


PASJE Press

SPRING ISSUE

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From Cathy Taylor, PASJE Director

Dear PASJE families:



As we come close to another Passover holiday, I would like to wish you all a *chag sameach* (a good holiday). Passover has been seen to be the most widely observed and important holiday to the Jewish people. I hope that as we enter into this time you will all take a little time to explore new books and different perspectives to find a deeper meaning of Passover for your family. Jews are asked to tell the story of Passover from generation to generation. Every year there seems to be another very relevant idea that we can relate to in connection with the themes of freedom and slavery in the Passover story of the Jewish people. For me, this year I am particularly tuned in to the genocide that is taking place in Darfur. I am also very proud that as a collective group, Jewish people have become very actively involved in bringing this atrocity to the attention of the world, to stop the genocide in Darfur. As a people with a history that includes slavery and prejudice, it is important that we learn from the negative to teach our children. We have a responsibility to prevent history from repeating such atrocities, and we must all pull together to help others. www.savedarfur.org

I would like to suggest a few books that I have found particularly helpful in learning about and guiding us to have a deeper and more meaningful Passover:

Make Your Own Seder, Rabbi Alan Kay and Jo Kay (point of interest: Jo Kay grew up in a large Italian family and practiced Catholicism until her marriage), Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2004.

The Women's Seder Sourcebook (good for men too), Jewish Lights Press, 2003.

Passover, 2nd Edition, The Family Guide to Spiritual Celebration, Dr. Ron Wolfson with Joel Grishaver, Jewish Lights Press, 2003.

Keeping Passover, Ira Steingroot, Harper Collins, 1995.

Creating Lively Passover Seders, David Arnow, Jewish Lights, 2004.

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OUR STUDENTS TALK ABOUT

Passover...

PASJE STUDENTS HAVE GIVEN US SOME OF THEIR IDEAS ABOUT PASSOVER, WHAT THEY THINK OF WHEN THEY ARE ASKED ABOUT PASSOVER, AND WHAT IS MOST MEANINGFUL TO THEM.

GABE: **“looking for the afikomen”**

MARINA: **“eating matzah”**

DANIEL: **“reading the four questions in Hebrew”**

PETE: **“making matzah”**

CLAIRE: **“finding the afikomen”**

ABIRA: **“singing Passover songs”**

JASON: **“eating knaidlach soup”** (matzoh ball soup)

BENJAMIN: **“the Israelites escaping from Egypt”**

RACHEL: **“I think of food and how Jews got away from Egypt.”**

SAMANTHA: **“All the feasts, and I also think of the other Egyptians who wanted pharaoh to let the Israelites go because they were miserable.”**

ABOUT US

Andrew Litt, Jason Garcia, and Monet Goldman have represented PASJE proudly as they work very hard at the building of a Palo Alto chapter of BBYO (B'nei Brit Youth).

Danielle Field, a beloved PASJE teacher for the past several years,

is getting married in April in Eilat, Israel. We will be creating a card for all to sign and send to her in Israel.

Thanks to Stacey Drum and Michael Schwartz, our intermediate beginners Hebrew classes are thriving. Stacey and Michael saved the day, when Michael Gubman

received a promotion in his field of specialized music he could not let go by.

If you have a special event, idea, or anything you would like our community to share with you, please send us an e-mail at catalsjcc@hotmail.com.

FOR YOUR SEDER PLATE

SEPHARDIC-STYLE**Date Charoset**

This type of Charoset is used by many different groups of Sephardim — North Africans, Iraqis, Iranians and Afghans among others. It is always based on a paste made from cooked dates, sometimes with raisins. Chopped walnuts and/or almonds are also often included, either mixed into the paste or sprinkled on top. Some Sephardim thin out the date paste with red wine and flavor it with cinnamon. Others make the paste thick enough to be formed into small balls. Occasionally, the balls are coated with edible, dried rose petals. Iraqi Jews often use more water and no additional ingredients, to produce a thin date syrup rather than a paste. The following version of date Charoset is an amalgam of several of these types of recipes.

