

THE CLANTON PARK HERALD

A monthly newsletter, intended to provide timely and pertinent information to *shul* members

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From the Rav...

A MOMENT IN THE TREASURY OF LIFE

Va'yisa ha'am es betzeiko terem yechmatz," in their haste to leave Egypt, the people did not have time to allow their dough to rise and leaven" (*Shmos* 12,34). *Matzo* was, and, come *Pesach*, *matzo* still is, that haste's culinary end result. We know, that *matzo*, in general, and the haste component of *matzo*, in particular, are more than ritualizations of a culinary mishap? We know that the haste is a defining ideal of the redemption that was, and of the *Yom Tov* that is? The Arizal, in consonance with the Rambam, *Avoda Zara* 1, 1, develops this ideal by noting the nadir of Egyptian Jewish life. These Jews, writes the Arizal, had sunk to the 49th level of *tuma'ah*, of impurity. They had sunk so low that just a bit of tarrying in the Egyptian milieu would have pushed them down to the incorrigible 50th level, to a point at which their impurity would have been irreversible. Haste was an absolute necessity; they had no time to spare.

And indeed haste defines not just the *matzo*, but also and, perhaps even more so, a *korban Pesach* that was defined by, *ve'achaltem oso be'chipazon*, "you shall eat it in haste" (*Shmos*, 12, 11). Haste defines *Pesach*, the *Yom Tov* that inaugurates Jewish life, because haste defines Jewish life. This haste, this impetus to hurry is the Torah's way of telling us that that life moves very quickly, that we have no time to spare. The Chafetz Chaim, in a parable that, for me, has always resonated, puts this rush into perspective. A king had been saved from drowning at sea by a simple peasant who had jumped into the waters and saved the king's life. The grateful king then told his saviour that he would, of course, be rewarded for his nobility. Sunday, when the clock strikes noon, the peasant would be allowed to enter the royal treasury while holding a large bag. For the next hour the peasant would be allowed to fill this bag with any and all of the treasury's secrets: precious metals, jewels, objets d'art.

The peasant was overwhelmed. He would now be a wealthy man. He would now have more money than anyone in the village, than anyone other than the king. And indeed, come Sunday at noon, the peasant was there, sack in hand, when the guard opened the treasury door. The peasant as he was about to enter the treasury, offered the guard a hearty good morning. The

guard, who still viewed the peasant as a commoner, did not deign to answer. The peasant was furious. He was about to become one of the most powerful men in the kingdom and a guard had the temerity to ignore him! And so, the peasant told the guard off. The guard ignored him again. The peasant's fury mounted. He ran down the hall to complain to the guard's superiors, but then upon realizing that precious time was passing, he began running back to the treasury. On the way back, his shoelace ripped. The peasant was mortified. He would not allow that pretentious guard to see him in a state of dishevelment! And so, yet another few minutes were allocated to re-knotting the lace so that he could walk past the sneering guard in a respectable fashion. But before he faced that guard again, he would calm himself down. The schnapps! His wife had packed a flask of his favourite schnapps! And so he indulged himself with a bit of schnapps. When he finally looked at the clock, he couldn't believe his eyes! Just a few minutes of the precious hour were left. He dropped everything, bolted into the treasury, and, in the remaining few minutes, scooped up whatever he could. Those few minutes allowed him to accumulate some jewels, some gold; something of consequence, but his wealth was but a fraction of what it could have been.

The peasant's story is the story of all too many lives, isn't it? The story of how people dawdle away their few years, losing time on an argument here, on appearances here, on a passing indulgence here. Yes, even with all the arguments and all the indulgences, we pick up some *mitzvos*. But in the next world we are sure to ask ourselves: Could we have accomplished more? Shouldn't we have been a bit more rushed? If the luxury of youth shields you from feelings of haste, approach a person who notices every tick of the clock, an older person. Ask him if he has accumulated enough *mitzvos*. Ask him if minutes spent on arguments, on appearances, on indulgences was time well spent. Ask a person like that and you'll quickly realize that during these few years of jewel collecting, there's no time to be lost. May that haste permeate our lives and help us take full advantage of this one, brief treasury experience.

