

Purim

פורים



"We free our minds and become Worry Free!" March 3 & 4th, 2007

Upon reigning, the King of Persia, Ahashverosh decided to have a feast. It was on the seventh day of these festivities that the King summoned his queen, Vashti,

to appear before him and demonstrate her beauty for the King's officials. Vashti refused to appear and according to the Talmud, G-d afflicted her with leprosy to cause her downfall and Esther's rise. Incensed, the King asked his officers for a suitable punishment. One advisor, Memuchan, possibly Haman, argued that Vashti should be killed for her disobedience. The King agreed and Vashti was murdered.

As time passed the King desired a new queen. To find a suitable wife, a contest was initiated among all the eligible girls in the kingdom. One of those was Esther, a Jewish girl. Esther had been raised by her relative Mordechai after her parents' death. Mordechai instructed Esther not to divulge her "Jewishness" when she went to meet the King. Each day Mordechai walked by the court and inquired as to her well being. Esther impressed all who met her, including the King and she was elevated to queen.

Years later the King elevated Haman a descendant of Amelak, the traditional enemy of the Jews, to the position of chief advisor. Haman was a wicked and vain man who expected everyone to bow down to him. Mordechai refused to bow because Jews are to bow only before G-d. Not content to just punish Mordechai, Haman wanted to destroy the entire Jewish people in Persia. He cast lots or "Purim" to determine the day of annihilation.

Haman slandered the Jews and convinced the King to go along with his plans. Upon learning of the plot, Mordechai tore his clothes, wore sackcloth and ashes and walked through the city crying loudly. When Esther heard of Mordechai's display, she dispatched a messenger to discover what was troubling her relative. Mordechai recounted the details of the evil decree and instructed Esther to intercede on the Jews behalf. Esther agreed to appear before the King and instructed Mordechai to organize a three-day fast for all the Jews on her behalf.

After completing the three-day fast, Esther entered the king's inner court dressed in her most royal garb. The King inquired as to Esther's

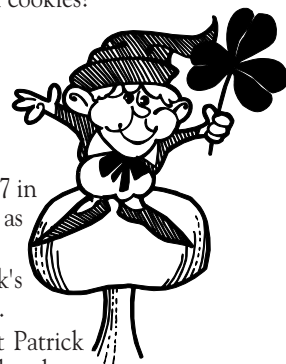
desires. Esther replied that she wished to invite the King and Haman to a banquet. After the feast Esther asked the King and Haman to return for another banquet the next night. Haman left the banquet consumed with self importance and pride but these feelings were turned to anger when he saw Mordechai. Haman went home and his wife, Zeresh, advised him to construct a gallows. Haman joyously acted upon the suggestion.

That night, the King discovered that Mordechai had never been rewarded for saving him from the assassination plot of two servants. When Haman appeared in the court, the King decided that his trusted servant should determine Mordechai's compensation. Haman, intending to obtain the King's permission to hang Mordechai, unwittingly answered the King's questions. The King asked Haman, "What should be done for the man the King wishes to reward?" Haman, believing that Ahashverosh intended to reward him, replied that the honoree should be dressed in royal clothing, ride upon a royal horse and be led through the city streets by an official proclaiming "This is what is done to the man the King wishes to honor."

Ahashverosh agreed and instructed Haman to carry it out for Mordechai, Crestfallen, Haman followed the King's orders. Haman's daughter, mistakenly believing that her father was being led by Mordechai, dumped garbage on her father, the horses' leader.

At Esther's second banquet Haman's downfall continued. Esther revealed Haman's villainous plot and the fact that she was Jewish. She asked the King to "grant me my soul and my people." Ahashverosh consumed with anger ordered that Haman be hanged on the gallows intended for Mordechai. The King elevated Mordechai to a position of great influence and allowed him to issue edicts permitting the Jews to fight their enemies. On the thirteenth and fourteenth of "Adar", the Jews won tremendous victories and were saved from the threat of total annihilation.

Ever since, Jews have observed Purim. The day before Purim is a day of fasting, in memory of Esther's fast. The fast is then followed by two days of dancing, merrymaking, feasting and gladness. The customs are as follows: Listen to the Megilla reading; send two kosher items to a friend; wear a costume with a mask; give charity to two poor people; eat festive meals and and drink wine; enjoy Kosher items; mention in your prayers about the miracles of Purim and eat yummy Hamantash cookies!



Saint Patrick's Day, Saturday, March 17, 2007 – A lil' Irish history...

The person who was to become St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was born in Wales about AD 385. His given name was Maewyn, and he almost did not get the job of Bishop of Ireland because he lacked the required scholarship.

Far from being a saint, until he was 16, he considered himself a pagan. At that age, he was sold into slavery by a group of Irish marauders that raided his village. During his captivity, he became closer to G-d.

He escaped from slavery after six years and went to Gaul where he studied in the monastery under St. Germain, Bishop of Auxerre for a period of twelve years. During his training he became aware that his calling was to convert the pagans to Christianity.

His wishes were to return to Ireland, to convert the native pagans to Christianity. But his superiors instead appointed St. Palladius. But two years later, Palladius transferred to Scotland. Patrick, having adopted that Christian name earlier, was then appointed as second Bishop to Ireland.

Patrick was quite successful at winning converts. And this fact upset the Celtic Druids. Patrick was arrested several times but escaped each time. He traveled throughout Ireland, establishing monasteries across the country. He also set up schools and churches, which would aid him in his conversion of the Irish country to Christianity.

His mission in Ireland lasted for thirty years. After that time, Patrick

retired to County Down. He died on March 17 in AD 461. That day has been commemorated as St. Patrick's Day ever since.

Much Irish folklore surrounds St. Patrick's Day. Not much of it is actually substantiated.

Some of this lore includes the belief that Patrick raised people from the dead. He also is said to have given a sermon from a hilltop that drove all the snakes from Ireland. Of course, no snakes were ever native to Ireland, and some people think this is a metaphor for the conversion of the pagans. Though originally a Catholic holy day, St. Patrick's Day has evolved into more of a secular holiday.

One traditional icon of the day is the Shamrock. And this stems from a more bona fide Irish tale that tells how Patrick used the three-leafed shamrock to explain the Trinity. He used it in his sermons to represent how the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit could all exist as separate elements of the same entity. His followers adopted the custom of wearing a shamrock on his feast day.

The St. Patrick's Day custom came to America in 1737 and was publicly celebrated in Boston, MA for the first time. This year, we celebrate our 270th year of Green Luck for all of us!

The Silver Connection

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March 2007

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Laughter: Medicine for the Heart

By Jane E. Maxwell

"Laughter and tears are both responses to frustration and exhaustion. I myself prefer to laugh, since there is less cleaning up to do afterward." —Kurt Vonnegut

Laughter is like a breath of fresh air that we desperately need. This seemingly simple act affects most of your body systems. Laughter strengthens the immune system by stimulating your body to increase production of immunoglobulin. It improves your heart rate and circulation by boosting the oxygen supply to your brain. Laughter controls pain by decreasing muscle tension, distracting attention, and increasing the production of endorphins, natural pain killers. Laughter is like giving yourself an internal massage as it stimulates and soothes. It truly is medicine for the heart.

Sometime when we feel inept, like a duck out of water, in our efforts to care for our loved one, the healthiest way to respond is to laugh at our own imperfections. We are human and at times say the wrong thing, spill soup down the front of the patient's shirt, or mess up at the most inopportune moment. But if we can't laugh, all we do is cry.

Humor, like prayer, helps us to rise above our circumstances. Seven years ago the idea of laughter was difficult for me to apply to the care of my terminally ill husband. Because I had worked as a registered nurse for over forty years, I was much too intent on fixing the symptoms of his illness and controlling his reactions to the chemotherapy and radiation. I was increasing not only my stress level, but also his.

Then as we turned on the TV and radio to some of his old favorites — "I Love Lucy," "Abbot and Costello," "All in the Family," and "Mayberry RFD," along with the music we grew up with, we began to laugh. Tensions faded, muscles relaxed, pain was lessened and we reconnected. Laughter reminded me that one is much more than his or her illness. We are all persons first, still alive and able to enjoy levity. Joy is still possible for the patient and the caregiver.

