

# How Fishl Won the Honorary Nar Award

By Philip "Fishl" Kutner

A long time ago, in the City of Warsaw, in Poland, there was an Arbeter Ring conference—the theme of which, was, *How to Increase Membership*. It seems that all the major cities in Poland like Warsaw, Lodz, and Bialystok had active Branches, but the outlying *derfer* (villages) had no Branches.

It was decided to place all the money and "know how" on a single test *dorf* (village). They wanted to set an example on a test case which could be written-up and used as a model for organizers to use in Branch development. The site chosen was Chelm.

A messenger was immediately dispatched to the Mayor of Chelm notifying him of the plan and the arrival in a month of a distinguished group of representatives consisting of the National Executive Director, the Director of Member Benefits, and the Director of Culture and Education.

Upon receiving the message the Mayor immediately became upset. How was he to prepare for this auspicious occasion? He hurriedly called an emergency meeting The City Council, The Chief Rabbi, The Superintendent of Schools, The Banker, and The Town's Chief Gossiper.

After stuttering through reading the message, the Mayor sat down and began to wring his hands. "Oh what can we do to be sure all goes well?"

The Chief Rabbi wisely said, "Let's all form a Branch before they come and then everyone will be a member and there will be no problem".

"Excellent idea" said the Banker "We can even have elections and have a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Financial Secretary, and ten Trustees".

"What a wonderful idea" said the Superintendent of Schools, "We'll need an installation of officers."

"Oh, we can have it ready when the Workmen's Circle National Executive Director, the Director of Member Benefits, and the Director of Culture and Education come" chirped the Town's Chief Gossiper.

"Oy" said the Mayor. "How can we have an installation without our honoring someone? We must have an honoree."

"Farvos nisht, why not give an award to the organizer with the best idea?" Asked a Councilman.

A shout arose from all in great excitement. It was then and there decided that the First Annual Honorary Nar Award would be announced at the installation in a month in the presence of the National Workmen's Circle dignitaries.

"But to whom shall we present the award?" was the question raised by another Councilman.

"Your right" replied the Mayor, "and I thought we had the problem all solved. Wait, I have it. Let's have a contest".

Kluger Veysman, the Supt. of Schools said, "Let's call the Award the Oscar, Emmy, or Tony".

"No" chirped up Ruvn Raykhman, the banker, "All those names are used in di goldine medine. Let's call it the Nar Award after our *shtot nar* (town fool)."

There was an instantaneous roar of agreement and the shnaps was passed around. They danced clumsily in circles all night long to celebrate the solution to their problem. However, the next morning when the Mayor reported to his wife the goings on of the previous night she asked him, "But, who will receive the Gimpel Award?"

Quickly the Mayor reconvened The City Council, The Chief Rabbi, The Superintendent of Schools, The Banker, and The Chief Gossiper. When he explained the let down he had after his wife's question, the entire council room was set in deep gloom.

"I told everyone of that all the problems were solved" blurted The Town Gossiper in tears, "No one will believe me any more. What am I to do?"

"Ah, hah" blurted out Kluger Veysman, The Superintendent of Schools, "You didn't appoint me as The Superintendent of Schools for no reason. Let's give the award to Gimpel the town water carrier. After all he carries water from the river to the school at the top of the mountain, and when it's winter the leaking pail leaves a stream of freezing water. It gets so bad that little children can't go to school."

"But why did we put the school on top of the mountain" asked Gerta Geretner, the town Gossiper."

Chief Rabbi, Frumer Rov, quickly replied with this explanation. "I believe that we need to teach Family Values, and those are Lofty Ideas. The higher up we are, the closer we are to God and the loftier the ideas."

"No, Gimpel shouldn't get the Award," stated Ruvn Raykhman, the Banker, "It should go to Beryl Blostfunzikh, the Town Crier. It's his idea to build a windmill at the top of the mountain to pump water."

"Yo, I mean yes, and when there was no wind, he had all the men blowing out their lungs and it still did no good. No, he doesn't deserve the Nar Award."

"You didn't elect me Mayor for no reason. I have the right person for the right reason," gleefully said Meyer the Mayor. "There is no doubt that the First Annual Nar Award should go to Fishl the Organizer."

"What is his idea to warrant this prized Award?" came the cry from everyone in the Council Chambers.

Meyer the Mayor arose, and he smugly replied, "He organized the pregnant women in a Labor Union. All the women get pregnant sooner or later and they all go into labor. Naturally they'd all want to join a labor movement. When those Leaders come, we'll have everyone belonging to The Arbeter Ring, and we'll have the nominee for the First Nar Award."

Everyone danced and drank all night. Even the Mayor's wife, Vaybele, was pleased the next morning.