

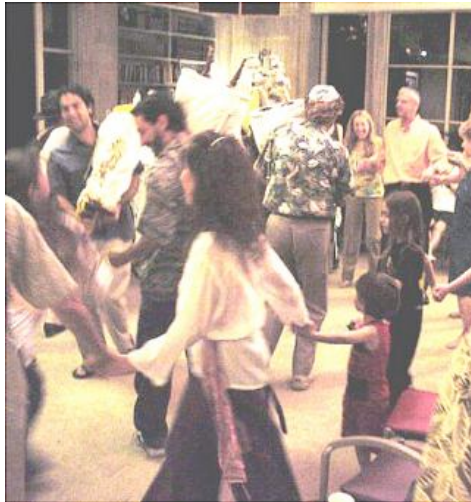
# Kol Ma'arav *Voice of the West*

קול מערב

*The Newsletter of Congregation Sof Ma'arav,  
the Westernmost Member of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism*

*November - December 2004*

## **SIMAN TOV UMAZEL TOV or WHAT A SWELL PARTY IT WAS!**



Simchat Torah at Sof Ma'arav  
Photo courtesy of Laurie Hanan

October 7th 2004 (22 Tishri 5765) is a date that my wife, Hinda, and I won't soon forget! The evening of Simchat Torah had all the ingredients needed for a wildly joyous evening. Adults and children getting close to, reading from, saying blessings over, taking hold of and celebrating Torah!

Our evening started at Temple to the strains of the Barechu and the Shema. This was followed by the unrolling of a Torah scroll and a journey from the beginning of Breishit to the end of Deuteronomy. After the Torah reading and rolling up of the Torah, we marched around the Sanctuary seven times singing Heiveinu Shalom Aleichem and Hava Nagila, the kids waving their flags during the final *hakafah*, or procession. To the melody of Eitz Chayim Hi, we returned the scrolls to the ark, but our Simchat Torah evening was not yet pau.

Suddenly it felt like synagogue-hopping on the upper west side of Manhattan as we walked over to Congregation Sof Ma'arav's Simchat Torah service. Hinda and I walked in during the reading from the end of Deuteronomy and were honored with an *aliyah* for a reading from Genesis. With the accompaniment of a three-piece musical ensemble we danced with

the Torah during a final *hakafah* before enjoying a potluck dessert table. Feeling exhilarated from the first two celebrations we walked back to our cars and thought, "Wonder if Chabad's Simchat Torah evening is still going?" We made it over in time for several *hakafot* (actually I marched and sang while Hinda sat for a bit with the women).

After a sip of schnapps the parties were over and we had been to three Simchat Torah services. It was great sharing such a beautiful *simcha* with our fellow Jews throughout the Oahu community. Wouldn't it be great if we had more opportunities to come together with our fellow Jews in a celebratory atmosphere?

For many Jews (and non-Jews) their perception of Judaism is shaped by the tragedy of the Holocaust or seeing a production of "Fiddler on the Roof." What chances do we have like Simchat Torah to say to ourselves and our fellow Jews "Don't Worry Be Happy?" Where do I begin...? There is the Nuuanu Interfaith Thanksgiving Eve Service on Wednesday, November 24th hosted by Temple Emanu-El and the Unitarian Church. There will be Hanukkah parties, Megilat Esther readings, as well as the Oahu Yom Ha'Atsma'ut celebration which Sof member Matt Sgan has brought back in a big way! And let us not forget that every Shabbat morning there is the joy and warmth of coming together for our Sof Shabbat service!

While they are not meant to be New Year's Eve in Times Square type gatherings, the list above represents moments when we Jews are obligated (and I hope motivated) to come together and share our joy just as when we come together to support members of our congregation and community during moments of sadness.

Let us celebrate the moments of Jewish life...together!

by Ken Aronowitz

## **Sof Ma'arav's Chanukah Party**

will be held at Sandy and Don's home, Kailua, on

**Saturday, December 11th at 7:30 p.m.**

Please bring latkes and/or "cold" dairy/pareve pot luck.

Please **RSVP** to 263-1130.

## JUST BEING THERE: Reflections from Hawaii - A Tribute to Sof Ma'arav

Anxiety displaces normalcy, when you can't do enough to help another person in distress - whether it is a family member, friend, neighbor, or stranger. Fretful thoughts intrude. Couldn't I do more? Why do my efforts seem so futile? Will my help be enough?

