

Der Bay

The International Anglo-Yiddish Newsletter

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Der Bay Celebrates Its Chai Issue Peering Backward & Looking Forward

What's Happened?

This issue has a potpourri of old and new articles. Mere words of gratitude are insufficient to thank the many contributors who had multiple articles or a series. Among the many are:

Ed Goldman, and his Comic Bible Scenes in Transliteration (the most ever requested);
Gella & Shikl Fishman, and their Secular Schools in America Archives at Stanford Univ.;
Morrie Feller, articles using the Hebrew / Yiddish alphabet;
Goldie Adler Gold, Shayles un Tshuves that are transliterated articles from the Forverts.,
Troim Katz Handler, stories and translations are distributed to our 100 IAYC Yiddish Clubs;
Stanley Siegelman, novel poetry in transliteration and English translation;
Archie Barkan, many articles and a dear friend;
Yosl z"l and Chana Mlotek, their songbooks;
Sheva Zucker, about her textbooks;
Sonia Pressman Fuentes, Jewish geography;
Hilda Rubin, several skits;
Harold Ticktin, several articles and chaired the IAYC conference in Cleveland;
Daniel Galay, Yiddish in Israel;
Rochelle Winer, Yiddish news of South Africa
Jack Halpern, Der Yapanisher Yid;
Yoshiji Hirose, impressions of Yiddish in America;
Iz Kugler z"l, series on the Yiddish Theater;
Pascal Curin, History of the Jewish Community of Alsace and Lorraine;
Dovid Kunigis, articles and wordlists;
Meyer Zaremba, Freud un fargenign;
Oscar Antel, Yiddish news of Winnipeg;
Leybl Fridhandler, anecdotes;
Dorothy Wasserman, Eng.-Yid. Computing;
Van Wallach, Yiddish films and videos.

What's Not Coming?

While further increases in publishing costs and postage are as sure as the sun rises every morning, there never will be an increase for this newsletter. It has been chai from the first single page issue to today's 16 pager. Because most have sent "a little extra," it has made the situation tenable.

Another guarantee is that there never will be a paid ad—only honest reviews.

What's Coming?

Because of the increased number of readers having access to e-mail, readership is increasing greatly. The abbreviated issues are sent free to anyone requesting it online. The greatest increases are in Canada and Israel followed by Europe and Australia.

Der Bay's website continues to update and expand. Anyone can request the abbreviated edition (a selection of 8-10 pages) of the hardcopy, by signing up at the homepage, www.derbay.org

Additional links to *Yiddish Sites* and *Other Jewish Sites* are being added. Be sure to check the listing accuracy of your club, class or band. There is a Google search box on the homepage only for the *Der Bay* website.

Information of the next IAYC conferences will be included. We are close to announcing the site of the IAYC Bar Mitsve Conference and who will chair this historic meeting.

Nu?

[Editor's note: For a short time back in 1991 when *Der Bay* was first published on 8.5x11, individual sheets, the Peninsula J CC sent it out as a newsletter at no charge. It then added pages and it was decided to use 11x17 sheets, have it printed professionally and ask for contributions of chai to cover the printing and first class mailing. Some did contribute. Here are two of the very early articles.]

Well, you read this far. You have to admit that for the subscription rate, it's the best bargain since the nickel pickle. So where do we go from here?

"You can't stop an idea whose time has come." Listening to the very strong encouragement on the phone calls received, on our venture with *goyim*, it's full steam ahead. Likewise the extremely positive letters are a lasting tribute to our effort.

Yes, there are very few small pockets of Jews in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area, but the gems that are sprinkled around comprise a remarkable source of interest, enthusiasm, talent, and knowledge.

Berkeley has a national reputation for its "Klez' bands. Three excellent Yiddish folk choruses are located in San Francisco, Palo Alto, and Berkeley. While the national list of Yiddish courses showed only two, there are now eight. None of the Yiddish teachers knew of the existence of more than three of the other Yiddish courses.

New Yiddish clubs are being formed on the Peninsula, and there is a resurgence of interest in the *mame-loshn*. Perhaps the greatest surprise to Fishl was the response by the faculty at our local universities. Fifty-three faculty members, and the Hillel Directors are included in the supporters for this venture.