INGREDIENTS

1 lb. pitted dates, chopped (if desired, dark raisins may be substituted for up to half of the dates)

1 1/2 cup warm water

2 to 4 Tbsp. sweet red Passover wine (optional)

1/2 to 1 tsp. ground cinnamon (optional)

1/2 to 1 cup finely chopped walnuts and/or almonds

PREPARATION

Put the dates and water into a saucepan and let them soak for 1 hour. Then bring them to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat, cover the saucepan, and simmer the dates for 30 to 60 minutes, or until they are very soft and form a paste. During the cooking period, stir the dates often, and mash them with a spoon to help break them down.

To smooth out the paste, press it through a sieve, colander or food mill, or purée it in a food processor. If the purée is too thin and does not have a rich date taste, return it to the saucepan and simmer it down to the desired consistency, keeping in mind that it will thicken slightly more as it cools.

Let the date paste cool to room temperature. Stir in the desired amount of wine and cinnamon. Stir in the nuts and/or sprinkle them on top. Store the paste in the refrigerator, tightly covered, for up to 2 weeks. For the best flavor, let it come to room temperature before serving. Makes about 2 cups.

YEMENITE-STYLE**Charoset**

Yemenite Jews like spicy food, and their Charoset is no exception. It has an intriguing sweet-hot flavor that is worth trying. Yemenites generally use very little sweetener in their cooking and might not use honey in the following Charoset. However, those with more “Western” tastes will probably prefer to include it.

INGREDIENTS:

6 large brown (calimyrna) dried figs

6 pitted dates

2 Tbsp. sesame seeds

about 1 tsp. honey (or to taste)

1/2 tsp. ground ginger

1/8 tsp. ground coriander

pinch of cayenne pepper

PREPARATION

Put the figs and dates through the fine blade of a food grinder, or finely grind them together in a food processor to make a very firm, sticky paste. Mix in the sesame seeds, honey and spices, adjusting the latter to taste. Store the Charoset in the refrigerator, tightly covered, for up to 2 weeks. For best flavor, let it come to room temperature before serving. Makes about 2/3 cup.

TO THOSE WHO HAVE
SUPPORTED PASJE WITH
DONATIONS THIS YEAR:

Thank you!

Daniel Justman

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Jacob Asher and Nancy Hosay

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From Cathy Taylor, continued from page 1

There are multitudes of haggadahs for Passover, I recommend that you check this one out before finding your favorite version for your family: *A Different Night*, by Noam Zion and David Dishon, Shalom Hartman Institute (lots of fun, pictures, creative activities).

In addition to the above books, I recommend a visit to Bob & Bob Bookstore, 151 Forest Avenue, Palo Alto, phone 329-9050. Let Ellen Bob know you are from PASJE, and ask her to walk you through the selection of Haggadahs for Passover. Ellen is truly an expert on these books, and she can help you pick the correct book for your Passover experience.

If you have a special book or tradition that you would like to share with the PASJE Community, please e-mail it to me at catalajcc@hotmail.com and let me know if we have your permission to send it out in a group e-mail.

The most important thing about Passover is Enjoy! Learn at all ages! Be creative — make it special for your family!

A few additional things I want to share with you...

This year at PASJE we have had an extraordinarily hard-working core of people on our board. Although they often are working behind the scenes, they really make your school run. The board is a volunteer board and should be commended for all their hard work. They bring together a wonderful composite of different skills, which they use to hone in on making our school the best that it can be. This year Jack Asher and Tanya Berezin have been the co-presidents. Tanya is also the acting treasurer, and Jack the secretary. Together with Judy Levy, Beth Marer-Garcia, and Joe Pearlman, they make up the PASJE Board. I thank them, as I am sure all of you do, for their terrific work. The board meets once a month during school hours, and we encourage you to sit in on the final sessions to see where you might find a niche and become a board member for the coming year. Our final meeting is May 21st, all are encouraged to come to this annual meeting. Please consider joining the board.

I cannot let this paper go out with giving very heartfelt thanks to Joe Pearlman and his hard-working Purim committee and all the staff, students, and families that made this year's festival such a success.

While we are giving words of gratitude, we must look back and thank our Hannukah helpers for making our Hannukah Family gathering so much fun. Special thanks to our Hannukah volunteer coordinator, Joan Segall.

Monica Frankel is our PASJE Press editor, and we thank her again for all her labor in making this paper happen regardless of schedule. Thank you for coming through for us!

—Cathy Taylor