Stop stressing. All you have to do is be there. This is a hard concept to accept. We seem compelled to do more. Just showing up doesn't seem to be good enough. Caught up in the frenzy of doing and redoing, we find it difficult to appreciate the value of just being there. We want to fix problems quickly, hoping they will disappear. But some difficulties take more time to properly alleviate; much more time than our spontaneous society allows. It is necessary to slow down and ask ourselves, "Is just being there, going to be enough?" Patiently, we realize, "it is".

Each week I sit in synagogue, in a small congregation where everyone's participation is important. Occasionally I feel guilty for not leading the service, learning a Torah portion, or sponsoring the festive meal. Eventually, I realized that being there was important, too. Maintaining a membership and supporting the service with my family's presence meant something. We help by just being there.

As I walked along the beach today, I thought maybe God wants us to be there for Him too. Caught up in the details of our lives, we think that just being there would never be enough. Could a little time each day of acknowledging God make a difference? We often forget to express gratitude for our blessings. It takes a moment or two, to sit with God, and just be there for Him, too.

by Sandra Z. Armstrong

Our member and magazine writer, Dr. Mark Cohen, scores with another "Vital Signs" article in the August issue of Discover

### Wren prints in black & white (from the Sof Passover Cookbook)

A volunteer is needed to advertise and coordinate the sale of our remaining Wren prints.

The prints are each 11"X14", suitable for framing, and will be sold in sets of 4 for \$25 including shipping.

If arrangements are made to pick them up at Sof, the charge is \$20.

If you are the one to help with this fundraising effort, contact Sally Morgan, Judy Goldman, or Iris Wiley.

If you wish to buy now, make out checks to Sof Ma'arav and send to P.O. Box 10850, Honolulu, HI 96816.

**What a great Hanukah present!**

### 2005 Entertainment Books on sale now!

from Hinda Diamond (737-9050) or Samantha Garr (739-5188).

They are valid from now until Dec. 1, 2005. \$30 cost with \$6 going to Sof Ma'arav.

### HEBREW AT U.H. - Spring 2005

Hebrew 102 M/W/F 12:30-1:20 Hebrew 202 M/W/F 2:30-3:20

(Satisfies UH's 2 year language requirement)

For further information, contact Instructor Iris Yoeli (808) 389-3983 [iyoeli@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:iyoeli@hawaii.rr.com)

If you have some familiarity with Hebrew, but no formal training, contact Instructor Yoeli for class placement.

### The Newsletter of Congregation Sof Ma'arav

Published by and for the membership of Congregation Sof Ma'arav  
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Please visit our website at [www.sofmaarav.org](http://www.sofmaarav.org)

Submissions and suggestions may be e-mailed to [mrabinko@yahoo.com](mailto:mrabinko@yahoo.com)

**Regular Shabbat Services are held Saturdays at 10 a.m.** Babysitting is available.

### Board of Directors

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## IN MEMORIAM

- **Leon Olstein**, father of Ami Olstein and Myron Olstein, passed away at 8:28 pm on Saturday, November 6 (23 Cheshvan) in Clifton, New Jersey. He was just 98 years old. He is also survived by 2 grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.
- **Shirley Lee Senner Schandler**, mother of Trudy Wong and her sisters Mickey and Linda, passed away at 6:45 pm on Sunday, October 31 (17 Cheshvan) in Asheville, North Carolina. She leaves behind, in addition to her 3 daughters and their husbands, 8 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.

Trudy's sister, Linda, found this poem written by their Mom and left on index cards:

**TALENT!** by Lee Schandler

People say "you've so much talent!"  
I wonder what they mean,  
Could it be my penchant for writing trite  
poetry?  
Or yet, my joy of making things of paper,  
wood, and glue  
Or puttering with decoupage - or dabbling  
with paint on canvas, wood, and tin?  
But you can do these too!  
I wonder rather do they mean that I can listen

And empathize with folks both young and old  
As they share with me their secrets, troubles,  
hopes and dreams,  
To consider that a "talent" to me would seem  
too bold,  
No, I guess they must mean that I have a  
"talent" for loving hard  
For loving people, friends and family -  
Flowers and animals too - with a joy I can't  
impart - but then

You can do that too!  
What is this "talent" I've acquired  
that is foreign dear to you?  
There is nothing that I know  
That you can't be talented in too!  
Doing, listening, loving  
To name just a few  
These are all my "talents"  
That I leave to each of you!