Try keeping a journal of humorous things you see, hear or read. Place cartoons on your refrigerator or bulletin board. They will be there when you need them. Avoid negative people. Don't put yourself down. Call someone today to arrange to meet for a few hours to renew your spirit. It truly will be medicine for your heart.

"A sense of humor can help us overlook the unattractive, tolerate the unpleasant, cope with the unexpected, and smile through the unbearable." —Moshe Waldoks

Jane E. Maxwell is a Registered Nurse and hospice volunteer.



Thank you Perle!

The Sterling Aventura, it's staff and community members want to graciously thank Ms. Perle Lipton, for adding eight large print books to our ever expanding library. We now have in rotation, over 2000 books for our residents to enjoy precious literary works from renowned authors.

Aging in Place: A Real Choice with worry free results!

Peter Leighton, some information taken from Helen Hunter, ACSW, Care Giver Magazine

As people age, they may be faced with making the decision as to whether to move out of their existing home. One smart choice is luxury assisted living. Too often, private homes are not conducive to the physical challenges that elders face in their advancing years. A recent study of aging baby boomers shows a large propensity to remain in their current homes after retirement or look further into long term care facilities. As a result, many assisted living communities throughout the country are organizing educational activities to highlight programs and support services, such as safer and secure environments, healthcare, chore services and transportation, which will enable elders to age comfortably in place. The Sterling Aventura takes care of these needs and is intentionally designed to allow for peace of mind.

The National Association of Home Building Inspectors suggests the following for seniors who choose to age in place. There should be at least one bedroom and one bathroom on each floor to avoid steps or stairs. Having a full shower with safe seating installed and a master bedroom makes it easier to age in place. At the Sterling Aventura, we have three fully functioning elevators to escort our residents from rooms to activities and meals. Our elevators stay 100% operational during Hurricanes and storms, as we have a 500 gallon fuel generator for emergencies. It simply was like a storm never passed by!

There should be conveniently located and easy to use controls and handles. Raised electrical outlets, electrical

switches positioned slightly lower, and AC/heating systems with large, easy to read numbers are perfect for the elderly. Installing lever handles makes it easier for people with arthritis to open doors. In addition, safety emergency pull chords and necklace held call pendants should be preminent. At the Sterling Aventura, we provide all of the above amenities for our residents to help make life smoother and feel more safe.

There should be "no-step up" entrances. Having at least one entry without steps creates easier access for everyone, regardless of ability. All of the Sterling Aventura's entrances and exits are full accessible for walkers, wheelchairs and ADA compliance. Our showers allow for our residents to walk into them "without a step up" as well, increasing safety.

There should be extra maneuvering space throughout the community. Wider doors and hallways can make an assisted living home more accessible. Our hall ways are lighted brightly 24/7 and are wide for easier movements.

Our smooth sliding drawers, instead of higher shelving, in the mini kitchenette cabinet areas, accommodate a person in a wheelchair. In addition, shelves under the sink and counter top can be converted from storage space to knee space for those who prefer to clean or do desk work while seated. Our kitchenette cabinets have D-shaped pulls that are a contrasting color to the cabinet door, making it much easier for the older person to grasp.

Our Bathrooms are 100% equipped with safety features. One

of the most important rooms in our community - allows our resident's to age in place - the bathroom. Grab bars, a seated bath chair, emergency call bells and a raised toilet seat provide stability for the older person and prevent falls. Falls in the bathroom or on the stairs are the second leading cause of accidents for elders, just behind automobile accidents. Our bathrooms are large in spacing. A larger bathroom makes maneuvering easier for people with walkers, canes, crutches, wheelchairs and automated scooters.

Eyesight changes as people age. The Sterling Aventura has adequate lighting in all living and social/recreational areas. We have installed lights with adjustable controls, dimmers, to help prevent glare and ensure proper lighting. In addition, all windows are equipped with shaded blinds to allow for each resident to adjust independently.

Many elders are choosing to move into proactive assisted living communities, many of which will have a number of the above features in place. The Sterling Aventura has planned ahead and made intentional "home" modification changes so that elders can choose to remain in a safe and secure environment, be comfortable in their surroundings, age in place, maintaining their independence and dignity. I know for my loved one, this would be the only decision to make - "the absolute best!" ... we provide it daily.