

# *Kol Ma'arav* Voice of the West

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

*Summer 2005*

Please join us for our

## **S H A V U O T Reading and Annual Meeting**

at Sof Ma'arav

**Sunday, June 12**

Starting with a **Pot Luck Dinner** at 6:00 p.m., followed by

**Reading of the Book of Ruth**

(contact Gregg Kinkley at [gregg.kinkley@verizon.net](mailto:gregg.kinkley@verizon.net) to volunteer for a reading), and

**Annual Meeting and Elections**

Your participation is needed for election of officers

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### **SOF PARTICIPATES IN YOM HA'ATZMAUT FESTIVITIES**



(l to r) Margie Soldan, Robert Littman, Ami Olstein, Alis Rasmussen, Shawn Steiman and Marv Black

Sof Ma'arav showed its community spirit on May 22 taking part in the celebration of Israel Independence Day at Skygate Park on the grounds of Honolulu Hale. This year marks 57 years since the founding of the State of Israel. The festival opened with a procession by students of the School of Jewish Studies (SJS) to center stage singing and dancing to "Hatikvah" and "America the Beautiful." Mayor Mufi Hannemann then read a proclamation and praised the Honolulu Jewish community for continuing its traditions. While the program of music, dancing, and speeches continued, the crowd *knoshed* on falafel and hot dogs and meandered among the tents set up by local Jewish congregations and organizations. Visitors to the *Sof Ma'arav* booth could read copies of the *Kol Ma'arav* Newsletter or purchase a copy of Sof's "The When You Live in Hawaii You Get Very Creative During Passover Cookbook."

Sof members continued their active participation in this community event which was organized by Ethan Kuniyoshi, replacing Mat Sgan who organized last year's festival. Dan Ziegler emceed, Gregg Kinkley chanted an opening prayer, Marlene Booth and Avi Soifer addressed the crowd, Eliana Hanan and Zara and Talia Rabinko danced at the opening with the SJS *Omanut* dance group, Shawn Steiman juggled, and Ken Aronowitz and Morris Rabinko rocked the crowd with the rest of "The *Ruach* Band."

See more photos of Sof members at the event on the next page



(l to r) Ethan Kuniyoshi, Dan Ziegler, and Mat Sgan



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Yom Ha'Atzmaut photos:

Top:

1. Dance Omanut: (Left to Right) Zara Rabinko, Eliana Hanan, Sharon Ahuvia, Rebecca Simmons and Talia Rabinko
2. The Ruach Band: (Left to Right): Morris Rabinko, Oren Yoeli, Ken Aronowitz, Bob Kaplan, and Frank Feldman

Bottom:

3. Marlene Booth
4. Avi Soifer
5. Juggling: Shawn Steiman

On May 7, 2005 we had an unusual event, a Sof Ma'arav service held at Temple Emanu'el. The occasion was **Marissa Freeman's Bat Mitzvah** and there were so many guests that the larger facility was needed to accommodate them all. The service was led by Ken Aronowitz and Gregg Kinkley and Marissa read Torah and Haftarah and joined her sister Rachel, a former Sof Ma'arav Bat Mitzvah, to lead Musaf. Their proud father, Peter Freeman, was inspired to read from the Torah as well, and now we know that he can do it he will be on our list for the future. Our suspicion is that the elegant mini prayer books can be attributed to the artistic talents of mother Genevieve. We had been used to thinking of Marissa as rather quiet, but discovered her sparkling personality and trenchant sense of humor. The closeness of the sisters was especially heartwarming and we look forward to many years of having services led by Marissa and Rachel.

Bernice Littman

**Sara Fischlowitz**, daughter of Barbara Fischlowitz-Leong and Merle Fischlowitz and stepdaughter of Michael Leong, has been accepted at Sackler School of Medicine at Tel Aviv University.

She will be departing for Israel on August 8. We all wish her a hearty Mazel Tov and great success in her studies!

Please tune your radios to 88.1 Hawaii Public Radio at 8:26 Mon-Fri for "Points of Contact".  
That's **Marlene Booth** highlighting the University of Hawaii's ongoing research and other virtues!

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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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## EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT GIVING A DROSH

Note: As of May 20, there were openings for the following dates:

June 11: *Naso* (Exodus 4:21-7:89)

June 18: *Beha'alotcha* (Numbers 8:1-9:14)

**SUGGESTED DROSH GUIDELINES:** A shabbat morning drosh is an interpretation of the Torah reading or the Haftarah of the day, or alternatively to comment on an important event in Jewish history, such as Yom Ha'Shoah. It is a mitzvah to do a drosh, to interact with the text, to explain it, agree with or challenge it. Do NOT let the words lie dead on the page.

