt [fact itself], vos ir hot mit im geredt vegn dem, un er vil zikh nisht baytn antplekt [unwilling to change reveals...] gor a sakh vegn im. To folgt zhe [obey] ayere ineveynikste [inner] gefiln – shtelt op di frayndshaft.

=====

Tayere khaznte,


Tayere naye ‘feys…,

Keyn oysgearbeter, ongenunemener [no worked out, accepted] etiket far ‘feysbuk’ iz nisht faran. Me ken bashlisn ontsunemen oder ignorirn azoyne bakoshes oyfn smakh [on the basis...] fun vi me filt zikh bavem. Ikh ken aykh ober nisht farzikhern [assure], az di amolike bakante veln zikh nisht filn baleydik. Der bashlus [decision] iz ayers.

=====

Tayere khaznte,


Daver

Tayerer Davener,


=====

Tayere khaznte,
Shayles un Tshuves in “Hilkhes Libe” - “Forverts” – 6/10-16/2011
(Questions and Answers in Matters of Love) Fun der khaznte Khane Slek
[transliterated and annotated by Goldie Adler Gold]

Tayere khaznte,

Mayne dray noentste khavertes [closest friends] un
ikh hobn zikh arayngetsoygn [moved into…] in a
hoyz lebn dem universtitet-kampus in yanuar
[january]. Mir hobn zikh ale lib un farbrengen
[like/enjoy] zeyer gut tsuzamen. Di eyntsike
problem iz vos eyn meydyl batsolt nisht ire
kehazboynes bay tsaytns [doesn’t pay her bills in
time].

Mir, di andere meydylkh, tsoln ayn vos me darf un
hobn nisht keyn problem. Az di eltern [parents] fun
dem meydyl gibn ir gelt, veysn mir [we know], ober
dos iz nisht der inyen [matter]. Zi hot poshet groyse
shverikeytn baym silukn [simply has difficulty paying
deficits].

Sofkl-sof [eventually] bakumen mir yo dos gelt fun
ir, ober shoyn etlekhe mol vos mir hobn gemuzt ir
kheylik funem dire-gelt [her portion of rent], lemoshl
[for example], ayntsonln in der tsvishntsayt [interim].
Dos iz dokh nicht yoysheridik [fair] az mir zoln
darfn vartn bi zi vet umkern dem khoyv tsurik
[pay back the debt]. Mir viln azs nisht gelt zol
tseshtern [spoil] undzer frayndshaft, un mir viln
tsunoyfrufn a zitsung fun ale mentshn in hoyz in a
vokh arum [call a meeting…next week]. Vi halt ir, zol
men dem ineyn bahandlen [How do you think we
should handle this matter]?

Khavertes

Tayere khavertes,

Khotsh [although] ir vilt nisht az gelt zol tseshtern
[destroy] di frayndshaft, vayzt aroys [explain] dos
meydyl an umderherets [disrespect] far der doziker
[this] frayndshaft, ven zi vingt [forces] di andere
dray meydylkh tsu tsoln ir khoyv [pay her debt] far
dire-gelt [rent]. Es ken zayn az zi halt, az di gantse
mayse iz a kleynikeyt […]nonsense] ven zi kert aykh
um [when she returns] dos gelt. Ober zi tor aykh
nisht shteln in a farlegenheyt [mustn’t embarrass you]
tsulib dem.

Aza grupe farzamlung [group meeting] iz nisht keyn
guter gedank [idea]. Es ken zayn az ven ze derzet
dray kegn eyns, vet zì zikh filn az me atakirt zi. A
beserer aynfal [plan], mir dakh, volt geven ir
klaybt oys [select] eyn mentsh mit a shtarkn vln
[determined willpower], velkher zol redn mit ir vegn
dem. Me darf ir zogn az ale dray meydylkh haltn,
az dos iz nisht yoysheridik, un zi fregn farvos zi ken
niseh tsoln batsaytns [in time]. Me ken forleygn
[propose] me zol bay ir nemen ir kheylik funem
dire-gelt a vokh, oder tsvey, frier. Ven me shtelt ir
a frierdikn termin [deadline], vet zi efsher tsoln tsu
der tsayt.

=====

Tayere khaznte,

Ikh voyn in a voynort [residence] mit gehilf-
badinung [help services] un farbreng mit a
simpatisher froy [pleasant woman] shoyn tsvey yor,
zint zi hot zikh arayngetsoygn [moved in] aher. Mir
zitsn baym zelbikn tish beysn [during] esn di dray
toltsaytn yedn tog, un es freyt mikh [it pleases me] 
ven ikh ze zi. Ikh veys az zi hot di zelbe gefiln
vegn mir.

Tsum badoyern [sadly] vert ir moyekh vos mer
kalye [mind impaired], un yene vokh hot men zi
aribergeirt inem opteyl [moved her to…section] far
di mentshn vos zenen oyverbotl [senile] un laydn
fun altshaymers-krenk. Dortn est men inem es-zal
lebn undzern. Ikh bin zikher [sure], az di froy volt
gikher gegesn mit mir bay eyn tish, un mir iz
shreklekh umetik [terribly lonesome] on ir. Vi ken
ikh ibertsaygn di oyfpasers [convince the caretakers],
az mir zoln esn tsuzamen nokh a mol?

Elnter [lonely] ‘singleman’

Tayerer elnt…single…,

Es ken zayn az [It is possible] di krannk-shvester
[nurse], mit vemen ir hot frier geredt vegn dem
inyn [this matter], iz nisht der rikhtiker mentsh.
Tsi iz do eyner funem personal [personnel], vos hot
gezn vi ir beyde hobn azoy gut farbrakht
tsuzamen, un volt gekent zogn a gut vort vegn
dem?

Redt mit a baamtn [official] in a hekherer pozitsye
vi di krannk-shvester; vayzt im di tsaytung-rubrik
[newspaper column]! Oyb zey hobn a bisl seykhl,
veln zey gefin en oyfn [way], vi azoy ir beyde
darnt zitsn tsuzamen, khotsh [at least] etlekhe mol a
tog. Es klingt, vi ir past eyne farn andern [care for
each other] un ikh hof az di ‘balementim’ veln ton vos
iz gut far aykh.
There still seems to be some confusion regarding Sholem Aleichem's formal secular education. Don Miron wrote in the YIVO Encyclopedia that S.A. "attended the local Russian secondary school matriculating in 1876 ".

Antony Polonsky claimed in his 2010 book "The Jews in Poland and Russia " vol II (page 243) that S.A. "went to a Russian gymnasium in Pereyaslav where he obtained a good grounding in secular subjects and the Russian language."

Even M. Bazhan wrote imprecisely in the introduction to S.A. six-volume collected works, Moskow, 1971, (vol 1, page 18) that S.A. attended an "yezdnaya shkola".

Knowing that S.A. attended the Pereyaslav Uyezdnoye Uchilishche in 1873-76 (not shkola) I asked Dr. Mark Nemenman, an expert on Russia, to find the status of those schools in the 19th-century Russia (see Appendix 1).

According to this status: the two-year (three-year since 1828) school was just an upgraded elementary school to enter (sic!) the gymnasium (high school). The three-year curriculum covered orthodox religion, Russian and general history, geography, arithmetic, geometry excluding proofs, physics, calligraphic writing, drawing.

There were only 500 yezdnoye uchilishche (out of at least 700 uyezds). Those schools were transformed in 1872 into six-year city schools (gorodskiye uchilishcha) where the education was no longer free. S.A. obviously attended the three-year uyezdnoye version in 1873-76.

Hence S.A. very modest formal education was definitely pre-secondary.

This extremely inquisitive man made it nicely up on his own (including the use of the Russian letter yat, in Yiddish yati).

I was also fascinated with the letter yat (!) when studying Russian pre-1918 spelling on my own. There are no rules. One has to simply memorize every word with one or several yats, pronounced as the Russian letter "e" (ye).

There was a saying in tsarist Russia that the letter “yat” separates the educated from the less educated.

The gymnasiums in Russia (see Appendix 2) were established in 1804 for the sole purpose of preparing the children of the nobility to enter the government service or the university. Those elitist schools could be founded in the gubernia capitals only.

To study in a gymnasium S.A. would have to move to Poltava (if Poltava had one). The number of gymnasiums was 32 in 1804, around 100 by 1850, and 167 at the end of the 19th century.

I love the yat story in S.A. 1902 monologue "Gimenazye":

"Er (the Jewish boy) shtelt dem yati (during the entrance exam). Farvos zol er im nisht shteln? Der hisorn, zugen zey, er shtelt im nit dort vu me badarf. (I like better "vu zey viln").

Appendix 3 presents a poem to illustrate the countless words with yat.

S.A. mentioned in his "Fun Yarid" (p.184 part 2) how at the age of 17, shortly after his uchilishche graduation, he impressed a company of youngsters with his solid knowledge of the contemporary Russian literature when asked whether he was familiar with Shpilhagen's "Nadniach", Auerbach's works, Bogroven's "Zapiski yevreya", and Chernyshevski's "Chto dyelat ".

Appendix 1

Уездное училище

Уездное училище, повышенная начальная школа, вторая (после приходского училища) ступень образования в России 19 в. Согласно уставу учебных заведений (1804), открывались в губернских и уездных городах для подготовки учащегося "всекого звания" к поступлению в гимназию.

В 2-летний курс входили: закон божий, священная история, изучение книги "O
должностях человека и гражданина", русская грамматика и грамматика родного языка, чистописание, всеобщая и русская география, всеобщая и русская история, арифметика, начальные сведения по геометрии, физике и естественной истории, рисование.

По уставу 1828, преимущественная связь У. у. с гимназией была нарушена, ставшие 3-классными училища в основном предназначались для детей купцов, мещан и т. п. В них преподавались закон божий, священная и церковная история, русский язык, арифметика, геометрия до стереометрии включительно (без доказательств), география, русская и всеобщая история, чистописание, черчение и рисование.

С разрешения министерства народного просвещения при У. у. могли открываться особые дополнительные курсы, которые давали начальное профессиональное образование.

Хотя У. у. предполагалось создать в каждом уезде, их было только около 500. В 1872 У. у. преобразованы в городские училища.

Городские училища

Городские училища, учебные заведения повышенного типа для детей мелкой городской буржуазии и служащих, впервые возникшие в Западной Европе в 17 в. (см. Бюргерские школы).

В России мужские Г. у. были созданы по положению от 31 мая 1872 на базе уездных училищ с 6-летним сроком обучения; в них могли учиться и дети зажиточных крестьян.