CHAG KASHER V'SAMEACH
Rabbi Yehoshua Weber

From the President...

GARY'S PARTING SHOTS

Gary Kopstick

Someone asked whether I feel burnt out after the two year term as president. In truth, I do not (maybe because I didn't do enough?). I rather would like to believe that it is due to the sincere, dedicated efforts of all our executive members, especially my vice-presidents Moishe and Ken, and our most devoted participant (MDP), Gershon. I cannot think of a more dedicated future leader than Moishe, who will be taking over as President.

I have chosen to write a few closing words in an effort to reach a wider audience than our Shabbos morning upstairs attendees. To me it appears that the shul remains at a crossroads, where our future course is yet to be determined. I would like to pose the following: Over the next ten years, as our existing membership roster continues to age, what initiatives are required? Is it time for additional fresh ideas and approaches? Is growth probable if we continue operating with solely a volunteer executive and without any paid office staff?

Personally, methinks we need an enthusiastic group of members to surface which will provide the desire, the ambition and the means to implement change and growth. I would encourage anyone so interested to consider forming such a group.

I have found the past two years meaningful and wish everyone *Chag Kosher Vesameach* and much *hatzlacha* in all your endeavours.

Mazel Tovs

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(416) 633-4941 "May we only meet b'simcha"

Omry and Nancy Farajun, on the birth of a son, Binyamin Aaron.

Jonathan and Tania Samson, on the birth of a daughter.

Shloimie and Tzivya Ochs on the *bar-mitzvah* of their son, Chaim.

Motti Kopstick, on his marriage to Tracey Smith, of Vancouver. Mazel tov, as well, to the parents,

Percy and Frances Kopstick, and to the entire Kopstick family.

Yechiel and Lisa Colman, on the engagement of their daughter, Yoni Colman, to Eli Abramoff, of Toronto. Mazel tov, as well, to Yehoshua and Ayelah Abramoff, and to the grandparents, Carl and Reta Goldstein, and Ben Genauer.

Aaron and Bertha Lang, on the wedding of their son, Yehuda Lang to Ester Binson of Montreal.

Issy and Ellen Isakow, on the wedding of their daughter, Dori, to Sruly Weiss of Toronto.

Dr. David and Miriam Rosenthal, on the birth of a grandson, to their children, Chaim and Shira Karpel. Mazel tov to the other grandparents, Tsvi and Robin Karpel, of New Jersey, and to the great-grandparents, Moshe and Bessie Marmer, Josef Rosenthal, and Helen Singfer.

Shul News and Rules

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The President and Executive Board of Clanton Park Synagogue, invites the General Membership to its ANNUAL MEETING on Sunday, April 30, 2006 at 8:00 PM, in the Meyer Pik Social Hall, to:

- (a) Review the Synagogue Financial Statement for year-end 2005**
- (b) Elect officers and directors**
- (c) Answer any questions from synagogue members.**

The Purim Party and Purim Spiel.... were memorable events at Clanton Park. *Yasher koach* to the Director of the play, Effie Popoudopolos, to the Musical Director, Gershon Wachtel, and to the devoted actors: Moshe Shields, Jeff Dorfman, Zack Rosen, Martin Hoffmitz, Nathan Birnbaum, Howard Lyons, Chaim Oliver and Ken Stollon. Special mention must go to Chaim Oliver, who was instrumental in organizing the *spiel*, and to Rabbi Weber, our inspiration and our editor.

A *yasher koach* also goes out to Manuel Kanner, who organized the children's programme, the pony rides and the petting zoo.

The shul has been cleaned for Pesach...

Littering of any kind in the *shul* is prohibited. Also, please do not leave candy wrappers or tissues in the slots that hold the *siddurim* and *chumashim*.

Yeshivas Bein Hazmanin.... As in past years, the *shul* has an extensive programme, both pre-*Pesach* and during *Chol Hamoed*. Please see flyer for details.

New class at Clanton Park: "Moments in Jewish History".... Rabbis Shlomo Jakobovits and Leo Davids will be offering a seven-session lecture series on "Moments in Jewish History", beginning Wednesday, May 3rd at 8:00 PM. These classes are open to the public; both men and women are invited. Admission is free. Look for the ad in *Canadian Jewish News*.

World Zionist Congress Update ... The election of delegates to the World Zionist Congress in the United States has been very successful and the Orthodox slate was able to increase its number of delegates by over 20%.

The Election in Canada will take place from the beginning of April until April 24th. Each registered voter will receive a package in the mail containing his or her ballot and the instructions for mailing the ballot correctly thereby exercising their vote. We hope to be just as successful as our colleagues in the States.

Although we have more registered voters than either the Conservative or Reform movements, that will not do us much good if we do not remind and cajole our members to actually exercising their right to vote. The ballot instructions will be easy to follow and it will take only a few minutes to mark the ballot and set it aside to go back in the mailbox. Please don't forget to vote!

If you have any questions, call Jerry Tepperman at 416-630-9266.

Home rental wanted ... in the Bathurst Manor area from the beginning of August 2006 to July 2007, while in Toronto for a sabbatical year. Please contact: David Genesove, Professor of Economics, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mt. Scopus, Jerusalem 91905 Israel
Tel: 972-2-588-3128 Fax: 972-2-581-6071
Email: genesove@mscc.huji.ac.il

The future of The Clanton Park Herald... I have been asked to continue on as editor of the *shul* bulletin for another two years. Although I have enjoyed the experience over the past two years – in particular, the interviews with the founding members, and the various articles that I had the chance to write and/or edit -- it has nonetheless been an added stress in terms of the large time commitment, the deadlines and the ever present potential for errors and omissions. Therefore, I have agreed to continue on as editor, under the following conditions: (1) the bulletin will become a quarterly publication, instead of a monthly one, and (2) any Milestones to be printed must be reported by the *Baal Simcha*, with full details, and correct spellings via email

(bulletin@clantonpark.com) or phone (416-493-9560 x 2102); if they are not received via email or phone, they will not be printed. Thanks for your continued support.

Youth News

All girls in grades 1 - 8 are invited to an exciting Chol Hamoed programme! ...

Who? All girls in grades 1-8

What? Rollerblading! (rollerblades and water will be provided)

Where? Rinx, 65 Orfus Rd.

When? Monday April 17th from 10:20-11:40 AM. (drop off and pick up at Rinx)

Cost? members: \$8 non-members: \$10

There are only a few spots remaining. Please reserve your spot ASAP by calling Rebecca at (416)633-3649 or email cpgirlsyouth@yahoo.ca.

"Pesach in Tanach" Quiz

Dr. Leibe Warner

- (1) Name the four *leshonos of geulah* (expressions of redemption), in order.
- (2) In what month -- and on what day of the month -- was *Pesach Sheni* celebrated?
- (3) During the reign of one of the kings of Judah, there was a special *Pesach* celebration which surpassed all previous *Pesach* celebrations since the days of Shmuel *HaNavi*. Name the king.
- (4) During the reign of one of the kings of Judah, the people gathered to celebrate *Pesach* with "*lev echad*" (a united heart). Name the king.
- (5) Moshe is mentioned only once in the entire *Hagaddah*, as part of a quote from *Shemos*. Identify the *passuk*.
- (6) Which *Tanna* quotes a *passuk* from *Devarim* to show that we must mention *Yetzias Mitzraim* at night?
- (7) In what *sefer* of the *Chumash* is it written that *matzos* should be eaten for six days?
- (8) Which king of Judah prayed for *B'nai Yisrael* because they were not all *tahor* (pure) when they ate from the *korban Pesach*?
- (9) On *Shabbos HaGadol*, we read in the *haftarah* about the future return of Eliyahu *HaNavi* (Malachi 3:23). There, his name is spelled without a *vav* (Elijah, instead of Eliyahu). In total, how many times in Tanach does his name appear without a *vav*? (Hint: the answer can be found in a Rashi in *Vayikrah*.)
- (10) Haman died on *Pesach*. The date of his death, the 16th of Nisan, is hinted at in a verse outside *Megillas Esther*. Cite the *passuk*. (Hint: the answer can be found in a *haftarah* which is read on *Pesach*.)

