

Israel Senior News

News and Issues affecting

Israel's Seniors

Issue #5

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Shvat 5768



בט"ד

Dear Readers,

As Tu B'Shvat approaches, those of us in Israel are reminded that it is the Shmitta (sabbatical) year here. This year, we will be taking a break from planting trees in Israel, but we can still plant other seeds - the seeds of friendship, hope and caring that will help us to grow as individuals, families and friends.

We have an interesting "bowl of fruit" for you to read this month. Hence the "Bark and Bytes" in the title of this issue.

Please keep sending in your submissions! Israel Senior Life is intended to reflect your lives and opinions and you are the best people to do this!

Wishing you a month of new life and personal growth.

Tamar Wisemon
Editor

Israel's Senior Population - The Latest Figures
By Hillel Fendel as appeared in IsraelNN.com

1,015 people aged 100 and more live in Israel today, including two who are aged 119. Two-thirds of the centenarians' club are women.

The number of elderly - aged 65 and over - in Israel last year numbered 687,500 - nearly 10% of the population. In 1960, only 5% of the population was that old.

Nearly 100,000 households headed by someone over 65 live under the poverty line. Nearly 10% of the elderly worked in the year 2004.

The elderly population is getting more so. In 1980, a third of them were over age 75, while in 2005, those over 75 numbered nearly 46%.

Eighteen Knesset Members are over aged 65. The oldest and longest-serving MK is Shimon Peres, 83, who has served in the Knesset since 1959 (except for three days in 2006 when he resigned for technical/political reasons, to comply with a Knesset law).

From the Central Bureau of Statistics:

In 2003, 24% of all the elderly - 162,000 people - had immigrated since the beginning of 1990 (144,000 of them from the former Soviet Union). 28% of the elderly live in Israel's four largest cities (Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, and Rishon LeTzion), compared to 23% of

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As reported in Israel National News

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by Leon Moss

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Readers Respond: **MY VISION**

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**Wishing you a Fruitful
Tu B'shvat
from Ezrat Avot!**



אג שמח!

the total population). 58% of the elderly are married - 79% of the men and 42% of the women. The principal reasons for this difference are the greater life expectancy of women, their tendency to marry men older than themselves, and the greater rate of remarriage among men than among women.

Since 1980, life expectancy at birth in Israel has increased by 5.4 years for men, reaching 77.5 in 2002, and by 5.8 years for women, reaching 81.5. Men's life expectancy is approximately one year lower than in Japan (the world's highest), and women's is almost four years lower.

Ezrat Avot's Annual Intergenerational Tu B'shvat Seder in Jerusalem - January 14th

Do you have the winter blues?
Don't worry, Tu B'shvat is just around the corner!
Ezrat Avot and Nefesh B'Nefesh invites English-speaking seniors and university age students to learn about Tu B'shvat and our connection between our "roots" and "branches", while enjoying tasty fruits of Israel.

Can't be in Israel, but want to do an intergenerational Tu B'shvat Seder...all you have to do is go to www.ezratavot.org and the seder will be there for you to take and put on yourself. All you need to provide is the people and food.

Date: Monday, January 14, 2008
Time: 5:00pm - 7:00pm
Location: OU Israel Center
Street: 22 Keren HaYesod, Jerusalem

For more details call Eryn at (02)582-5107

ANYONE GOT UNWANTED RAM? Leon Moss

I've been doing a lot of work lately, meaning I spend hours in front of the computer. I often have half a dozen or more programs open at the same time and I zoom from one to another at high speed, looking for the information I need. Of course I never close anything. Eventually, the computer glares at me, gives an exasperated sigh and shuts down, leaving me looking at the "blue screen of death" and furious with myself for not having saved my work every few minutes.

"Add memory," said my computer guru when I explained the problem to him. I procrastinated for a few weeks and then it happened again today, catching me with an almost finished article. I yanked out all the wires and plugs out the back and took the computer to the store. What a simple job. I don't think the technician used a screwdriver or any other tool. As far as I could see, he simply plugged a memory upgrade into a prepared slot, put the cover back and handed me an invoice. 320 shekels later my computer can remember anything. It now has a gigabyte of memory.

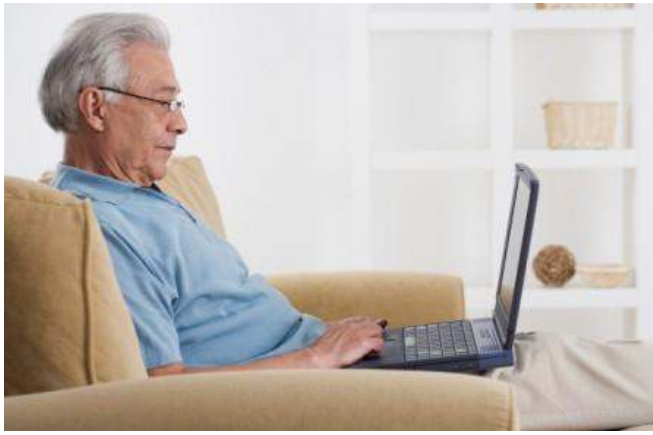
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**Tree Pose
by Matt. Meyers**

**Stand like a tree
And let the wind
Blow through your tension.
Do not turn
From fear's quivering
Be patient.
Let your hair and skin become
Wind blown.
Stand in a stand of trees
And become Unknown.**

Matt. Meyers grew up in a public housing project in Brooklyn. He now lives in rural New Mexico. He has visited Israel five times, living two of his fifty-nine years in Eretz Yisrael.