From here on it is hoped that the Letters to the Editor column will be an important clearinghouse of opinions on where we are heading in our quest to revitalize Yiddish. Please send your constructive criticism or better yet your "feedback" to Fishl.

Original articles in English, transliteration or Yiddish will be accepted. Please have them in 3.5 inch columns. See you next month.

Editor's note: The next column is one in a series that started when Fishl was editor of the Tam Tov, the newsletter of the Ot Am Unit of B'nai B'rith. When he became interested in Yiddish, he realized that B'nai B'rith was not involved in promoting Yiddish so his allegiance changed.

Zeyde & Yingl

- Y Grandpa could you tell me what's this thing they call a *resolution*?
- Z I'd say it's something you say. It's like when you make a promise. Folks usually make them at the beginning of the year.
- Y Oh.
- Z Sonny, is there any special reason why you asked me that question? Did you hear someone use that word?
- Y Yesterday, after we finished dinner, we all went into the den to watch TV. I heard mommy 'n daddy saying something and then make a New Year's resolution.
- Z Is that so? What did mommy 'n daddy say? Do you remember their exact words?
- Y They said they'd try to do something in Yiddish at least once a month.
- Z That's really very nice. When mommy was your age we visited my daddy and mommy and they spoke Yiddish.
- Y Grandpa, I think I'm gonna make a *resolution*. Do you think it's OK for little kids like me to make a *resolution*?
- Z Sonny, would you like to tell me what **your** resolution will be? I really very much would like to know.
- Y Sure, I don't mind at all. From now on I'm not gonna fight with my sister Irene-- unless she starts it first.
- Z That's very nice, Sonny. You know you just had a fight with her just a short while before we started to talk.
- Y I know, Grandpa, but when mommy 'n daddy aren't looking she always starts it first and I have to do something.
- Z Oh...(pause)
- Z Do you mind if I tell your bubbe what your resolution is?
- Y I guess it's OK. (pause)
- Y Grandpa, now that I told you about my resolution, could ya tell me--did ya make a New Year's Resolution?
- Z Hmm. Yes, as a matter of fact I actually did make one.
- Y Would ya mind telling me what ya promised to do different this year?
- Z Of course, I'll tell you. I promised myself and bubbe that I'd join a Yiddish Club or take a Yiddish class to keep Yiddish alive.
- Y Tell me grandpa, did you make that exact same resolution this time last year, just like mommy 'n daddy did?
- Z Yes,, as I recall, it just so happens that I did.
- Y Well, if ya didn't keep it last year, what makes ya think you're gonna keep it this year?
- Z Sonny, that's a good question!

English-Yiddish Computing: Excerpts from Dorothy Wasserman Articles

Editor's note: Dorothy's 3 articles were in *Der Bay* in 1991 and 1992. When she moved from New York to Texas, we lost contact. She was a great resource. We have come a long way on the Internet in cyberspace.

Fishl has invited me to write. "Tell us," he said, "how we can word process in Yiddish, print, produce learning materials with sound, send our files to each other using modems, don't get too technical."

My interest in Yiddish on the computer stems from my mother's death. I no longer could converse with her daily in Yiddish. Concurrently the old Yiddish presses were folding; typefaces were sold, given away or abandoned. Those who needed to share in Yiddish print had no way to do so economically.

As a computer consultant and desktop publisher, I helped people to get their ideas into print. Why not in Yiddish? Yiddish needs young people to be involved, and they already are computer literate.

Beginning in 1987, I was part of a group evaluating Hebrew-English-Yiddish (HEY) word processors. In addition to what you would expect from a regular word processor we included at least five essentials.

- Yiddish letters must flow from right to left.
- Words must word wrap in the correct direction.
- The user must be able to edit the Yiddish letters on the screen and then print them.
- All three languages must mix correctly, each in its proper direction, even on the same line.
- All Yiddish letters must be in the Hebrew set.

This is the second in this series. With Fishl's caveat of "don't get too technical" still ringing in my ears, I will review two outstanding word processors, NB Lingua for IBM compatibles, and NISUS for any Macintosh computer. Although they operate with two very different systems they share many features.

