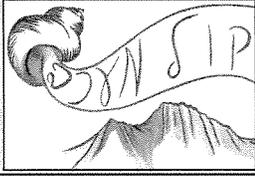


# *Kol Ma'arav* *Voice of the West* קול מערב



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

*Winter 2006-07*

## **Sof Ma'arav Part of Family Promise Venture**

Family Promise is a nationwide network of compassionate Americans who want to help low-income families achieve lasting independence and to redress the underlying causes of poverty and homelessness. Through the mobilization of existing community resources and thousands of volunteers, Family Promise provides comprehensive services to families at a fraction of the cost of government programs.

Family Promise began seventeen years ago in New York City when a group of concerned citizens became convinced that by banding together, they could assist homeless families and accomplish what they couldn't do alone. They called themselves the Interfaith Hospitality Network. As word spread, ten more congregations formed a second Network. Programs such as transitional housing, childcare, and family mentoring followed —outgrowths of increased awareness and involvement. By 1989 the Network (now known as Family Promise) moved into the national arena.

To date, Family Promise has established 124 affiliates in 39 states, using the services of more than 110,000 volunteers and 4,500 congregations. They provide shelter, meals, and housing and job placement support to more than 20,000 homeless family members annually, 58 percent of them children.

The Kailua affiliate opened in March of 2006. Thirteen member organizations — all faith-based congregations of different denominations — take weeklong turns four times a year providing food and shelter for the families. Family Promise helps find funding for educational programs and assists in getting child-care and government-assisted housing so that families can become self-sufficient. Families stay until they find permanent housing, so long as they show progress, or at least meaningful effort.

Because Sof Ma'arav is building-challenged, our congregation has been unable to participate as a full member. We have, however, been working as a "support group," offering donations of time and money. The Congregation would like to thank Barry and Renee Shain, Carolann Beiderman, Naomi (aka Ami) Olstein, Kay Lorraine, and Marlene Booth for their generous participation throughout the past six months.

If you would like to get involved with the Family Promise Program call our Sof liaison, Kay Lorraine at 949-4699.

(See Kay's "Christmas Letter" on the back page for an account of the Family Promise experience.)

**HAVDALAH EVENING. PLEASE JOIN US!**

**SATURDAY EVENING, JANUARY 20 AT 7:30 PM**

AT THE HOME OF MAT AND GIN SGAN

Gayle Goodman and Alis Rasmussen will present

**Prayer, Song, and Study: Summer in Israel 2006**

Jordan Popper will chant Havdalah

Tel. 595-9136 for directions

**Sof Board Meeting Jan. 21, 2007 at 7:30 PM at the Morgans**

## EVENTS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED:

### **Many Thanks to Sandy and Don Armstrong for throwing another great Chanukah Party**

The band – featuring Ken Aronowitz and Ken Cohen – was swinging and the dreidels were spinning at the Armstrongs on Sunday evening, Dec 17.  
SOF MA'ARAV, THE PARTY SHUL!

### **Talmud Study**

Over twenty Sof members and friends studied Mishnah with Rabbi Natan Margalit Saturday afternoon Jan 6 at the home of Fran Margulies. The focus was on the first *Perek of Brachot*, but the discussion widened. Natan placed Mishnah in historical context and showed us how to connect its literary style and structure to the sages' remarkable – and successful – efforts to keep the Jewish civilization alive after the destruction of the second Temple. Natan teaches at Hebrew College Rabbinical School in Boston MA, and was in Honolulu visiting family with his wife Ilana and son Nadav.

**Couldn't make it? Come to Gregg Kinkley's Talmud class.  
Meets every Shabbat at 9:00 a.m. before Shabbat services.**

### **It's Raining Bat Mitzvahs!**

The Rabinko's thank Sof Ma'arav for helping make Zara's Bat Mitzvah on Dec. 9 a very special day. But if you missed it, more Bat Mitzvahs are coming still in 5767. Maryna Feldberg's on March 31, and stay tuned for dates for the Bat Mitzvahs of Gayle Goodman and Aviva Kosansky.

### **Such A Deal!**

The world renowned and unique cookbook -

### **The When You Live In Hawaii You Get Very Creative During Passover Cookbook**

- co-edited by Judy Goldman is available on special now!  
Buy two (2) for \$10.50 each and get one (1) free in advance of Passover. Shipping if needed is extra.

This is truly an incredible collection of Passover recipes gathered by the members, families, and friends of Congregation Sof Ma'arav.

To make arrangements for your copies,  
contact Mat at Tel. 595-9136 or e-mail at [newmat@aol.com](mailto:newmat@aol.com)

### **The Newsletter 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**

President:	Bernice Littman	Vice President:	Sally Morgan	Treasurer:	Dr. Robert Littman
Recording Secretary:	Sally Morgan	Corresponding Secretary:	Ami Olstein	Ritual Committee Chair:	Dr. Gregg Kinkley
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Gabbais:	Dr. Michael Weinstein & Dr. Marvin Black	Education Chair:	Dr. Dina Yoshimi	At Large	Marlene Booth
		Welcoming Committee:	Sandy Armstrong		

## SALLY'S BOOK CORNER

Many Sofers have expressed interest in our **Sof Book Club**. For your information, here is our schedule for Year 2 of the book club:

**Jan. 14, 2007: Dara Horn. The World to Come.** Using a real-life art heist as her starting point, Horn traces the life and times of several characters, including Russian-born artist Marc Chagall, the New Jersey based Ziskind family, and the "already-weres" and "not-yets" who roam an eternal world that exists outside the boundaries of life on earth.

