

Anniversary Book Supplement

Preface:

Originally, upon filling out the Dickstein anniversary questionnaire I did not recall anything particularly interesting or worthy of note about growing up in the Dickstein household (as I figured "I just had a normal childhood"). However, after attending the incredible anniversary gathering/event (on *motzo'ei Shabbos Parshas Vayeitzei*) and after reading the accompanying journal, I began to experience a re-awakening of many wonderful dormant memories. I decided to jot down my thoughts for anyone who might be interested. Besides the nostalgia this article will probably evoke in Ima and Aba and in my siblings old enough to remember these incidents, I hope it will serve as a source of inspiration for the younger generation in the sense that it portrays a simpler lifestyle from 30 to 40 years ago (1965-1975).

So far, the response has Boruch Hashem been very positive from those who have reviewed the original draft document. Many comments that were submitted have been incorporated in this (final) document. [The included remarks are preceded by the contributor's name/initials printed in **bold typeface**.]

Disclaimers & Admonitions:

I. These stories and recollections were recorded from memory without the intent to create or concoct anything. However, it is inevitable that with the passing of time some of the minor details have probably become a bit distorted in my mind or forgotten. Therefore, in some cases some *minor* details, such as the exact words of a conversation, had to be reconstructed based on assumption and speculation (and perhaps a small dose of imagination). Also, some of the given dates and prices are based on approximation. As this document is passed around, I'm sure that family members will submit corrections and modifications, which I hope to incorporate in a future, second printing. [Please don't hesitate to send in your comments and remarks.]

II. Some important words of caution: The author and publisher strongly recommend (on Ima's advice) using discretion when reading these stories to *young* children. Please use your parental judgment to censor any stories or episodes which could influence young, impressionable minds, possibly causing some youngsters to behave in a foolhardy, wild or mischievous manner.

III. The author also wishes to make it abundantly clear that many of these stories stand out *only* because they are the *exception*, rather than the rule. Understand, therefore, that some of the more exciting anecdotes contained herein do not accurately portray the typical orderly, organized tone of the Dickstein household. Readers are hereby given notice that it is improper and even unlawful to extract or infer from this document that the Dickstein children were lacking whatsoever in their overall behavior, good manners, parental supervision and daily baths with plenty of soap and vigorous scrubbing behind the ears.

.....
- Completed with Hashem's help on the sixth day of Chanukah, 5767

I. Pre-468 / East 94th Street (East Flatbush) - 1963-1969

Who remembers..... ??

1. ...Aba and Uncle Chaim learning nightly Gemara and Shulchan Aruch at our kitchen table in our small apartment (taking turns, one night upstairs and one night downstairs). We drifted off to sleep while listening to the sweet sound of their learning (and arguing - *milchamta shel Torah*).
2. Our humble apartment on East 94th Street in East Flatbush had no dining room. It had a simple living room or family room - which was used as a bedroom for two kids who slept together on the couch-bed every night.
3. ...*davening* at Manastrich Shul where most of the members were elderly (war survivors, or so it seemed), for whom the concept of having a large family *bli ayin horah* was a major novelty - The Dickstein kids had the *z'chus* of coming up to the *bimah* Friday night to drink the *kiddush* wine in *shul*. The "Candy Man" (or the *gabai*) used to *kibutz* with little Nochum Pesach, telling him, "its not ***nochen pesach***, *es iz* "***faren pesach***". [Using a play on words with the name Nochum Pesach to mean "*nochen pesach*" – *after Pesach* - he tried to joke that "now its not *after pesach yom tov*, it is *before pesach*."] – The man was very proud of his *ga'onisha chapp* as he repeated it each time he saw Nuchi.
4. On this topic about a large family - our great Uncles and Aunts, Al, Hy, Bernie, Manny, Sylvia, Chani, Suri etc. used to remark to the four Dickstein boys, "when are you guys going to start your own basketball team?"
5. The neighborhood was full of [old, non-bearded] Yiddish-speaking people, many of them non-frum (some of them shop-owners on Rutland Ave.), who would stop and try to speak us little *heimish*-looking kids. They would ask us in *Yiddish*, "do you go to *cheder*?" or "what's your name" ("*vi heist du*?") and to their great dismay (and to our embarrassment) we usually did not understand them because we did not know *yiddish*.
6. ...going to Baum's supermarket on the corner to buy nosh, which consisted of a choice of Katz's Kosher Popcorn or Wise Potato Chips (there was no other Kosher Junk-Food then).
7. ...our Sunday Carpool to and from Yeshiva of Eastern Pkwy, which consisted of Zaidy Knoll walking us to the Sutter Ave Train Line (for a one-stop ride to Eastern Pkwy), or on a nice day, he would save the 20-cent fare by walking us home alongside "Lincoln Terrace Park." [**Nochum Pesach**: "Let's not forget the story of how I walked home, at age 4 or 5, from school myself and I arrived home before the school bus?! – **Velvel**: I have no personal recollection of that episode, so everyone should ask Ima for the full un-abridged story.]
8. The novelty of getting a special car-ride in Uncle Ari's (O"H) car whenever he came to visit - or in Zaidy Lenchitz's car (he always had a different old car each time he came!)

