

for openers

Fingers, Feet & Treats To Eat



Taiglach

A fellow fifth-grader once told me that he hated going to his grandmother's house because it smelled like mothballs.

I loved going to visit both of my grandmothers because their houses always smelled like something wonderful was happening in the kitchen.



Norman Prady

What's more, at my mother's mother's house, I didn't have to wait for baking to be done. There was the bowl.

The bowl looked big enough to hold a family's-worth of soup. Grandma kept it on a high shelf in a kitchen cupboard. I always feared that she might fall as she climbed the 1930s Sears stepstool to bring the bowl down. But she always made it.

The bowl was a reward that she never brought out until lunch was entirely consumed, a practice I silently objected to and promised to never inflict on my own children. The bowl, you see, was filled with a rotating inventory of treasures for the tummy. Five or more kinds of chewing gum. Small candy bars. Individually wrapped candies, including a variety of caramels, creamy nougats, soft-centered

hard raspberry candies, Hershey's kisses. Boxes of Good & Plenty — those remarkable bits of licorice coated with hard-candy shells. And enough other stuff that could make me forget if Grandma's house smelled like mothballs, which it didn't. Most of the time.

At my father's mother's house, it was entirely about the oven. Grandma's oven produced exciting cookies. A favorite of mine was the one that apparently began life as a small ball of dough into which Grandma pressed her thumb, creating a well that she filled with jellies or jams after it was baked.

I smelled those little round delights as I walked into her house, and she'd laugh as I rushed toward the stove calling out, "Are they done? Are they done?"

But Grandma made other things, too. Some that I wouldn't go near as much as my father grabbed platefuls from her. Petchah, for example. Can you imagine making jelly out of the feet of baby cows? With carrots, onions, garlic and hardboiled eggs? To me, it was a recipe that had best been left in the old country. My father kept urging me to try it. Baby cows' feet? No thanks.

And if one grandma was making jelly from baby cows' feet, the other was making chicken soup from chickens'

feet. Apparently, there was a connection between the two dishes, called collagen, a protein that I once tried to learn about in a book describing the science of cooking. After a few pages, I felt I didn't really need to know.

Meanwhile, Grandma's sister, my father's Aunt Ella, made taiglach. Ah, little balls of fried dough dredged in honey and clustered with hazelnuts, almonds and dried fruit. Visiting Aunt Ella on a Jewish holiday meant leaving with the stickiest and happiest fingers you ever could hope for.

At my mother's mother's house during December, Grandma could be found baking holiday cookies. Lots of menorahs and Stars of David that looked quite like the more-widely distributed holiday cookies at the grocery store. I think Grandma would have had a nice laugh at an item in a recent December catalog mailed out by Figi's Inc.

"Walker's Festive Shortbread Cookies, Net Wt. 12 oz., \$19.99, combine the very finest, all natural taste from the Scottish Highlands with a bit of holiday magic and you have these delightful, buttery shortbread Trees, Stars, Santas and Bells. Kosher."

Somewhat of a tasty mixed message. *

Norman Prady, 82, is a journalist and author living in Berkeley.

guest column

A Jewish Organizational Model To Emulate

A couple months ago, I had the opportunity to present a fundraising workshop in front of a varied group of Chabad rabbis, shlichim as they're called, at their annual International Conference of Chabad-Lubavitch Emissaries in the Crown Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn, N.Y.

The bulk of the conference — workshops, classes, study sessions — took place in a massive 138,000-square-foot armory transformed into a convention center for 5,200 rabbis and guests from around the world. I watched with interest as the rabbis, with their trademark black fedoras and long beards, slowly filed into the room where I'd be talking to them, a white tent set up in a corner of the hangar-like space. It's not your everyday training session, that's for sure.

While I attended the men's confer-

ence, the shlichot, or female emissaries, will be having their annual conference in just a few weeks. As Joseph Telushkin points out in his *New York Times*' bestseller *Rebbe*, the wives of



Mort Plotnick

the shlichim, the shlichot, are perceived as full work partners with their husbands and that it was actually the Rebbe — Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson — who suggested the establishment of the annual convention for shlichot.

This wasn't my first encounter with Chabad. I've long had appreciation for these rabbis who, together with their wives and families, have dedicated their lives in the hope of bringing their fellow Jews — often in the most far-flung of places — closer to Judaism.

In fact, I have had the pleasure to work and interact with many Chabad institutions here in Detroit, including

the Lubavitch Yeshiva-International School for Chabad Leadership, a school with hundreds of alumni serving as shlichim to Jewish communities around the world, many of whom I had the pleasure of meeting at the conference.

I'm also very well acquainted with The Shul, MJI and the Friendship Circle of Michigan, an extraordinary organization that brings together teenage volunteers and children with special needs for hours of fun and friendship.

Rabbi Mendel Stein, the Lubavitch Yeshiva's director of development, whom I have known for several years by now, invited and encouraged me to speak at this awesome global Jewish gathering — an experience I am truly grateful for.

I accepted Rabbi Stein's invitation immediately, precisely because of my firsthand knowledge of the good work Chabad does here in the Michigan area. I've been involved in community work and fundraising for close to 60 years,

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Ask Attorney Ken Gross about...

Your Legal Issues



PLANNING TIME!