Both have pull down menus as well as command keystrokes. Pull down-menus are easier for beginners, while command keystrokes let *mavens* work faster. Both have excellent and thorough documentation, with clear explanations that help beginners understand how the programs work and what they are capable of. And both have beautiful fonts (letters) on the computer screen as well as on the printed page. Unlike some word-processing programs, the nikud and dagesh in the Hebrew words show up clearly and properly.

You can search and replace easily. You can find any word, phrase or paragraph and replace it with any other word, phrase or paragraph with a few

key-strokes. You also can search for a particular typeface or style such as type size, bold or underlined type, and replace them.

With one click or keystroke you switch languages. If you go from a Roman character-based language, such as English, to Hebrew or Yiddish, the program switches directions automatically. For multi-lingual software, the *edge* of one language is clearly distinguished from the *edge* of the second. So you can mix languages, yet control the editing.

The programs are useful for producing teaching materials in Hebrew, English and Yiddish, or combination of them. Both have some desktop publishing features, which let you do layouts for newsletters, brochures, worksheets, lessons, and more, right on the computer screen.

This is the third in the series. When you talk about printing, you must address the issue of the typeface of the letters (fonts). Here we must give full credit to Adam Whiteman, who has created several Yiddish fonts that not only print out but show up on the Mac screen.

Why Yiddish letters? Are the same letters used as in Hebrew? Most of the Hebrew letters are used, but 14 other characters are needed, in addition.

Screen displays and printers have different graphic requirements so separate sets of characters must be developed for each. Adam has developed beautiful Yiddish fonts, including a *handshrift*, one that looks like handwriting.

On the Mac, each font can be displayed and printed in many sizes ranging from 7 to 127 points, in bold, italics, underlined, super and sub script, etc.. For the PC or the MAC the fonts are stored in memory and accessed by the printer without the need of a specific Hebrew chip. The software is specific to the American type computers that do not need a special Hebrew chip.

The rest of this discussion applies to English as well as Yiddish printing. Once you have typed, spell-checked and formatted your document on the word processor, the letters are sent to a dot matrix or a laser printer by the computer.

What is the difference? A dot matrix printer is less expensive, but the resolution of the characters is not as clear. A laser printer, while more expensive, gives a resolution of 300 dots per inch (dpi), which looks much better.

Yiddish Seminar at New York University

by Yoshiji Hirose, Ph.D

The Uriel Weinreich Program at New York University, co-sponsored by YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and New York University, began in late June, 2008. The seminars were for a small number of high-level Yiddish speakers and the participants were mostly Yiddish scholars and specialists. I became close with a Yiddish-language lecturer from Stanford University, Yankel, and an elderly woman named Barbara who was raised with Yiddish as her first language.

Other members included a Yiddish-language singer who performs in Europe and America, and graduate students from Harvard University, the University of Chicago and University of Minnesota who were working on their dissertations in Yiddish literature. The lecturers were Dr. Sheva Zucker, editor-in-chief of the League for Yiddish literary magazine *Afn Shvel*, and Avrom Lichtenboim, director of the Buenos Aires, Argentina branch of YIVO. He is a Yiddish-language literature critic. Both of them welcomed my participation as a visiting fellow in their lectures.

Dr. Zucker told me a very interesting story regarding her father. In 1940, her father, Meyer Zucker, at that time a young and single man, was issued a visa at the Japanese Consulate in Lithuania by Vice Consul Chiune Sugihara, also known as "Japan's Schindler." Sugihara is remembered for issuing thousands of transit visas, against orders, to Jewish refugees during World War II so that they could travel to Japan. Her father went to Kobe and lived there for several months. After that, he lived for several years in a Jewish ghetto in Shanghai.