The drosher should prepare an informal talk, no longer than 10 minutes. If the drosher wishes, an additional five minutes may be allotted to questions and comments.

**TIME CONSTRAINTS.** Sof Ma'arav's rental agreement allows us the use of the premises from 9 AM to 1 PM. We must be out by the deadline to permit use by others. In order to have time for a sociable Oneg Shabbat, we should complete the worship service by noon. That means some time constraints are on all parts of the service, with the exception of the Torah Service itself.

Droshes are an important part of the service and we can work within the time constraints.

Longer services (two scrolls, Hallel, etc.) may require further compression and, regrettably, the drosh is omitted.

**HINTS FOR GOOD DROSHING.** It is not necessary to summarize the whole portion or even our own triennial third of the portion or the whole of the Haftarah. One good topic, though, is the relationship between the Torah reading and the Haftarah for that day.

Rabbinical professional commentary on any portion or Haftarah is available on the web, in our own text, or in supplementary texts owned by the congregation or in the libraries of Sally Morgan and Fran Margulies. Feel free to borrow a book from Sof Ma'arav shelves, but do remember to return it. Feel free to express your ideas and your experiences as you prepare your drosh.

Thanks. Sally Morgan

**Farewell to Four Members of Our Congregation:** Thirty-five Sofers gathered at the home of Gin and Mat Sgan on May 19 to bid farewell to **Samantha Garr**, **Johanna Afshani**, **Rob Afra**, and **Mark Cohen**, who will be leaving the islands. After a bountiful pot luck supper, words of appreciation were offered for each of their contributions to the life of our Chavurah. The "emigres" expressed their thanks to Sof Ma'Arav for being a "second family" to them.

We all wish them bon voyage as they enter new phases of their lives and hope that they will return soon.

## SHAVUOT

(Excerpted from *Celebration, The Book of Jewish Festivals* edited by Naomi 'Black)

### A Harvest Festival

In ancient Israel the harvest season began in the spring - with Passover - when the barley crop was harvested. In the months that followed, the other crops and fruits began to ripen. The very first ripe fruits of each species were called *bikkurim*.

When a Jewish farmer saw the first cluster of grapes or the first pomegranate or the first ripe figs, he would not pluck the fruit and eat it. Instead, the farmer would tie a ribbon around the branch of the fruit. This ribbon served as a sign to all that these fruits were *bikkurim*, first fruits, to be brought to Jerusalem and eaten in the Holy City.

Every farmer would gather his *bikkurim* in a basket and set out on his journey to Jerusalem. On the road he would meet other farmers bearing the *bikkurim* they had grown. Those who lived near Jerusalem brought fresh fruit, while farmers traveling a long distance carried raisins and dried figs, which would not spoil during the trip.

The pilgrims, led by flute players, carried their baskets on their shoulders. Every basket was adorned with decorative fruits specially chosen for their beauty. As the procession neared Jerusalem, a spirit of anticipation and excitement seized the travelers; they raised their voices in song, and their march became a dance.

At the outskirts of the city, the president and the officers of the Temple stood waiting to greet the pilgrims. Sometimes the king himself emerged and joined the procession. Together, everyone marched toward the Temple Mount. On the steps of the Temple, the Levites sang welcome to the travelers. Then each farmer would present his basket to a Temple priest and recite the following declaration:

*My ancestor was a stranger when he went down to Egypt, but there he became a great and strong nation. Then the Egyptians afflicted and enslaved us. So G-d brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and glorious miracles. And He gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first of the fruit of the land which G-d has given me.*

The *bikkurim* ritual, though no longer practiced today, represents a pertinent moral lesson: the acknowledgement that one's accomplishments and success depend on factors beyond one's control. The farmer gave thanks to G-d for a bountiful harvest. We, too, should recognize the good fortune in our lives and demonstrate our gratefulness on Shavuot.

submitted by Ami Olstein

The Sof Book Club will meet on Sunday, July 10th to discuss Etty Hillesulm's *An Interrupted Life*. Save that date!