9. Ima's *shvartzer* cleaning lady cleaned all day each Thursday for the total wage of \$10 for the entire day's work! (8b) Once Tante Esther's cleaning lady took/stole a few drinks of wine and got drunk on the job! [Footnote from **Nochum Pesach**: - this incident happened on East 9th Street.]
10. ..the pear tree in the back yard. We hardly ever went to the back yard because it was accessible only through the cellar in the back through the fold-out cellar door.
11. Aba went to Uncle Nachum's *chasuna* in St. Louis and brought us back some TWA pins (from the airplane) as souvenirs and we were quite happy & excited with that.
12. Someone must of got bored waiting for Ima to get everything ready to start the *seudah* in the Succah so a *minhag* was started whereby the Dickstein boys would circle the block on the first night of Succos before entering the Succah.
13. We would watch our non-*frum* neighbor's teenage daughter (Barbara was her name I believe) sticking her head outside her bathroom window (which was right opposite our windows) and smoking cigarettes so that her mother shouldn't see her. (I remember sticking our tongues out at her.). I wonder if her mother had a sense of smell?! [NP - Barbara had a brother named Kenny.]
14. The neighborhood "changed colors" and got pretty dangerous before we moved out... Zaidy Knoll had his office machines (meaning, his electric adding machine) stolen from his office in the basement. Mrs. Breuer (our tenant) had a *geneivah*. The Barnetzky's (two blocks away) heard someone break in to their front door downstairs and one the older Barnetzky boys had the wherewithal to say in a loud voice to his brother, "HEY JOE GET THE GUN" - thus scaring off the poor robbers!
15. There was no bakery in neighborhood and Aba would bring home a special "Jelly roll" cake from the East Side *l'kovod Shabbos*.
16. Mrs. Haber (an unfortunate *almanah* befriended by Bubby Knoll) would often visit (Ima and Bubby Knoll) and when she was homebound she would listen to Aba make *Havdalah* over the telephone every week.
17. Bubby Knoll's cleaning lady, "Carrey," who got so *heimish* that she stayed on as part of the family even after she was too old to clean much. She would get paid by Bubby Knoll just to come and *shmooze* over coffee and iron a few shirts (a tribute to Bubby Knoll's giving nature).
18. Sometimes Aba took us along on Purim if he got a ride to the East Side to give *Shalach Manos* to the Rosh Yeshiva, R' Moshe. On the way we would pass through Williamsburg to see a real Purim where everyone was dressed up in the street - something not common anywhere else in those days.
19. Our weekly allowance in elementary school was 10 cents per week – enough to buy one snack (of red sour-ball hard candies or a cup of soda) from the Yeshiva candy-machine.
20. In the summer of '67, the summer Chesky was born, Aba decided to give Ima a break and he sent all the kids over the age of 6 away to sleep-away camp. Avremi (age 6) and I (age 7) were sent to Camp Agudah **Bunk n.** (as we were too young for Camp Magen Avraham). At first upon applying to Camp Aguda, Aba was told they were full and the application was rejected. Rav Moshe, however, made a phone call that day to some *macher* in the Aguda office (to help Aba, his *talmid*). Somehow the next day they called back from the Aguda office and we were accepted into camp.

Ima did not receive any correspondence from her kids for the first week or two and she had no idea how we were doing. Apparently, my postcards got lost in the mail because the postman couldn't make out the address. Then when a letter finally arrived Ima couldn't read the handwriting! Since there were no phone calls to camp, Ima was quite concerned about our welfare - until she finally got a one-line postcard from little Avremi which read, "**my guzler is goo**"!?!? She eventually deciphered it to mean "**My counselor is good!**". This good piece of news made Ima feel a lot more relieved, knowing we were alive and well in camp.

Aba paid about \$40 per week for our stay at camp Aguda and he paid even less for the kids at camp Magen Avraham.

21. After Miriam Leah was born (right before Pesach of '69), Ima needed a rest so Aba sent all the kids away for the second part of Pesach. I went to Uncle Mutty in Queens (with some other kids) and I remember it was a bit of a culture shock. [NP - Bezalel and I were sent to the Fisher's in Boro Park and we had different type of culture shock.]

22. It was a quiet morning 7:00 a.m. on the second day of Pesach 1967 (or '66). Everyone is sleeping peacefully, when all of the sudden the silence is shattered by Velvel jumping out of bed and exclaiming with glee and excitement, "**It's chol hamo'ed!!**" Apparently, I was eagerly looking forward to, **and dreaming** about some *chol hamo'ed* family (or Pirchai) excursion. My brothers woke up startled, and when they finally realized what happened, they had a good laugh at my expense and poked plenty of fun at my "silly mistake." "How could it be *chol hamo'ed*" they asked me, "if there was no *havdalah* yet?!" My unrestrained *chol hamo'ed* excitement was a family joke for many years to come.

23. Our family doctor, old Dr. Snyder made house-calls (on occasion) and he would come with his little black doctor bag (like the one Fisher Price sells today for the kids). He would give a **shot** of penicillin to the sick kids (and that certainly discouraged anyone from playing hooky). He would make a funny bird noise when looking in the ears.

24. **NP:** - Who remembers the "Junk-Man" coming down the street with his horse and buggy (with clanging bells), collecting all kinds of scrap metal and stuff (and leaving a smelly trail behind in the road).

II. The old Country/ The Mountains of Old

1. We had great freedom running around all day in the bungalow colonies - without shirts, only *tzitzis* and undershirts. We hiked and explored many woods, swam many lakes and streams and hitched many roads.. [NP - We also made many fires!] Indeed, I vividly remember one incident in which some smart alec tried to add kerosene to the fire and the whole can exploded in our face (a close call). - The smell of singed hair remained with us for several days - I don't remember what excuse I gave Ima and Aba to explain that smell. [NP - We were free to run around all day and do what we want because those bungalow colonies never had afternoon day camps or organized groups of any sort. Nevertheless, I don't remember the kids complaining, "I am bored, what should I do?" Nochum remembers playing ping-pong with Aba (and recalls that Aba had a wicked backhand shot). On some occasions Aba played baseball, when the men in the bungalow colony would get together for a game on Sunday afternoon.] Some of the colonies had no *minyán* during the week (because most of the men were in the city). We

would have to catch a ride to a nearby colony. Sometimes we got a ride to “Woodridge Yeshiva” where R’ Meir Stern (and R’ Levi Kurpenia) were the Roshei Yeshiva (before Passaic). It was a *chashuva* out-of-town Yeshiva that closed down about 35 years ago (due to politics).]

2. It was quite a feat for Aba and Ima to pack stuff for a whole summer and taking a family of 7-10 kids in a hired station wagon (with an attached U-haul) for a good three-hour trip w/o any a/c. In those days the trip to the mountains was longer because the new Route 17 was not built yet. (Ima would sponge our faces with water if the car got very hot). One year everything was packed, babies, cribs, high chairs, bottles, blankets, pillows, toys, bikes and all kind of stuff - and the driver didn't show up.... Another time the driver came and then left because he said we had too much stuff (maybe he wanted more \$\$\$), and we had to unpack. Aba tried in vain to find another driver. [NP: In the end, Zaidy Lenchitz volunteered to drive us up with his own car and a rented U-haul – a major *chesed*.]

3. Once, as we were pulling into the Bungalow Colony, our car or U-Haul got stuck in the mud - quite a distance from our bungalow - so Aba and the driver had to *shlep* everything by hand to the bungalow - and Zaidy Dickstein o"H (who had a bungalow in that colony) came over with a wheel-barrel to help *shlep* stuff.

4. Many summers Aba worked during the week in the city and Ima had to handle the kids alone...and when necessary, threatening us, "I'll tell Aba when he comes back for Shabbos".

5. One bungalow colony had a Rebbe for the kids (a Yerushalmi, I believe) who would teach us in the woods and told great stories - but the problem was I didn't understand a word all summer long because he spoke only in Yiddish. [Nochum P: Adding to the problem was the fact that there was only **one group** for all of the boys of the colony of all ages in the same group (like the old-time European *cheder*).]

6. I slept in Zaidy (Yisrael) and Bubby (Hinda) Dickstein's bungalow sometimes (maybe when there was not enough space in our bungalow) and I would get quite scared upon hearing Zaidy groaning and yelling in his sleep due to nightmares resulting from his harrowing experiences in World-War I. (Bubby Hinda would have to shake and wake him to quiet him down.)

7. Bubby (Hinda) Dickstein would ask the kids to go pick blueberries (which she called "huckel-berries") in the woods and fields. If we brought back enough jars and cans full of blueberries she would bake delicious pies.

8. There was only one pay-phone and any time there was an incoming call, the party had to be paged far and wide. To make a call, you had to wait on line with a pocket full of quarters to feed the phone - No cell phones or calling cards in those days!

9. Chesky was 3 or 4 years old and wanted ice cream. He went to the colony concession/store and to make his request look realistic he cleverly asked the man for "a bread, a milk, and one ice cream" and told them to put it on Dickstein's bill - I don't remember where he dumped the extra milk and bread....

10. We would catch frogs in the creek and would throw them over the *mehitzah* into the swimming pool as a sure way of getting the girls out of the pool when their time was up.

11. Camp Staten Island (1972....):...we used to see R' Moshe learning all day right in front of our bungalow and snapping as many pictures as I wanted - Then selling copies of those pictures in the winter to *Bochrim* in Torah Vodaas.

III. NEW HOUSE - 468 E 9 Street:

- The NEW house cost about \$35,000. to the best of my recollection and the old house on E 94 was sold for \$28,000 or so. .

We were all very excited about moving to our *NEW & Fancy* house?