**Feb. 25: Roger Kamenz. The Jew in the Lotus.** Kamenz, a poet and a Jew, was invited to attend and write about a historical meeting between a delegation of American Jews and a group of Tibetan Buddhist that included the Dalai Lama.

**April 8: Milton Steinberg. As a Driven Leaf.** Steinberg brings to life the age of the Talmud. The characters include historical figures: Akiba, Yohanan, Joshua, Eleazer, Beruiah, and Elisha ben Abuyah, who struggle to live in two worlds.

**May 20: Amos Oz. A Tale of Love and Darkness.** A memoir that is at once a great family saga and a self-portrait of a writer who witnessed the birth of Israel and lived through its turbulent history

**July 1: Naomi Ragen. The Covenant.** Living in Jerusalem, Elise Margulies always fears for the lives of her husband and their daughter. Then, one day, these fears come true.

**Aug. 12: Tom Reiss. The Orientalist.** Meet Lev Nussimbaum, a Jew who transformed himself into a Muslim prince and became a best-selling author in Nazi Germany in this biography that reads like a novel.

The Sof Book Club will meet from 1 PM until 3 PM on the dates given above at a rotating location. A flyer will follow to give the place and directions for each meeting, or contact **Carolann Biederman at 254-8812 or cabc@lava.net**. We hope you will be able to join us for a scintillating afternoon.

The **Koret International Jewish Book Award Winners**, 2005-2006 selected by the People's Choice are:

**Fiction: Jonathan Safran Foer. Everything is Illuminated.** Safran Foer is an extremely funny as well as intelligent writer who combines some of the best Jewish folk yarns since Isaac Bashevis Singer with a quite heartbreaking meditation on love, friendship, and loss.

**Jewish Life & Living: Rochel B Berman. Dignity beyond Death.** This is Rochel Berman's account of her involvement in her community's *Hevra Kadisha*, their burial society. The book is both informative and deeply moving.

**Jewish Fiction: David Grossman. Her Body Knows.** Grossman presents two novellas of searing psychological intensity. Both stories deal with the pain of betrayal. In *Frenzy*, Shaul confides to his sister-in-law that he knows about his wife's 10-year love affair. In wrenching detail, he describes the demise of his marriage and his wife's love for another man. The second novella, *In Another Life*, portrays a thorny relationship between a dying woman and her emotionally blocked daughter.

**Jewish Thought: Rebecca Goldstein. Betraying Spinoza.** Goldstein sets out to rediscover the man often hidden beneath the veneer of rigorous rationality, and to crack the mystery of the breach between the philosopher and his Jewish past.

**Children's Literature: Howard Schwartz. Before You Were Born.** A child asks for a story about "before I was born." What follows is a tale from Jewish legend, based on stories of Lailah, the guardian of the human soul.

See if you agree that these books should be winners. And we all hope you choose to join the Sof Book Club.

Didn't get enough Hanukkah? For Hanukkah music that will set your feet tapping, try **The Klezmatiks. Woody Guthrie's Happy Joyous Hanukkah!** or **The Levees' HanukkahRocks.**

- Sally Morgan

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## A Bissl un a Bissl

**From Hadassah Magazine, October 2006.** For Holocaust survivors, especially those who were orphaned, the possibility of discovering living relatives, even at this late date, can be exciting. A special DNA database-The DNA Shoah Project-may now be the answer. The survivors, their children or grandchildren can now complete a simple swab test, placing their own DNA on file, to be matched against a database that will be compiled from Holocaust-era remains that are constantly turning up. For details go to [www.dnashoah.info](http://www.dnashoah.info).

**YIDDBONICS 101.** From *A Little Joy; A Little Oy*. Yinglish, the "fusion" of Yiddish and English not only finds new users for words like "oy" and "chutzpah", but provides new meanings with a flip of a verb, a cadence, a flair. And what is the most overworked word in Yinglish? "So" as in "So I took from your wallet!" (Big Deal) or "So what did the doctor say?" (Oy vay!)

**From Mercaz, USA.** In October, MAROM Olami, the international association of Conservative/Masorti students and young adults organized the first ever gathering of Masorti youth participating on "*shnat hachshara*" (a leadership

development year taken between high school and college) programs in Israel. Nearly 200 participants coming from 10 different countries met for a full day of programs at *Neot Kedumim*.

**From YIVO News, Spring 2006.** Nearly 8,000 first time visitors have explored YIVO's redesigned web site. The site offers information about YIVO's history, archives and resources. For those not living in New York, lectures and panel discussion can be viewed through high quality web streaming by anyone with high speed internet. If you need to know, [www.yivo.org](http://www.yivo.org) is the site to go to.

**From Forward" Art & Cultme Section, Oct. 6, 2006.** Raphael Mostel's article, *Jews in the Court*, states that: it has been commonly believed that Jews were banned from England in 1290 and not allowed back until Oliver Cromwell lifted the ban in 1656. However, new research has revealed that not only were there Jews in Britain, but they were right in the very heart of England's cultural life of the period, in the Tudor court itself.

-Sally Morgan

## A Christmas Letter:

It is December 25<sup>th</sup> and I am here at the **Family Promise Center** in Kailua allowing the staff to spend Christmas with their own families. The children are playing with the new toys that Santa brought from donations from around the community.

Congregation Sof Ma'arav is a part of the Family Promise network of faith-based congregations of different denominations around the country. Congregations with buildings, such as Temple Emanu-El or First Christian Church, take week-long turns hosting the families by providing a place for them to sleep (Family Promise provides the cots) and cooking them an evening meal and breakfast in the mornings. Host volunteers also help the kids with their homework or just give single moms some time for themselves. Because Sof Ma'arav is "building challenged," we assist in other ways. The Shains' generous donation helped the Center pay for basic services such as electricity, while other volunteers have donated time on Sundays so that staff members could attend church and have a day off.

"What do you do there?" people often ask me. "Is it hard?" "Is it scary?" The answers are fairly simple. Because Family Promise is devoted to helping families in transition to self-sufficiency, they do not accept any drug addicts and there is no mental illness present that I am aware of (unless you count me). All families have children and are actively working toward taking control of their own lives. During the day, the families work, pursue job opportunities, attend school, or enroll in job training. The Family Promise Center provides access to phones, mail, fax, a copier, showers, and laundry facilities. The program also provides transportation to and from the host sites and the Center.

The first family I met at Family Promise were David and Athena K. and their three children. David spent 17 years as a city truck driver. A work-related disability kept him out for two years. That led to a series of events that led to his being laid off. Soon after, even though Athena was working full time at Castle Medical Center, the family lost their home in Kane'ohe and ended up sleeping in a truck and under a drippy blue tarp at Kualoa Beach Park. The four months spent in the Family Promise program gave the K. family an opportunity to pull themselves out of crippling debt. David found a job in construction work and Athena was able to find a better-paying position as a care-giver for an individual in Kailua. They've had their own apartment in Punalu'u since July and are trying to save for their own home. Their kids are doing well in school. They still drop by the Center from time to time to say hello and to volunteer. Frankly, I miss them.

My "job" at Family Promise is as small or as large as I choose to make it. For many months we had a single mother with six children in the program. Just doing their laundry was a full day's worth of work. I chose to take over that duty in order to give

Deborah (the mother) some time off. All summer, six days a week, she worked cleaning houses with the help of her teenage boys, while attending nursing classes at night. I was proud to attend Deborah's graduation ceremony when she became a certified nurses' aid. Other students had friends and family surrounding them and I did not want Deborah to be the only graduate walking across the stage to receive her certificate wearing no lei and hearing no applause. The family now lives in an apartment in Aiea and Deborah is able to support them with the help of food stamps. QUEST helps the family with healthcare.

The day of the earthquake here in Hawaii was an interesting time. It hit on a Sunday – my day in charge at the Family Promise Center. I was faced with the challenge of how to feed the families without any electricity. Now preparing lunch is not one of my duties. Each family prepares their own noontime meal, usually a rice dish. But with no electricity we were all in the same boat – hungry and without resources. Everything in Kailua was closed, but by taking turns sitting in my car monitoring the radio we learned that one grocery store in Kailua was allowing 10 people at a time to enter and make purchases with cash only. Fortunately, I had gone to the cash machine the night before.

I stood in the line for about an hour and managed to get the last grill and five bags of charcoal. The store wouldn't allow any purchases from the cold cases or the freezer (fear of lawsuits) but I got creative and tried to think of things that could be cooked on a grill. When I returned to the Center, the guys put the grill together while I taught the children how to soak corn in their husks and then wrap them in aluminum foil for roasting. We wrapped baked potatoes, too. They actually turned it into a fun activity. We dined on sliced barbecued Spam, corn on the cob, potatoes, and fresh fruit. For dinner we opened cans of Dinty Moore Beef Stew and cooked it in a pan over the barbecue along with grilled eggplant and Portobello mushrooms. By the next day the electricity had been restored, but we were fully prepared to spend several more days of creative barbecuing.

As you can see, sometimes my Sunday is full of activity. Other times, I go to the Center and do pretty much nothing. I have occasionally fallen asleep. The children tease me by telling me I snore, but I know that couldn't possibly be true. Crazy kids!

Sometimes, I find that when my life stinks and I can't seem to improve my situation, it helps if I try to improve someone else's life, instead. Family Promise has given me that opportunity. And who knows, someday maybe I'll need some help myself. If so, I hope that someone like Family Promise will take me in. I assure you, the rumors of my snoring are greatly exaggerated.

Warmest regards,

Kay Lorraine, Family Promise/Sof Liaison 949-4699

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**To:**