В Г. у. обучали закону божьему, чтению и письму, русскому языку и церковнославянскому чтению, арифметике, практической геометрии, географии, отечественной и всеобщей истории, естественной истории и физике, черчению, рисованию, гимнастике, а также некоторым прикладным знаниям и ремёслам (работы по дереву и металлу).

Обучение в Г. у. было платным, размер платы устанавливался инспектором народных училищ в соответствии с местными условиями и утверждался попечителем учебного округа. Права выпускников Г. у. на продолжение образования были ограничены. Они могли поступить только в низшие профессиональные школы или на 1- и 2-годичные педагогические курсы, существовавшие при некоторых Г. у. Курсы давали право преподавать в начальных училищах и возможность поступления в учительский институт. В 1912 Г. у. были преобразованы в высшие начальные училища.

Appendix 2

Гимназии должны были открываться в губернских городах. Целью обучения была подготовка детей дворян к государственной службе или поступлению в университет.

Appendix 3

A poem where almost every word has a yat (four yat in the first line).

Бълы, блѣдный, бѣдный бѣсть
Убѣжалъ голодный въ лѣсь.
Лѣшемъ по лѣсу онь бѣгалъ,
Рѣдкой съ хрѣномъ пообѣдалъ
И за горойй тотъ обѣдь.
Даль обѣтъ надѣлатъ бѣдь.
Вѣдай, братъ, что кѣльть и кѣлтка,
Рѣшето, рѣшетка, сѣтка,
Вѣжа и желѣзо съ ять,—
Такъ и надобно писать.
Нась вѣки и рѣчицы
Защищасть гласть звѣницы,
Вѣки жмуриять цѣльны вѣкъ
Ночью каждый человѣкъ...
Вѣтеръ вѣтки поломалъ,
Нѣмецъ вѣники связалъ,
Свѣсилъ вѣно при промѣщѣ,
За двѣ гривны продалъ въ Вѣчѣ.
Дѣвъ и Дѣвстръ, какъ всѣмъ извѣстно,
Двѣ рѣки въ соединѣніѣ тѣсномъ,
Дѣлитъ области ихъ Булъ,
Рѣжетъ съ сѣвера на югъ.
Кто тамъ гнѣвно свирѣптъ?
Крѣпко сѣтовать такъ смѣять?
Надо мирно споръ рѣшить
И другъ друга убѣдить...
Птицы гнѣзда грѣхъ зорить,
Грѣхъ напрасно хлѣбъ сорить,
Надь калкой грѣхъ смѣяться,
Надь увѣчнымъ издѣвать...

Editor’s Note: You can reach Prof. Will Rayms by email at wlodek.1@comcast.net

Dictionaries usually give only brief treatment to etymologies and even etymological dictionaries often do not lavish on them the attention they deserve. To help fill the gap, the author deals in depth with several etymologically problematic words in various Germanic, Jewish, Romance, and Slavic languages, all of which have hitherto either been misetymologized or not etymologized at all (the three most detailed chapters – 14, 16, and 31 – are respectively 104, 130, and 134 pages long). Sometimes, he succeeds in cracking the nut; sometimes, he is able only to clear away misunderstanding; but always he endeavors to set the stage for further serious treatment, as in the several chapters disproving or doubting a Yiddish or Hebrew origin for certain English lexemes.

Usually, the author marshals not only linguistic but also historical and cultural information, his approach thus being both linguistic and philological (as William Labov has said, “All linguistics is sociolinguistics”). He deals too with etiology, an often essential but not infrequently neglected component of etymological research. For example, dictionaries in all languages that include a lexeme translating literally as ‘Molotov cocktail’ not only misetymologize it but also often fail to etiologize it (why does it commemorate Vyatsheslav Mikhailovitsh Molotov?) or misetiologize it. Chapter 10 (42 pages), based in part on an examination of relevant Finnish military terms and other Finnish sources, presents, for the first time, the right etymology and the right etiology.

Since this book, which consists of thirty chapters in English and one in romanized Yiddish, also discusses methodology (notably in chapter 11 but also in most others), it has the makings of an introduction to the science, art, and craft of etymology, and can serve as a reader in courses in diachronic linguistics in general or in etymology in particular. The titles of the chapters are:

1. The Alleged Russian Origin of French bistro ~ bistrot ‘wine merchant; public house’ Versus Its Probable Ultimate Origin in Vulgar Latin or Gallo-Romance (On the Persistence of a Folk Etymology and Folk Etiology Despite the Suggestion of Better Etymologies)
2. The Origin of Chicano Spanish blanquillo ‘testicle’ (On How Emulated Dyosemy Can Defeat the Purpose of a Euphemism)
3. The British English Origin of Informal Israeli Hebrew braso
4. American English Slang copacetic ‘fine, all right’ Has No Hebrew, Yiddish, or Other Jewish Connection
5. The American English Slangism fink Probably Has No Jewish Connection
6. Definite and Possible English Reflexes of Spanish garbanzo ‘chickpea’
7. Originally American English glitz, glitz up, and glitzy Probably Have No Yiddish Connection
8. Towards a Dossier on the Still Unclear Immediate Etymon(s?) of American English Slang hooker ‘whore’ (With Remarks on the Origin of American English Barnegat, Dixie, fly ~ vlei ~ vley ~ vlaie ~ vly, Gramercy Park, Hell Gate, jazz, slaughter, and Spuyten Duyvil)
9. American English jitney ‘five-cent coin; sum of five cents’ Has No Apparent Jewish or Russian Connection and May Come from (Black?) Louisiana French jetnée (On the Increasing Difficulty of Harvesting All the Grain)
10. Etymology and Etiology in the Study of Eponymous Lexemes: The Case of English Molotov cocktail and Finnish Molotovin koktaali
11. Nine Criteria for Assessing the Likelihood of Yiddish Influence on English (With Examples)
12. English paparazzo < Italian paparazzo = Commmonization of the Label Name Paparazzo (in Federico Fellini’s La Dolce Vita) < ?
13. New York City English parky ‘park keeper’ Is Probably a Spontaneous Coinage Rather than a Borrowing from British English
14. When Chauvinism Interferes in Etymological Research: A Few Observations on the Supposed Vulgar Latin Derivation of Rumanian pastramă ~ păstrămă, a Noun of Immediate Turkish Origin (With Preliminary Remarks on Related Words in Albanian, Arabic,
Armenian, English, French, Greek, Hebrew, Judezmo, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Yiddish

15. An Immediate or Non-Immediate Jewish Connection for Dutch poeha and Variants (> Afrikaans bohaai > South African English bohaai), French brouhaha (> English brouhaha), French Brou, brou, ha, ha, Brou, ha, ha, High German buhai and Variants, Low German buhê and Variants, or Modern West Frisian balei and Variants Has Not Been Proven (With Remarks on the Jewish Italian or Liturgical Hebrew Origin of Arezzo Dialectal barruccaba and the Liturgical Hebrew Origin of Italian badanai)

16. Mexican Spanish sarape ~ zarape (Whence American English sarape ~ serape ~ serapi ~ zarape and French sarapé ~ sérapé), a Word Possibly from Tarascan /'charakwa/, Probably Has No Jewish or Iranian Connection

17. Is Slang American English schnook ~ shnook ‘pitifully meek person’ from Informal High German Schmuck’ ‘a kind of small sheep’, Northeastern Yiddish shnik ‘[elephant’s] trunk; snout [of other animals]’, or Plattduetsch Schnück ‘snail’?

18. Whence American English scrod and Grimsby English scrob?

19. Does American English shack ‘shanty’ Come From One or More Uto-Aztecan Languages of the American Plains?

20. The Etymology of English spiel and spieler and Scots English bonspiel

21. English Star Chamber Has No Jewish Connection

22. Who Can Decipher (Yiddish?) *“bashtem” and (Yiddish?) *“ghop bagi”? 

23. The (Solely Southeastern?) Yiddish Cloth Name taniklot and the Rare American English Baking Term poolish ‘leaven, starter, starter dough’

24. An Instance of Convergence: Frisian witte and Yiddish mideye

25. A Few English Words Misattributed to Yiddish (finagle, finical, finick, toco, trantrle, and trantlum); a Yiddish-Origin English Word Misetymologized for at Least Sixty-One Years (bopkes); a Misetymologized Yiddish Pen Name (shnul niger); and a Misetymologized Eastern Yiddish Word (yaynve-veyyane!) 

26. Etymological and Sociolinguistic Notes of Czech and Jewish or Possible Jewish Interest (On Czech fízi, frajle, hajzl, Hira, keťas, mecheche, mišuge ~ mišuke, Nabuchodonozor ~ Nabukadnezar, pajzl, pejzy, Šmelina, Šmelinárˇ, Šmok; Yiddish di alt-naye shul, peyem ~ peym; Olomouc in Yiddish Lexemes; Franz Kafka’s Early Linguistic History; and the Investigation of Yiddish in Bohemia and Moravia)

27. On the Probable Kenaanic Origin of Two Eastern Yiddish Kin Terms, zeyde ‘grandfather’ and bobe ‘grandmother’

28. Zinfandel: An American English Grape and Wine Name of Immediate Hungarian, Moravian Czech, and/or Slovak Origin (On How the Origin of a Significans Need Not Be Parallel to the Origin of the Corresponding Significatum)

29. Nokh a por dugmes fun der yidisher hashpoe af ivrit

30. Some More Israeli Hebrew Items of German Origin

31. Jewish Dickensiana, Part One: Despite Popular Belief, the Name Fagin in Charles Dickens’s Oliver Twist Has No Jewish Connection (With Appendixes on Some Laws Concerning Personal Names and on Dickens’s Authentic Yiddish Name)

***

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Editor’s Note: The URLs for the bookstores where you can purchase your copies of the book have been shortened by using TinyURL service to make them possible to type into your browser. Your editor is especially interested in your feedback on this article.
Itst bin ikh an elter-zeyde?
By Philip “Fishl“ Kutner

If you’ve been there ‘n done that, then you can possibly know how I feel. For those of you who still are waiting for this miracle to happen, it is indescribable.

When Melanie my first eynikl came, I stared through the glass window in the hospital nursery. In the third bassinet was my little cherub, mama of my ur-eynikl. I became transfixed—as if in a stupor. Never having been under the influence of peyote or other drug, I can only imagine the euphoria.

So, now, my ur-eynikl, little Lyla Sophia, extends my flesh on Earth for still another generation. Perhaps she will be one of those who will help us perpetuate our mame-loshn. Perhaps she will raise a family to bring back the yidishkeyt I have known and love.