Meeting such a man's daughter and participating in her seminar was, for me, something of magical encounter. Before one morning's lecture, she said she had a present for me and handed me the latest edition of *Afn Shvel*. By chance, it was a special edition on refugees of the Holocaust. It was a collection of reminiscences by Holocaust survivors that were rescued by Chiune Sugihara and the Japanese army. On the cover is a picture of Jewish refugees posing with deer in front of the pagoda at Mount Wakakusa (*wakakusa-yama*) in Nara. Dr. Zucker told me the words of her father who passed away several years ago. He said that even in the middle of a war, the Japanese people were very kind and treated him well. He loved Japan. It is often said that the impression of a country subjectively comes from the anonymous people who come in contact with it. As a Japanese citizen, Mr. Zucker's words made me very happy.

When I spoke on Isaac Bashevis Singer, I was asked literary questions, and was able to safely answer. However, I was unable to understand the meaning of a seemingly simple question. It was about how Singer left his wife and son in Poland, and went to live in the U.S. The question was, "When did the son and wife emigrate to Palestine?" The Yiddish word *oyle* was said, not *emigrate to Palestine*.

Oyle comes from Hebrew and, as I learned, is a single word used to express an emigration to Palestine/Israel. In Japanese cultural terms, elderly people from Kyoto, don't ask people from Tokyo, "When did you come (*kuru*) to Kyoto?" They ask, "When did you ascend (*noboru*)?" For them, the word *noboru* (ascend) is presumed to mean "come to Kyoto," an ancient capital of Japan.

When one refers to emigration to Jerusalem, they don't say "to Israel." It is done by just saying *oyle*. Yiddish expressions that are steeped in Jewish culture are difficult for outsiders to understand. I was reminded that learning a word also means acquiring all of the included cultural background.

I had an unexpected encounter. Firing the seminar at NYU, a young, Asian-looking woman asked me in English whether I was from Tokyo. The lady, Nadia Kahn, is unique among Ashkenazi Jews due to her Asian facial features. I learned that she is the daughter of a Japanese mother and a Jewish father, and was born in Japan. She studied Judaism in Israel and Harvard University, and is a convert to Judaism. She is working as a Senior Editorial Assistant for YIVO. She said that despite her efforts, her rare identity as a Jewish-Japanese American has caused her various troubles.

As a speaker of Yiddish, I have had experiences like hers. When someone with Asian features enters Jewish society, we have to explain why we are interested in Yiddish. At first, I felt it couldn't be helped. Being asked the same question by each new person can be a bit annoying.

In Nadia's situation, having a Jewish husband and children, a more complicated explanation is needed. A lot of people assume that she took the Jewish name Kahn when she got married, but it is her maiden name. She explained that she did not change her name because she is proud of her heritage and her children will use her husband's last name. Nadia Kahn is the first Jewish Japanese-American that I have met. I feel that I have a glimpse of multi-ethnic USA.

Fish's Letter Friday, June 18, 1993 to Itche Golderg

It was an enjoyable, stimulating, and rewarding experience I had when I finally met you at your office. This was prior to my going to Maryland for the First Yiddish Club Conference. While we had spoken previously on the phone, it is not the same as sitting together and sharing experiences. You are truly one of the treasures in keeping Yiddish alive.

Below are my impressions and opinions on a remarkable and historic event for the future of Yiddish. Because of the turf-protecting philosophy of major Yiddish-oriented organizations, cooperation among them is minimal to non-existent. Perhaps the greatest asset of the umbrella group leading the club movement is its unselfishness in sharing and willingness to do what is best for the majority.

There were 100 out-of-town delegates and 50 from the Greater Washington area. The largest out-of-town group came from New York. Eight came from Canada and eight from California. I was pleased to see that five came from my own area around San Francisco. While Avrum Lichtenboim came from Argentina (YIVO), he did not make a special trip, for he was going to New York. He stayed through the conference and was warmly received. We were impressed with his knowledge and warmth. He was a positive influence on the conference.

Saturday evening saw the first activity with an opening concert of Klezmer music by the marvelous Capital Klezmers. It was a way to have everyone enjoy and relax. After registration on Sunday, the first full day of the conference, Ida Leivick presented the First Harry V. Lerner Memorial Lecture entitled "H Leivick: His Life and His Work". Her impeccable Yiddish presentation received a standing ovation and set the tone for the day.