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## Biloxi Blues – High Holy Days in Mississippi

This year I enrolled in the Rabbinical Assembly's High Holiday placement service for cantors. I contacted eighteen of the fifty congregations seeking a *hazzan*, and ended up choosing Congregation Beth Shalom in Biloxi, Mississippi because of its relative proximity to Ft. Lauderdale, thinking I would make a day trip to help my sister settle the affairs of our recently departed father, Simon (Shabsi) Cohen z'l'b. Beth Shalom is the only Conservative-affiliated congregation on the Mississippi Gulf coast, although there are several in New Orleans, and two in Mobile, Alabama.

The *shul*, a small brick and stone building with very high ceilings and twelve rows of wood pews with an aisle down the middle, dates from the mid-1950's. The congregation was founded by a regional *makher* in scrap metals whose family remains a pillar of the community. One of his three daughters-in-law is congregation president, an incomparable belle of a *balabos*, known to single-handedly feed her entire clan with her melt-in-the-mouth brisket and potato *kugel*, while keeping up her Yiddish-studded end of the conversation in the heavy drawl of her native Louisiana.

Initially, I was contacted by the ritual chair, an editor of the two largest Gulf coast gaming industry periodicals. She had been recruited from her native Las Vegas by Jackpot magazine in 1995. She guided me by phone through the old Silverman *mahzor*, as we worked out the format and cues we would use during services. In *shul* she served with me on the *bimah*, calling the pages and leading the English readings.

The *shul's* resident caretaker picked me up at the Gulfport/Biloxi airport on Monday, September 13, and immediately confirmed the fears that haunted me on the flight from Honolulu: Hurricane Ivan was heading up the Gulf of Mexico, with landfall expected somewhere between New Orleans and the Florida panhandle on Wednesday, Erev Rosh Hashana. I was awakened at the hotel Tuesday morning at 8 a.m. by a phone call from a Jerusalem Post reporter interested in interviewing a *hazzan* who flew five thousand miles to face a category-5 storm (her article appeared in the September 14-15 online edition). Within minutes, the hotel

loudspeakers announced that the hotel – the Beau Rivage, the largest in the area – would close down at noon, and that everyone must check out immediately.

Beth Shalom's treasurer, a New Jersey transplant and chief of the Office of Tourism, picked me up and we drove to his home in Gulfport, some 15 miles west. By the time we reached the house, Ivan had turned westward, bearing down on the Biloxi area. We arranged to stay with a family in the capital city of Jackson, 180 miles north of the Gulf coast, and joined the stream of evacuees going north on Highway 49 at 6 am. It took us almost nine hours to get to Jackson.

Southern hospitality is alive and well in Jackson. Our hosts, whose family dates back to a Civil War congregation of Reform Jews, provided us with every comfort, fed us lavishly, and entertained us with wonderful stories of their family and community. We attended evening and morning services at our hosts' congregation. The rabbi who had arranged for our stay led a traditional Reform service, complete with organ and choir, and giant ark doors in the shape of the *shnei lukhot habrit*, which slid apart at the touch of a button to reveal the well-lit marble-lined interior.

After morning services we learned that power had been restored in Biloxi. We took leave of our gracious hosts and returned to Biloxi – the return trip took us only three hours. Next morning I felt good to be back with the congregation I'd come to *daven* with. I was received graciously and appreciatively by the members. I had the honor and pleasure to lead a Torah study group on Shabbat Hol HaMoed, to teach in the Sunday school, and to give a recital of Jewish music at the home of a member, using a borrowed guitar and the mandolin that Fran Margulies gave me last year as a hand-me-down/gift from her cousin (Thank you, Fran!) My attempt at teaching some Hawaiiiana fell a little flat as they had never heard of Queen Liliuokalani's "Aloha Oe", and understood me to be singing Adon Olam to the tune of, what else, "Aloha...Oy!".

by Ken Cohen

## Sally's Book Corner

**YIDDISH NEWS:** The 100th anniversary of Isaac Bashevis Singer's birth is being commemorated by the National Yiddish Book Center and the Library of America, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, with the publication of "Isaac Bashevis Singer: Collected Stories." Not only is Singer the only Yiddish writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, but he is the only Yiddish writer selected by the Library of America, which specializes in definitive editions of American writers' works.