To come home from Jerry and his committee’s stirring IAYC conference in Michigan, and to get this wonderful news makes me ask, “Does it ever get any better than this?” Come share with me this blessing, un lomir ale trinken a glezele vayn.
Der Bay’s Website—What’s There?

Der Internatsionaler Kalendar lists events worldwide with contact phone numbers.

Yiddish Radio Programs worldwide.

A 100 word Yiddish test and answers. 41 word lists from addresses to 64 Yiddish words that are the same in singular and plural.

Links to 170 key Yiddish sites with descriptions and a list of 164 other key Jewish sites.

Playing 11 games from Etl Betl (cat’s cradle), to Shimon Zogt (with pictures of male and female body parts), to Yidishe Tsung Plonters (tongue twisters).

Information about the 14 IAYC Conferences with the speakers, entertainers, vendors, and photos.

The 90 Mama stories in Hrabina of Hunterdon. A few copies of the book are still available.

The IAYC Klub Korner with ideas for starting and programming Yiddish clubs.

Twenty-two frequently asked questions and answers.

List of dates and contact information for Major Yiddish Events worldwide.

List with contact information of Yiddish teachers, klezmer group leaders, Yiddish club leaders, librarians, performers, radio announcers, comedians, computer mavens, and singers.

Fishl’s original Chelm stories (56).

The Yiddish Network (TYN) is a list of people worldwide who are contacts for travelers and those who are relocating.

Yiddish for the disabled—mainly for the blind and visually impaired, and the deaf and hard of hearing. www.smccb.org is Fishl’s site for his blind club.

List of Yiddish translators with suggestions for translation jobs. Has a detailed discussion of caveats for both the translator and translatee.

Sign up for a Yiddish briv fraynd (470). List your interests and rate yourself. You will be matched with ten people worldwide with whom you can write in Yiddish or transliteration, online or in hardcopy.

Contact information of over 160 klezmer groups and a link to Ari Davidow’s Klezmer Shack with even a larger list.

List by title and first line of the 250 Yiddish songs in the Yosl and Chana Mlotek three songbooks with their location.

List of key Yiddish publications and contact information.

Also on the homepage you can sign up for a free monthly copy of the abbreviated edition of Der Bay. Have your club members sign-up.

The URL for the website is http://www.derbay.org

Fishl loves to get calls, for it is the next best thing to shaking hands or getting a hug.
One of the "Violins of Hope" made its American debut at the 33rd Institute at the Wildacres Retreat in Little Switzerland, NC. Asaela "Assi" Weinstein, of Tel Aviv, Israel, and her husband, master violin maker Amnon Weinstein, restored violins rescued from concentration camps and ghettos after the Holocaust. Assi recounted gripping stories of the violins' owners. She brought with her one of the restored violins, engraved by its owner with the Star of David. Violinist Carios (Chaim) Tarazona, accompanied by Paul (Pesach) Nitsch, performed on this violin the haunting music from "Schindler's List," composed by John William.

The Yiddish Institute is dedicated to the memory of LD, Blumenthal and Herman Blumenthal. Institutnikes were greeted upon arrival by Batsheva and Dovid Herbstman, and Esta and Heshi Spindel. A warm reception prepared by hosts Shoshana and Yosef Miller and the Spindels, awaited everyone on the patio overlooking a breathtaking view of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The institute opened with Avrahm Luski welcoming everyone in Yiddish and English. Mike (Michel) House, manager of Wildacres, told how LD_Blumenthal bought the mountaintop in the 1930s and turned it into a haven for non-profit educational, religious, music and art groups in the 1940s. Baila Pransky, Institute Coordinator/Advisor greeted everyone in Yiddish and English, and introduced the devoted Yiddish Institute committee. The guest lecturers, performers, and 100 institutnikes, introduced themselves and told where they live now and where they or their parents/grandparents migrated from-- many from Eastern Europe and beyond. Each evening featured spirited singing and dancing.

The overall theme of the Institute was "Yiddishkeyt Abounds" with a professional cast of performing artists and lecturers. Descriptions of the performers and their programs follow:

"Simkhe," a musical group, starred Gene (Issam) Kavadlo, Carlos (Chaim) Tarazona, and Paul (Pesach) Nitsch. Gene, principal clarinetist with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra since 1975, is the founder and leader of "Viva Klezmer!"; Carlos has played violin with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra since 2003; Paul, "Simkhe’s" pianist, is Professor of Music and Artist-in-Residence at Queens University of Charlotte; Ali (Alissa) Kavadlo accompanied the group with the tambourine.

'Simkhe" played a variety of Yiddish pieces. One program called "Mayses un Musik" featured music of Daniel Galay, an Argentiman-born Israeli. His Yiddish folktales, were narrated by Baila Pransky and accompanied by the musicians.

The second program was "Klezmer Potpourri," which included festive song and dance music. The program concluded with "The Klezmer's Wedding" by Srul Irving Glick.

Robert Abelon, a baritone and Cantor of Temple Israel in NYC, who performs with symphony orchestras and in Yiddish theater, and Pianist/Arranger Joyce (Freydl) Rosenzweig, presented three concerts that included familiar Yiddish songs, "Mir Bagrisn Der Heyliger Shabbes"; and The John Pransky Concert to honor the memory of one of the Institute's founders. Joyce is music director of Congregation Beth Simchat Torah in NYC. In addition to accompanying Cantor Abelson, Joyce trained a group of institutnikes to sing a melody at the final concert.

The institute's programming included workshops devoted to "Beginning Yiddish" taught by Baila Pransky; "Pearls of Yiddish Literature" as well as "Yiddish Readings;" both with Avrahm Luski; and "My Yiddishe Journey" with Hazan Moishe Friedler, whose life journey took him from Buenos Aires to Mexico City and Tampa, Florida.

Shabbes services were held on Friday evening and Saturday morning, arranged and conducted by Itzhak Bienstock with Hazan Moishe Friedler; Torah Reader was Menahem Me Zahav; and Haftorah was chanted by Malka Me Zahav. Avraham Lush followed the Hebrew Torah and Haftorah readings with Yiddish translations. Itzhak led morning and evening Minyanim. With the blending of Yiddish, Hebrew and English in prayer and song, a spiritual atmosphere, through daily and Shabbes services, brought another dimension to this multifaceted Yiddish experience.

At the conclusion, we heard a summation of the Institute by the faculty and shared closing remarks by institutnikes. Hazan Friedler described the weekend as a unique gathering, saying, "We leave with a little more of the pintele Yid... culturally, humanly and Judaically. You made this weekend my Minyan." The Institute brought strangers together to express their love of the Yiddish language and culture. This was a parting of mishpokhe—strangers no more.
Teacher of the Month

“What a wonderful idea it would be if we had a special column for Teacher of the Month.” That sounds like a great idea. Fishl, thanks anonymous for suggesting it. Then came an email telling of a move to a new home. This was an opportunity to select the first teacher. If you think it is a good idea for a monthly column, send in the information of your favorite Yiddish teacher. If enough readers agree, then we’ll do it. Send it to fishl@derbay.org

Ruth Goodman - ruthfg@aol.com

Relocating to a retirement home brings changes and the need to adjust to a new way of life. For Ruth it has been a time of excitement and a new opportunity to encourage others to study Yiddish. When Ruth moved from Delaware to Pennsylvania, she was urged to start a Yiddish class even though she is still keeping up teaching her prior classes.

As a retired reading specialist, she has the tools to help her have the patience and knowledge to be a language teacher. She received a solid background in Yiddish as a youngster in New York City, and is a graduate of an Arbeter Ring Mitlshul. Her master’s degree is in reading, Ruth has earned her right to be the first teacher to be honored in what we hope will be a series.

For 20 years while still living in Wilmington, DE, Ruth taught Yiddish and Judaic subjects to adults at the Osher Lifelong Learning Center. Lectures on Judaic subjects include: The History of Jewish Symbols; The History of Yiddish Theater and Film; Jewish Life in the Middle Ages; and Jewish Superstitions.

Ruth Goodman has authored three award-winning books. These are:

• Pen Pals: What It Means to be Jewish in America and Israel (sold out)

• Easy Steps to the Hebrew Aleph Bet (Teach yourself to read Hebrew--$14.95)

• The Jewish Pope a translation of Yudel Mark’s book: available at $14.95 plus postage.

Send check plus postage to Ruth F Goodman, 409 Sparrow’s Ridge, Glen Mills, PA 19342.

Edward M. Goldman's Der Bay

Comical Bible Skits

Ed Goldman of Bayonne, New Jersey wrote komishe biblishe stsenes. They were published in Der Bay. It has proved to be the most popular series. The format is being reworked and enlarged. They will be available for clubs programming. This is the list of skits and dates of publication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skit Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why God Made Adam</td>
<td>Nov '92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why God Made Eve</td>
<td>Dec '92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Snake Crawls on His Belly</td>
<td>Jan '93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Cain Has a Sign on His Forehead</td>
<td>Feb '93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Lot's Wife Became a Pillar of Salt</td>
<td>Mar '93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why God Called Abram &quot;Abraham&quot;</td>
<td>Apr '93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why God Made a Rainbow</td>
<td>May '93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why People Don't Speak Mame-Loshen</td>
<td>J-A '93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Isaac Blessed Jacob Instead of Esau</td>
<td>Oct '93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Jacob Became Old Before His Time</td>
<td>Nov '93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why King Ahashverus Hanged Haman Instead of Mordekhay</td>
<td>Feb '94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Moses Wandered 40 Years in the Dessert</td>
<td>Mar '94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Jonah Hid in the Belly of a Whale</td>
<td>Apr '94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why They Called Samson a Sissy</td>
<td>May '94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Mona Lisa is Smiling</td>
<td>June '94</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Yiddish Club Programming

The skits are Romanized (transliterated), with the less common words translated. They should be read twice, first for pronunciation and meaning, then read as if being performed as plays. Some groups have actually performed them for other Yiddish groups. Don’t try to memorize the parts.

Have club members volunteer to take the part of a particular character. They vary from three to nine per skit. There is a narrator’s role in the skits.
We have a relative, Berl Magid, who survived the Holocaust, wrote of his experiences, and had the book published in Israel. The book is in Yiddish and needs to be translated for the family and for the world to hear.

Below is a synopsis of the book and the publishing details. It currently exists on the bookshelves of the US Holocaust Museum and in three or four universities.