: The following is partial list of מעלות and amenities we were all looking forward to:

- (a) Each kid would have their own bed in a normal bedroom (as opposed to sleeping two kids together on the couch).
- (b) I would be sleeping on a new bunk-bed with Avremi, [P.S. It didn't take too long till we began fighting who should get the bottom bed.]
- (c) There were two side-yards and a "spacious" back-yard (that was accessible w/o going through the cellar!). The back yard had room for play, as well as a (well-tended) garden with fig trees!
[Indeed, we used to periodically to go swimming or take a dip to cool off in a small 2-ft pool in the back yard till we were pretty old. We also had some very bountiful fig seasons. Sometimes we would have to eat "fig compote" throughout the winter. Zaidy Knoll would also sell the surpluss figs in front of Torah Vodaas (with Chesky or Ely's help) before Rosh Hashana, for *she'hecheyanu.*]
- (d) The house had an attic and basement! (e) a bell that worked, even a return-bell that we could press in the kitchen and it would allow someone to enter downstairs - a real electronic wonder!
- (f) three porches, one in back and one downstairs in front and a covered porch upstairs, which was going to be our play-room! Imagine not having to always play in the living room! (Though I don't remember actually playing in the play room too much).
- (g) In addition to a living room, the house had a dining room with a light fixture (chandelier), (as opposed to the simple covered light bulb that we were used to).
- It didn't dawn upon us at that point that some of the rooms and porches of our NEW house were not much larger than a closet!
- (h) The house came equipped with a window-air-conditioner in the dining room - The first air conditioner ever in the Dickstein Home! It took us a bit of time to realize that the a/c was a pre WWII model which blew in only dusty hot air, even worse than the fan in the old house. (It was replaced a few years later with a new a/c which is presently still in the dining room since 1973 or so.)
- (i) Our appt. was re-modeled in accordance with the latest fashion standards - Aba had someone put in a "Hollywood kitchen" (meaning, wooden cabinets and paneled walls) and tile bathroom. We even had a built-in matching bench in the kitchen with matching cushions. And the dining/living room came with wall-to-wall carpeting (something novel to us - never mind the fact that the carpet was many years old at the time - it still lasted Ima and served her well until the turn of the century, around the year 2000, when it was finally replaced with Tante Suri's old carpet (I think).

* Buying a house on the block of Torah Vodaas proved to be a great choice and *hashgacha pratis*. We had a *varm Yeshivisha minyan* on the block, a good place to learn *bein hazmanim* and on Shabbos etc. Particularly memorable is the *yomim noraim davening* and Simchas Torah at Torah Voda'as. I spent many hours after school playing in Torah Vodaas yard and gym, playing with *bochrim* from Torah Vodaas. We had the *z'chus* to see and hear from R' Gedalia Schor and R' Pam, as well the other *Rabbe'im* and Roshei Yeshiva. Aba always made full use of the Bais Medresh, learning there nightly and going twice a week to hear R' Zelig Epstein and Rav Pam's *shiurim* (Zaidy Knoll also went to the *shiur*). Aba would also run over with us boys after Shalosh Seudos to hear R' Gedalia Schor's *shmuez*. (Though his *shmuezin* were above my head, I still got the flavor of his style and *gadlus* (which is apparent in his children today).

IV. Who remembers...

1. ...Betzael's Bar Mitzvah in the country. Uncle Chaim taught all the bar mitzvah boys the *trop* for *layning*, but Betzael had Uncle Hashy in the mountains to brush him up on his *layning*. We had a Shabbos *seudah* for about 20-25 people (our family, the Fishers and some Uncles). In those days, Ima spent months baking all the cakes and cooking (almost) all the food for the Bar Mitzvah.
2. Shabsi Fisher's wedding (about 1970). We were sooo excited (as it was the first wedding of a cousin - and the first wedding I ever went to). We had a little let-down at the wedding because we didn't get a seat at a regular table.
3. Shalom Yosef Dickstein (Mutt's *bechor*) fancy Bar Mitzvah in Queens, we went for Shabbos as well as for the Sunday affair (it was quite a fancy and expensive affair as I recall).
4. Nachum Pesach's Bar Mitzvah. He had a *kiddush* followed by Shabbos *seudah* for family and few friends (probably 40 people or so). [Let's not forget the "Shabbos of the famous missing blankets", when Nochum invited his friend, Avremel Brog, the famous 9th Grade Rebbe in Peekskill. (Ask Rabbi Brog about the details of this story, he remembers it quite well) Ima still harbors a small suspicion that it might have been my handiwork, for every once in a while Ima would say, "Tell me Velvy, was it you?" However, for the record, I still maintain I am 100% innocent - unless I was sleep-walking at the time!]
5. My Bar Mitzvah and Avremi's, consisted of a Bagel & Lox breakfast at our respective Yeshivos - for about 60 people or so. Total expense - \$100-\$150 (approx.).
6. Before our Bar Mitzvah we took the train to meet Aba in the lower East Side to buy our suit and hat. Aba picked me out a brown double-breasted suit (on sale). It was the ONLY suit bought for the next 10 or 12 years, for I made use of Nochum Pesach and Betzael's old suits (Each Pesach time they received free suits at their Yeshiva, donated by a benefactor, Howard Lasher, or something like that).
7. Since we never had a car, we either took public transportation to stores and school etc. or drove our bikes all over town at all hours (dangerous or not, - believe me there were many close calls, either with *shkotzim* starting up, or with traffic accidents) - Betzael's bike once got

a flat a few miles from our house and he had to walk back with the bike (through some unpleasant neighborhoods).

Once some *goyim* cornered me on my way to YOB and took my bus-pass. All of a sudden a lady walking her dog passed by and yelled at them, “you better give that kid back his pass or I’ll have my dog bite your head off” (They listened to her). [**Aba:**– “Once one of the boy’s had his bus pass stolen and the police caught the thief. Aba had to go down to the court with the boy, either Bezalel or Nochum.” The *shvartzer*’s friends took one look at little Betzalel and said to the thief, “What? You started up with that little kid (Have you no shame)! ”]

7b. A little while after we moved in, there was excitement one morning in the neighborhood when people noticed **bloody** footsteps up and down the block and in many backyards (including ours). It seems some burglar was running away and climbing over a fence when he lost his shoe and continued running even after his foot became bloody. [All the police had to do was follow the footsteps to the culprit!] – or so the story went.

8. The excitement when the twins were born - When they came home the fun started... The night nurse naming Chaya, "*Chayla the Shrayala*" due to her loud (and constant) crying.

9. We often were given the chore to keep an eye on the twins, and also on Miriam Leah in the country (Staten Island camp) - no easy task.

10. We had a *shvartzer* lady, Mrs. Marshal, who came to help during the day for a few months after the twins were born (sponsored by the city). She was in the process of trying to bathe little Chesky and she slipped INTO THE BATHTUB. Ima had to give her a change of clothing.

11. On Thursday nights (if Ima didn't make supper) she would give us each a dollar to buy supper from the Torah Vodaas canteen. The canteen, located in the Dormitory building downstairs - where they have a nursery now, consisted a room full of vending machines (with franks, burgers, knishes, danishes, ice cream, etc.) and a microwave oven to heat the stuff. [This was before the Yeshiva Ketanah moved into the dorm. Building.] On Friday we would get 40 cents to buy Pizza in the corner Pizza shop.

12. When we moved in, our neighbor (Grossman’s house) was an Italian guy named Mr. Alvarez who owned a big German Shepard dog. He had a little girl named Gloria [**Miriam Leah Strauss:** Her name was Lorie, not Gloria.] who was Sara Leiba’s age. Sarah Leiba and Bracha Baila (Gradman) would sometimes play jump rope with Lorie outside (until they got a bit older) and Mr. Alvarez would call Bracha Baila “*Rocca Bella*” – a real Italian-sounding name! Everyone was really scared of that dog except for Dovi Adler who loved animals and made friends with the dog (and was able to touch and pat it) by giving it half of his lunch (salami sandwich) every day for a period of time. [**MLS:** Mr. Alvarez worked in the sign business and he did some of his work in his driveway. All day we would hear the screeching noise of his saw cutting through the metal signs in his driveway. One day (at the behest of her parents, I presume) Brocha Baila told Lorie that she could no longer play with her, and unfortunately that caused a lot of hard feelings.

13. The *shikkar goy* Jimmy and his kids lived across the street. From time to time there was always trouble with him and his kids. – Once there was even an all-out brawl in front of our house on Shabbos, when Jimmy broke Rabbi Pechee’s shoulder. Once, to our great consternation and concern, we found one of our little kids (I think Eli) calling out the front

porch window, “There is Jimmy with the big fat belly” (He could of got the whole house burnt down, but B”H I think Jimmy was too drunk to pay any attention). [MLS: Believe it or not, one of Jimmy’s kids eventually joined the police, (or the auxiliary police). I think it was a way to keep his family out of trouble. Let’s not forget to mention the apt. building next door which used to be full of *shvartzers*. One of the boys there was named Tilton, and we were petrified to walk past them, so we would cross the street. They hung out all day and sometimes had block parties and danced in the water of the fire hydrant. Boy, were we excited when

we heard the building was sold and the tenants were being thrown out. It took a long time until all the tenants finally left. One night, after the building was already vacant and boarded up, we saw a candle flickering in one of the windows and we were shaking out of our wits, thinking, who knows who’s hiding in there!!!] In fact, Zayde Knoll was very instrumental in finding out who the owner was and getting him to sell the building, and then getting people in the neighborhood involved in buying it etc.

14. We stuffed loads of people into our succah. Ima and some girls had to listen to Kiddush from the upstairs porch and eat upstairs (due to taking care of babies and lack of room in succah).

A typical example of our spirited Torah discussions in the Succah:

Aba would typically mention a new story or *p’sak* from R’ Moshe or Reb Dovid he picked up fresh off the press in MTJ. The fun would get started when Uncle Chaim would inevitably respond from the other end of the table, “that’s a tremendous *chiddush* and its *farkert* from the Chazon Ish and/or from a *befeirisha Mishna Berurah* or *Tosfos in Eruvin*. Then everyone would get a chance at chiming in with *sevoros* and bringing *rayos* pro and con. Uncle Chaim would hold his ground and the discussion/argument would continue for the whole *seuda*. At the following *seuda* one of our boys would pipe up with a new proof or rebuttal, explaining that R’ Moshe apparently learned a different *p’shat* in *Tosfos*...and then Round-Two of the discussion/fight would begin....and so on.

P.S. I think we might have prevailed on Uncle Chaim to be *modeh* or change his mind once or twice throughout the years.

15. A year or two after we moved in, Rav Pam moved into the neighborhood. A week or two later, Rav Pam and his Rebbetzin paid us a social visit one *motzo’ei Shabbos* because they wanted to meet their new neighbors!!

V. Fun, Mischief and Antics:

Our house (and furniture) was great for all types of sporting events and performances:

1. The annual LDI Chanukah and Purim productions, using the living room (either in our apt. or by Lenchitz) as the stage with a curtain strung up between the living room and dining room where the patrons and viewers would sit.
2. The shinny slippery long hallway in our house was great for hockey, using a rolled up pair of socks as the puck.
3. Every door in the house has a protruding ledge above it, which served as a perfect basket for many great basketball games (using a small ball or socks), especially in the living room.

4. Within a two-year span (1971-1973 approx) I had the misfortune of being in the middle of much property damage.

(a) While practicing hitting a small super-ball in the upstairs bedroom (in Zaidy Knoll's house), the window *somehow* got a big hole!! (b) while horsing around in the dining room, someone was pushed through the glass door of the *Seforim Shrank* (luckily with only minor bodily injury). (c) While jumping on the living room couch and swinging around a footsie toy, the living-room light-cover somehow came crashing down.

-- I remember making trips (on foot) with Zaidy Knoll to the glazier to get glass to fix some of these damages. The upstairs window was a bit tricky though, for Zaidy had to tie a few belts to my waste as a harness so that he could hold on to me while I went out on the roof 3 stories up, in order to get the window back in (or possibly, that expedition on the roof was for another project).

(d) How about the time I got the notion to bounce our full-size large basketball around the dining room. It somehow bounced on top of the *Seforim Shrank*. Now, we all know that the top of the black *seforim shrank* served as our "China Closet" where the chrome *liechters*, silver-plated *becher*, and green esrog box was kept. Aside from the *liechters* tumbling down and bending a bit out of shape (which I hoped no one would notice after I quickly put them back up in their honored place), I had the bad *mazel* of knocking down our new *challah* board that Aba just got from Zaidy Dickstein as gift. (I think it was a souvenir from Eretz Yisrael and it was the first *challah* board we ever owned!). Needless to say the marble center broke into several pieces and the scolding I received was not pretty. Aba said, "What am I going to tell Zaidy when he comes for Shabbos and asks about his new *challah* board?" [For some reason, I was at a loss for a satisfactory answer at that point...] למעשה, I took some glue (or plaster) and glued the pieces back in. Although the cracks were quite visible (and not too pretty), I hoped and prayed that Zaidy Dickstein wouldn't *chop* what happened... Aba used that *challah* board for many, many years (maybe it is still use today – check it out).

5. Worse than property damage, I was also responsible for a few injuries:

(a) When I was about 8 years old, Uncle Motty's family came to visit (in the old house) and we got wild in Ima and Aba's bedroom. I mistakenly pushed David (a Maggid Shiur today in Rechovot) off Aba's bed and he got a good gash in his head. This was definitely not the type of games he was used to playing in Queens (where he was forbidden to go into his parent's bedroom). Moral of the Story: Never allow more than 4 kids at a time to jump on a bed! [Ima remarked: "I was probably nursing the baby at the time!"]

(b) In the same year, while horsing around in our living room, I pushed Nuchi into the radiator and he needed a number of stitches above his forehead. [NP: - We were playing rough "tackle football"] It must have been a pretty good push because the scar is still visible today. Moral: Wear helmets when playing near a radiator!

The main thing is that I somehow emerged from all these incidents relatively intact and emotionally un-scarred. For this I am very thankful!

6. Who remembers Sara Leiba (age 8 or 9) and Bracha Baila disturbing the Shabbos afternoon calm when they would suddenly start squealing, "Where's the doll that was just here

in this carriage?!” Of course, one of the boys (I wonder which one) was having a delightful time pestering the girls (who were trying to play house), by kidnapping their sleeping babies from the doll carriage, and then enjoying the show (sorry!).

VI. The Complete Unabridged Story of "Julius Knoll's Coffee Shop"

One Shabbos (around 1974) the phone rang upstairs in Bubby (Rivka O"H) Knoll's apartment. In those days there was no caller ID to see whose calling, and no answering machines to stop the ringing after 3 or 4 times. The phone rang for a long time (lets say, 15-20 rings), which made Bubby Knoll nervous. She said to Zaidy Knoll, "I wonder whose trying to reach me, maybe someone's in trouble." Zaidy said, "don't worry, it's probably a wrong number". Throughout Shabbos the phone kept ringing at different times, each time causing Bubby Knoll to get more nervous. She was imagining all types of possible misfortunes and tragedies. She said to Zaidy Knoll, "Maybe a relative is very sick and needs to reach me" and Zaidy said, "don't worry..." Bubby Knoll came down to Ima and expressed her concerns, saying, "I wonder whom that could be and why they are calling..." By the time Shalosh Seudos arrived, Bubby Knoll was really nervous.

Lo and behold, right after Shabbos the phone rings again upstairs and Bubby Knoll jumps on it, "Yes, Hello Hello". The official voice at the other end says, "Hello, Is this Julius Knoll from The Julius Knoll Coffee Shop??"

Bubby Knoll: - "Julius Knoll lives here, but he doesn't own a Coffee Shop."

Caller's voice: - "Well, I'm looking for the owner of The Julius Knoll Coffee Shop and I've been trying all day to reach him at this number".

Bubby Knoll: - "I'm sorry but you seem to have the wrong party and the wrong number."

Voice:- "I'm so sorry Ma'am, Good Bye!"

Bubby Knoll comes downstairs, exclaiming with relief, "Freyda you wouldn't believe what just happened. It seems that someone had the wrong number...etc. etc."

After a few minutes, Ima hears a kid cracking up in the bedroom near the kitchen. She comes in and something clicks in her head. She says, "Velvy, did that phone call have something to do with you?" "I bet it did," she said (seeing the phone on the bed). I had no choice but to admit that I concocted the phony call in an attempt to calm Bubby Knoll down. [I don't remember if Bubby Knoll found out, but everyone sure had a good laugh. - I explained to my kids when I recalled this story, "Shtick is OK if its for a good reason, but not if it hurts someone's feelings *chas v'shalom* - just like Yaakov Avinu had to use trickery to get his *berachos*".]

VII The Snowball/Egg Incident of '74:

In July of 1974, Ima (or Bubby Knoll o"H) was defrosting the freezer. Walking by, I noticed a tub full of ice and snow and I experimented making some nice hard snowballs. Then I had this bright idea to toss some snowballs out the window of Bubby's 3rd-floor apartment, figuring the pedestrians on East 9th would be pleased to see that it was snowing in July! (I think I got Avremi or Nuchi involved in this exciting venture.)

A little while later, one of our girls charged up the steps exclaiming, “A lady is knocking on the door downstairs yelling that some kids are throwing EGGS at her from the upstairs window and she is threatening to call the police!” “Ima wants to know what’s going on.” All of my sincere attempts at explaining that it was only a little snow fell on deaf ears. The lady sneered, “Yeh, right, tell it to the Marines, you expect me to believe it’s snowing in July...?!” “ Ima finally calmed down the lady and got her to leave, so I eventually came out of hiding once the coast was clear. Of course I was summarily reprimanded, and I thought to myself, “How come I’m always the one getting in trouble; I was just having a little clean fun, why is everyone picking on me,?!” Indeed, I wonder why.

THE END!

Addendum to the Supplement / Communications & Correspondence

The following is a record of some historical, behind-the-scenes, never-before-published e-mail exchanges:

Part I pertains to the original planning stages for the major Anniversary Event which started in September, Rosh Hashana time.

Part II contains remarks and feed-back concerning the actual event and the subsequent supplement.

Part I / Planning stage

From: Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L
Date: Wednesday, September 27th, 2006 1:35 PM
To: Al Hadaf [mailto:cong_al_hadaf@yahoo.com]
Subject: Anniversary planning

"Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L" <mstrauss@bmg.edu> wrote:

Dear Velvy,

"We are starting to think of ideas for Aba and Imas 50th anniversary, iy"H.

"We are thinking of writings, calendar, pictures, etc and a sort of get together. If you have any good ideas or brainstorm, please send them to me or Miriam or Chayi!!! Thanx.

P.S. How is Baila?. Did she finish cooking for Chanuka yet?!!! How is Russi & everyone else?

From: Al Hadaf [mailto:cong_al_hadaf@yahoo.com]
Date: Wednesday, September 27, 2006 12:06 PM
To: Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L
Subject: Anniversary planning

Dear Miriam,

How about a **real** nice Hallmark golden-anniversary CARD!

That's the best anniversary idea I have so far.

If no one offers to go out & buy it, I would even volunteer to go out and get it!

I'll even throw in a nice box of Barton's chocolate to top it off!

How's that for a good son!??

P.S. (forget about Chanukah) Baila is busy cleaning for Pesach now!

Thursday, Sept. 28th "Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L" <mstrauss@bmg.edu> wrote:

Dear Velvy,

You are a real CHARACTER.
A CARD and a BARTONS, You have it made!!! *Shoin!!*

[2 months later....]

From: "Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L" <mstrauss@bmg.edu>
Sent: Monday, November 27, 2006 1:58 PM
To: <cong_al_hadaf@yahoo.com>
Subject: Anniversary planning

Dear Velvy,

Hi, the scrapbook has still a bit more room, only if you're interested. Would you like to

write a note, thought, essay to your parents to be included?

Boruch Hashem it is really coming out nice. I think they will love it. I hope so because we are really putting in hundreds of hours to it. I already have plenty of stuff, but if you would like, you still can submit something. Tanta Esther is submitting something still as well as Sara Leba.

Part II / Post-Anniversary-Event remarks & feed-back:

The morning after....

From: "Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L" <mstrauss@bmg.edu>
Sent: Monday, December 04, 2006
To: Al Hadaf [mailto:cong_al_hadaf@yahoo.com]
Subject: Anniversary Event Follow-Up

Dear Velvy,

Baila told me how you emailed pictures of the anniversary party to Russi and Shimmy and they enjoyed them during their lunch. Can you email them to me? I would love to see them and then forward them to Binyomin. He really felt bad he missed it the big event.

Boruch Hashem, Binyomin had a great trip to Eretz Yisrael. He loved the time he spent with Sruly. He did his Yeshiva checking, and he had a grand Seuda by your kids (Russi).

Did you like the party? I think Aba and Ima were quite overwhelmed, but it was very beautiful Boruch Hashem. I hope our hard work paid off...