As for me, I am still trundling along on the same number of memory bytes I have been using for the past seventy something years. Some of the cells are fine and working efficiently, maybe as efficiently as ever, some even seem to be a tad better than they were years ago while others are showing distinct signs of wear.

Take the key bytes for instance. I'm not at the state of my grandmother who constantly offered rewards to us kids for finding her keys, but I am fascinated at what goes on inside my head when I can watch myself put the keys down, turn away for a micro-second, look back and presto! the keys are gone. The spectacle bytes are another story altogether and it is clear that they do not function as they were designed to do. Perhaps there is no actual connection between my spectacles and their bytes, just some imaginary relationship. I now keep 4 pairs of spectacles at strategic positions around the apartment – it helps but it's not foolproof. And then there is the front door byte – I'm not going back - of course I locked it!

There are other tell-tale signs that show that my memory chips are losing their edge. Like the name of the actor in that movie. His name has not disappeared forever; but it eludes me at the moment, which means that it will pop into my head at some time when I don't need it. The same goes for those familiar looking people who smile at me in the mall and seem to wait for a response. I'm so sure I don't know them...

Just like our computers, we have two basic types of memory, RAM and ROM, short term and long term memory. As we age it's our RAM that wears thin – where do you live, how many children do you have, what's your wife's name, where do you live, how many children do you have, what's your wife's name, where do you live, how many children do you have, what's your wife's name? Our ROM is fine. I can remember my second grade teacher's name and I remember being part of the family circle sitting around the radio and listening to Winston Churchill's famous, "We shall fight them on the beaches" speech of 1940 when I was 7 years old.

So if anyone knows where I can get a quick RAM upgrade, no medicines or tools involved, a simple plug-in will do, I'm interested. If my memory-upgraded computer, which is now working like a dream, is any kind of example, I'm definitely in the market for a new finish to my rusty old chips.

Leon Moss is a "retired-but-working" engineer living with his wife in Kfar Saba. Work consists mostly of writing.



Hello by Ray Walker

**It's time to say hello
Though wintry winds begin to blow
And rain slashes through the leaves
And temperatures begin to freeze.
The masses huddling to keep warm
Despite the lack of summer sun.
Fond thoughts of those we hold so dear
Do keep us warm this time of year.**

Ray Walker is a retired teacher, former Rockies climber, social activist, American olah and published poet.

Anglo Retirees Tutoring Schoolchildren

Project Mesila places senior volunteers in elementary schools to provide individual assistance to Israeli schoolchildren struggling in their English studies.

Available this year in Bet Shemesh.

My Vision

(In response to "The Art of Healing" by Monty M. Zion M.D., Issue 3#)

First came mention of a cyst; then, we spoke of lesions; later, tumors was introduced, so when I learned it was a carcinoma under my eye, I wasn't too surprised.

My initial reaction was overwhelming joy, and sense of elevation. I felt Hashem singled out my soul to test; to repair for return. Awed by this honor, filled with gratitude, I exulted: He wants me back.

Strolling down my beautiful street, I observed local neighbors with new clarity; perceived how each passer-by was surrounded by an aura of dazzling light. Heads bent, they walked a well-toed path, searching for truth, unaware its light enveloped them. This unforgettable vision didn't last long. It doesn't need to, because to witness, is to know it.

Involved in choice of surgeon, medical care, and expense, the decision made me anxious. I'd no wish to disturb my don's Torah studies, so I resolved to go through it alone. My youngest grandson would turn one, a week later and doubting I'd look or feel well, I took over his gifts, beforehand.

Hearing I needed some Tehillim for the next day, my son learned of the impending operation out of town. He insisted on coming too, and my stomach stopped churning. And so began the art of healing.

The expert surgeon didn't waste a move; kept me informed throughout the forty minutes we shared: never forgot I was a person. It was a blessing to be in such certain hands. Emerging from surgery, my left eye covered, I had felt no pain from start of finish. Overnight, in a nearby hotel, I didn't even need an Acamol. Next day I visited the surgeon's clinic, to have the bandage removed. He expressed confidence in his handiwork, while we arranged a follow-up visit.

But, strange to report, I'm still recovering. From what? From the word: carcinoma. I seem to need heaps of time to recuperate from those nine letters; it takes tons of sleep, piles of hot food. Such is the power of a word.

My daughter moved in with me exactly the next night, as she suddenly needed accommodation. Nothing is by chance: it was perfect timing. The bruising fades slowly; the eyelid heals.

My vision remains.

Name withheld upon request.



"As my parents planted for me, so am I planting for my children."

We hope that this e-zine will give you a window onto life for seniors in Israel today.

Every month we will send you the latest news, together with profiles of veteran Israelis, reviews, articles and poetry written by or about seniors.

To subscribe, email info@ezratavot.org

To submit your article or request Writers' Guidelines - email: info@ezratavot.org

Israel Senior Life is a publication of Ezrat Avot

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We welcome comments and submissions to info@ezratavot.org

Ezrat Avot is a non-profit organization that provides services, resources and education to enable Israel's elderly to age in the comfort and dignity of their own homes and communities.