"Memoirs of a Lithuanian Jew, born in Birzai, who served in the military before World War II. Describes the Nazi occupation of Lithuania in June 1941, and the hardships he experienced in the ghetto of Siauliai, where he was interned and which was liquidated in July 1944.

Magid was sent to Stutthof and then to Kaufering. In April 1945, after a death march to Dachau, he was liberated by American forces. In 1949 he immigrated to the U.S., and in 1973 to Israel."

We would appreciate any help that you can provide. I have used a Yiddish translator for translating some family correspondence, but the quote to translate this book of 228 pages is well over $2000.

Thanks for considering, and any assistance that you provide will be very much appreciated.

Below are the details (publisher, pages, title in Yiddish and English)

Title: Vos ikh hob tsu dertseyn: bleter fun a lebn
Author: Magid, Bert David
Publisher: Tel Aviv: Farlag Y.L. Perets, 1992.
Description: 228 p. : ill. ; 22 cm.
Format: Book
Subjects: Magid, Bert David - Holocaust Jewish (1939-1945) – Personal Narratives
Notes: In Yiddish, T.p. partially vocalized. Title on t.p. verso: What I have to tell.

Michael R Bien
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mobile: 610-547-2636

Translating Yiddish Literature: Mobilizing a New Generation

The Yiddish Book Center and the Fund for Translation of Jewish Literature announce a working conference that will take place at the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, MA, November 12-13, 2011. Established and aspiring translators, publishers, students, and scholars will attend.

This conference comes at a moment of urgency and promise. Less than 2% of Yiddish literature has been translated, and despite recent efforts, at the current rate it will be another 25,000 years before all Yiddish titles are accessible to English readers. The goal is to spark an effort to translate the best of Yiddish literature into English. Panels will discuss these issues:

- What works should be translated?
- How can we use new media & online publishing?
- How do we train a new generation of translators, and what resources do they need to succeed?

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

- Welcoming Aaron Lansky, Yiddish Book Center
- Keynote, Lawrence Rosenwald, Wellesley College
- 25,000 Titles to Go: The Current State of Yiddish Translation:
  Anita Norich, University of Michigan
  Zachary Baker, Stanford University
  Samuel Kassow, Trinity College
- New Media, New Readers: Publication in the Digital Age
  Chair: Ilan Stavans, Amherst College
  David Roskies, Jewish Theological Seminary
  Susan Harris, Words without Borders
  Joshua Lambert, New York University
- What Do New Yiddish Translators Need to Succeed?
  Chair: Justin Cammy, Smith College
  Rebecca Margolis, University of Ottawa
  Barbara Harshav, Yale University
  Solon Beinfeld, Washington University (ret.)

Online registration is available at www.yiddishbookcenter.org/translationconference
Shayles un Tshuves in “Hilkhes Libe” - “Forverts” – Oct. 29 - Nov. 4, 2010  
(Questions and Answers in the Matter of Love) - Fun der khaznte Khane Slek  
[transliterated and annotated by Goldie Adler Gold]

Tayere khaznte,


“Emkat”-nemer

Tayerer “emkat”-nemer,


+++++++

Tayere khaznte,

Ikh hob zikh aribergeklibn keyn L.A. fun Toronto mit a yor tsurik, kedey vayter ontsugeyn mit mayn tsiil [goal] tsu vern a film-rezhisor [director]. In di ershte 6 khadoshim hob ikh geshafn [created] mayn eygenem kurtsn film, vos shpilt in farshedyene erter, gevint prizn un vert gevizin in vos a mol gresere kinos [movie theaters]. Me hot mir bald gemoldn [announced] andre groyse proyektn. S’hot zikh mir gedakht [I thought], az ikh bin shoyn oyfn veg...

Ober fun di ale tsugezogte [promised] goldene glikn hot zikh oysgelozt a boydem [fizzled out]. Ikh kling on yedn tog tsu di “rikhtike” mentshn un pruv epes bakumen an arbet, ober keyner hot mir dervayl nisht gekent helfn. Ikh vel bald mer nisht hobn keyn gelt un mayne tate-ame haltn, az ikh hob shoyn genug zikh gemutshet [suffered] in der shtot un zey vilt ikh zol ahemkumen. Ven nor eyn proyekt volt tsu shtand gekumen [if only…materialize], volt geven in ordenung [okay]. Ober es zet oys ist, az alts toyg oyf kapores [be useless]. In Kanade arbet ikh vi a doktor (in di fareynike shtatn tor ikh nies), un a pozitsye in mayn felde ken ikh ist bakumen in Toronto.

oy s eyn lebn, beshas [while] me hale an oyg [un
harts] getzelt [aimed] oyf an andern, mayn emese
laydnshaft [passion]?

Film-rezhisor [director] Dokter

Tayerer film-rezh...dokter,

Mazltov oyf ayere gerotene [successful] proyektn
biz aher! Ikh her ven a sakh menshn, velkhe
kumen keyn L.A. tsu vern matsliexh [succeed] in
der film industrye, un gor veynik fun zey hobn aza
hatslokhe [success] vi ir hot gehat. Oyb tsu vern a
rehzisor, azoy vi ir hoft tsu ton mitn lebn, vet eyn
yor nisht shatn [harm]. Git a trakht vifl tsayt ir hot
shtudirt in der meditsin-shul; ikh vokt zikh gelozt,
tum veynkstns, khots a helft fun azoy fil tsayt
[allow myself at least half...] ernst nokhtsugeyn ayer
kholem [seriously to follow...dream].

Deriber [therefore] meyn ikh, ir zolt geyn oyf an
intervyu. Se treft zikh zelt [seldom occurs], az a
pozitsye gedoyert [lasts] nor 4 khadoshim. Oyb ir
bakumt di pozitsye, veln di 4 khadoshim aykh
dermeglekhn [allow] tsu zayn nokh 4 khadoshim in
L.A. Ven in Toronto, kent ir lozn fray a geive tsayt
in tog tsu arbetn oyfn film. Halt on vayter [continue]
dem kontakt mit di L.A.er fraynd un farlirt nisht di
farbindung [lose contact]. Dermit vet ir nisht vern
opgefremdt [estranged] funem lebn dortn, un s'vet
aykh laykhter zayn ven ir fort tsurik. Ayere
khalomes veln mekuyem vern [dreams...come true]
oyb ir hot di mut zikh optzugebn mit zey [devote
yourself to them] mitn gantsn hartsn.

December 4, 2009

Tayerer khaznte,

Ikh farbreng [enjoy] mit a vulerdelekhn man shoyn 3
khadoshim. Er iz gut tsu mir, hot a gelungene
Er hot afile lib tsu farbrengen mit mayn mishpokhe.
To vos iz den di problem? Er hot azoy fil
"gevoynheyt" [habits], vos geyen mir oyf di nervn.
Zayn kol iz zeyr a hoykhs un klingt vi a froys
[loud...feminine]. Er shtek eykynol nisht arayn
zayn hemd in di hoyzn [never puts his shirt in his
pants], ven mir esn in a restoran un zet oys vi a
zhlob [yokel], dos 'bretl' funem klozet [toilet seat] lozt
er ale mol in der heykh. Er glet mayn kop, elehey
[as if] ikh bin a hunt, un azoy vayter. Zol ikh blaybn
mit im? Er iz ozyergevneynltech [exceptional], ober er
dergeyt mir di yorn [annoys me]!
Umruik [uneasy]

Tayere umruik,

Neyn, beser nisht tsu blaybn mit im. Nisht vayl er
dergeyt aykh di yorn, nor vayl ir zent nisht genug
dervaksn [mature] tsu hobn an ernste batsiung
[serious relationship] mit a man. Oyb nokh 3
khadoshim mahk er aykh meshuge tsulib di
dreymbekh, ken ikh garatirm, az ir vet gefinen
nokh un nokh 'kesruxes' [faults] bay im mit der
tsayt. Nisht nor dos – ikh bin zikhaz, az ir velt
gefinen azoyne narishkeytn bay ale bokhrim [boy-
friends] ayere. Blaybt dervyl aleyyn, biz ir filt az ir
zent nisht genug 'rayf' [mature] ontsunemen azoyne
gevoynheyt bay andere.

++++++++++++

Tayere khaznte,

Ikh zorg zikh vegn koyfn hakhanike matones [gifts]
dem yor. Frier flegn mir koyfn zekhtsn matones,
eyne far yeder nakht far undzere tsvey kinder. Mir
flegn onheybn mit a kleyner matone, un di greste
matone hobn mir geshonken [presented] di letste
nakht. Dos yor hobn mir groyse shverikeytn mit
gelt, vi bay a sakh andere mishpokhes. Nokh
erger—ikh hob farloyrn mayn shtele [job] mit a
khoydesh tsurik. Gelt kayklt zikh nisht in di gase
un mir hobn nisht di fondn far 16 matones. Ober
ikh vil nisht, az di kinder zoln zayn anotsy
[disappointed]. Undzere kinder zenen nisht keyn
tsebalevete [spoiled] un bakumen zelt zayn matones
beysn yor. Vi ken ikh zey tsufirdn shteln on
oystsugebn a sakh gelt?

Farzorgtse [worried] mame

Tayere Farz...mame,

Redt zikh durkh mit di kinder far [before] hakhanike,
zye zoln nisht zayn azoy anotsy beshas dem
yontef. Ir vet zikh efsher khideshn [be surprised]
vifl zey veyns shoyn. Efsher funeshteyn zey aleyyn,
az di tsayt iz nisht azu geyn vayl ir hot farloyrn in
arbet. Farzikhert [assure] zey az s'iz do genug gelt
far alts vos iz neytk—kleyder, esn, ikher far der
shul—ober gelt far iberike zakhn hot men nisht itst.
Vos shaykh [regarding] di 8 nekht fun hakhanike—
yayzshafrish [creative]! Mistame ken men gefinen
an aktivitet far der gantszer mishpokhe yedn oyf der
nakht. Kokht latkes tsuzamen, kukt oyf a film in
eynym, shpilt in dreydl. Di matone fun farbrere
tsuzamen vi a mishpokhe iz oykh epes vert! A
freylekhn hakhanike.
Secular Jewishness—Why and How - Part I
Dr. Barney Zumoff

When I went to Israel for the first time, some 25 years ago, I, like all Jewish tourists, paid the obligatory visit to the Western Wall. As I traversed the broad, open plaza that abuts the Temple Mount, I felt an unaccustomed emotion that I couldn’t characterize. On reaching the Wall, I stretched out my hand, touched the stones, and unexpectedly burst into tears. They were not tears of sorrow but tears of joy. Here was I, a lifelong non-believer, feeling overwhelming joy at communing with my long-ago Jewish ancestors, feeling a sense of connection with all Jews, past and present. We Jews bandy about the expressions “klal yisroel” and “Jewish peoplehood” quite lightly, but it was only at the Western Wall that I had a sudden epiphany that illuminated what those expressions really mean.