**HADASSAH MEDICAL ORGANIZATION NOMINATED FOR NOBEL PEACE PRIZE:** (New York, NY - March 8, 2005) -- The Hadassah Medical Organization (HMO), which has won international acclaim for promoting peace in the Middle East by providing equal treatment to Palestinians and Israelis, has been nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee does not release names of nominees, but professors and legislators from at least four different countries recently revealed to Hadassah officials that they had extended formal nominations on behalf of the medical organization, according to June Walker, National President of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, the founder and benefactor of the medical organization.

The nominations cited three areas in which HMO has excelled in promoting peace in the region: the ability to maintain the value of equal treatment for all people despite treating more terror victims than any other medical center; the model of cooperation and coexistence set by the mixed staff of people of all faiths; and the medical organization's ongoing initiatives in creating bridges for peace even throughout the intifada.

"I can't think of a more meaningful way to celebrate our founding," said Walker, noting that the organization is celebrating its 93rd birthday this month. "The values of Hadassah continue to set the standard that all people need to strive for." The winner of \$1.6 million prize will be announced in the fall.

*Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, is the largest women's and the largest Jewish volunteer organization in the U.S., and supports HMO in Israel, the largest medical and research center in the Middle East. Each year 600,000 patients from all over the world are treated at the two hospitals, a community health center, and 90 outpatient clinics.*

**A BISSL UN A BISSL**

**The Observant Reader.** In its Sunday, January 30, 2005 column, The Observant Reader, the New York Times Book Review, ran an essay by Wendy Shalit who wrote that some writers claim to portray ultra-Orthodox Jews from an insider's perspective, but are these writers really insiders? Shalit pointed to the works of Tova Mirvis whose works Shalit claims reveal the author's estrangement from the traditional Orthodox community. Tova Mirvis took umbrage to Shalit's contention in an answering article that appeared in Forward, Feb.4, 2005 claiming, in essence, that Shalit is wrong, wrong, wrong! Who is right is really for the reader to determine, but what a typical Yiddish argument this is.

**Dovid Katz's book, Words on Fire; the Unfinished Story of Yiddish,** traces the language from medieval times onward to the present. He shows that, far from being a dying language, as many claim, Yiddish is making a resurgence among religious

Jewish communities and will still be thriving well into the next century. On the other hand, Philologos of Forward disagrees. So what else is new?

**David Mamet** remembers when he had a Shabbos dinner at Saul Bellow's house. After dinner, Bellow reminisced about his youth in Canada, and his memories of those Friday nights. He talked about speaking Yiddish (and French) before he spoke English. Mamet's wife mentioned the song *Oyfn Pripetshik* in which the *melamed* is teaching the child the *aleph-bet*. The teacher sings, "Zog zhe nokh a mol un take nokh a mol: kometz Alef o.. (Tell me once again, and, indeed, once again, kometz Alefis sounded o..." But the second verse which we did not know, is, indeed, the heartbreaker. Here, as Saul sang for us, the *melamed* tells the young boy that he knows the study is difficult for him. Someday, though, he says, someday in the pain of exile, the letters will bring comfort. Then, of course, Saul sang *Rozhinkes mit Mandeln*. These songs, both caress and break the Jewish heart.. Alav, Hashalom. (From Nextbook, April 15, 2005)

**Treasures from the Archives.** Two exemplary women, Rose Schneiderman and Nettie Rosenstein is a story in contrast of two women in the garment industry. Rose, born in Chelm in 1882, grew up in a lower East Side sweatshop. While still in her teens, Rose joined the labor movement, and during her long tenure as vice president and the president of the Women's trade Union League, Rose organized many of the lowest paid and most severely exploited workers in New York City and also trained a new generation of working-class organizers. She went on to become one of New York's first female secretaries of labor. On the opposite side stands Nettie Rosenstein, the inventor of the "little black dress", the woman Life magazine profiled in 1937 as one of the most revered of American designers. Ranging from tragedy to triumph, from the dying embers of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory to the high gloss of Seventh Avenue, the history of the Jews in the American garment industry runs the full gamut of human experience.

**Iraqi Jewish Archives.** In 2003, U.S. forces discovered a cache of documents and sacred texts that had belonged to Iraq's once-thriving Jewish community in a flooded basement of Saddam Hussein's secret police. The records were transported to the U.S. where efforts to restore them are stalled by a shortage of funds. Among the items are a Bible printed in Venice in 1568, rare books on Jewish law, pamphlets and parchment scroll, including sections of a damaged Torah. The documents are now at a National Archives laboratory in Texas.

**Thought for the quarter:** People were given two ears and one tongue, so that they may listen more than speak. A Jewish folk saying.

- Sally Morgan

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To: