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LINCOLN SQUARE SYNAGOGUE BULLETIN

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Iyar, 5734

May, 1974

From The Rabbi's Desk

This is the concluding segment of an article by the Rabbi on the Marriage Ceremony.

Wedding Ceremony

Processional

The groom accompanied by his parents, followed by the bride accompanied by her parents are then led to the *chupah* (nuptial canopy), which symbolizes the new home about to be created in Israel. According to some customs, this *chupah* is in the form of a *talit* (prayer shawl), which is draped over the bride and groom. It is customary for the *chupah* to be "under the roof of heaven," as a further expression of divine protection. The groom's party precedes his entry and the bride's party precedes her entry much as courtiers who herald the coming of the King and Queen. Each member of the processional marches to the accompaniment of an appropriately chosen Hebrew melody with special blessings chanted by the Cantor for the groom and bride respectively as each ascends the *chupah*.

It is customary for the groom to wear a *kittel* (white robe) as a symbol of purity and rebirth just as he wears on the Day of Forgiveness and during the Passover Seder. When the bride joins the groom she encircles him seven times (with her train upheld by mother and mother-in-law) symbolizing that he is now the center of her existence and that she is obligated to honor him even as he expresses his obligation to honor her in the *ketubah*. Seven is the symbolic number of completion and fulfillment, and serves as a reminder of the seven traits of betrothal between God and Israel:

- I will betroth you to Myself forever;
- I will betroth you to Myself in righteousness and justice and lovingkindness and compassion;
- I will betroth you to Myself in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord.

(Hosea 2:21-22)."

Continued on page 10



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LAG B'OMER



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Sisterhood

by Beatrice L. Wald

Those of us who were privileged to hear Dr. Hartman on Friday evening and Saturday morning, March 23rd and 24th, enjoyed a most illuminating philosopher, theologian and historian comment on the spiritual rebirth and feeling of continuity in religious as well as historical identification in Israel. Dr. Hartman, professor at the University of Jerusalem, is well versed in his subject, and we benefitted from his enormous research and knowledge.

We want to again thank Rabbi and Vicki Riskin for their delightful and instructive discourse on the subject of Pesach preparations for this year — different from others because the first Seder took place on a Saturday night. We are most grateful for their guidance and many helpful hints.

Rabbi Riskin continued his discussion of the structure and significance of the Sabbath Service at his second talk on Monday, May 6th.

Our White Elephant Sale has been postponed because of the many events taking place at the originally planned time. We will reschedule it and advise you accordingly.

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**Who says a good Synagogue
Bulletin has to be dull?**

Schedule of Services

Friday, May 10

Lag Ba'Omer

- *Kindle Sabbath Candles7:41 P.M.
- Mincha and
Kabbalat Shabbat6:45 P.M.

Saturday, May 11 (Emor)

- Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 A.M.
- Leviticus 21:1-24:23,
Ezekiel 44:15-31
- Talmud Class6:40 P.M.
- Mincha7:40 P.M.

Friday, May 17

- *Kindle Sabbath Candles7:48 P.M.
- Mincha and
Kabbalat Shabbat6:45 P.M.

Saturday, May 18

(Behar-Bechukotai)

- Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 A.M.
- Leviticus 25:1-27:34
Jeremiah 16:19-17:14
- Talmud Class6:45 P.M.
- Mincha7:45 P.M.

Wednesday, May 22

Rosh Chodesh Sivan

Friday, May 24

- Kindle Sabbath Candles7:54 P.M.
- Mincha and
Kabbalat Shabbat6:45 P.M.

Saturday, May 25 (Bamidbar)

- Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 A.M.
- Numbers 1:1-4:20
Hosea 2:1-22
- Talmud Class6:55 P.M.
- Mincha7:55 P.M.

Sunday, May 26

- Kindle Festival Candles7:56 P.M.
- Mincha and Kabbalat
Yom Tov8:05 P.M.
- Midnight Bible Class11:30 P.M.
- "Revelation at Sinai"

Monday, May 27

- Sunrise Services
- Hashkama Minyan
- Shavuot Morning Services.....8:45 A.M.
- Exodus 19:1-20:26
Numbers 28:26-31
Ezekiel 1:1-28, 3:12
- Talmud Class7:10 P.M.
- Mincha8:10 P.M.
- Kindle Festival Candles.....8:56 P.M.

Tuesday, May 28

- Shavuot Morning Services.....8:45 A.M.
- Deuteronomy 15:19-16:17
Numbers 28:26-31
Habakkuk 2:20-3:19

Yizkor Memorial Services

- Talmud Class7:10 P.M.
- Mincha8:10 P.M.

Friday, May 31

- *Kindle Sabbath Candles8:00 P.M.
- Mincha and
Kabbalat Shabbat6:45 P.M.

Saturday, June 1 (Naso)

- Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 A.M.
- Numbers 4:21-7:89
Judges 13:2-25
- Talmud Class7:00 P.M.
- Mincha8:00 P.M.

Friday, June 7

- *Kindle Sabbath Candles8:05 P.M.
- Mincha and
Kabbalat Shabbat6:45 P.M.

Saturday, June 8 (Behaalotecha)

- Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 A.M.
- Numbers 8:1-12:16
Zechariah 2:14-4:7
- Talmud Class7:05 P.M.
- Mincha8:05 P.M.

Friday, June 14

- *Kindle Sabbath Candles8:08 P.M.
- Mincha and
Kabbalat Shabbat6:45 P.M.

Saturday, June 15 (Shelach)

- Shabbat Morning Services.....8:45 A.M.
- Numbers 13:1-15:41
Joshua 2
- Talmud Class7:10 P.M.
- Mincha8:10 P.M.

*It is our custom to begin Mincha Friday afternoon at 6:45 P.M. throughout Daylight Savings Time. Those who usher in the Sabbath earlier with the congregation must instruct their wives to kindle the Sabbath candles by 7:10 P.M. Once the congregation chants Mizmor Shir Leyom Hashabbat (the Psalm for the Sabbath Day) the Sabbath has officially begun for the worshippers and their families.

Daily Minyan

- Weekdays7:15 and 7:50 A.M.
- Sundays and Holidays8:30 A.M.
- Mincha and MaarivAt Sunset

Shabbat Services

- Early Services8:00 A.M.
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ing from 10:00-11:00 A.M.

OUR PURIM PARTY

By L. Rachelle Selevan

A Purim Party at the Synagogue was an enjoyable activity for the Jewish deaf. Adults and children alike had a memorable afternoon.

The party began with a carnival which contained many booths such as balloon shaving, shooting flames and blowing ping pong balls around a track. We were fortunate to have Rabbi Steven Riskin tell us the story of Purim; an interpreter was provided for the deaf. The adults watched an amusing Israeli movie with subtitles while the children were divided into groups for teenagers

and youngsters. They were given special entertainment and treats. Refreshments were served to all and the children were given Shalach Manos to take home.

I wish to thank many people who gave their time and effort to make our Purim Party a big success: Rabbi Steven Riskin for opening up the Synagogue to the Jewish deaf and to Louis Fenton, Cantor Goffin and Mrs. Martha Cohn of the Synagogue staff; Mr. and Mrs. Irving Selevan and Reuvain, my parents and brother, for making numerous phone calls and arrangements; Eliezer Lederfeind, Rabbinical student at the Talmudical Institute of Pittsburgh, for publishing 'Our Way' Magazine for the deaf; Reva Levitansky, Teacher of Hebrew Institute of the Deaf, for setting up the carnival; Mimi Ogorek, my colleague at St. Francis School for the Deaf, and her husband for their supportive role in organizing the party; Saralyn and Fred Rothberg, Kathy and Jacob Horowitz, Betty and Leon Lebor, Barbara Drummer, Farida Guindi and Louis Mandelbaum, deaf adults, for displaying ardent enthusiasm and help to make the party the success it was; Richard Fendrich for his excellent job of interpreting Rabbi Riskin's speech; Debbie and Peter Abelow, Chanie Toiv and Esther Warshavchik, my friends for their help at the party; Rabbi and Mrs. Joseph Lazarus, parents of a deaf boy, for their zealous work in arranging the party; Dr. Emil M. Zabell, Director of the New York Society of the Deaf, for contacting schools of the deaf to distribute flyers to the children.

Many of the people at the party demonstrated an interest for more parties and social events. In order to make it a continuous gathering, a well-rounded Jewish program should be offered to deaf youngsters and teenagers which would give them the same opportunities afforded to hearing children. Sunday classes or after school classes, in conjunction with field trips, holiday parties and the like could be organized if sufficient interest and cooperation is shown. If you are interested in any way, kindly write Rachelle Selevan at 570 Grand Street, New York City 10002.

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LAG B'OMER

By Abraham Davis Houpt

Beginning with the second night of Passover and every night thereafter the days are counted for a period of seven weeks until the fiftieth day when the major festival of Shavuot is celebrated. This fulfills the precept of the counting of the Omer as it is written in the law: "From the day after the day of rest (referring to the first day of Passover), the day that you bring the sheaf (omer) of wave offering, you shall keep count for seven full weeks; you shall count fifty days, until the day after the seventh week (Lev. 23.5-16); (then) there shall be a holy convocation to you" (Shavuot). Since the start of the counting coincides with the day on which a certain measurement (omer) of barley was cut down and brought to the Temple as an offering (on the second day of Passover), the entire period of the counting became known as Sefirat Omer, the counting of the Omer. In the course of time these days became associated with a mood of sadness and semi-mourning, for it was during the period of the Sefira, during the second century, that 24 thousand disciples of Rabbi Akiva perished in a plague. It was at that time, after the destruction of the second Temple, that Bar Kochba attempted to throw off the burden of Roman rule which made it dangerous to study or teach Torah. Customs vary in different communities regarding the Sefira period, but the prevailing custom is to abstain from any joyous celebrations during the days of the Omer with the exception of the New Moons of Iyar and Sivan and the holiday of Lag B'Omer.

Lag B'Omer, the thirty-third day of the Counting of the Omer (ל'ג) is the Hebrew abbreviation meaning 33, corresponds to the 18th day of Iyar which was the cessation of the plague which was destroying the students of Rabbi Akiva.



All restrictive laws that are observed during the other days of the Omer are suspended during this semi-holiday. Because of its identification with Rabbi Akiva, the day became known as "The Scholar's Festival." According to legend Simeon Bar Yohai, author of the most sacred book of mysticism, the Zohar, died on Lag B'Omer while transmitting revelations he had received. In Israel, many Jews make a Lag B'Omer pilgrimage to the Galilee to the tomb of Rabbi Simeon Bar Yochai as well as to the burial sites of other talmudic sages in the district of Meron.

A hymn entitled "Bar Yohai" which consists of ten stanzas, each stanza corresponding to one of the ten Sefirot (computations of the Divine Being), is sung in many communities on this day. Lag B'Omer is a favorite children's holiday marked by excursions into the fields, the making of bonfires and illuminations and playing with bows and arrows.

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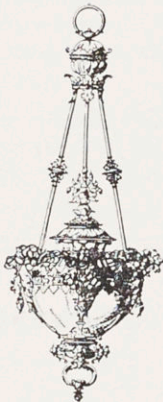
MRS. MILTON GROSSMAN on the loss of her beloved sister.

MRS. SOLOMON LANIADO on the loss of her beloved husband.

MRS. FRANK E. WOLF on the loss of her beloved mother.

May the memory of the dearly departed serve forever as a blessing.

