

THE JEWISH STAR

Serving the Orthodox communities of the South Shore

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YIKES! SHPILKES!

Azriel Ganz turns a negative into a positive

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Dairy King does big business and great blintzes

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IN MY VIEW

Candid Conversation

Learning the lessons of history

BY RABBI YAKOV HOROWITZ

About 11 years ago, I began writing "An Ounce of Prevention," the article that dramatically changed the course of my life. It appeared in the May 1996 issue of *The Jewish Observer* and candidly addressed a topic that was simply not discussed in polite company at that time — the subject of our beloved boys and girls who were not making it in our yeshiva system.



Rabbi Yakov Horowitz

The Jewish Observer got more than 50 letters to the editor — the most ever in response to a published article — and more than 300 people called my home phone in the first month alone. A small percentage of the letters and calls complimented or took issue with some of the things I had written. But the vast majority of them were from desperate parents looking for help — any kind of help — in getting their children back on the path to successful lives. Clearly, a sensitive nerve was touched.

Following sessions on the topic of at-risk teens at

the national conventions of Torah Umesorah and Agudath Israel, and with the active encouragement of our Gedolei HaDor, Project YES was created with a sacred mission — to help each and every one of our precious children achieve success in our Yeshivos and Beis Yaakovs.

Over the past 10 years, many positive developments have occurred as a result of

See VIEW, Page 5

Rabbi Yakov Horowitz is the founder and Menahel of Yeshiva Darchei Noam of Monsey, and the founder and Program Director of Agudath Israel's Project Y.E.S. We proudly welcome him to the Jewish Star as a regular contributor.

Taking 5T voters to the cleaners

Trash-talking audit looks at Sanitary District No.1, Town of Hempstead offers to take over if voters ask

BY MAYER FERTIG

Would you like to have your health insurance, including vision and dental, fully paid for the rest of your life? How does life insurance worth hundreds of thousands of dollars sound, at no cost? How about more than \$178,000 a year from four different government jobs — on top of a

private accounting practice — with little or no timekeeping?

Managing the people who collect the trash is nice work, if you can get it, in Sanitary District No. 1, which levies taxes of more than \$14 million on the communities it serves. These include the Five Towns, Green Acres and Valley Stream South and the incorporated villages of

Hewlett Harbor, Hewlett Neck, Hewlett Pay Park, Woodsburgh and Meadowmere Park, as well as unincorporated Lynbrook.

An audit by the Office of the New York State Comptroller over a 40-month period, ending in April 2006, found that while the district's five board members receive just \$7,500 a year in salary, there

are no legal limits on the fringe benefits they can receive. Auditors found those were generous to a fault, far in excess of the benefits packages provided to the regular employees, and above and beyond what several other regional sanitary districts provide to board members.

Board members and upper management with just

five years of service who are at least 62 years old automatically qualify for lifetime health benefits. District No. 1 also pays for life insurance for current and retired employees, including \$300,000 term policies for each of the five board members, the superintendent and the part-time treasurer, as well as a \$200,000 policy for

See CLEANERS, Page 2

The Need for Speed



Courtesy of Cradle of Aviation Museum

This Boeing 707 nose section comes from the first jet aircraft El Al ever purchased, which set a speed record between Tel Aviv and Kennedy airport in 1961. The cockpit will be open to visitors during the Yeshiva break week. See page 3 for details.

Parshat Va'era

Insights into Moshe Rabeinu

BY RABBI AVI BILLET

At the beginning of Va'era, God tells Moshe His reasons for waiting and why He is now remembering the Jewish people. He describes the plan for the exodus using the four phrases of redemption we commemorate on Pesach.

Moshe has a very clear task. He is to approach Pharaoh and demand the Jews be given the opportunity to go to the wilderness to worship G-d.

In response to the stated divine plan, Moshe seems to repeat his personal objection twice — in 6:10-12 and in 6:29-30 — "because I have a speech impediment, no

one, not the Jews nor the king of Egypt, will listen to me."

Rashi claims the two paragraphs are meant to be repetitive. G-d went on a small tangent describing the lineage of Yaakov leading up to Moshe and Aharon, and then the Torah returned to its topic by reminding us of the most recent conversation that took place between G-d and Moshe.

A careful comparison of the two paragraphs, however, reveals that the second one is not a repetition but in fact presents a sec-

See PARSHAT, Page 10

Avi Billet is a mohel based in the Five Towns. He is also a rabbi and an educator. He can be reached at avbillet@gmail.com.

Educational model stresses clarity

Yeshiva of South Shore to be among first Goldhar-certified schools

BY AMY GOLDSTEIN

Arthur Shield's seventh-grade social studies class at the Yeshiva of South Shore is learning to review the concepts of diffusion. In 14 seconds.

Rabbi Avraham Goldhar of Passaic, N.J., asks the students to fill in the blanks. "Diffusion is the movement of particles through air from high concentration to ..." "Low," the students respond together. "It happens through the cell membrane or ...," he said. "Outside the cell," they

respond. "Is energy required?" he asked. "No," they answered.

Rabbi Goldhar's test project is changing the learning environment of the Yeshiva of South Shore. Known as the Goldhar program, South Shore is one of the first schools in the country expected to be certified as a proficient Goldhar school. The elementary school's sixth through eighth graders find they better understand material both in class and as they review it before exams. The result? Better grades with less study time.

Goldhar first became

See EDUCATIONAL, Page 10



A seventh-grade social studies class at South Shore receives instruction on the Goldhar method from Rabbi Avraham Goldhar.

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Shabbat

Candlelighting: 4:38 p.m. ■ Shabbat ends: 5:42 p.m.
Torah reading: Parshat Va'era

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\$2.8 million in state aid for Atlantic Beach Bridge Authority

STAFF REPORT

The Atlantic Beach Bridge Authority will receive nearly \$3 million in state aid. The money will go toward retiring or restructuring debt from the bridge's \$26 million rehabilitation three years ago, according to Nassau Comptroller Howard

Weitzman. He and Legislator Jeff Toback obtained \$2.8 million from the NYS Department of Transportation.

"The aid can defer or eliminate the need for a future toll increase," which has been discussed, according to Weitzman.

Toback said local officials have been trying to obtain those funds since 1999

but were foiled by a lack of cooperation at the county level. "It's a common story around here," he said, "one branch of government wasn't interested in helping out and the taxpayers almost lost out on nearly \$3 million."

The aid was announced on Jan. 15 at the foot of the Atlantic Beach Bridge.

TAKING 5T VOTERS TO THE CLEANERS

Continued from Page One

the board's attorney. Other Sanitary Districts in the region provide either no life insurance coverage at all or policies worth, at most, \$50,000.

"The \$300,000 insurance policies jumped out at me," said Jeff Toback, Nassau County Legislator for the 7th District, "It's further evidence that they thought that no one would look at the books."

Auditors uncovered nearly half a million dollars of what they considered to be excess

costs, including health insurance

for deceased employees and for employees who did not qualify. Auditors found inaccurate financial records and tax reporting, no full-time staff to manage the district's fiscal affairs, and contracts awarded without ensuring adequate competition. "The Board has not fulfilled its fiduciary responsibility to establish a system of internal controls," the report found, noting, "district management does not operate the district in an economical and efficient manner." The audit report included 28 specific recommendations for corrective action.

Nassau Comptroller Howard Weitzman (D) has called on the Town of Hempstead to oversee special districts, and Supervisor Kate Murray (R) has agreed. Her spokesman, Mike Deery, said, "We believe that independently elected districts should be accountable to their constituents for the budgets that they craft but, that being said, to provide a greater level of oversight we have agreed to review the budgets of all these special districts." Deery added that the town's own sanitation service has been favorably evaluated by the county comptroller. "We think we do a very good, cost-effective job," he said. "And to the extent that any district would prefer the township to provide sanitary services in there we would be ready and able to handle that. However, we would not impose our will on the residents of a district ... If we hear a resounding call from a community for change we'll certainly work with that community."

The district's accountant, Salvatore Evola, held what the auditors described as two full-time public positions, and two part-time ones, for a total government paycheck exceeding \$178,000 a year. He was hired in 1994 as a part-time employee earning \$18,500, according to the audit report. In 2006 he was reported as a full-time employee earning \$42,000 a year. He received a benefits package, including life and health insurance, worth an additional \$19,000. He also serves as the full-time Village Clerk/Treasurer of Cedarhurst, and the part-time treasurer of the Inwood Fire District and the Island Park Union Free School District. Auditors found he did not maintain time records.

Evola told *the Jewish Star* he resigned from his position with the Island Park school district six months ago, "to spend more time with my family." He denied being a full-time employee of the sanitary district, explaining that a mistake in retirement reporting in 2006, uncovered by the audit, had been corrected. Denying any impropriety, he said, "Someone who doesn't understand could feel [that there was the appearance of impropriety] but there was no personal gain on my end, in terms of retirement, because I already work full-time [for the village]. If someone worked part-time and reported full-time, that would be improper."

Evola also said that he has voluntarily given up his life and health insurance benefits and is now covered by his wife's health policy. The district's general counsel, Nat Swergold, earns \$40,000 a year plus fringe benefits worth \$17,000. These include a life insurance policy which will remain in effect after retirement as well as a state pension. Yet, he also bills the district \$200 an hour for much of the work he performs. In 2005 he was paid over \$80,000 by the sanitary district. Like the accountant, the attorney has no established work schedule and maintains no time records. He has no office at the sanitary district; most of his work is performed at his own office. The auditors felt both men should be reclassified as independent contractors.

Swergold told *the Star*, "plenty of law makes it absolutely clear that the arrangement I have had with the district for 34 years is quite common."

In many school districts, he said, "their general counsel is paid for some services, usually delineated in an agreement, and other services are billed hourly." His \$200 hourly rate is "almost laughable," for an attorney of his age and experience, he said, "but I consider it part of public service."

Swergold said the auditors failed to mention the millions of dollars he has saved the district in recent years by winning lawsuits. Joseph Candella, chairman of the district's board of commissioners, was out of town and not available, but in a response to the auditors said that the district believes that elected and appointed officials, such as the attorney and accountant, are not subject to time-keeping or competitive bidding requirements. He objected to the audit finding that the districts bidding and procurement procedures are inadequate. He said the district is evaluating the need for additional office staff, is seeking reimbursement for errors such as insurance payments for deceased employees, and has engaged an outside firm to conduct annual audits.

Candella's response was not enough for Toback, who said, "They sort of get caught red-handed and say 'na, na, na, na, na. It's terrible.'"

"They sort of get caught red-handed and say 'na, na, na, na, na.' It's terrible."

Legislator Jeff Toback

costs, including health insurance for deceased employees and for employees who did not qualify. Auditors found inaccurate financial records and tax reporting, no full-time staff to manage the district's fiscal affairs, and contracts awarded without ensuring adequate

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A Beautiful Bus

Photo by David Rosner

Through a generous donation from The Sheryl Steinberg Collins Foundation, the Mid-Island Y JCC purchased a much-needed new school bus. Inscribed with the words, "To What's Important," the bus will be used to transport nursery and school-age children as well as senior adults to various JCC programs. Seth Collins presented the keys to the bus to JCC bus driver Paul Corrado at the recent dedication. JCC Executive Director Joyce Ashkenazy was also on hand with Collins' children Ryan, Zachary, Samantha and Jake.



The Cradle of Aviation will salute the many contributions of Jewish War Veterans during the week of Jan. 23-26, to coincide with the yeshiva winter break.

A war story

WWII pilots give unique perspective on life

BY PAUL SHAPIRO

If you're looking for things to do with the kids during winter break, keep reading.

The Jewish War Veterans is the oldest, active veterans association in the US, founded by Civil War Veterans in 1896. They are dedicated to a program that supports the needs of vets, combats anti-Semitism and bigotry, supports American youth and assists oppressed Jews worldwide. The Cradle of Aviation Museum is celebrating the contributions of Jewish War Veterans by inviting a few of them to share their unique perspective and experiences piloting warplanes in World War II.

Tom Gwynne, Vice President for Programs at the Cradle of Aviation Museum, who put this program together, feels that these veterans' stories should be "interesting as well as inspirational." He hopes the students learn how important their religion is and how significant it is to have a spiritual life, and feels that they can do this by listening to these awfully powerful stories.

"This is a family oriented event with a very powerful story, that regardless of what religion you practice, is worth coming to be a part of," Gwynne said. "You would find that talking with these gentleman that your spirituality is something that stands you in a very good stead and can be a significant portion of your life. I think that's a story that anyone would have to relate to. It's an educational, enjoyable and fun way to learn something significant."

Building a program for observant Jews was important to Gwynne, who noticed that the museum got a very strong showing, particularly from the Orthodox or Hassidic communities on Long Island, during Succot and other Jewish holidays.

"The Orthodox community has treated us so well and have enjoyed their experiences here in the past," he said. "As we were planning out things to do this year and reach out to interesting people, we thought that if these programs work for Tuskegee Airmen [America's first black military airmen], then lets do something for the Jewish community who has been so good to us." This pro-

gram was not specifically designed for the Orthodox community, but The Cradle of Aviation Museum hopes it accommodates them.

"What we had hoped to do is build a program that they would find attractive to participate in when their kids are out of the yeshiva schools," Gwynne said. "So we planned to have a tailored program, for not just that community, but anybody that would find it interesting. But quite frankly that community was the spark plug. We are trying to take advantage of an opportunity that we hope they will take advantage of."

Gwynne hopes to get between 700 and 800 people to visit the Cradle of Aviation Museum for this event. "That would be wonderful," he said. "I think if we got 300 we'd consider it a success. But more is clearly better than fewer."

The Jewish veteran aviators that will be speaking during the week of Jan. 23-26 from 12:00 to 3:00 p.m. include, Leonard Gold, of Oceanside, who was a P-38 fighter pilot in World War II and is credited with shooting down 3.5 Nazi aircrafts, and Stanley Lowell, of North Bellmore, who served as B-17 command pilot in WWII.

Gwynne feels that the Jewish war veterans unique perspective can serve as inspiration for anyone that comes to hear them speak. "Needless to say, being a Jew in Nazi POW camp, it wasn't all fun and games," said Gwynne when speaking of Lowell's story. "I am an Episcopalian and I get goose bumps just thinking about it."

Lowell, 85, who was shot down over Belgium and captured by the Nazis, barely survived after being in a POW camp for almost a year. He feels that the interesting part of his story is the fact that although he is Jewish that when he would fly missions over Germany he would wear Christian dog tags. "And as it turned out it was fortuitous that I did that," he said, "because my aircraft was shot down and I ended up in a German prison camp. I sincerely believe that if I was wearing Hebrew dog tags that I would have never even reached the prison camp."

Lowell's upbringing may have saved his life. After coming

to America, his father assimilated into the American lifestyle. He did not want to be associated with anything that would remind him of his life in Russia. He changed his name and because of this he gave his children, including Stanley, no religious education. "This made it very easy for me to have no guilty feelings at all to hang up Hebrew dog tags and put on my Christian dog tags," he said. "My lack of religious education and feelings for the religion made it easy for me to pass as a Christian."

There are three main things Lowell plans to speak about. First, is what happened on the mission and how his plane got shot down. Secondly, he wants to make sure his audience understand the anti-Semitism that he encountered amongst the American officers during the war. And third is an extremely interesting story concerning how he was tracked down by a boy working for the Belgium Underground during World War II.

"Fifty years after the end of the war I was tracked down by an 11-year-old boy, who in 1944 was working for the Belgium Underground during World War II," he explained. "In that capacity he was to hide any American airmen that he observed being shot down. His job was to hide them in the woods and then at night, whenever the Germans weren't around, they would try to get these airmen back to England through the underground escape channels that existed. He didn't do that for us."

He found Lowell and his crew half a century later, which resulted in a reunion. The crew, which had been shot down in May of 1944, were invited to Belgium and with the approval of the King of Belgium "We were treated like the conquerors of Europe," he said. "It was unbelievable."

Lowell simply hopes that people come to hear him speak and that they enjoy what the stories he has to tell. "I am not a professional speaker, but that I have an interesting story to tell them," he said. "Being a commander on a B-17 during World War II there were adventures, many adventures that I went on, as you can imagine."



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OPINION

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Serving the Orthodox communities of the South Shore

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A bad smell and it's not trash

When it comes to passing a sniff test, any organization responsible for collecting garbage may just have the deck stacked against it. Odoriferous quips aside, many points uncovered by the state audit of Sanitary District No. 1 can and have been explained away as errors. Further, the auditors made no allegation of criminality. However, the totality of the audit findings would seem to suggest that District No. 1 might not pass a sniff test even if it sold flowers.

We certainly don't object to providing employees with generous benefits. It would be nice if every government and business had the will and the wherewithal to provide comprehensive health and life insurance benefits and the peace of mind they provide. However, providing an absurdly outsized level of benefit only to the people at the top of an organization — particularly a

Editorial

government organization — does not pass a test of propriety.

Unlike the attorney for the sanitary district, we don't believe that valid comparisons can be made to large disparities in pay and benefits found in the corporate world. These are tax dollars. If you don't like how Home Depot pays its CEO you can always go to Lowes. If you want your trash picked up in the Five Towns, however, there's only one game in town.

To its credit, the district recently supported a change in a decades-old law that sometimes saw the district's election fall on Friday afternoon. However, rules that provide for a single polling place to accommodate thousands of voters in just four hours were left unchanged. The inconvenience of casting a vote at the

garbage facility surely plays a part in keeping turnout low.

In some ways, we have it really good. Back door pickup is great, there's unlimited special pickup, it's nice to not have to recycle and the tax burden for these conveniences is reasonable — less than what the Town of Hempstead charges for curbside pickup.

On the other hand, a spokesman for Supervisor Murray told *the Star* that any district that would prefer the township to take over its garbage collection need just express its preference "coherently and overwhelmingly" — presumably with a referendum.

Who's to say that if the town took over from Sanitary District No. 1 it couldn't continue to offer the same services we currently enjoy?

If District No. 1 doesn't sufficiently clean up its own trash, perhaps voters ought to consider the town's offer.

RIGHT ANGLE

Shabbat Chauffeurs

The setting sun doesn't panic most people. Most people, though, aren't Orthodox Jews stuck in traffic on the New Jersey Turnpike an hour before the onset of Shabbat, when Jewish religious law forbids driving a car.

I generally stay off highways — and try mightily to avoid cars altogether — several hours before sundown of a Shabbat or Jewish holiday. But this past Oct. 6 was an exception. My 16-year-old son was stranded.

Dovie had accepted a ride that morning from Baltimore, where he



Rabbi Avi Shafran

attends yeshiva, and was to be dropped off at our home in Staten Island. But a later start than planned and unforeseen traffic (a turnpike oxymoron) forced the family driving him (Orthodox Jews like us) to instead proceed directly to their own destination in New Jersey. They called me several hours before sunset to ask if I could

meet them on the turnpike to pick my son up.

I readily, and nervously, agreed, and set out. The traffic was as formidable southward as it was headed north. But my paternal instinct propelled me on. Then my son's drivers called again.

They had to leave Dovie at a motel off the highway in order to reach their own destination before the Sabbath. My paternal instinct — and my car — went into overdrive.

Judaism is a religion of laws, and for those of us who consider those laws sacrosanct, a situation like the one I faced is harrowing. If the sun set before I reached my son, I would have to pull the car over and leave it wherever it was. It would likely get towed and I would likely be picked up by the police. If I reached my son before sunset but without enough time to get home, we would both be stranded, though thankfully together. As I watched the sun dropping closer to the horizon, I drove as efficiently as I could, knowing I was

in trouble.

To make a long story blessedly short, I reached Dovie about a half-hour before sunset. I barely stopped the car, he threw his bags in the back, jumped inside and off we sped.

More traffic. The sun sinking fast. Finally, looming before us, the bridge to Staten Island. We made it across just as the sun began to set. We veered onto a residential street, ditched our possessions in the car (the Shabbat laws prohibit carrying anything in a public area) and got out.

We were 10 miles from home, but elated. We had made it onto Staten Island before the Sabbath began. I'm not in great physical shape but, thank G-d, can probably handle a few hours

of walking.

After holding our private Mincha service (ideally recited before sunset), we crossed to the median of the highway and marched northward.

After about a 45 minute walk — punctuated by the honks of drivers either amused or perturbed by the sight of a bearded man and a teenage boy walking where no one usually does — a car stopped on the median grass about 200 feet in front of us. A man emerged and began walking toward us.

He was a neatly-dressed, pleasant-looking young man who asked if we needed help. I explained our predicament and thanked him for his concern. "Can I drive you home?" he asked.

See CHAUFFEURS, Page 5

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IN MY VIEW: CANDID CONVERSATION

Continued from Page One

the attention devoted to this critical issue. Many wonderful organizations and tailored educational programs have been created to help children who are not making it in mainstream schools. Parenting classes and in-service training for rebbeim/moros have become accepted. There is a far greater degree of sensitivity to 'children at-risk.'

But I am deeply, deeply concerned that conditions are ripe for a huge, exponential increase in the number and percentages of our children who will rachmana litzlan abandon Yiddishkeit in the coming years — like nothing we have ever seen in our lifetimes — if we don't dramatically transform the way we parent and educate our children. I have been feeling this way for a few years now, but this uneasy sentiment is growing as time goes on.

Why all the worry, you ask? Are we not doing extraordinary well in the arena of raising our children? The answer is that we most certainly have so much to be proud of. Batei midrashim, kollelim, and seminaries are brimming with many thousand of outstanding, spiritual young men and women, kein yirbu. We have, over the past few generations, demonstrated our ability to transmit our timeless tradition to our children and grandchildren. But that is only part of the story — the enjoyable part. Components of the bigger picture are out-of-sight and therefore conveniently out-of-mind.

I'd like to ask you to conjure up a mental image of the dancing in the men's section of the last wedding that you attended. In your mind's eye, there are probably several concentric circles of participants — each with varied levels of intensity. In the inner circle, the chosson and his friends are dancing with great fervor. The second ring probably consists of middle-age guys (like myself) operating at a much slower RPM (for readers who occupy the inner ring at weddings, RPM stands for revolutions per minute), while the

outer circle of the dance is comprised of SMV's (slow moving vehicles). In addition, you have individuals sitting at tables not partaking in the festivities. Finally, there are those outside the wedding hall, smoking or chatting on cell phones.

Now imagine if you asked people from these diverse groups for their perception of the dancing at the wedding. The inner, lively group would say that the dancing was fantastic. Middle age guys would say the music was too loud. Outer group members may say the boys were a bit on the wild side. And the fellows outside on their cell phones will say, "Dancing; what dancing?"

That is a thumbnail sketch of the children our community is raising. The 'inner group' — those achieving success in our schools — are doing extraordinarily well, Baruch Hashem. The 'middle group' thinks that things are too intense for them, but they are still part of our community, while the 'outer group' operates at the fringes of our society — barely participating and feeling disenfranchised. And then there are the people outside the wedding hall ... those who completely abandon Yiddishkeit. So, how are we doing as a society in the raising of our children? Well, it depends on your vantage point.

If I may stay with the wedding analogy for another moment, I am that restless fellow who bounces around among the three dancing rings — and keeps running out to chat with the guys outside the hall. You see, there is an extraordinary dichotomy in my professional life (or rather lives). Daytime, I am the quintessential inner-ring participant. I serve as the menahel of a Yeshiva elementary school, where I get to walk the hallways and listen to the sweet sounds of tefilah and the beautiful singsong chanting of the timeless Torah thoughts of Abaya and Rava (two sages of the Talmud). But as the sun sets each night, I am confronted with the horrific agony of the children who are not succeeding in our school system and the unspeakable anguish of their parents, siblings

and grandparents. The phones at Project YES and so many other outstanding organizations ring with stories of frustrated, unhappy children; with reports of gambling, drug use, molestation, promiscuous activity — even deaths and suicide (I personally know of three from children who committed suicide in the past nine months alone).

What are the numbers — the percentages of our children in the various rings? Accurate information and research-based studies are not readily available, but I would estimate that during the past few decades, about five to fifteen percent of children from observant homes completely left Yiddishkeit — which is far more than we would like to admit or believe.

However, viewed from an historical perspective, the 'drop-out' rate from Orthodox Jewry in the past fifty years is far lower than it was during the tumultuous hundred years that preceded our parents' generation — from 1850 to 1950. The 'drop-out' rate was much, much higher in the Lower East Side at the turn of the century, in Yerushalayim in the Thirties and Forties, and in many Chassidish, Litvish, and Ashkenazic communities in pre-war Europe during the height of the haskalah — when communism, pogroms, and grinding poverty decimated the ranks of the frum world.

We are deluding ourselves — and ignoring the lessons of history — if we think that we are somehow immune from another colossal wave of children leaving Yiddishkeit in the years to come. For we have been steadily increasing the frantic pace and intensity of the 'inner ring' over the past 10-15 years. And the dancers are clapping their hands tighter and tighter — inadvertently excluding a significant proportion of people from participating.

If you accept my proposition that five to fifteen percent of our children are outside the wedding hall (and I think those numbers are low-ball estimates), trust me when I say that there are huge numbers of kids in rings two and three. They are waiting and watching — not sure if they want to join the dance or just go outside for a smoke and a

schmooze.

All the while, there are enormous cultural changes occurring that have profound ramifications for the Torah observant community. More than seven years ago, I delivered a lecture at a public forum regarding the challenges presented to Torah families by rapidly evolving technology. An individual on the panel who preceded me spoke about the need to 'circle the wagons' — keep these influences away from our children. I followed his presentation by stating that I agreed wholeheartedly that parents must be very vigilant about what their children are exposed to, as I have repeatedly stated at virtually every parenting class that I conduct. But I also said that this will not nearly be sufficient, as I predicted that within ten years, our children will be able to go to the local candy store or 7-11 and purchase a disposable palm-size device for \$25 (along the lines of a phone card) that will allow them to set up their own e-mail account and go online without their parents knowing about it. (Update: We are almost there. One can already purchase an audio iPod with limited memory — and pornographic content — for less than \$20.) I then spoke about the need to effectively parent our children and see to it that they are in nurturing school and community environments.

I keep getting calls from concerned parents from very charedi and chasidish homes asking me how to respond to their teenage children's requests for iPod's. These are sheltered children from heimishe homes. Their parents are rightfully terrified of the implications of saying yes, but correctly realize that saying no without a good reason will be counterproductive. They also fully understand that their children can buy it without their permission if they really want to.

Also unsettling is the fact that many of these parents have no idea what an iPod is. So there you have it. Kids speaking a language that their parents don't understand. Children acclimating to a new environment while their parents are like ... well,

immigrants. The last time we had that experience was on the Lower East Side. Do you have any idea what percentage of the kids left Yiddishkeit in that generation?

People often ask me how things are doing regarding the teen-at-risk crisis. I usually nod my head and make small talk; the settings in which these questions are presented are generally not conducive to serious discussions. And to be perfectly honest, I've found that most people don't really want to hear the stark reality as I see things.

But if you wish to know my candid thoughts on this subject, pull up a chair and read these columns very carefully over the next few weeks and months. What I have to say will probably upset you. I may engender your resentment and perhaps even your anger for writing these columns and airing these subjects in such a public forum. But I feel an overwhelming sense of responsibility to write these articles, nonetheless.

For we need to candidly discuss how we educate our children and how we set our charity priorities. We need to talk about investing in the training and financial stability of our valiant mechanchim/mechanchos, and discuss the need to provide recreation opportunities for our kids. We need to reflect on the missions of our schools — are we looking to raise mitzuyanim/mitzuyanans, outstanding students, or normal, well-adjusted children who have the capacity to become outstanding? Should average or weaker students be relegated to second-tier schools, or should they be welcome in mainstream schools? We need to have candid discussions about how to confront the challenges of technology that are heading our way — ready-or-not. The list goes on and on. It is my vision and hope that this forum will help us realize our collective goal of "V'chol bo'navich limudei Hashem."

For more information, visit www.rabbi-horowitz.com. E-mail comments to letters@thejewishstar.com. (c) 2007 Rabbi Yakov Horowitz, all rights reserved

Shabbat Chauffeurs

Continued from Page Four

I replied that on the Sabbath I couldn't as much as open the door of his car. "If I open it for you, can you be driven?" he asked again.

"Are you Jewish?" I asked. It would be wrong for me to even cause another Jew to violate the Jewish Sabbath.

"No," he said with a smile. "I'm a born-again Christian."

His offer couldn't be blithely refused. As the three of us walked together, I responded, "That is very kind of you. Where are you headed?"

At that point we had reached the man's car; a young woman whom he introduced as his fiancé sat in the front passen-

ger seat. If she had any concern about picking up two strangers, she certainly didn't show it.

"To the Staten Island Mall," he replied, as he opened the door for us. That would shave half our walk off, I thought, and my son and I got in the car. Anthony, as our benefactor identified himself, was all too happy to help. "But please," I said, "just to the mall."

Anthony and his future wife couldn't have been nicer. Part of me wondered if this Christian couple might see my son and me as marks to whom to preach religion, but our conversation was only about their upcoming marriage and world affairs, and they both made my son and me feel as if we were doing them a favor

by allowing them to be our chauffeurs.

In any event, when we reached the mall, Anthony asked us where we lived. I told him and he insisted on taking us home. (Later I discovered that halacha might have required me to not allow him to go out of his way for me.) When we reached our driveway, Anthony opened the door for us again, and we thanked him from the bottom of our hearts. When my wife and family — who had last heard from me when I was on the turnpike and didn't know where Dovie and I would be spending Shabbat (and the next day, the second day of Sukkot) — saw us walk in the front door, they were shocked but overjoyed.

The gratitude we felt toward our benefactors was, and is, not

only for their having cared about my son and I but also for demonstrating, in a world of so much evil unleashed in the name of religion, good will toward two strangers of another faith.

In the Jewish religious tradition, though, there is something that goes beyond simple gratitude; it is called hakarat hatov — literally: "recognition of the good." Gratitude is recognition of another person's choice, but hakarat hatov is something one must feel even toward an inanimate, unchoosing, object. "Into a well from which you drank," admonishes the Talmud, "do not throw a stone."

Hakarat hatov, I think, can best be understood as something meant to benefit not the recipient but the giver. It is intended to make us — the "recognizers" —

more sensitive, more aware of the ultimate Source of all goodness. Whether through the agency of a well, a river, the earth or the fortuitous arrival of someone able and ready to help us, our ultimate feelings of joy and appreciation are for the One who has provided.

Sukkot is called z'man simchateinu, "the time of our hap-

piness." This past Sukkot in my home, the phrase resonated with particular power.

Rabbi Shafran is director of public affairs for Agudath Israel of America. This article first appeared in the Staten Island Advance, and is published with permission.

CORRECTION

In "The harrowing tale of Kosher Cajun" (1/5/07) a photo caption misidentified Natalie Brown. *The Star* regrets the error.

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In Memoriam

The Jewish Star offers condolences to Mr. Yanky Brach, to his mother, Miriam Brach, and to his sisters, Leah Katz and Blimie Spiro, on the loss of their husband and father, **Shmuel Brach, a'h.**

May he be a maylitz yosher for the entire Brach family and for all of Klal Yisroel.

**Cliff Richner
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Publisher, The Jewish Star**

Shabbat in Beit Shemesh

BY TAMAR HANAU

The one way streets of Beit Shemesh are lined with identical, white attached houses. Each house has its own unique charm, whether its basketball hoops, beautiful flowers or draping Israeli flags. The cobblestone streets are lined with American cars and large mini vans. The sky is crystal blue and in the background one can see majestic hills and never ending fields.

Beit Shemesh is surreal. Set in the hills of Israel the calm, residential city is both peaceful and tranquil. It is a predominantly Anglo community where the preferred language is English. In fact, I totally forgot that I was in Israel until the sun set and the city became hushed and cloaked in silence.

This past Shabbat, Shaalvim took us to Beit Shemesh in order to meet the community and see what making aliyah is all about. We were each assigned different families to stay with to become part of the community and see as much as possible. I walked into the Burg's house erev Shabbat, who coincidentally just made aliyah a year ago from Lawrence, quickly changed into

Shabbat clothes and left for shul. (Not before some imported Entenmann's doughnuts which they offered and which we could not refuse!!)

When we entered the women's section we were greeted by a beautiful scene; different looking Jews all sitting together and praying as one. There were the American teenagers alongside the older women who wore hats, next to the women wearing tichels, next to the Ethiopians in their African garb, next to women wearing sheitels, next to the Israeli girls in long flowy skirts, next to small children who were trying to follow along, next to the Shaalvim girls who were all deep in prayer. It was a remarkable sight. I was moved.

The older Ethiopian women, dressed fully in their African garb, closed their eyes in deep concentration. They were praying to Hashem. They looked so different, but we are all one people. They wore faces which showed the harshness and bitterness of their lives. Their expressions showed gratitude for where they were today. The Israeli children sang along with the chazzan in their Israeli accents while their



Tamar Hanau

American mothers sang softly beside them. The men's section below was filled with knitted kipot. As one we welcomed in the Shabbat Malka. After shul we each went to different families for dinner. I ate with a nice family who had made aliyah a few years earlier. While the children looked American, their swift Hebrew and strong accents suggested otherwise. I was embarrassed that their 10-year-old spoke Hebrew 10 times better than I did.

After dinner we went back to the shul for a panel discussion and we met with many different women who made aliyah and learned how they dealt with their challenges. On the panel were a speech therapist, a lawyer, a doctor and a home-maker.

On Shabbat morning we davened in shul, blessed the new month and once again went to another family for lunch. Lunch began at 11:00 a.m. and we were promptly served chulent, chicken and other foods and side dishes. I still can't understand how the Israelis can stomach chulent so early, let alone recent olot. I went to lunch with Gila Ler-

man, a graduate of SKA and resident of Woodmere. The family was very nice, but they couldn't understand why we would want to live in the Five Towns and decided to beat up the Five Towns for a while. We tried, somewhat unsuccessfully, to defend our hometown. (Sorry guys, we tried and we still love you!)

The Shabbat finished off with a kumsitz and a moving speech. Shabbat was followed by a Melava Malka of Israeli food and dancing. We all were on such a high. We all felt such passion and excitement. We couldn't help but wonder, in amazement, at the strength and dedication of the people of Beit Shemesh.

Michelle Elmaleh, our dean of students, summed up the Shabbat by explaining that people who make aliyah are not extraordinary. They are simply ordinary people who made extraordinary decisions. It's those decisions that one makes during his lifetime which makes him extraordinary.

Tamar Hanau is a HAFTR graduate currently studying at Shaalvim for Women in Israel. This is the 17th in her series of articles about her year in Israel.

The Amish Pay a Visit



Members of the Mennonite community from Bethel, PA visited the Jewish Children's Museum in Brooklyn. They traveled by subway to the Museum to learn about Jewish culture and tradition and stumbled upon a giant challah.

Shpilkes

Channeling nervous energy

BY AZRIEL GANZ

When I was growing up, I was a fidget. In fact, I'm still a fidget. Then, as now, I would play with anything I could get my hands on. I would drive my teachers crazy, tapping a pencil on my desk or twirling a pen. I would drive my parents and siblings crazy doing the same things with my forks and spoons on the table. These days I specialize in dismantling paper clips. I can also expertly fling pencils into

the ceiling at work. Naturally, I use a headset with a long extension wire so that I don't have to stay seated while talking on the phone.

Had I grown up now rather than then, I might have been sent to the doctor to determine whether I suffered from ADD. In those days, the technical medical term people used to describe my state of being was "shpilkes." Shpilkes, it was explained to me, is the Yiddish term for "ants in the pants," or nervous energy. I certainly had that.

The trick, I discovered over the years, is to harness shpilkes to your advantage. During my school years I always played a lot of basketball because having ants in your pants was a good thing on the court. So, even though I was small and a terrible shooter, I was always welcome on the court because I never stopped running and played fierce defense. And, it was better getting rid of the nervous energy on the court rather than in the classroom.

Of course, harnessing shpilkes as one gets older becomes increasingly more difficult. As an example, my boss wasn't really keen on the idea of having pencils hanging from my ceiling so I had to stop. Instead, I started running. This was good on many fronts since not only did I let off the steam, I actually got healthier. As I got older and my knees started to fail me, I turned to biking with similar results.

The good news is that there are even opportunities at work where shpilkes is acceptable and even admirable. I recently discovered one such opportunity.

In my current job (when I'm not eating) I very frequently have to give presentations, sometimes to hundreds of people at a time. In these situations, my normal shpilkes level increases to dangerous heights because of real nervousness. Having to stand in front of a lectern or sit still at a table would drive me crazy, but I needed to be in front of a microphone and click my computer each time I had turn the page of my Powerpoint presentation. Being still made me sweat and turn pale.

Then, I discovered that technology could come to my rescue. Now, I agree to speak only if I can be hooked up to a wireless microphone clipped to my lapel. I also purchased my own remote control (or what my father, z'l, called a "shmitchik") that allows me to change the page on my Powerpoint from anywhere in the room with a simple click of the button. (I am the Michael Jordan of presenters; I can change pages behind my back, between my legs, with a hesitation move or a stutter step). From a nervous, pale and stationary presenter, I was transformed into the second coming of Phil Donohue. Engaging all my shpilkes, I now traipse around the room with so much confidence and authority that people actually think that I know what I'm talking about.

Unfortunately, I haven't been able to solve all my shpilkes-related issues. Long airplane rides still drive me nuts and Shabbos morning tefilah is a challenge. Indeed, if you want to know where I sit in shul, look for the spot with the worn out carpet.

Azriel Ganz is the general counsel of a trade organization, but tells people that he eats for a living. He lives in Woodmere and davenes at Aish Kodesh where, on most Shabbat mornings, he can be found pacing.



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SPORTS

The comeback kids

Down 7 in the fourth, HANC beats North Shore by 1

BY PAUL SHAPIRO

HANC 43, North Shore 42

The last time the HANC Hurricanes and the North Shore Stars got together HANC dominated the game taking home its second consecutive Satran Tournament title. This time around wasn't as easy, coming down to final shot.

After HANC led most of the first half behind its strong defensive play, North Shore made a run late in the third to take a 3-point lead going into the final quarter. That lead was extended to as much as 7 with only two minutes left in the game.

"With two minutes left and down by 7 we looked to increase pressure on the outside and force turnovers," HANC Coach Elliot Steinmetz said. "My thoughts were that if we could get a couple of quick turnovers and quick points that we'd be in good shape."

HANC did just that with strong defense and some big shots, which got the Hurricanes right back in the game. First, Sam Klein hit his fourth three of the day to pull HANC within 4. Michael Fellus then hit a lay-up off an offensive rebound to make it a 2-point game. After draining a foul shot, Marc Guttman hit a baseline jumper to cap off an 8-0 run to give the Hurricanes a 1-point lead. North Shore looked to be done until the Stars' Adam Kordvani hit a huge shot to give North Shore a 1-point lead with 20 seconds left to play.

On HANC's next and final possession Richie Hochhauser drove to the hoop, and to his surprise found junior Ike Levine wide open on the baseline. Levine pulled up and drained the shot from the corner for the game winner with only 11 seconds to go.

"I was pretty sure it was going in once it left his hands," Coach Steinmetz said. "He's a good shooter."

This win puts HANC (6-5) above .500 for the first time in just over a month. The Hurricanes are 9-6 overall if you include the Satran Tournament and HANC is now 3-1 versus North Shore, one of the top team's in the Long Island Division as well



HANC junior Ike Levine hit the game winner versus North Shore with 11 seconds left on the clock.

as the country.

"This was a very exciting game that could have gone either way in the last minutes," Coach Steinmetz said. "We went back and forth twice before Ike hit his shot."

HANC's next game will take place at Westchester on Feb. 1 at 8:30 p.m.

ON THE Calendar

2007 Maccabi team try-outs

Jewish athletes between the ages of 13 and 16 (as of July 31, 2007) are invited to try-out for the 2007 Mid-Island Y JCC Maccabi Boys Roller Hockey and Girls Volleyball Teams.

Jewish athletes between the ages of 13 and 14 (as of July 31, 2007) are invited to try-out for the 2007 Mid-Island Y JCC Maccabi Boys Basketball Team.

■ Boys Roller Hockey Team Try-outs: Tuesday, Jan. 23 from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m. at the Mid-Island Y JCC, Tuesday, Jan. 30 from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Skate Safe, located at 182 Sweet Hollow Rd. in Old Bethpage.

■ Boys Basketball Team Try-outs: Tuesday, Jan. 16 from 8:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center, located at 45 Manetto Hill Rd. in Plainview.

■ Girls Volleyball Team Try-outs: Sunday, Jan. 14 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Mid-Island Y JCC.

Please call in advance if you are interested in any of these try-outs. For information call Donna Cresenti, Maccabi Delegation Head, at (516) 822-3535, ext. 308 or Matt Carpenter at ext. 350.

Plainview - The Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center will host an eight-week course, from the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute, on Tuesday evenings from 7:45 to 9:00 p.m. beginning Jan. 23. The "Kabbalah of Character" is designed to help you understand the unique mix of qualities that defines your individuality. Authored by Rabbi Moshe Miller, noted scholar of Kabbalah, the course invites you to choose from among a wealth of reflective approaches to chart your own path to personal growth. The fee for this class is \$99, which includes textbooks. There is a discount for Mid-Island Y JCC members. The Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center is located at 45 Manetto Hill Rd. in Plainview. For more information or to register call (516) 682-0404 or e-mail TOBC@optonline.net.

4341, ext. 111 or Debbie Rosen, Assistant Director of Adult Services at ext. 129.

Oceanside - The Friedberg JCC will host the Bond Street Theatre troupe as they perform "Giant Steps" on Sunday, Jan. 28 at 2:00 p.m. Through dance, mime, music and storytelling, the renowned Bond Street Theatre troupe will take audiences of all ages on an imaginative theatrical journey through the world of giants as they appear in folktales from around the world and as still characters in various cultures. The fee for this event is \$8, plus an additional \$1 at the door. The Friedberg JCC is located at 15 Neil Court in Oceanside. For more information call Maddy Levi, Director of Cultural & Fine Arts at (516) 766-4341, ext. 114.

Oceanside - The Friedberg JCC will host an Adult Connections Club - on Thursdays from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. - for those energetic, recently retired adults looking to pursue many different interests and develop new avenues for friendship. This week's meeting, on Jan. 25, will be a dinner and lecture with Professor Herb Rosenbaum on Jews in American Politics. The fee is \$10 per month. The JCC is located at 15 Neil Court in Oceanside. For more information call Sue Lederman, Director of Adult Services, at (516) 766-

North Woodmere - The Young Israel of North Woodmere will host a lecture program every Monday entitled The Arab/Israeli Conflict: From Understanding to Advocacy. The Jan. 29 lecture topic is "Advocating for Israel/Part A." Rabbi Bini Maryles will host this 11-week program developed by The David Project. The lectures are free and begin at 8:30 p.m. The Young Israel of North Woodmere is located at 634 Hungry Harbor Rd. in North Woodmere. For more information call (516) 791-5099.

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Dining Guide

Dairy King

BY FELISA BILLET



since their mother's. For those experiencing blintzes for the first time, Deutsch is adamant they not be confused with crepes, which have thinner skins and runny fillings.

Besides blintzes, highlights of the restaurant's soul food include potato pierogies (fried or boiled), cold borscht, matzo brie, latkes, nova lox, and kippers and onions (smoked herring fried with onions). Thick, homemade soups, broccoli and cheddar stuffed potatoes, mozzarella sticks and open tuna melts are diner-style favorites.

The menu's more contemporary side features an extensive make-your-own-salad-bar, raspberry honey-mustard glazed salmon, eggplant parmigiana, vegetable lasagna and upscale paninis.

The portions are large and the service, run by waitresses in their 50s and 60s, is like having your bubbly take care of you. Deutsch is attentive to the customers as well. (He stops mid-sentence to help a woman maneuver her stroller through the dining room and picks up a napkin before a customer realizes it fell). Similarly,

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Party Room: No. However, the restaurant can be reserved for a party.
Catering: Extensive
Lunch Menu: Yes
Take-Out: Yes
Delivery: With a minimum order
Lunch Price: \$10-\$12 for salads and entrees
Dinner Price: \$20 specials include bread basket, soup, salad, entrée and side dishes, dessert
Diner's Tip: Can't make it to the restaurant but you're craving a home-style blintz? Dairy King's blintzes are available in nine varieties under the Grandma Seiden's label and can be found in many supermarkets.

our waitress anticipated our every move.

"I am happy when people take food home," said Deutsch, though he is quick to mention that it isn't often people have leftovers. "I want people to eat and be satisfied and not to go home hungry."

Kosher consumers want more

Less duplication and more variety and innovation are atop the list

BY PAUL SHAPIRO



tion data from more than 14 food and drug retailers, with 10 million households over the last 5 plus years. The results of the study also included why consumers shop and what drives them, consumer perception of what kosher is and where it is shelved, and what factors influence consumer decision, trip-drivers and frequency.

"I think the study was done to try to figure out what consumer behavior is like in the kosher aisle," said Menachem Lubinsky, founder of Kosherfest

and CEO of LUBICOM Marketing. "There are many ways to study the kosher consumer, but how the kosher consumer behaves in the designated kosher aisle was not previously studied. So I guess that was the reason for why Cannondale did this study."

According to Lubinsky, the Cannondale findings actually explain a lot about kosher shoppers as well as kosher food. "The findings mean the consumers are very carefully monitoring the stores and that while there are new items on the shelves that many of them are duplicates from products that already exist," he explained. "Now some on the manufacturers are trying to fill the shelf with their products and as a result there is duplication. But the consumer was saying we don't want duplication. We want move innovative items."

Lubinsky feels that retailers across the country are paying close attention to this study, especially about the implication that kosher sales would be unaffected if there was no deep discounting, a common practice by many kosher retailers.

"The deep discounting was an eye opener to me," he said. "I'd always known the kosher consumer was not a coupon shopper. I knew they didn't shop the kosher aisle because of the coupons they had and this study proves that purchase decisions were not necessarily made because of them." He continued, "What's surprising is that what

it really says that the consumer is saying is that if you didn't discount the items people would still go out and buy these items. Much of the industry had always believed, to some degree, that consumers made their decisions on where to shop based on deep discounts and this study has shot that down."

Kosher food companies are growing at a rate between 10 to 15 percent, according to an annual kosher food company survey conducted by LUBICOM Marketing. "While last year's growth was due to an increase in wines, cheeses and sauces, snack foods and an increase in frozen food options are currently hot items in the kosher food industry, as are new wines from Israel," Lubinsky said.

Today there are 10.5 million kosher consumers in the United States. About 21 percent of Americans buy kosher products because they are kosher. The dollar value of the kosher market is about \$10 billion, and the dollar value of kosher goods produced in the USA is \$175 billion, according to Lubicom Marketing. There were also over 3,000 new kosher products made in the '06 calendar year. The new popular kosher items for the past year were mainly snacks, cakes and new wines.

"I think one of the big challenges for the industry is to satisfy the consumer's desire to experiment with new products and to use new products," Lubinsky said. "New products drive sales and although shoppers are brand loyal to certain foods, they are always on the hunt for new products."

Kosherfest is the largest international kosher food and food service trade show, which will be held in NYC at the Jacob Javits Convention Center, Nov. 12-13, 2007.

Key findings:

- There are many faces of the kosher consumer, not just one
- Consumers want broader selection of categories, not multiple brands
- They purchase an entire solution of products during the holidays, not just core items
- Kosher consumers spend about \$1,000 more annually than the average buyer
- 70% of kosher consumers are 18-35
- Kosher consumers are Jewish, use kosher and non-kosher products, purchase kosher products year-round and have changing taste preferences
- Kosher consumers are also non-Jewish, feel kosher products are better for you, find a link to natural/organic and are an emerging and growing segment

- Other non Jewish consumers buy kosher products because many are vegetarian and lactose and gluten-free
- The kosher section is where most consumers discover new products
- All kosher consumers agreed that they want a greater variety of items with minimal duplication and more new products
- Stores that offer deep discounts do not increase kosher holiday traffic more than stores with lesser discounts
- More kosher holiday categories trigger greater holiday purchases
- Kosher consumers want help from manufacturers and retailers on how to use kosher products (meal ideas, recipes, etc.)

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EDUCATIONAL MODEL STRESSES CLARITY

Continued from Page One

involved in the learn-it-quick-but-remember-it-well methodology about 16 years ago, when he wrote background crash courses in Limudei Kodesh subjects to help adults who weren't necessarily religious their entire lives catch up quickly. He once had similar trouble.

Five years ago, he was asked to apply what he had taught in crash courses as a study skill. He said he didn't want to, but he did it anyway.

The test? A seventh-grade biology class. Students' grades improved by 20 to 50 percent while studying time was reduced by 50 to 80 percent.

To date Rabbi Goldhar has taught thousands of students his note-taking method, where students learn to process information so they break down and simplify what they learn while they're taking notes. The buy-in for them is the decreased study time. The method doesn't discriminate against weaker students.

"It's reaching every student in the class," said Rabbi Shmuel Schwebel, general studies principal of the Yeshiva of South Shore. "They're jumping on board in every way to get involved. ... Success breeds success [in other subjects]."

The method is uniform for both Hebrew and English subjects because knowing what to write down in a notebook is a skill set of the mind rather than of the material. The skill set shuns writing in complete sentences. "A sentence is a training wheel for the mind," Rabbi Goldhar said. "They don't need to write down every word because their mind is very capable of processing it, and it's showing all students they can have much greater confidence in their thinking skills."

Instead, it favors writing in spokes. Each spoke has a brief phrase that triggers the mind so the student recalls what he or she has learned. The spoke system helps each student make sense from what a teacher says in class. "Teachers can be clear in articulating things, but that doesn't mean every kid is walking away with that clarity in hand," Rabbi Goldhar said.

The teachers at South Shore appreciate the method. Shield, who has used the Goldhar method in his classes since he learned it in the spring, said he has improved his use of the blackboard. "When I utilize the board with the Goldhar method it's usually done toward the end of the period. It's almost like a culminating thing — let's bring it all together — the kids leave classroom having all the same information."

Visual clues are key. "Instead of having to study by reading horizontally they see it vertically with the spokes and baby spokes they create which come off each of the main spokes," Shield said. "The kids take to it right away."

Shield, who taught public school students for 34 years before teaching at Yeshiva of South Shore, said he doesn't give out high grades unless



Yeshiva of South Shore students use Rabbi Goldhar's methods to help remember the original 13 English colonies. By using visual clues these students find it 10 times easier to learn.

the students earn them. But he has seen positive results quickly. On a recent test, 11 out of 21 students in one of his seventh-grade classes scored 90 or above — even before they had received official training from Rabbi Goldhar.

The administration at South Shore feel the students succeed because they control of the material. "The students in class have a model that's helping them organize and file, and they're being able to retain the information so when they walk up to the test they're up to mastery," Rabbi Schwebel said. "It takes away the fear factor. It takes away the cloud over their head. The night before a test doesn't become a nightmare."

With the Goldhar system, the hallway becomes a classroom. Rabbi Goldhar works at the Yeshiva of South Shore for several hours every Tuesday and the students are eager to see him.

On a recent Tuesday, eighth grader Aaron Katan saw Rabbi Goldhar and ran up to him, shouting, "Rabbi Goldhar! Rabbi Goldhar!" He showed him how he used the spoke technique to learn a blatt of Gemara.

The ownership of the learning process turns every student into a cognizant one. "The weakest kid [in another Goldhar school in Philadelphia] comes home, he circles his books, he has a way of conquering and seeing real success," Rabbi Goldhar said. "That makes school much more exciting for him."

Rabbi Goldhar feels that the goal of setting the bar high can change the school. "My passion is to show we can generate dramatic results in education, and the best way to make it apparent is if you can do it schoolwide — with a variety of students and teachers buying into it," he said. "It changes the learning culture with very concrete results."

To learn more about the Goldhar program go to www.goldhar.com.

PARSHAT VA'ERA

Continued from Page One

ond set of objections to G-d's oversimplified command, "Go to Pharaoh and talk to him."

In 6:12, Moshe's response is "[If] the Jews did not listen to [and believe] me, how will Pharaoh ever listen to me — and by the way, I have a speech impediment?"

G-d's response here is, "You and [your brother] Aharon will go to Pharaoh to take the Jews out of Egypt," followed by the listing of lineage to give us the family background of Moshe and Aharon.

In 6:30, Moshe's response is somewhat different. "I have a speech impediment, so how will Pharaoh listen to me?"

To this, G-d responds, "You will be [like] a G-d to Pharaoh, and Aharon will be your prophet. You will say what I command you, and Aharon will repeat it to Pharaoh."

In 6:12, Moshe assumes he will fail because he was unsuccessful with the Jews. His speech impediment seems to be an afterthought.

In 6:30, he uses his speech impediment as an excuse to not even attempt to speak to Pharaoh.

Rashi's grandson, Rashbam, suggests G-d's response to Moshe's first statement in 6:12 was the listing of the lineage. Listing the generations of Levi was not randomly done at that moment. It was the answer to Moshe's first question — if I failed with the Jews, how will I succeed with Pharaoh?

The answer is that the failure with the Jews only happened because they do not know who you are. You grew up in Pharaoh's home and have spent somewhere between the last 40 to 60 years living abroad in Midyan. The Jewish people need a reminder of who you are, and why you are the right man, based on your lineage, to take them out of Egypt.

Apparently Moshe's speech impediment was not his cause for failure within the Jewish community. Their non-acceptance of him was because he was new to the neighborhood, no one knew him, and his

efforts thus far had been ineffective and had caused more work to come upon them.

His objection in 6:30, however, focuses on his physical handicap. "How will Pharaoh listen to a person with a speech impediment?"

Here, G-d's answer is that you do not have to speak to Pharaoh because Aharon will be your intermediary.

Rashbam's approach is much more appealing. It covers for the seeming repetitive nature of the Torah, and gives us striking insight to Moshe's human persona and the relationship he has with G-d.

He does not respond very well to criticism. He wants to do the best job possible, as soon as possible. He wishes he were more perfect, but G-d did not make him more perfect. He wants the path in front of him to be paved and bulldozed, exactly as he thinks G-d said it would be.

On another level, we see the relationship G-d has with Moshe as being akin to the parent-child relationship. At first, G-d has to give Moshe much instruction. Moshe takes it, does his best with it, fails and needs a good boost to bounce back and recover. When he tries again, he develops more confidence, and slowly develops a much closer relationship with G-d.

The greatest moments come, though, in G-d's reactions to Moshe's objections. While last week we read of G-d becoming angry with Moshe for refusing to accept the job of taking the Jews out of Egypt, now that he has the job, G-d becomes increasingly patient with Moshe's issues. He validates Moshe's fears, responds to each one in kind, and makes every effort to show Moshe how his issues can be resolved with a little communal education and a little help from a loving sibling named Aharon.

Anyone who can relate to Moshe's human characteristics and insecurities will most surely benefit from friends and relatives who use G-d's reactions as a guide to help strengthen any relationship.

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