Q. What do you suggest for 2016?

A. As we cross the calendar year, it's the time to assess what needs to be done for the upcoming year. First on your agenda should be to make sure you have your estate plan in order. A Will, Revocable Trust (to avoid Probate), Durable Power of Attorney (so your spouse or child can act for you if you are unable) and a Healthcare Power of Attorney (to address critical care health issues) are essential. Young couples with children need to make sure they have appointed a guardian for their children in case a disaster occurs. Next — are your finances in order. Stated simply, are you on course to have enough savings for retirement that you will be able to sustain your remaining years? On this point, you need to make sure you are not wasting your retirement by paying high interest on credit cards month and month, year after year. Call us — we can address these issues.



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commentary

Rabbis Urge Congress to Keep Guns Out Of Hands Of Convicted Abusers

By the Clergy Task Force of Jewish Women's International

In the well-known story from the opening chapters of *Genesis*, we read the sparse narrative of an intimate relationship that turns violent.

Writing of the murder of Abel by his brother, Cain, Russel Jacoby, author of *Bloodlust: On the Roots of Violence from Cain and Abel to the Present*, points out that victims are most at risk in their intimate relationships.

"Cain knew his brother — he talked with Abel — and [yet] slew him afterward," Jacoby writes.

Statistics show not only that guns in the hands of those who commit domestic violence often lead to murder, but also that violence is more often perpetrated by family members or intimate acquaintances than by strangers. Fifty-five percent of women murdered by intimate partners are killed with a gun. Yet current federal law fails to protect a growing population of victims and survivors of domestic violence, children as well as adults.

President Barack Obama's recent effort through executive action to improve enforcement and clarify definitions regarding existing regulations on the sale of firearms is a welcome step toward changing the direction of the national discussion on gun violence. We support what the president has ordered: more effective enforcement of existing laws and a clarification of language that defines who is "engaged in the business" of gun sales.

But as welcome as these steps are,

Congress still needs to address the dangerous and often lethal connection between domestic violence and guns. Federal law currently prohibits only some convicted abusers from buying or owning guns.

Those convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence against a current or former dating partner, or misdemeanor stalking, can still legally buy and own guns. And the presence of a gun in an abusive relationship increases the homicide risk for a woman by 500 percent.

The Jewish textual tradition has long grappled with the roots of violence among intimates. But our tradition also understands that such intellectual wrestling is not enough — we also have an obligation to act.

That is why, as religious leaders, we are supporting two pending pieces of legislation — the Zero Tolerance for Domestic Abusers Act in the U.S. House of Representatives and the Protecting Domestic Violence and Stalking Victims Act in the U.S. Senate — that would prohibit the purchase or possession of guns by those convicted of any acts of domestic violence.

Perhaps Americans, still recovering from the shock of one mass killing after another and bruised by polarizing political rhetoric, will yet reach areas of consensus and cooperation. People of good will can and should find it possible to agree on small but significant steps that can reduce both the level of violence and the risk associated with guns.

By closing loopholes in existing laws, where the scope and intent of the act is clear, we are not engaging in polemics or in politically motivated rhetoric. Rather, we are seeking to strengthen existing laws designed to protect victims of domestic violence.

Given what is known about how guns can quickly escalate domestic disputes into murder, we urge Congress to pass these bills. If Americans may still learn any lesson from the tragic story of Cain and Abel, it is that we are, in fact, our brother's — and sister's and partner's and parents' and children's — keeper.

Jewish homes are not immune to gun violence. Sadly, it has touched homes in our local community. JCADA, the Jewish Coalition against Domestic Abuse, works to eliminate domestic violence in our community and supports the efforts to keep guns out of the hands of perpetrators of domestic violence. If you need assistance or find yourself in a dangerous situation, call the JCADA confidential help line at (248) 592-2335. *

Rabbi Marla Hornsten of Temple Israel in West Bloomfield and Rabbi Ari Lorge of Central Synagogue in New York are co-chairs of Jewish Women International's clergy task force on domestic abuse in the Jewish community. The advocacy committee is comprised of Rabbi Richard Hirsh, Rabbi Donna Kirshbaum, Rabbi David Rosenberg and Rabbi Rebecca Sirbu.

guest column

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and sharing some of my experience with these incredibly young (and not-as-young) rabbis was the least I could do.

When I arrived with Rabbi Stein at the Bedford-Union Armory in Crown Heights, I saw a passion unlike anything I've witnessed before. Upbeat and energetic rabbis discussing not the decline of the American Jewish community but what they were doing to help build it and how they could do that better.

I immediately realized that while I would be presenting to these rabbis and contributing to their efforts, I would be receiving so much more.

Here are three personal takeaways, I think we, as Jewish organizational leaders, can learn from the Chabad model:

- Twenty-one years since his passing,

the Rebbe's teachings continue to guide and inspire his army of shlichim. There's a tremendous sense of mission and focus that exists among them in a way that it doesn't exist in other organizations. We need to be extremely clear on our organization's mission and stay focused.

- Chabad rarely, if ever, focuses on costly studies or polls. Instead, they focus their energies and funds on implementing their mission and delivering tangible results. We must remember that internal studies, reports and polls, however worthy, are merely a means to an end.

- When interacting with shlichim, one will quickly sense their strong responsibility to the Jewish people, a responsibility that far transcends covering their annual budget

or promoting a specific agenda. We have to be sincere about our work, and sometimes that means putting our personal agendas aside and doing what's truly best for our people.

Donors today want to have a tangible, positive impact on the Jewish future and are looking for genuine and honest organizations that can help them do that. One who observes the Chabad shlichim and shlichot can't help but be moved and inspired to action.

I know I was. *

Mort Plotnick is a development consultant who specializes in the nonprofit sector. He is the executive director emeritus of the Detroit JCC and lives in West Bloomfield.

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