Vahrzeits



SAMUEL RACHLIS
Sunday Evening, May 5
Monday, May 6
HENRY ROSENBERG
Monday Evening, May 6
Tuesday, May 7
MOLLY BROWNSTEIN
Tuesday Evening, May 7
Wednesday, May 8
SARAH REDFORD
Tuesday Evening, May 7
Wednesday, May 8
JENNIE GOLDSMITH
Saturday Evening, May 11
Sunday, May 12
MORRIS BROOKS
Monday Evening, May 13
Tuesday, May 14
BENJAMIN COOPER
Saturday Evening, May 18
Sunday, May 19
ISRAEL HENRY KESSLER
Saturday Evening, May 18
Sunday, May 19
HELEN REGENT
Monday Evening, May 20
Tuesday, May 21
LOUIS FISCHER
Tuesday Evening, May 21
Wednesday, May 22
MAX MORGENSTERN
Thursday Evening, May 23
Friday, May 24

TILLIE WEINRAUCH
Sunday Evening, May 26
Monday, May 27
BEATRICE ROSENBLATT
Friday Evening, May 31
Saturday, June 1
ALFRED SCHULMAN
Friday Evening, May 31
Saturday, June 1
GEORGE H. WIENER
Friday Evening, May 31
Saturday, June 1
LOUIS RODETSKY
Saturday Evening, June 1
Sunday, June 2
CHARLES STRUCKLER
Sunday Evening, June 2
Monday, June 3
PAULA SIMON
Monday Evening, June 3
Tuesday, June 4
RUTH NEUWIRTH KLEWANS
Tuesday Evening, June 4
Wednesday, June 5
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Wednesday, June 12
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Friday Evening, June 14
Saturday, June 15

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Project Ezra

Amidst barrels of pickles, garment stores, and kosher bakeries walks a new couple. They will not tour the entire Lower East Side today. They will walk perhaps two blocks to the park, and then sit and talk. Perhaps a little shopping. The task, the activity is not important. They are together. Now he walks her home. She carries her cane feebly, as he puts her shopping bags with his college notebook, and holds her arm. They are a new match. They are the new love of young Jews for elderly Jews. Their shadchan is a special matchmaker — Project Ezra.

Project Ezra is new to the match-making business. Just two years ago it was an idea in the minds of twenty young Jews. We saw loneliness and fear on the faces of old Jews in the Lower East Side. We wanted to help, and we knew that many Jewish students would join us. All that was needed was the link.

We created that link one year ago: Project Ezra. Some of the founders became the staff, the rest, the Board of Directors. We set our goals clearly: to identify the isolated elderly, to find the committed young, to join them, to help them grow together. Having no answer for poverty and old age, we would relieve the solitude which is their terrible product. This is the first step, and the most possible.

We have made more than three hundred matches since then. We have found the elderly through community organizations, local merchants, and through extensive surveys of housing projects. Students have answered us at our engagements at campuses and high schools. Each match has become unique—some are made of weekly visits some less frequent. We guide each according to its character. There are many more old, and many young. Now there is a link.

As Project Ezra looks forward to enlarging and extending its activities, we eagerly greet the support and interest of all. Our staff and Board members will be happy to answer all inquiries. Our telephone is 475-6200, Ext. 9. Tax deductible contributions may be made out to The Jewish Association of College Youth, and earmarked "For Project Ezra." Donations are sent to Project Ezra, 197 East Broadway, New York, New York 10002.

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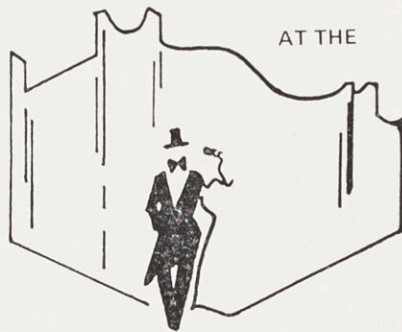
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J.S.A. CLASS

by Renee Brief

For the past term and a half I have had the pleasure of being in the *BIBLE and CLASSICAL COMMENTARY* class given by Jack Bieler.

We are now in the midst of learning D'varim (Deuteronomy) which is considered by some to be a very complicated and technical portion of Torah to learn. But the class is so geared that students from various levels — from beginner to advanced — can gain something.

In learning the text, Jack brings in Gemorah and many different commentaries with an emphasis on the views of Rashi and Ramban.

At certain points during the term, students are assigned a few p'sakim to research and then present them to the class with the problems and interpretations which they find, and then present the opinions of Rashi and Ramban. The Gemorah can be used as well in this research and, if necessary, Jack aids us by listing them in reference to our respective p'sukim. Jack feels that one of the main purposes of his class is to enable the student to deal with, and study, the text by himself. He believes that education should be a transfer of ideas between the student and the teacher. I think this Chumash class has proven itself to be an excellent illustration of its instructor's belief.

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MR. AND MRS. MARVIN GOODMAN on their recent marriage.

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MISS MINDY SILVERBERG on her engagement.

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Around The Shul

by Rifke

Remember, this is LAG B'OMER.

This column previously has focused on the larger issues facing Lincoln Square — the dilemma of Synagogue expansion, the great siddur shortage, the flap over the resignation of the Vice-President, etc., etc. Now that the solution for these controversial matters has been disclosed, and the difficulties have been resolved (e.g. the Synagogue continues to expand at the seams, siddurim have become a luxury item, the Spanbocks have been honored — what a turnabout that!), this month's article analyzes vital but somewhat less burning issues around the Shul. These are the Synagogue problems festering below the surface, the inner turmoil beneath the external calm. These are, in short, tomorrow's Echod headlines, the knotty matters with which our Rabbi will be forced to grapple in the coming months.

A terrific struggle for succession is taking place at SISTERHOOD. All prominent members are struggling to avoid being tapped by the Rabbi as the group's new president. Mrs. A. (President Anne Abramson) may retire. She has declared that "two years of Sisterhood are enough." (Some members are known to feel that one meeting of Sisterhood is enough.) The entire Synagogue hopes she remains. Bach is particularly upset because they will not have Mrs. A. to kick around anymore.

Gradually, the Rabbi is expected to bring great pressure to bear on Mrs. A. Already, Echod has threatened to serialize a book about the Abramson years, "Four Thousand Crises", including a chapter on the unfortunate impeachment stories which have persisted throughout her tenure.

During Mrs. B's (former President Bess Bergman) Presidency, Mrs. A. was groomed as the heir apparent. Today there will be no obvious successor. Sisterhood faces a foreboding crisis.

A terrific struggle for space is taking place in the JUNIOR LEAGUE. More and more babies, in more and more carriages, are being wheeled into the Shul lobby on Shabbat. Careful measurement of the lobby shows there is space for approximately two carriages, and one stroller (if properly manipulated). Until the present time, the area has been awarded on a first come—first serve basis. (Barbara Haupt normally arrives at 4 A.M. Shabbat morning — and she usually gets a space.) What with all the infants though, there has been some talk about dedicating lobby footage much as we dedicate windows, books, rooms, seats, steps, poles and bannisters.

The present idea is that a little red dot will be placed on the reserved area. The mother whose face turns closest to this shade of red when her baby disrupts services wins the space.

This thought has definite appeal, but a better solution might be carriage-pooling.

A second problem confronting Junior Leaguers is that new members do not receive sufficient attention. In other communities, a couple is known as "that new young couple" for three years; at Lincoln Square, newlyweds surrender the limelight in closer to three hours. No sooner had the Grossmans celebrated their Sheva Brachos in our Bais Medrash, than the Bashevkenes were getting married. Engagement announcements came so quickly around Simchat Torah that there was even a spouse mix-up in our dancing around the Fluks, Grants and Sterns. At one recent Chumash Group, twenty-three young couples attended and the combined marriage time amounted to seven months and three days.

The core of this problem lies in appellation. Couples married two months should be called "brand new," and after four months just "new." After nine months, the couple should be "Nu, Nu?" Subsequently, label them "spanking new."

A terrific struggle for meaning is taking place at BACH. Recent Synagogue marriages resulting from meetings outside the regular course of Bach activity has occasioned a fundamental searching self-examination within the group. More and more singles are broaching the once taboo subject, "Who needs Bach?"

More explicitly, the question being asked is — why participate in Bach, if one may find a spouse outside the group. After all, the argument goes, Bach luncheons are no mitziah, and co-ed volley-ball is not particularly challenging.

These Bachniks raise "a very good question, a very good question."

From The Rabbi's Desk (Cont'd)

Kidushin or Erusin (Sanctification or Betrothal)

There are two blessings of sanctification recited over a goblet of wine by the Rabbi (*Mesader Kidushin*), the first being the blessing for wine itself as a symbol of joyous celebration and the second giving praise to God for forbidding certain relationships and sanctifying us by means of the permitted relationships. Both groom and bride partake of wine from the same goblet. The groom then places a plain ring (any precious stone is forbidden in order to banish vain and materialistic thoughts from the betrothal relationship) upon the forefinger of the bride's right hand in the presence of two valid witnesses, immediately before which he declares:

"Behold, you are sanctified unto me with this ring in accordance with the laws of Moses and of Israel."

Reading the Ketubah

Our present-day marriage ceremony actually consists of what had previously been two ceremonies, separated by a twelve month interval. The betrothal or sanctification merely resulted in mutual obligation. The celebration of the actual chupah and the establishment of a united home did not take place until one year later. By the eleventh century the betrothal and marriage ceremonies were celebrated at the same time, but were nevertheless kept distinct by reading the *Ketubah* between them and using a separate wine goblet for each set of blessings. (The significance of the *Ketubah* was discussed with the chatan's tish.)

Nishuin (lit. elevation)

This is the actual marital ceremony or the lifting of the bride into the new household and is marked by seven blessings in which we praise God for creating man not only in a physical sense with a circumscribed existence but also in a spiritual sense which transcends time and spans all of Jewish existence. He has roots which go back to the primordial Garden of Eden and a destiny which is linked forward with the redemption of Israel and the world. The couple, filled with thanksgiving for the love and fellowship they feel for each other, take their place in the great chain of Jewish being and pray that their personal joy be transformed into universal celebration of peace.

Breaking of a Glass

Because we understand the fragility of all physical relationships, because there is no moment of joy without its memory of sadness, because despite personal happiness we live in the midst of universal tragedy, and because we mourn the destruction of the Holy Temple (70 C.E.) which was responsible for a Diaspora of persecution and pogrom culminating in the Nazi holocaust and our present-day struggle with the Communist governments and the Arab countries, the conclusion of the public wedding ceremony is the groom's breaking of a glass (preferably wine goblet). There is a custom to place some ashes on the groom's forehead and to recite the following psalm prior to his stepping on the glass with his right foot:

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
May my right hand forget its cunning.
May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth
If I do not remember thee,
If I do not hold Jerusalem above my greatest joy." (Psalms 137:5-6)

Yikhud (lit. Unity)

Marriage in the Jewish tradition is both a group responsibility and a personal fellowship. Immediately following the public ceremony, the couple retires to a private room where they have the opportunity to express their emotions to each other and to eat their first meal as husband and wife. They are guarded from disturbance for at least seven minutes by two witnesses standing outside, and the fact that they are alone together for this length of time symbolizes the consummation of the marriage and establishes the permanence of their union.

Synagogue News and Notes

Many scoffed when Sisterhood advertised their annual Pesach Question-In as "featuring *Vicki Riskin* assisted by *Rabbi Riskin*", but those in the know understood that this was just telling it like it is . . . what a drawing-card our *Rebbitzin* is . . . not to be outdone, Bach threatens to schedule *Hillel Riskin* for a speaking engagement — the moment he learns how to talk . . .

Rabbi Cohen sold chometz for over 300 families!

The Community Seder was as exciting as it was LONG . . . Participants varied in their accounts as to when the first Saturday night Seder finally ended, but to hear *the Rabbi* tell it, he had to be reminded, by his students, that it was time for Morning Services — on Tuesday . . . *Harry Hausman* asks too many questions . . . (who prepares Michael Widlanski's questions?) . . . Before Pesach, the incomparable *Ephraim Buchwald* and *Mordecai Reich* led the youngsters in many community activities including the distribution of shmura matzoh and model seders . . . The Torah Van is on the streets and doing well, but everyone is worried *the Rabbi* will take the wheel soon.

The Annual Dinner was a grand success (and *Echod* reporters on the scene promise a feature story in the next issue) . . . Journal Chairman *Fred Ehrman* will receive the UOJCA President's Award at the UOJCA Dinner this year . . . *Jack Schenker* did a tremendous job raising funds at our U.J.A. breakfast . . . meanwhile *Rosalie Schenker* is minding the library on Shabbat afternoons . . .

Progress for the Book Fair is attributable to the assistance of *Jesse Cogan*, *Deena Geller*, *Chaya Gorsetman* and *Ron Platzer* . . . *Tuvia Rome* spoke on the Middle East at a recent Bach luncheon . . . *Mel Moed* is the Singles' heir apparent . . .

Celebrated simultaneously the *Alpert-Grossman* Sheva Brochos, the *Woloch* anniversary and the *Sawyer* Bar-Mitzvah at a recent Shabbat seudah . . . note uncovered in a Joseph Shapiro Academy class: "I'll only take the summer course if *Stu Grant* teaches" . . .

In one recent Shabbat *drash*, *the Rabbi* described *Marilyn Cohen* as a cross between a cedar tree and a hyssop — and she thought she was being complimented . . . *Sharon Elbaum* was asked, up at Barnard, by Eyewitness News, if she was a streaker. "Of course", she replied, without batting an eyelash. That's our *Cookie* . . .

The Hashkomah Minyon participants had a feast at a Kiddush tendered by *Moishe Wandler* — a real "spiritual uplift."



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From Rabbi Davis' Desk

by Rabbi Eddie Davis

Rabbi Eddie Davis set a standard of excellence as Lincoln Square's Baal Koreh for which all his successors must aim. His incomparable Purim readings also will long be remembered. Few of our young couples are more popular with the congregation than Eddie and Meira — not only because of their jocularity, friendliness and ready smile — but Eddie was very fastidious about insuring that the Rabbi's *drashim* did not extend over fifteen minutes!

It is now almost 2 years since Meira and I have left New York and LSS, and from the reports we've received our absence has not daunted the Synagogue's growth. This is disheartening to me who, deep down, knew that the crowds were flocking to LSS, not to hear Rabbi R., but to hear the Baal Koreh. It is good to see that the good Rabbi is making it on his own without my assistance.

Putting aside my attempts at levity, I want to tell you that we haven't, nor will we ever, forget our years at LSS. In fact, our ties with the Synagogue are still intact. Working with the Rabbi was an experience that helps me now in my position as Rabbi at Keneseth Beth Israel in Richmond, Va. (No, this is not the deep South.)

I look at my own Synagogue and I see much potential, but not without a great deal of work. My congregation numbers 175 families, only a handful of whom are 100% observant; the great majority are extremely ignorant about their own religion. The biggest need is education, and, I mean education for adults. The children are well taken care of — the Richmond Hebrew Day School is an excellent Yeshiva Ketanah and the NCSY youth group does good work. I have concentrated my efforts on educating the adults. We've begun a successful Adult Education program with classes in Bible, Hebrew and Jewish History. The Friday Night Oneg Shabbats are used as a lecture series on different topics and the Shabbat morning sermon has now been changed to lectures on Tephilah, prayer. The Congregants are warm and very receptive to their sports-addicted, non-conformist Rabbi.

Our son, Dani (Daniel Yitzchak) has more uncles and aunts than he'll ever need, but he is able to keep all of us smiling. Meira and I can't wait to trade in the diapers and begin to become professional Nachas Sheppers.

As you can see, Richmond is pleasant even though it is most definitely the Diaspora. The task is great, and the knowledge that Rabbi Riskin is only a busy-signal away is not always so comforting. But, nevertheless, the satisfaction of making a family kosher is the type that I wish all of you could experience.

If ever you big city people want a place to stay in Richmond, please contact us — the door is open and there is room. L'hitraot.

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