When I continued to follow tradition and placed folded pieces of paper with secret messages into cracks in the Wall, what did I wish for? That my children and grandchildren would always remain good and devoted Jews. If, as was very likely, they would not be observant, then let them at least remain part of the historical and contemporary fabric of Jewish life, let them feel Jewish, let them transmit that feeling to their own children and grandchildren, so that the golden chain of Jewish existence would go on. I didn’t then, and don’t now, ask myself why I feel that way—it’s a deep and atavistic emotion that is rooted in some ancient part of my Jewish brain.

Well, one might ask, just how does a Jew go about feeling Jewish and transmitting that feeling to his descendants? The pious Jew has a simple answer: be observant, follow the Biblical commandments, and live by the halachic laws. And indeed, in the “old home” in Europe, that is how most Jews lived: religion was so closely interwoven with their every thought and action that it was not a separate sphere of activity—it was life itself.

But around the turn of the 20th century, a growing number of Jews in Eastern Europe began to turn their backs on observant Judaism. They felt that it was narrow, provincial, backward-looking, and oppressive; they wanted Jews to partake of the freedom and cultural riches of the rest of the world; they wanted to focus their energies on the social and economic betterment of all people, Jews included. In a sense, this was an update on the Haskalah (Enlightenment) movement, which had begun about a century earlier in Western Europe and had continued to percolate among Jewish intellectuals ever since.

There were, however, two big differences: The Haskalah movement was taken up principally by intellectuals, while the new one was a mass movement, affecting Jews of all classes, especially workers and other non-intellectuals; also, despite the fact that the followers of the Haskalah were eager to expand their horizons to include the cultural riches of the non-Jewish world, they often maintained their status as observant Jews, seeing no conflict between that and the expansion of their intellectual horizons.

In contrast, the new movement was clearly secular; its adherents simply lost their faith in the Jewish God, or in any God at all, for that matter. Indeed, some of them developed a profound antagonism to religion and anything related to it, and became militant antireligionists. They became secularists, not just secular persons—their secularism became a quasi religion.

That did not mean that those Jews who ceased to be observant wanted to cease being Jewish. On the contrary, they were eager to remain Jewish, but that now required a conscious effort rather than the passive floating with the current that permitted observant Jews to remain Jewish. The nonobservant Jews gradually evolved the concept of “secular Jewishness,” a concept that has been succinctly defined by the late William Stern, former Executive Director of the Workmen’s Circle, as “living and thinking as a Jew without God.”

They created numerous organizations to help them live that kind of Jewish life: the Bund, ORT, the Yiddish Daily Forward, the Zukunft, the Jewish Labor Committee, YIVO, the Congress for Jewish Culture, the Workmen’s Circle, the Labor Zionist Alliance, the Sholem Aleichem Institute, the Jewish People’s Fraternal Order, and the secular Yiddish schools run by the last four of these. The vast majority of the Jews who immigrated to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th century were such secular Jews, as were the vast majority of Jews
who immigrated to Israel (then Palestine) in its early years. Even today, a very large majority of the Jews in both countries are secular Jews, despite the fact that observant Jews make themselves heard and felt to such an extent that an outside observer might be forgiven for mistakenly concluding that they are the majority of the Jewish people.

A question immediately presents itself: What does the Jewishness of secular Jews consist of, and how do they preserve that Jewishness and transmit it to their children and grandchildren? At the beginning, almost all the secular Jews spoke Yiddish as their mother tongue, and many of them were active Socialists (and some Communists.) Those two commonalities were an important glue that held the secular Jewish community together in the early days, but both of them are disappearing rapidly now. Today, if one finds a Jew who speaks Yiddish as his mother tongue, he will usually be a haredi Jew, not a secular Jew.

Many secular Jews continue their attachment to Yiddish and their efforts to preserve it as a living language, both because of its historical importance as the basis of Jewish culture for the past thousand years and because of its value as a glue to hold the secular Jewish community together. This intellectual and emotional attachment to Yiddish is referred to as “Yiddishism.”

At this point, I want to take a broad historical look at secular Jewishness then and now, over the sweep of history.

In Biblical times, our forebears developed a complete and well-rounded culture, with all the normal components, secular and religious, that were to be found in the cultures of surrounding lands. Religion was important to our Jewish ancestors and informed their lives with compassion, decency, and social justice—ideas that still permeate the Jewish conscience to this day—but it was not the be-all and end-all of their lives.

Indeed, they would scarcely recognize as fellow Jews the present-day haredim, who focus their entire lives on religious observance and pay little or no attention to any other aspect of the life and culture of the lands in which they live, including the land of Israel. To be sure, our ancestors did have a priestly class, but the interaction of the priests with the day-to-day lives of the people was relatively limited; it occurred principally in connection with worship at the Temple in Jerusalem, largely at the time of the Days of Awe and the great pilgrimage holidays: Sukkes, Peysakh, and Shevues.

After the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile, the nascent rabbinical class became dominant in Jewish community life, largely by necessity: Temple worship was no longer possible; secular aspects of life were truncated by the exilic condition, with its immersion in the surrounding, often hostile cultures; and no governmental structure for the Jewish community existed. Into this potentially chaotic situation, the rabbis introduced order and stability.

An example cited by our historians is Yokhanan ben Zakkai, whose establishment of the yeshiva at Yavneh right after the destruction of the Temple is often credited with saving the Jewish people from being swallowed up and consumed by the invading Roman culture.

What about now? Israel, the only totally Jewish land, presents a fascinating mixture of the ancient, pre-Diaspora “total” Jewish culture, including its secular features, and the insular, inward-directed culture of the haredim, which is a continuation of the rabbinically controlled post-Diaspora culture that has dominated the Jewish world for most of the past two thousand years. The great majority of Israeli Jews are secular; neither their outlook nor their behavior is religiously oriented.

Many, perhaps most, of them are deeply conscious of Jewish customs, rituals, and history, but they are able to give these a completely secular cast: they incorporate them into their Jewish self-identification and their way of life, but feel no need to add a truly religious dimension to them in order to feel Jewish. Incidentally, that is a partial answer to the question I raised above: what the Jewishness of secular Jews consists of. Obviously it can be done.

The haredi minority, on the other hand, takes the position that a Jew who is not deeply religious and a follower of halakha is no Jew at all. Not only, they believe, does the secular part of Israeli culture not add anything to Jewishness, but it interferes with and detracts from what they consider “real” Jewishness. This dichotomy of worldviews has been generating heat and conflict from the beginning in Israel, and the struggle is getting worse—perhaps approaching a flash point.
At Der Bay’s Website - http://www.derbay.org/radiolinks.html
Most Yiddish programs can be heard online in “real time” or have archives of past programs or both

Yiddish Radio Winnipeg – LIST COMPILED BY ROCHELLE ZUCKER – HER WEEKLY PROGRAM
Listen Live Sundays - 2:00-2:30 PM CDT - http://www.ckj.com
Archive
http://www.mediafire.com/?sharekey=fff90363c2a5ad73ab1eab3e9fa335ca728e6d7a6e38cc6c

Forward Radio Hour - New York
Most recent program - http://www.yiddish.forward.com/last-radio-program/
Archive - http://www.yiddish.forward.com/archivepage/?p=3

The Yiddish Voice – Boston
Yiddish Voice Website - http://www.yiddishvoice.com/
WUNR 1600 AM/Brookline, Massachusetts USA - Wednesdays 7:30-8:30 P.M. EST
http://www.wunr.com/

Di Yidishe Sho Paris
Radio J - http://www.radiorcj.info/#top

Australia

Radio ZZZ
Choose Jewish Sunday from the “Listen to a Show” drop down menu at the left

Buenos Aires Argentina
Mit Lid Un Vort  (Shoshana Nejama Szostak) can be heard at the times they are broadcast. Sometimes you can also find a previous episode up on the page.

Naye Khvalyes – Warsaw Poland – Many interesting interviews
http://www.polskieradio.pl/zagranica/il/news/archiwum.aspx?s=271&k=0

Radio Sefarad
Radio Sefard in Spain now has a Yiddish program produced by Abraham Lichtenbaum of the Buenos Aires IWO (YIVO)

Yiddish Time – Brussels – Miryam Fuks

Radio Shalom – Copenhagen Denmark http://radioshalom.dk
Some Yiddish shows are in archive - http://radioshalom.dk/?m=201003&paged=2
Although the station is not online there is an interview with Sergio Bengelsdorf – host of the Yiddish Radio program in Kishnev Moldova on Naye Khvalyes
Oystsugn fun briv in der redaktsye

My parents just moved into assisted living in the Princeton area and I’m looking for a Yiddish club for them to join. I see Cranbury, NJ on your list of clubs. Please send contact information for the club.
Elyse Pivnick, Trenton, NJ, 609-341-4723

I loved the convention. I loved lighting the candles, singing in the dining room, entertaining the invited elderly, singing at the Holocaust Museum, and sold 14 of the 15 CD’s that I brought along. The young lady from the Yiddish Book Center filmed me singing Yankele, and she said it would be put on their Internet. The entertainment was great—we were so very happy to be there. Cookie Blattman, Tamarac, FL lblattman@aol.com

You say the closest Yiddish equivalent of the English "doable" is the Yiddish " possibilité" (meglikh), which is from the German "moeglich" and means "possible". There is a difference between "possible" which may refer to a passive state as well and "doable" which is expressly of an active character. I am not aware of a similar synonym in Yiddish. The closest is a phrase like "men ken dos makh’n" or "es iz tsu makh’n". Boris Kopit, Rochester, NY

We did well with our book at the conference and are looking forward to the Jewish Book Fair. We’ve been interviewed, have a sponsor, and will promote our book at the fair. Two people, from this area, and Harold Ticktin from Cleveland are using the mayses for their Vinkls. Harold was ecstatic when I called him, because I brought two cases to my daughter in Cleveland. Alva Dworkin, Southfield, MI

Jerry Gerger and his committee did a fantastic job! We loved the speakers, the break-out sessions, the lavish food, and the wonderful entertainment. The conference was inspirational, and a feel-good time. We returned to Minneapolis and are ready for our 19th year. Remember, you owe me a strawberry soda for finding your med’s and your I-pad on the floor under my table in the ballroom at the hotel.;-
Annalee Odessky St. Louis Park, MN

I received the latest Der Bay and I cannot tell you how thrilled I was and feel so lost that I cannot partake of the activities, but my heart is there. I turned 94 and volunteer at Touro Hospital (Jewish) once a week. I had a stroke on my right side and have to walk with a walker, but nothing will stop me. I taught a Yiddish class and they want me to start it again. Tsip Levitov, New Orleans, LA

Editor’s note: Tsip’s book is entitled The Chocolate Traveler. Known as the “Chocolate Lady”, Tsip’s book relates her experiences around the world in her search for chocolatiers.

