

Israel Senior News

News and Issues affecting

Israel's Seniors

Issue #4 December 2007 Kislev 5768

Dear Readers,

Hannukah is a time for drawing together and strengthening our connections. We gather together with our close friends and family, to light flames in the darkness, sing songs of the strength of the few over the many and eat comfort foods - sugar sufganiot (donuts) and sizzling latkes.



This issue of Israel Senior Life is devoted to contemporary grandparenting - we have included poems and articles that discuss how becoming a grandparent has changed our lives.

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 Chag Urim Sameach, a holiday of lights and joy.

Tamar Wisemon
Editor

New plan aimed at helping infirm elderly regain independence

By Yuval Azoulay, as printed in Haaretz

The health and pensioners' affairs ministries have unveiled a joint plan to improve medical treatment for the elderly.

The plan calls for rehabilitation programs for the elderly in hospitals, private homes and the community at large. Its intention is to help older people with medical problems regain their independence.

The project, drafted by a joint steering committee headed by former director of the National Insurance Institution, Prof. Yohanan Stessman, was described by Health Ministry officials as "revolutionary."

The Pensioners' Affairs Ministry has earmarked NIS 7 million for the program, and the funds will be allocated over the next two years.

Health Minister Yaakov Ben-Yizri and Pensioners'



בס"ד

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As reported in Haaretz

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Hannukah Sameach from Ezrat Avot!



חג שמח!

Affairs Minister Rafi Eitan, both of the Pensioners' Party, said Sunday that elderly people who would require rehabilitation within a few days from their release from hospital would be eligible for the rehabilitation program. Steering committee members said yesterday that many elderly people who needed rehabilitation in the past did not receive it. As a result, they needed hospitalization or constant care and their condition deteriorated.

The committee members said they would consider enabling each person requiring rehabilitation to undergo some of the process in a hospital, for a three-month period, depending on the patient's condition. It will be possible to extend this period. The rest of the rehabilitation will be conducted in the community and the patient's home.

"Israel 60+" Student Photography Contest The winning entry!



After much deliberation by our panel of judges, the first prize in our Student Photography Contest went to Niva Simon of Ben Gurion University of the Negev, for her photograph entitled, "Dorot" (Generations).

All of the winning entries will be on display later this year. Details to be announced!

Many thanks to our judges: Ariel Jerozolimski, The Jerusalem Post; Esteban Alterman, The Jerusalem Report; Melanie Fenton, International Freelance Photographer; Nati Shochat, Flash 90 and Israel Talby, IsraelImages.com

A NEW MEMBER OF THE TRIBE Leon Moss

Today I became a grandfather. Not in the physical sense – that happened some years ago - but in the real sense, when you suddenly become aware that your responsibilities have not yet come to an end.

There are many days, usually on weekends, when grandchildren come to visit. These days are a mixture of ‘once-removed’ love, impatient waiting for their

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A Return to Basics by Larry Lefkowitz

**My three-month old grandson
Gives me a wide smile and
Waves his hands and feet in
frantic joy
Upon seeing me and I am filled
with pleasure
Thus we seek recognition and
love
A seeking not lessened
By all my years of living
My cynicism and irony
Evaporate at such a meeting
And when he falls asleep
In his crib and I in my bed
In the same room
One at the beginning of life
The other toward its end
There is something almost
mystical
About the moment
Like a smile bridging the years**

*Larry's stories, poems and humor
have appeared in publications in
Israel, the U.S. and Britain.*



"Our grandchildren accept us for ourselves, without rebuke or effort to change us, as no one in our entire lives has ever done, not our parents, siblings, spouses, friends - and hardly ever our own grown children."

*Ruth Goode, author of "A
Book for Grandmothers"*

arrival followed all too soon by a longing for their departure, relief at the silence which follows and anxiety for their safety on the drive home. I have always assumed that these are typical of the thoughts that go round in a grandparent's mind. Today was different and it came as a complete and very pleasant surprise.

Second grandson Yonatan who lives in Tel Aviv, called to ask if he could spend the long weekend with us in Jerusalem. We hesitated, remembering the last such visit, about half a year ago. That had ended in disaster when I had to take him home halfway through the weekend because he couldn't cope with being separated from his mother and I couldn't stand his crying.

But now I reacted immediately and positively and drove the fifty odd miles to pick him up. On the way back to Jerusalem he began asking questions about King David's City, which I understood to mean the Old City of Jerusalem. This was confirmed by his rattling off some facts - the city has a high wall around it, there are eight gates, one is called the Lion's Gate, another the Flower Gate - and his reciting miscellaneous information about the Western Wall. "Was it really part of the temple?" he asked. I said that I would take him there so that he could see for himself.

I was enormously impressed - he is a first grader attending a Municipal primary school near his home. He has a good teacher - his education is already shining through, I thought excitedly.

At home, I took down a book from my shelves and showed him photographs of the ancient walls and gates. His excitement grew.

"Let's go now, Pop," he said. "What are we waiting for?"

I was actually hoping for an afternoon nap to restore some of the energy used negotiating my way through the traffic, but his enthusiasm was too much to ignore.

We parked the car in the lot outside the Zion Gate and he stood looking up at the high old walls in astonishment. I pointed out the archers' slits and the crenellated top of the wall, explaining their purpose. He nodded. "Everything is made from stone," he observed. He speaks both English and Hebrew and some of his sentences are composed of both languages, meaning one has to listen attentively so as not to miss anything.

We made our way through the groups of tourists thronging the gate and wended our way, hand in hand,

GRANDMOTHER-TO-BE by Rifkah Goldberg

**By the end of the year
Unceremoniously told
I will be a grandmother**

**Will my hair
Turn completely white
Anticipating the occasion?**

**Will my still full set of
Teeth start falling out
Lips begin to pucker?**

**Will I soon take little naps
In the middle of every day
Dreaming of the golden child?**

**Will I search the loft for
Your antiquated baby clothes
Take up knitting needles
again?**

**How can you make me
Into a grandmother when I
am still
Trying to find out who I really
am?**

Rifkah Goldberg has been writing poetry since 1996. She is a contributor to the "Jerusalem Poetry Slams," the Voices Israel Group of Poets in English, and the Israel Association of Writers in English. Her writing has also been published in poetry journals and anthologies in Israel, England and the United States.

through the narrow alleyways. "What's that nice smell?" he asked outside a bakery and I promised to buy hot rolls on the way out. "Why are there so many steps?" I explained that Jerusalem is built in the mountains and that there are steps everywhere. More and more I was impressed at his observation and mature remarks.

At the plaza in front of the Western Wall we stood for a while looking at the various activities. "Can we go in there too?" he asked and I nodded. Taking his cue from me, he patted his head to make sure his cap was in place and we approached the crowded and awesome place together.

"Can I touch it?" he asked and for a moment I felt as though some age-old instinct that lies dormant in every Jew was awakening. We walked up to the wall and he touched it lightly with one hand, as though saying, "I'm here at last."

At that moment I became a real grandfather. Real in the sense of fulfilling a tradition of bringing a grandchild to this place, of introducing him to his Biblical ancestors, of making sure that the tribe I am tending will continue for another generation.

We stood quietly for a few minutes and then moved back slightly and watched the pious praying.

We left the plaza, climbed the many steps and wandered around the residential quarter, looking at the old buildings. We watched the residents scurrying about on their holiday eve chores. A passing tourist ruffled Yoni's red hair and said, "What a beautiful child!" He pulled away and made a face at her. A true six-year old boy.

"Let's go home, Pop and don't forget the bakery!"

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

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 for this new school year in Jerusalem and Bet Shemesh.

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

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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.

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