All eight workshops held Monday and Tuesday mornings were well attended. I sat in on portions of six of them, and rated them from very good to superior. Using visual aids and having handout materials made the difference in most cases. Two main lectures in the large hall at the University were very-well attended, but the lack of air-conditioning bothered some of the attendees. These lectures by Professor Mikhl Herzog and Dr. Khana Kliger were given in English. This was necessary for their fees were covered by several grants which required that these lectures be open to the entire university. While many more people attended, and the presentations received extremely high ratings, some attendees felt that they should have been given in Yiddish.

Accommodations were in a first class hotel on campus run by the Marriott Corporation. While they had facilities for an entire conference, we opted for the nearby, beautiful Hillel Building. This kept the Jewish environment, lowered the cost, and permitted us to use the wonderful caterer at Hillel. We can't say enough about the service and quality of the home-cooked meals. This made for a heymish environment. There was no formal seating, and everyone wanted to get to know as many other delegates as possible. This camaraderie left many wonderful memories as well as new contacts. It was a time of unselfish sharing of ideas.

The visit to the new Holocaust Center was the conference highlight. It is a remarkable edifice and has breath-taking exhibits. It cannot be viewed in half a day. Having to make the round-trip between lunch and dinner left scant time to really view the exhibits. Most of us will return for an extended visit.

Often unplanned situations create the need for innovations. Instead of seeing a Yiddish film one evening, an impromptu amateur show was put on by attendees headed by Sunny Landsman of Tamarac, Florida. It was amazing at the talent and the quality of performances when one considers that it was entirely unrehearsed. Because of Joseph Mlotek's hospitalization, Dr. Moishe Wolfe of Portland gave the Yiddish lecture on the status of Yiddish in the old Soviet Union.

Another feature of the conference was the exhibit and sales by the Arbeter-Ring. Stephen Dowling, The Yiddish Book Center manager was extremely helpful in answering questions and advising attendees. He said that his reception was much better than he expected and recommended that the next conference expand the exhibitors and vendors.

Itche, on June 28, I shall be traveling to Toronto with Dr. Allan Blair of Columbus, OH and Dr. Harold Black of Bethesda, MD to view the facilities and have discussions on the possibility of Toronto being the site of the Second International Yiddish Club Conference in 1995. Sunny Landsman, another important member of the umbrella group, is on tour and will be updated on the discussions.

Barry and Bess Shockett have planned meetings and visitations for us, including an evening performance of Finjan, the renowned, Klezmer orchestra. Yiddish of Greater Washington deserves great accolades for initiating these activities.

Prof. Dov Noy in S.F. Bay Area

[**Editor's note:** Prof. Dov Noy, a world-renowned folklorist, was one of Fishl's earliest resources and many long letters were exchanged. Prof. Noy's letters came on odd sheets written while he was on the run. I later learned that this was the way he communicated. After his wife's death there was no contact and he is dearly missed. This article appeared in the January 1992 issue of *Der Bay*.]

Professor Dov Noy returned to the Bay Area where he has many friends. He has taught at UC Berkeley and can modestly boast to a large circle of local followers. In addition to UC Berkeley, he also has taught at Harvard University, UCLA, University of Pennsylvania, Boston University and throughout Canada and Europe. He is now Professor of Hebrew Literature and Folklore at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Director of the Hebrew University Folklore Center.

After a series of lectures for the Foundation for Jewish Studies in The Greater Washington Area, and St. Louis, Professor Dov Noy came for a series of four presentations December 17-19. His first was at San Francisco JCC on "Jewish Folk Religion vs The Forces of Darkness."

At the December Peninsula JCC monthly Yiddish Club meeting in Belmont, Prof. Dov Noy drew the largest club attendance we've ever had. His delightful and informative presentation on: "Jewish Folklore--The Yiddish Dimension" had everyone amazed at the depth and breadth of his knowledge.

Susan Kroll, of Brotherhood Way JCC, has had an excellent series of programs in conjunction with Congregation Ner Tamid. At this joint meeting Prof. Dov Noy's topic was "Jewish Life Cycles and Folklore."