I will plan on attending the next conference in Pittsburgh, as I live in Philadelphia. Do you have notes on the discussions of this past conference?
Rita Ratson, Philadelphia, PA

Editor’s note: Rita is head of the Yiddish Department at Gratz College.

Mazl Tov: Mayn tsveyte eynikl iz oykh a meydl, mitn nomen Avery Sophia. Ik hveys nisht vos iz der tsimes mitn nomen Sophia. An ander inyen: ikh hob bakumen a fantastishn "teyp" fun ayykh fun Prof. Ornstein. Hot er gemakht andere "teyps"? Mit hartsike grusn un a groysn dank far ayer riziker arbet tsu teshparytn un under yidishe shpakh.
Prof. George G. Katz, Clinical Professor, UCLA

It was so nice seeing you at the conference. I look forward to the next one in Pittsburgh. Your last issue of Der Bay was quite scholarly.
Alva Dworkin, Southfield, MI

I think your readers would find it fascinating to know that here in the mountains of North Carolina we have, for the last 33 years, sponsored a flourishing Yiddish Institute devoted to the Yiddish language and culture. We have attracted Yiddishists from throughout the US and abroad who find the soul of Yiddishkeyt in our midst.
Baila Pransky, Coordinator, Charlotte Yiddish Institute, Charlotte, NC, johnbaila@aol.com

We were so pleased to be at the IAYC conference and look forward to the next one. We enjoyed the Detroit experience, the hospitality, the breakout sessions, dining, entertainment, and to meet such friendly people from all over the US and Canada. It was wonderful. We treasure each issue of Der Bay.
Sondra & Harvey Jacobs, Cleveland, OH
We Need a New Yiddish Yellow Pages

The questions are received more than weekly. Where can I find a Yiddish teacher, translator or Yiddish club.

Eventually this should be a worldwide project. Starting with the US will be a good beginning. Perhaps some group will pick up this idea for their own country.

While *Der Bay* has many lists, more comprehensive listings that also would cover Yiddish course offerings, books, storytellers, vendors, etc. need to be published.

A wonderful little booklet entitled “Yiddish in Israel Directory 1992” was published by Hemshech Dor – Libhobers fun Yiddish. I believe it never has been updated.

Fishl made an attempt with Phil Givens o”h to work on this project for Canada, but Phil soon left us and it never was followed up. Today, the Canadian Yiddish community is fragmented with the major centers not integrated. By utilizing the Internet, it would not be difficult to network the Yiddish groups.

A Google Search

A Google search of “Yiddish Yellow Pages” brings up the New York City Yellow Pages. This was not I had in mind, but I can’t blame Google.

An excellent start is the Yellow Pages publication by Judy Kunofsky’s KlezCalifornia. It is comprehensive for Northern California and contains all the information for this area. We need the entire US.

By far the most comprehensive listing of Yiddish musical groups is Klezmer Shack. Ari Davidow covers klezmer and Jewish music in far greater detail than can be found on *Der Bay’s* website. Putting this list together with the other resources in a publication like that of Kanefsky would be very useful. Below is only a start and not meant to be complete. Please send in additions

Organizations

Arbeter Ring
CIYCL
Congress for Jewish Culture
Folksbiene
Forverts
Holocaust Museums
International Association of Yiddish Clubs
League for Yiddish
Living Traditions
National Center for Jewish Film
Yiddish Artists and Friends New York City
Yiddish Book Center
Yiddish Departments at Universities
Yiddish of Greater Washington
Yiddishkayt LA
YIVO
Yugntruf

On the Internet

*Der Bay*
Mendele
Refoyls yidish veb-bletl
Virtual Shtetl
Yiddish Lives
Yiddishnet
Teacher of the Month: Rita Ratson

“Everything in my heart and soul is real yiddishkayt,” says Rita Ratson, with a passion so compelling it is almost palpable. This passion for Yiddish language and culture electrifies Rita’s classes at Gratz College, where she is both a popular teacher and coordinator of the Yiddish program. Gratz, the oldest college of Jewish studies in North America, is a vibrant academic institution in suburban Philadelphia, Pennsylvania that offers a full spectrum of on-campus and online programs.

Rita’s position at Gratz is the perfect capstone to her life experience. Yiddish was Rita’s first and primary language – even though she had already lived in Poland, Israel, and Germany upon arriving in the United States, just two weeks shy of her eighth birthday. In her new country, Rita went on to learn English and to receive a secular education, ultimately culminating in an associate’s degree from Pierce College.

When her father, a Holocaust survivor, pronounced, “Hitler did not win; Yiddish will not be dead,” there was no question that his daughter would also pursue a Yiddish education in America. As a young girl, Rita attended Folkshul. Later, in the Workmen’s Circle’s Yiddish higher education system, Rita flourished, soaking up Yiddish literature and music, excelling in writing and ultimately graduating with honors.

In the late 1970’s, Rita returned briefly to the Workmen’s Circle as co-founder of one of its schools for young children, and served as both director and teacher until the school closed for financial reasons. After Rita had stopped pursuing Yiddish professionally, a friend bluntly remarked, “You cannot die without passing on what you know.”

In 1999, with these words repeating like a mantra in her mind, Rita contacted Gratz College and was hired to teach a Yiddish class for adults. A year later, one class had become several, and Rita had become coordinator of Gratz’s Yiddish department.

Currently, Rita teaches all levels of Yiddish, including a conversation class, which incorporates Yiddish literature and folk songs as well as news articles from The Forward. Although her passion keeps her students constantly engaged, Rita believes that learning Yiddish cannot be relegated solely to the classroom because “Yiddish is a whole entire landscape of a life.” As a result, she has arranged Klezmer concerts and classic Yiddish film presentations at Gratz, and twice a year, she also leads popular trips to the Folksbiene Yiddish Theater in New York.

In addition to teaching, Rita is a professional Yiddish translator, appearing on the translator lists of Der Bay and of the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts. Rita brings the same passion, integrity, and sense of responsibility to her translation work that she brings to her teaching. “I need to translate the family’s emotion and bring it forward. It’s a great responsibility, and I take it very seriously,” she says.

When not teaching Yiddish or translating, Rita can be found fulfilling her role as a vice president of the very dynamic Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors Association (www.cjhsa.org). “This organization,” she explains, “has the obligation and profound commitment to honor our parents and relatives, preserve our unique heritage and culture, educate our community on Holocaust issues, fight bigotry and hatred and encourage tolerance and equality.”

Gratz College assumes this responsibility as well through its on-campus and online certificate programs in Holocaust and Genocide Studies and through its proposed master’s degree program in this area. For more information, go to the website that is located at: www.gratzcollege.edu/holocauststudies.

As a Yiddish teacher, translator and daughter of a Holocaust survivor, Gratz’s Rita Ratson’s major interest and effort is all about connecting people to their past. “My greatest passion is to try and make people aware of who they are and of their heritage,” she says. “The greatest thing is to honor where we come from. I want to celebrate our heritage and make it available to the next generation.”

Editor’s note: To contact Rita Ratson, you may call 215-635-7300, ext. 177 or e-mail her at: rratson@gratz.edu.
Grunch Mazar (Name of the town)  
Sovkhoz Savoy (Name of collective farm)  
Uzbekistan 1941 USSR

One day after work (collecting cotton), I didn’t feel well. I was advised to see the feldsher, Sergei Ivanovich, whose office was across from the building where I had my room. His office was in a building where higher officials lived.

A feldsher in the Soviet Union was a position somewhere between a doctor and a nurse. Sergei gave me a note to rest for two days. The note said that he would evaluate and watch my condition after the two days. It also mentioned that I might need some medications and only a doctor could prescribe them.

When Sergei found out that I was born in Poland, he invited me for dinner. I put on my suit, which I had brought from home, and a nice shirt, and headed to Sergei Ivanovich’s place. He invited me to the dining room. The last time I had seen a set up table with so many goodies was at home on a special occasion. Sergei locked the door and invited me to sit down.

The large table was covered with a white tablecloth. It had motifs of the Greek Orthodox Catholic church, with a cross that had an additional horizontal piece of wood. The image of the double-headed eagle adorned each corner of it. I sat down near Sergei on one of the six red-velvet-upholstered chairs. The plates and utensils sparkled, reflecting the rays from the electric bulbs hanging above the tables.

In the very center of the table were a plate with a chicken and another plate that had meat and also vegetables. On a long bread-plate, there was nicely displayed pumpernickel pita bread, white bread, and “leposhka”, a Moslem kind of pita bread. Near the bread was a fancy bottle of Stolichnaya vodka.

Ana Petrovna, Sergei’s wife, kept fixing the contents on the table. She said, “Sergei, have a drink with Jefem” (Chaim, in Russian). We raised the goblet...Sergei said, “na zdarovie, good health, and a free capitalist Russia”. Ana brought in a cut-up herring and said, “It is very good after a drink.” She continued... “Eat, eat, help yourself.”

Ana wore a white dress with a red apron. Her gray hair was combed back and held in place with two small, black combs. She wore low rubber boots, which were very popular in Russia, with heavy socks. You could see two golden teeth, almost symmetrical, on her lower jaw. Two black earrings, which resembled the shape of a cross, adorned her small ears on her small round face.

Through her glasses (which were on the dark side), you could barely see her blue eyes and part of her eyebrows. Ana’s apron had a big picture of a workman with a big hammer and a lady farmer with a sickle. They were quite big. I am not sure why she made it her business to tell me that a member of the communist party gave it to her. Maybe she wanted to emphasize that she wouldn’t have bought it.

A young lady who joined us at the table turned out to be their granddaughter, Katia. Ana explained that her father, a pilot in the Red Air Force, had died when his plane was shot down on the Western Front. Her mother, the hostess’ daughter, was a registered nurse on the Front, helping the injured. Katia was twelve years old. We had a great time. eating and drinking. For a while I thought I was not in the Soviet Union. How many working people lived like Sergei Ivanovich? Many people died in the October revolution in 1917 in order to achieve equality, which did not happen.