Go to the *shul* website to see the answers to last bulletin's *Megillas Esther* Quiz.

All We Have is Language

Professor Paul Socken

Without language, there is no expression, no communication, no humanity. When language is debased, it has a profound effect on individuals as well as on society, whether we realize it or not. Language that is deceitful or sloppy reflects a state of mind that can be dangerous because it has an insidious effect on the reader. If people read enough drivel, they can become insensitive to language and they can be influenced or unduly manipulated by others who know how to use language to great effect. This has importance in everything from the commercial realm to politics. In a day and age when people's attention span has been severely limited because of video games, television and computers, this inattention to language is particularly alarming. People tend to become increasingly visual and not literate. They can read the words on the page but do they really absorb what the words are saying, do they read for meaning, or do the words pass over them like a haze? The latter is called functional illiteracy, the ability to read but the inability to understand and reflect on the text they have just read. No spell or grammar checker programme on any computer can remedy that situation.

Consider for a moment how language becomes debased in a society because readers are intentionally manipulated for commercial or other purposes. Economy class is now "hospitality" class; a failure is a "non-passing grade"; used cars are "pre-owned vehicles"; financial people talk about "forward planning" (is there any other kind of planning?); a repeat is an "encore presentation"; and "almost exactly" is universally used (if it's exact then it isn't almost). Note that no one sector has a monopoly on this kind of deceit – it occurs in business, in the academy, in the financial sector.

Language does change. The English of today is not the English of Dickens and certainly not of Shakespeare, so distinctions will be lost and forms evolve. However, one should not be sanguine about sloppy use of language that reflects distraction and inattention and about deceitful use of language intended to mislead. It is not too much to suggest that civil and democratic society is at stake, for democracy depends entirely on an alert, informed, lucid and articulate citizenry. When language is debased, thought itself is in jeopardy. Politicians, the military and business interests use language for their own purposes and an inattentive, distracted and semi-literate population risks becoming their dupes.

This kind of issue affects the Jewish community directly as we get drawn into discussions about "occupied Palestinian territories" instead of

"disputed territories" and the term Holocaust, a unique event in human history, is adopted by every group of victims.

"Yeshivish" English – "where are we holding?", "Rashi brings down..." and one could give countless examples – is fine in a specific setting but is not mainstream English and cannot be used for effective communication with people beyond that setting.

A former Chairman of the Department of English at the University of Waterloo told me not long ago that there is not a single university in North America that he is aware of that produces scholars of grammar. University departments of English focus on literature and Departments of Linguistics produce a variety of wonderful and important scholars of sociolinguistics and other specialities but the old-fashioned grammarian, what they used to call "philologists", has no accreditation or official status. There are scholars interested in language, as there always have been, but that does not replace the professional who is trained specifically in that discipline. I don't know if the lack of this academic speciality reflects a lack of interest or if the dearth of grammarians led to a loss of care about the use of language. In any event, the clear result is a current use of language that is not in the best interests of a cultivated and astute society.

If this matter is as serious as I am suggesting, then it demands more than an individual's occasional letter to the editor or an incensed and silent cognoscenti. It would require many people bringing this issue to the attention of school boards which create curriculum, editorial boards of major newspapers (where are their language specialists?), university departments with responsibility in this area and political parties and corporations that abuse their power and authority. And Jews must take their responsibility to speak clearly and forcefully on issues that affect our community in language that is understood and admired by all segments of society. Speaking amongst ourselves is important, but influencing those beyond our small circle is critical on Israel, day school funding, assimilation and intermarriage and other matters.

Societies are either top-down or bottom-up. Either an elite at the top dominates the unfortunate many at the bottom or an enlightened populace sensitizes its corporate, government and academic leaders to its deeply-held values and convictions. In that sense, a society gets what it deserves. Winston Churchill famously and rightly said that democracy ensures that a people shall be governed no better than it deserves. If the corruption of language in all spheres is the norm today, is that no better than we deserve?