From: Al Hadaf [mailto:cong_al_hadaf@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, December 05, 2006 6:34 PM
To: Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L
Subject: Anniversary Event Follow-Up

Dear Miriam,

The event was great, very moving... etc. Your efforts were definitely worth it and noticeable. In fact, I got so nostalgic that I've been jotting down many of my own memories, incidents and anecdotes - I'm holding now by 10 pages!

I really first wanted to look it over and correct a few things, but I guess I will attach a copy in the meantime for your review. Let me know your thoughts on it...

Should I revise it? - Is it too long and boring??

Baila spoke to Binyomin and she was cracking up from his report from Yerushalaim.

Please send regards to Binyomin and tell him thanks for looking in on my kids and taking care of Sruly. He had a great boost and he sounds all pumped.

Velvy

From: cong_al_hadaf@yahoo.com

Sent: Thu, 7 Dec 2006 1:41 PM

To: Russie ; mstrauss@bmg.edu ; yty1@aol.com; mirid@juno.com; campshira@kewnet.com

Subject: Anniversary book supplement

Dear Family,

You could check out this attached 10-pg.draft document of musings and recollections. Please send me comments and corrections

- You could also check out the following special anniversary website if you have access.

<http://congalhadaf.tripod.com/anniversary.html>

Enjoy,

Velvel

Sruly's e-mail message from Yerushalaim (from Russy's computer)

Sent: Thursday, December 07, 2006 2:54 PM

From: Russie Aboud

Subject: Anniversary website

Hi! It's Sruly.

I just enjoyed a lavish dinner at the Abouds, accompanied by this insightful article about your youth. It feels good knowing that "**getting picked on**" came through inheritance!

Kol Tuv. Gotta go.

Sent: Thursday, December 07, 2006 1:35 PM

From: Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L

Subject: "I remember when"

"Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L" <mstrauss@bmg.edu> wrote:

I am in middle of reading your *lange megilla*, I am sure Ima would love it,

“The guzler goo” story was a real 'masterpiece', even I know the story. I think you should leave your document as is - without trying to shorten it. It is all very interesting, and Ima would love every bit of it, so why take out anything. Whoever doesn't want to read so much, could just chuck it and you'll never know to be insulted!!!

"Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L" <mstrauss@bmg.edu> wrote:

Velvy:

Hi, I told Aba about your upcoming supplement, Aba was thrilled, looking forward

"Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L" <mstrauss@bmg.edu> wrote:

CHESKY IS PLOTZING TO SEE IT; I AM WAITING TO GET THE FINAL COPY FROM YOU.

Sent: Friday, December 08, 2006 10:36 AM

From: ytv1@aol.com ytv1@aol.com

Subject: Anniversary book supplement

Chaya writes:

Dear Velvy:

I don't know if Baila gave you the message but we really all enjoyed your article - I'll bring it over today after work for Ima - I didn't get to view the website you emailed me yet -

Have a good Shabbos!

Then 20 minutes later...Chaya writes again:

Sent: Friday, December 08, 2006 10:50 AM

From: ytv1@aol.com

Subject: Anniversary book supplement

Just checked out the website - YOU ARE A RIOT of a RABBI!!!

Do you think Ab&I will appreciate this publicity... ? They want to keep this low key

- I guess I can show it to them and explain them the website is just a joke and is not accessible to the public!

From: Russie

To: Al Hadaf

Sent: Saturday, December 09, 2006 7:21 PM

Subject: Re: Anniversary

Dear Totty,

We got to read about the good old days in 468 E. 9th St and before. It was very interesting. Maybe one day we could write such kind of olden day stories about ourselves. [Example: Going to the mechanic during Sheva Berachos with our old green Ford!]

Shimmie and Russie

From: "Miriam Dickstein" <mirid@juno.com>
To: <cong_al_hadaf@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 10, 2006 6:14 PM
Subject: Re: Anniversary book supplement

Our family enjoyed the supplement very much. My kids want to know why their father didn't have such excitement. Nachum has some valuable editorial comments which I think should be included before you print your final copy.

Kol Tuv,
M.

Wednesday, December 13, 2006

"*Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L*" <mstrauss@bmg.edu> wrote:

Dear Velvy,

HOWS EVERYTHING? WHEN IS YOUR SUPPLEMENT GONNA 'BE PUBLISHED'?? _____

From: Al Hadaf [mailto:cong_al_hadaf@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2006 2:49 AM
To: Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L
Subject: Supplement

Dear Miriam,

Nochum just sent me some *hosafos*, so maybe next week I'll get a "round tuit". -
Bye, Velvel

"*Strauss, Mrs. Miriam L*" <mstrauss@bmg.edu> wrote:

Can't wait! Are you getting together Chanukah...

From: ytv1@aol.com
To: cong_al_hadaf@yahoo.com
Date: Thu, 28 Dec 2006 12:41:30
Subject: Re: "memories"

Hi! I printed your memoirs and sent them to Ora Pella to give Betzalel (they live a few doors from each other) in the meanwhile she found it so interesting she did not want to part with it just yet. I will call her and ask her to send it on to Betz. and I will give her a final copy for herself when you send me the final version.

The disclaimers were very cute and I must say very well written - *mamish* professional!!

Chayi

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