While Ana cleaned the table, Sergei invited me to the living room and asked me to join him on the velvet ottoman. He asked all kinds of questions. “What kind of government ruled Poland before the war? Was Poland a republic with a capitalist system?” When I said yes, he opened up. He told me that he still admired Czar Nicholas and was proud of the Cossacks. He praised the pre-revolution ruble known worldwide for its high gold content.

He complained that the present paper money was not worth anything because the “magazines” (Russian supermarkets) were empty and you could not buy anything. In the Czar’s time, people preferred paper money because the gold coins were too heavy to carry. Unfortunately, after the revolution in 1917, paper money became a museum
item, but Sergei believed that the Bolsheviks would not last long, and that’s why he kept the paper money.

Sergei arose and went to his study. He came back with an old bag that had some writing on it and a Czarist double-headed eagle. He reached inside and came up with crisp 50 and 100 ruble notes. Sergei said, “Look at the sharp colors.” He took out one of the Soviet paper rubles and continued, “Look at it…no comparison.”

Sergei’s father was a medical doctor. Sergei himself, had attended the first Quardia (Russian medical school) in St. Petersburg, but the October revolution had interrupted his studies. His father, Piotr Nikolaevich, was mobilized into the Czarist army and served on the Western Front. Shortages of ammunition and food demoralized the Czar’s army.

The soldiers simply refused to fight or listen to their superiors. They got rid of their rifles and returned to St. Petersburg to fight for the revolution. After the war was over and the Bolsheviks took over the government, they sent Sergei’s father to Siberia; he was considered a capitalist and exploiter—how else was he able to get real estate in St. Petersburg and Moscow? Sergei never saw his father again.

Sergei decided to move to Central Asia, Uzbekistan, to start a new life. He married Ana Petrovna. They had two daughters, three granddaughters, and two grandsons. He had been in the Savoy, (the Soviet Farm) for the past 14 years. As time went on, I was treated like a member of the family and became their tailor, fixing pants, and sewing shirts and jackets. I even made coats for the grandchildren and was able to use their old Singer sewing machine, which dated back to the Czar. I remained a part of Sergei and Ana’s family until my best Jewish friend from Warsaw convinced me to leave the Sovkhoz to go to Samarkand, a trip that almost cost me my life...

Sergei had a nice personality. He must have been in his late fifties and combed back his graying hair. He had a small, square beard and a mustache that was turning pepper-and-salt. He had dark brown eyes with heavy eyebrows, and his lips and cheeks had a reddish tint. Sergei always wore long black boots, the upper part of which resembled a harmonica. His black pants were tucked in his boots. His black Russian blouse had a stand-up collar and buttons on the left side; he wore it with a wide belt outside the pants. The collar and the opening with the buttons on the left side and the bottom of his blouse had images of flowers sewn by hand, with cross-stitches of different colored threads.

Sergei was getting paid by the Sovkhoz. He also had additional income. It was widely accepted that whenever someone came to him to complain about his health he always needed to bring Sergei a present: rice, flour, vegetables, or poultry. Sergei would always say, “Oh, it is not necessary,” but at the end, he always accepted it, and said, “Thank you.”

The note, that Sergei used to give the sick people to be excused from work for a day or two, was accepted by the Sovkhoz authorities. Many “sick people” used the day to work on their small parcel of land near their house.

Quite often I was invited for dinner. Every time Sergei would invite me to his study to talk, the conversation always turned out to be the same. He praised the capitalist system and private initiative. According to Sergei, it gave the people an incentive to work because they could always buy what they wanted. He said that was not the case in the Soviet Union where everything was planned by the government.

I wanted to warn Sergei that he should stop telling people how he still admired Czar Nicholas and the capitalist system. If someone had told the KGB about him, he and his family would have wound up somewhere else, like Vorkuta (known for its gulags) in Northern Siberia. But somehow, I couldn’t do it. He enjoyed so much talking about the previous system. Maybe he divulged his outlook to me because he trusted me.

Sergei’s prediction came true: the Soviet Union did fall apart and was dissolved. Sergei would have had to work in the Sovkhoz another 45 years to have witnessed it. His other prediction did not materialize: the Czarist paper money never circulated again; it remained, and will always remain, a museum item.
Shayles un Tshuves in “Hilkhes Libe”
“Forverts” – October 1-7, 2010
(Questions and Answers in the Matter of Love) - Fun der khaznte Khane Sleik
[transliterated and annotated by Goldie Adler Gold]

Tayere khaznte,

Vi vel ikh kenen iberlebn dem khoydesh [survive… month (Sept.)]? Ikh hob getseylt [counted] di teg – bemeshekh [during] fun di draysik teg faln oys elf teg oder shabes oder yontef. Ikh hob hanoe fun shabes eyn mol a vokh, ober dray vokhn mit dray yontoyvim? Ikh hob a khshad [suspicion], az undzer religye hot nisht badarft azoy zayn [it didn’t have to be this way].

Ikh veys nisht farvos, ober ikh veys yo az ikh volt nisht gedarft hobn azoyne gefiln. Kent ir epes forleygn [propose] a dervaksenem [mature] man, eyner aleyn, er zol mer hanoe [pleasure] hobn funem yontef?


Efsher ken ayer shil aykh zogn, tsi se zenen faran eltere layt [if there are older folks] oder kranke vos voltn gevolt me zol zey mevaker-khoyle zayn [visit…(sick)]. Dos vos me arbet nisht iz nisht keyn terets opstupatern [no excuse to waste] a tog ligndik in bet [lying in bed]! Ikh vintsh aykh a khoydesh [month] fun ruekh-hakoydesh [inspiration].

Tayere khaznte,
Shayles un Tshuves un “Hilkhes Libe”
“Forverts” – March 11-17, 2011
Fun der khaznte Khane Slek
[transliterated and annotated by Goldie Adler Gold]

Tayere khaznte,

Mayn tate treft zikh mit a froy velkhe iz nor mit dray yor elter fun mir. Vos zol ikh ton? Ikhlalt az s’iz a khoyzek [I feel it is ridiculous]! Er un mayn mame hohn zikh geget [divorced] mit a sakh yorn tsurik. Er meyn, az er hot zikh farlibt in der froy. Mir vert nisht gut ven ikh trakht, az emetsn in mayn elter kon gefeln vern mayn foter vi a mansparshoyn [man], un, farkert [on the other hand], az mayn foter tsit tsu a froy fun mayn elter.

Di geboyrn-tog simkhe [the birthday party] fun mayn eyn-yorik tsu a gantse parshe [Pentateuch section].


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The demographic balance is shifting toward the Haredim, who have four or five times the birthrate of the secular Jews; if the Haredim should become the majority, which could well happen within the next twenty-five years or so, Israeli culture could well change to an unrecognizable pattern.

In the Diaspora, the very same conflict about the nature of Jewish culture has been playing itself out, with some important nuances of difference, for two centuries, starting with the beginnings of the Haskalah movement (movement lasted ~1770-1880). The slogan of the adherents of Haskalah came to be: “Be a Jew at home, but a man in the street,” meaning that they should fully practice the secular culture of the non-Jewish majority population while retaining their Jewishness in their homes and family lives.

This, of course, begged the question of what the Jewishness of home life was to consist of—was it to be religious Jewishness or what we would these days call cultural Jewishness: language, history, customs, literature, music, foods, etc? In point of fact, one of the disquieting features of the Haskalah movement is that many of its adherents eventually drifted far away from Jewishness, to complete assimilation or even to conversion (e.g., the Mendelssohns and the Disraelis).

This history has left a lingering doubt and concern in the minds of those Jews for whom assimilation and conversion are catastrophes to be avoided. Is it possible, they wonder, to avoid these catastrophes without remaining fully within the confines of religious Judaism? This question is the central one that faces the proponents of secular Jewishness. (Once again, however, the experience of Israel provides a partial answer: millions of Israelis are secular Jews, and conversion is essentially nonexistent.)

A hundred years after the second secular movement began, militant secularism, the actively anti-religionist approach, is, or should be passé. In the Workmen’s Circle, for example, that attitude lingers in only a handful of the oldest members; the younger ones are often either more or less observant themselves, or, if not, are at least completely comfortable with and tolerant of those who are. The secular Jews of today do not oppose religion—it simply is not for them. They do, however, have an intense commitment to remaining Jews and to transmitting that commitment to their descendants.

How to do that is not clear. Obviously, just saying: “I’m Jewish” is not enough; one’s children will and do ask: “What makes you Jewish, and why should I bother being Jewish?” For non-Israeli secular Jews, the usual ingredients of Jewish identification are missing: no common Jewish language, no common land, no access to Jewish literature in Yiddish or Hebrew, etc.—the only thing that remains is celebration of holidays and tradition. The apparent alternative is full religious observance.

But before accepting this dichotomy, it is worth examining the problem in detail: are the common language, the common land, and the access to Jewish literature in Yiddish or Hebrew absolutely essential to remaining secularly Jewish? Though we Yiddishists have a strong emotional/intellectual commitment to the preservation of Yiddish and think of it as a major tool for preserving the Jewish secular community, we should remember that Jewish communities of the past have lived in many different common language cultures: Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Arabic, Ladino, etc. Why not English, the principal language of the principal Diaspora community, the United States?

As for a common land, that has not been a feature of Jewish life during all of its history except the most recent 60 years, and yet Jews the world over have remained a cohesive people. Finally, access to Jewish literature in Yiddish or Hebrew—I do believe that Jewish literature is indeed a major factor in holding the Jewish community together, and I believe that the literature in Yiddish or Hebrew is the principal component, but is it the only possible component?

One alternative is translation. I have been devoted to the task of translating Yiddish literature for many years, and I consider my 21 published books in that area to represent “holy work” (perhaps a strange expression for a non-believer, but an apt one nevertheless.) Another, though perhaps controversial, alternative is “Jewish literature” in
the vernacular of whatever land the Jewish community inhabits. One can engage in a lively controversy about whether the work of such authors as Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud, etc. is distinctly Jewish literature, but many critics and readers think so.

These points aside, there is universal agreement that a knowledge of Jewish history and a knowledge of and celebration of Jewish holidays and traditions are essential to maintaining Jewishness. That knowledge must be taught and learned. When the teaching function of the homes weakens, as it clearly has in recent times, some type of formal education should supplement it. That was the function of the secular Yiddish schools referred to earlier in this article, and they performed that task very well, as witness the tens of thousands of Jews of my generation who remain actively committed secular Jews.

The secular Jewish organizations, now principally The Workmen’s Circle, should continue and even redouble their efforts to support and expand the secular shule movement. Secular Yiddish day-schools were advocated by Yiddishists for many years, but were consistently (I think mistakenly) rejected by many politically progressive secularists on the grounds that they would injure the public school system. I think the idea should be revisited—its time may have come.

The relationships of different groups of Jews to the secular aspects of Jewishness can be described as a spectrum. At one end are the various ultra-Orthodox groups, who are usually conceived as strongly rejecting all aspects of secular Jewishness that do not directly advance their religious purposes. That this is not strictly true can be seen from the occasional presence of such Jews at “secular” Yiddish theater performances and their occasional reading of “treyf” secular Yiddish writers such as Sholem Aleichem.

Next in the spectrum come the Modern Orthodox, who clearly admit secular interests to their lives, as manifested not least by their great secular universities: Bar-Ilan in Israel and Yeshiva in the United States. Conservative Jews fit here in the spectrum, too.

Reform Jews are farther along the spectrum. Though they participate in the worship of God, one gets the impression that they don’t take it too seriously, and they often reject many of the tenets of Jewish religious tradition, notably the dietary laws and the prohibition against travel or work on the Sabbath. Their Jewishness contains major secular elements and emphasizes the Jewish community and Jewish peoplehood.

Still farther along are the Reconstructionist Jews. Mordecai Kaplan, the founder and developer of Reconstructionism, loved Judaism but couldn’t believe in a personal God. The type of Judaism he advocated was more of a culture than a religion, a civilization, rather than a faith predicated on observing the dictates of a divine lawgiver. In my view, Reconstructionism is clearly a type of secular Jewishness, with emphasis on Jewish peoplehood (a concept that Kaplan was instrumental in developing); it actually represents a conceptual bridge between the realms of religious and secular Jewishness.

Next in the spectrum are the self-proclaimed secular Jews, who are strongly committed to all aspects of Jewishness, even including some semireligious traditions, but do not leave any room for the existence, let alone the worship, of God. This position is and has long been the traditional organizational position of the Workmen’s Circle and its kindred organizations, but not necessarily that of all of their members.

There are two variants of this position: the first is that of the organized Secular Humanist groups, as nurtured by Yehuda Bauer and Sherwin Wine, who create putatively nonreligious secular synagogues that seem to the outsider to make a religion out of being nonreligious; the second is that of a majority of Israeli Jews, who avow themselves nonreligious and nonbelievers but consider it un-Jewish not to observe holidays and traditions, and often attend synagogues more or less frequently, especially on major holidays.

Finally, at the far end of the spectrum, are the militant secularists, who may also be very committed Jews but who bridle and gag, indeed become apoplectic, at any mention of God, and who feel that observance of Jewish traditions such as Sabbath and holidays is hypocritical and empty if one is not a believer.

At this point, I think it is appropriate to examine the concept of “religious Jew” in general. To my mind, being a religious Jew absolutely requires
belief in and worship of a real God, not a vague personification of natural forces or ethical principles nor an impersonal deity immanent in all of Nature (cf. Spinoza) nor a Deist’s God who gave the universe its starting push (the Big Bang, in today’s terms) and has had nothing to do with it ever since, but a real, personal God who has always been involved in Jewish history and continues to be available for personal interaction with individual Jews through prayer. Judged by that criterion, the great majority of religious or observant Jews, including some rabbis, are not really religious at all. They observe the traditional religious rituals but do not feel the commanding presence of an omnipotent Being.

It is ironic, therefore, that such a sharp dichotomy has developed between religious and secular Jews and there is so much conflict between them. Both groups share a common need to be deeply involved in secular Jewish culture—secular Jews because it is the way for them to maintain their Jewish identity if they don’t want to or cannot bring themselves to express that identity through Torah/Talmud observance, and religious Jews because they need to understand the breadth and depth of the total Jewish culture.

It is my feeling that the Jews’ relationship to secular Jewishness is undergoing a Hegelian process of thesis – antithesis – synthesis. The extremes of the spectrum, ultra-Orthodox total rejection of secular matters and militant secularists’ total rejection of Jewish traditional observance, and certainly of God, are both disappearing and giving way to a consensus that Jewish peoplehood and secular Jewishness are central to remaining a committed Jew in this era.

This does not mean that Jews at one end of the spectrum will not remain deeply religious and God-fearing or that those at the other end of the spectrum will not remain firmly atheistic, only that all Jews will coalesce around a central core of peoplehood and the elements of secular Jewishness: history, language, literature, traditions, the struggle for social and economic justice, music, theater, food, etc.

It is to be hoped that this will lead to a sharp decrease in the heat and virulence of present-day internecine battles between various groups of Jews. There is a warm, comfortable, homey tent that is big enough to accommodate us all.

Dr. Barnett Zumoff

Dr. Barnett Zumoff is an internationally renowned Endocrinology teacher and researcher who has published over 250 papers in the field of medicine. He is Professor of Medicine at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. In addition, he has had a long career in Yiddish cultural activity.

He is Past President and current VP of the Forward Association, publisher of the Yiddish Forverts and the English Forward, and he is the co-President of the Congress for Jewish Culture. He is also vice-President of the Folksbiene, the oldest Yiddish theater in the world, and vice-President of the Atran Foundation, one of the largest American charitable foundations that make grants to Yiddish cultural organizations.

For many years he was President of the Workmen’s Circle/Arbeter Ring—the only major fraternal organization that supports Yiddish language and culture and Yiddish schools in the United States.

He is a prolific translator of Yiddish literature: he has published 21 books of translation and a number of individual pieces that have been published in the Forward, Jewish Currents, Midstream, and Bitter Root; his translation of "Stars Are Now Dying," by Peretz Hirshbeyn, in Bitter Root, won a prize in their contest.

Dr Zumoff is a popular lecturer on Yiddish poetry in translation, and has made presentations to YIVO, the Congress for Jewish Culture, and the Workmen’s Circle, and to lay community groups.

As a key member of the IAYC Board of Directors, his wise counsel has directed us in creative ways that have helped to make the organization one of the key Yiddish organizations world-wide.

“Secular Jewishness—Why and How” was the title of his presentation at the last IAYC conference in Novi, Michigan, on August 28, 2011.

His book, The Waterfall: Rhymed Yiddish Couplets will be in the packet sent to all IAYC member clubs.
My Melanie’s Mayse – The Mystery of the Magic Menorah
By Philip Fishl Kutner – circa 1988

One Khanike while visiting Lakeland, Florida, I told a bedtime story to Melanie and her brother Jeff. Each night it was a different story. It was what I had done for Melanie's mommy and Melanie's mommy's brother and sister many years earlier.

It was the first night of Khanuke. I was lying with Melanie and Jeffrey—the bedroom door was ajar. We saw through the crack in the door the shadow of the dining room table and the Menorah. Two candles were lit—a lowly one and the majestic shamus. The candles long should have been burned out, but there was an eerie glow. Melanie said, "Zeyde tell me a mayse". It was The Mystery of the Magic Menorah. This story was told, by my zeyde when I was a little boy.

Chapter 1

Sometime after the oil burned for eight days and eight nights, they decided to commemorate the event by adding an extra candle in a nine-armed candelabra to celebrate the miracle That menorah has long disappeared and its magic with it.

Legend has it that every 100 years the miracle reappears. Whoever lights the candles that night has a wish come true. According to legend you cannot make your wish until everyone else is asleep and not tell even after a wish comes true. If you do, it disappears. Since no one tells, we don't know when it is the night of the 100 years. Make a wish every night, you will not have two chances to make it come true. Several made wishes on the right night, but they did not come true because everyone was not asleep, or they told their wish.

That night Melanie said, "Zeyde I lit the candles tonight. Does that mean I get to make the wish tonight." I responded, "Yes, and if you wait until everyone is asleep and if this really is the Magic Menorah, and if you don't tell anyone, it will come true, but don't tell me if you make a wish."

"But Zeyde," Melanie said, "if you asked me did I make a wish, and I tell the truth, the wish will go away. If I don't tell the truth then I'll be lying."

"You're right Melanie" I said, 'but if you don't answer, you're not lying and I'll know.

Chapter 2

When I was a little boy we lived in an old farmhouse with with a dirt floor in the basement. My twin brothers and I loved to go down there in the summer, for it was cool and we hid from our parents to play make believe games.

One August day my brother Bobby said "let's play make believe Khanuke. Let's make believe that we are lighting the Magic Menorah and that our wishes all came true. Fishl, what would you wish for."

"We can't play Magic Menorah because we don't have a menorah to light" I answered.

"That's no problem" said my other twin brother, Sol. "I'll get dad's searchlight. We'll make believe it's the Magic Menorah." Little did we know what was to happen before my brother Sol came back.

A moment after Sol closed the basement door, Bobby said, "Why don't we close the light while we wait?" I reached over to close the light and as I did we heard noises as if tiny feet were running around nearby. I reached to turn on the light when I felt a cool hand push me away. A squeaky voice said, "Don't scream. I'm Mickey Man, from the Magic Menorah" My brother Dizzy Izzy from Israel is waiting to play."

Mickey looked at the wall of the basement, lo and behold a doorway appeared and he motioned us to walk through. On the other side was a long hallway and at the end was a gate. We opened the gate and walked to the house. As we looked through the window, we saw a terrible sight. There was a fight going on between Dizzy Izzy and the Evil Doers.

Mickey Man told us to quickly run home and not dare to turn around or tell anyone about what happened. We quickly ran to the gate opened it, and ran down the path. When we got to our house the doorway to the basement was open and we ran through to safety. Instantly the door disappeared as if it had never been there.

All of a sudden a searchlight went on and Sol said, "OK I'm here we can now play make believe with the Magic Menorah."
These Yiddish words come back as if Mama were talking to me. It happens in that twilight moment when I first awake. This morning, “gelegnhayt” came back loud and clear.

When Mama asked, “Vi azoy zogt men dos af English?” I told her that I would look it up in the dictionary.

She said, “Do you mean you’ll ask Mr. Weinstein, or Mr. Weintraub?”

Then she left and went back to baking those flaky kikhelakh in the sky.

So I looked it up in Weinreich, and he said it is gelegnheyt not gelegnhayt. Yes, it means chance, occasion, or opportunity.

For Mama it was, “Me darf hobn di gelegnhayt.”

Mama, maybe you’ll see me tomorrow?