Finally, he concluded his series in the San Francisco Bay Area, with his second lecture of the day, at the wonderful Jewish Magnes Museum in Berkeley. Here he met with a dear friend, Seymour Frommer, the director. They had the opportunity to reminisce on old times when the professor had taught at UC Berkeley and about the many previous visits.

From our beautiful Bay Area he went to a series in Los Angeles. We were left with a most sincere, "I welcome you all to visit me in Jerusalem." Yes, Fishl believes that contacts in TYN (The Yiddish Network) would do well in highly recommending Prof. Dov Noy for a folklore program in their community.

Remember

[**Editor's note:** My dear friend Walter Artzt o'h was an immigrant who became a successful businessman, inventor and was very interested in fostering Yiddish. When he became ill in late life, his family isolated him and sadly we lost contact. His autobiography is entitled *Ready Willig and Abel*. "The Americanization of his brother Willig and Abel..." This article appeared in the May 1992 issue of *Der Bay*.]

That's what he called it. Walter Artzt wrote poetry and he wants it to be a tribute a teaching tool, and a joy of Yiddish--of and for the Jewish people.

What is so remarkable about this dedicated Yiddishist is that he wrote the poetry in Yiddish, translated it, into English, published it in hardcover and is now distributing it FREE to Yiddish clubs. That's correct. Leader's of Yiddish clubs all you need do to acquire this wonderful book is write to Velvl Artzt and tell him the name of your Yiddish Club.

Fishl first read the English translation of this 182 page book and is well into the Yiddish section. As inspiring as the English is, the Yiddish brought tears to his eyes.

The poems are divided into five divisions; The Holocaust, Israel, America, The Family and The Family of Man. Any one of these would be a worthwhile endeavor in itself.

Journeying into philosophical areas and then to the thoughts of a child, Artzt is equally at ease in either. "My Grandfather's Horse" shows one end of this spectrum.

Der Zeyde "Ferd"

Kuk, kind mayns: der volkn in himl
zet oys vi a ferd,
un der rayter iz a kind--
zayne oygn--tsvey shtern balaykhtn di erd.

Farhit dos bild in gedank,
eyder es vert tseshtert;
ven du vest oysvaksn,
vel ikh dir koyfn an emesn ferd

dervayl fun mayne alte pleytses krikh arop,
ikh hof, mayn farlang hostu gehert;
oyf dem emesn ferd vestu raytn galop
un ikh vel vern oys ferd.

un az dos lebn vet ongeyn vayter
un es vet dir zayn bashert,
dayn eynikl vet zayn der rayter
un du vest zayn dos ferd.

Der Yiddisher Lehrer (un mischpoche circa 1924)

By Harold Ticktin

Years ago, to help learn Yiddish, I picked up a little volume on Canal Street with the title of this essay. In 63 lessons the reader is carried from *mame* and *bobe* to the habitual past tense. As interesting as the grammar (actually more interesting) is the family assumed in this cuddly book, parent, children, aunts, uncles and grandparents all of whom seem to live together or close by. The main protagonists are three sister, Dora, Lili, and Lena, flanked by all of the above, quite a large group for one *dire* (apartment), but in this hardworking saga no other arrangement seems possible. No radio, people travel only by public transportation. Occasionally there is mention of a *ferd*, but only with someone behind it. No one drives a car, not even a highly regarded visiting *feter* (uncle). No college, light amusement; the outside world is glimpsed only by shopping.

The greater world is dimly seen. Lili writes home from a visit with Uncle Yankl in the country—greeting all eight of the others, telling them of the beauties of nature. In 1924 the country seems more like a recollection of the *shtetl*, what with fields, ducks, geese, courtyards, rivers and woods. One gets the feeling that the editors of *Der Yiddisher Lehrer* had a few nostalgic memories of their own along these lines. Her rural idyll is soon to be interrupted by a trip to *Vashington*; a relative lives there. All visits anywhere inevitably involve staying with family.

Though the term “*esn aroys*” (eating out) had already entered the American-Jewish lexicon, in this house there are no hot dogs, apple pie or steaks. The *tate*, a shadowy figure, slipping in and out to work long hours, is sometimes served “bread and meat,” maybe a “roll with a glass of tea.” We do learn about potatoes, *bulbes* and even *bulbes* pie. Good children are rewarded with nothing higher than *karshn un epl* (cherries and apples).

For childhood leisure there are only two playthings for Izzy and Lena—pots and pans. For some 20 lessons they are clanged by the *kinder* in the present, past and future tenses. A typical exercise has “My sister knocks always with pots when she washes them.” *Mame* cautions Yankl to “go to the kitchen and tell your sisters not to rattle so with the pots when *tate* is sleeping before he goes to work.

I was really taken by use of the conditional in the book. After all “what if, could or would” is part of the national character. A dazzling example is: “If you would not have laughed when *Yankl* fell

yesterday, you would not today feel such shame.” Consistent with Jewish life even the future is conditional: “If you will love your parents, God will love and help you.” A people waiting for a Messiah who has not appeared for 4,000 years is quite likely to find the conditional very congenial.

Needless to say the diminutive is writ large in *Der Yiddische Lehrer*. In the later lessons *Yankl* becomes *Yankele*, *Dora*, *Dorele*, while they sing a *lidele*. The barracks quality recedes and by the time “*shlof, shlof*, Papa will bring a bird, a nut, an apple” the reader is *kvelling*.

Two letters near the end, from Baile and Lili touch beautifully on the assumptions of Jewish life made by the author. *Baile* to her *Zayde*: “...very long now have I wanted to write you, without being able to. But now that I can write and read I shall. I miss you and wish I could be able to see you, but now it is cold and one cannot travel. In summer I will come to you again.”

Lili to her beloved dear parents: “Thank you for the books. I miss you and my brothers and sisters. Life here in the village with *feter* and *mume* is good. I lack for nothing but you at home.”

In the end the family and *Vashington* converge with fateful consequences for the future. Lili’s trip to *Vashington* opens the great world to her. We realize that she is hardly likely to return to the warmth of her immediate family. Like *Tevye’s* daughters there is no turning back, but for us we still have the warmth emanating from this fascinating “memoir” of immigrant life back in 1924

Editor’s note: Harold Ticktin is an attorney in the Cleveland, Ohio area. He is a member of the IAYC Board of Directors and chaired the Eleventh IAYC conference at the Marriott Hotel in Warrensville Heights—a Cleveland suburb.

Harold is a prolific writer and has published over 500 articles. His lectures at the IAYC conferences have been exciting. At the La Jolla conference his topic was: The Roots of Jewish Humor.

He was honored by Workmen’s Circle as Man of the Year and is multi-talented and fluent in the Italian language. Harold is President of Cenacolo-The Italian Literary Society.

Shpil ma zhon af yidish Play Mah Jongg in Yiddish

by Varda Grinspan & Sydney Turk-Porter

In the lobby of the hotel at the Marriott (Cleveland Ohio) at the IAYC conference August 3-6, 2007, we played mahj in Yiddish with the help of Ruth Goodman (Delaware) and Varda Grinspan (New Jersey) who speak fluent Yiddish and taught the rest of us newcomers Yiddish. They taught several others who joined us at the table and me. We played at lunchtime before the afternoon sessions began and again at 4:30 p.m. before the dinner was served and again after the entertainment at 9:30 or 10 p.m., for several days.

We repeated the fun and learning in La Jolla too. What fun we had using Yiddish words. The list of Yiddish words and oysdruken (expressions) was written by Varda Grinspan of New Jersey in 2007 and *Der Bay* published it on our behalf (page 4 in the March 2007 issue). A printed list from Varda's *Der Bay* column was furnished to new players at the Mah Jongg table in La Jolla, as they gathered around to watch. Having the list available allowed us to recruit new players.

Here are a few new words to add to our existing list:

"Wait a minute" --- "Vart a minut"
"I want that" ----- "Ikh vil dos"
"Dice: " ----- "Varfl"
"Soap" ----- "Zeyf"

Save the information and bring it with you to the next conference.

Editor's note: the women mentioned above are a very special group.

Varda Grinspan from Fair Lawn, New Jersey, leads a Yiddish club. She has a unique background and is one of a few people who is conversant in Hebrew Yiddish and Ladino. She attended the very first IAYC conference at the University of Maryland with her late husband who was a Yiddish scholar and taught her Yiddish.

Sydney Turk Porter is the wife of Cantor Hale Porter who has done the IAYC conference shabes blessings and been a conference presenter as well as being a key member of the IAYC Board of Directors.

Ruth Goodman teaches Yiddish at the Senior Adult Program of the University of Delaware. She also has been a presenter at IAYC conferences. At this one she played a key role in one of the four Yiddish teacher panels at the founding of the International Association of Yiddish Teachers (IAYT).

Silence Is Golden?

by Lou Charloff, Encino, CA

In the 1930's, the big political struggle in New York was not between the left and the right – it was between the left and the left.

Aunt Bess was a fiercely dedicated Communist. She strove for a world in which government, which meant the people, would own all means of production and everybody earned a decent wage. With no poverty, we would eliminate almost all crime, we would do away with many illnesses and we would look forward to the end of wars. Or so she would have us believe.

She was a bright woman who, when angry, had a mouth that could strike like a slashing saber and bring you to your knees. And she directed that anger against a cold, harsh, bitter world that she fought to replace with an ideal utopia.

My father was a life-long Socialist who shared her dreams. The difference between the two credos was that the Communists knew that the utopia they strove for could be achieved only by a series of Soviet-style revolutions. The Socialists felt that justice demanded that they educate the world and achieve success by the legal ballot.

That difference was enough for the two parties to resent each other bitterly and caused my father and his sister not to speak to each other for twenty years. Other family members and I tried in vain to get a reconciliation. My father was not unreceptive but Aunt Bess refused to allow herself to be persuaded. And the years rolled on with no contact whatsoever between them.

My father had health problems and received a surprise during his last hospitalization. One afternoon, the door opened and his sister Bess walked into his room. After they greeted one another, she said, "Sam, I'm going to say something to you – you'll do what I tell you and I don't want you to argue with me. When they let you out of the hospital, you'll come live with me in my apartment and I'll take care of you."

During his last year, my father lived with his sister. She took care of him, feeding him not only with her cooking but also with her love. They had no arguments but they never discussed politics.

Editor's note: Lou is an entertainer and stepped in at the conference as a fill-in. He received high ratings in the evaluations. We thank him for stepping in at the last minute and having a great performance. He can be reached at: loucharloff@earthlink.net

Mama Had Secret Kites

by Philip *Fishl* Kutner

As a little boy I vaguely remember asking Papa, "Where are Mama's kites?"

"Papa's response was, "In the Secret Dresser." It was the piece of furniture in Papa and Mama's bedroom that was off bounds for us boys. Many years later we learned that it was where Mama kept her lady's under-things. We boys regularly were told that "Me tor dos nisht efenen."

Mama's kites included, "Oy iz zi a mieskayt." This was the adjective Mama used to describe an actress on the Yiddish stage who had given a below par performance. These were the rare occasions when Papa drove us to "The City" to see a Yiddish play.

Yidishkayt was Mama's favorite kite. Mama came from an ultra-Orthodox family and touted that she was a "bas koyen" (daughter of a Cohen—the highest level—above a Levi or like Papa, a Yisroel.)

Frumkayt was also on Mama's kite list. We kept a strictly kosher home. Papa went along with it even though on the outside he was known to have coffee with cream, after eating fleyshiks.

"Where are your kites, Mama?" I still remember her saying, "Freg nisht aza narishkayt!"

Mama Had Twin Boys

by Philip *Fishl* Kutner

A year and a week after I was born, Mama gave birth to twin boys. In 53 weeks Mama had 3 sons!

It must have been a joyous time for Zeyde. That was what we called Mama's father. Papa's father was called Grandpa. Mama's family members were the Greenhorns and Papa's family snobs were the Yenkis. Yes, 13 years later and several miscarriages or abortions, Semele arrived.

The joke in the family was based on my selfishness on taking second stage when the twins were born. Mama nursed all three of us. Mama said I was very smart and started to speak very early. Because of my jealousy I became very possessive of Mama and began saying, "My titty, my titty."

Der Bay

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