**NEWS FOR HEBREW READERS:** "My heart is in the east, and I am in the farthest west" describes Sof Ma'arav, but Judah Halevi's poem did not envision a congregation in Hawaii. As we know, he was describing his longing to be in Eretz Israel. His works and other Hebrew classics are now available on line at [www.benyehuda.org](http://www.benyehuda.org). The creator of the Hebrew-only Ben-Yehuda project hopes to include more works from the Middle Ages onward. (From Hadassah Magazine, August/September 2004)

**A BOOK FOR ALL SEASONS:** THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD; Healing Wisdom of the Twenty-Third Psalm by Harold S. Kushner (Alfred A. Knopf, 2003). The 23rd Psalm has been a source of comfort in grief and of courage in fear. Here, Rabbi Kushner discovers what it has to teach us about living our day-to-day lives. Each chapter discusses a line of the psalm both in the context of the time in which it was written and today. He draws heavily on rabbinical Judaism, but also includes references to popular culture including Woody Allen, Freud, Michelangelo and other diverse sources. His writing expands our understanding of the psalm and helps us benefit from its everyday spiritual wisdom.

## A Bissl un a Bissl

**From the Wall St. Journal, August 17, 2004.** Because of the Biblical prohibition against working on the Sabbath, Jews close their stores, but does that also apply to their Web sites? The question was posed to Rabbi Heinemann, of Star-K Kosher Certification, an international kosher certification organization based in Baltimore. Rabbi Heinemann is one of a handful of rabbis in the United States who is recognized as having mastered the minutia of Jewish law. At first, Rabbi Heinemann referred to a ruling by the late Rabbi Yizchok Weiss which stated that Orthodox-owned vending machines must be closed because even though the owner isn't present to make the exchange, he still collects the money. In view of this, the

initial ruling was that the Web sites must be unplugged. It could remain open only if the shopping cart on the Web site is shut down. This decision brought on a storm of protest, and the rabbi reconsidered. "Technically speaking," he wrote, "the vendor's monetary acquisition, the kinyan kesef, happens on a weekday so there is no issue, prohibition of amekach umemhar business sale transactions, on Shabbos." This was a rare reversal for the rabbi, who is concerned that keeping the Sabbath in a proper way is very important.

**In Pakn Treger, Winter 2004.** Did you ever wonder what became of the real life Gidget, whose story was made famous as the girl surfer in the movie Gidget? She is now Mrs. Kathy Zuckerman, wife of Marvin Zuckerman who is the author of the popular Yiddish textbook, "Learning Yiddish in Easy Stages." She was interviewed during a visit to the National Yiddish Book Center. Does she still surf? When she turned sixty, she got back on her board. Once a year, she and her husband go to Waikiki where the surfing is less tricky than at Malibu. Hang Ten, while you're here, Kathy!

**Maykhl farn baykhl (Broke da mout').** For you chocoholics who think a balanced diet is to have a piece of chocolate in each hand, here's good news. You no longer have to go to Israel to taste fresh European-made fondant, pralines and truffles made by Israeli Oded Brenner, founder of the kosher confectionery Max Brenner. Just go on line to [www.chocosphere.com](http://www.chocosphere.com) which sells Max Brenner and order the confection of your choice.

If, on the other hand, you crave the kosher delicacies of the Lower East Side, go to [www.nycjewishtours.org](http://www.nycjewishtours.org) and click on NEW-Lower Eastside Gift Basket. All proceeds from your Noshcard benefit the not-for-profit Lower East Side Conservancy, and are assembled by the Henry Street Settlements' welfare-to Work program. To walk off these goodies, this site offers tours in the Lower East Side of New York. See the web site for more information. And finally, for kosher chat and chew, there is Chowhound.com. For Jewish food-lovers who keep kosher and consider themselves gastronomes, this is the web site for you.

Whether you spell it "Chanukah", "Chanukkah", Hanukkah" or "Hanukah", may the spirit of the season burn brightly for you.

Gut yontev, Sally Morgan

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To: