



QUOTH THE MAVEN

BY BEVERLY KING POLLOCK

Bar Mitzvahs are for Crying

Last Saturday I didn't cry at my son's Bar Mitzvah. (I couldn't spare the time.) But my mother and her four sisters made up for me. Afterwards my 13 year old son told me he saw so many wet faces in the audience he started to worry. He didn't know whether he was that bad -- or that good.

Tante Bloomeh said my husband and I looked perfectly relaxed during the services. And why not? It was the only time during the whole weekend we got a chance to sit down.

For when you have 45 relatives coming to town from distant places like New York, Cleveland and Atlanta, you have to entertain and feed and transport to and from the airport.

I was telling a friend how my husband filled up the car with gas three times in three days (about 60 gallons). And she said she measured the success of her Bar Mitzvah weekend not in terms of gasoline but toilet paper. Would you believe 10 rolls? (Women wrap their hair in the stuff at bedtime to protect the beauty parlor look.)

The Friday before the Bar Mitzvah our dinner was in three shifts, depending on the time of the guests' arrival. But before the last sitting I had a slightly traumatic experience. My daughter was an hour late coming home from college and my stomach started to worry.

Then she called to say the car she was riding home in was hit by another car -- thank God

LAS VEGAS ISRAELITE

she's okay -- but before I found out and in the meantime trying to keep the accident a secret from my mother I overcooked the turkey and had to use up all the cranberry sauce I made to last through Thanksgiving as camouflage.

Saturday morning my son went to Shul before we did so he could practice once more with the Rabbi. And again I received a terrifying phone call. This time from my son. Don't ask me how it happened. All I know is he ripped the seat of his Bar Mitzvah pants. Thirty-two phone calls later I found a stranger to sew 'em up before services started.

You don't know how you manage to live through it all but you do and you enjoy. And some things stand out in your mind. Like when the Rabbi trying to reassure my son beforehand said, "Don't think of yourself as being in the presence of the congregation. Just think of yourself as being in the presence of God."

Modestly I admit our son was magnificent. Cousin Moishe said it was the first time he had heard a speech obviously written by the Bar Mitzvah boy and not delivered in machine gun fashion. (That was a compliment, I think.)

We also heard other nice remarks. My neighbor said, "Can your son cater my David's Bar Mitzvah in January?"

And a prominent member of the congregation said, "Your son is the Shul's Freddie Bartholomew."

And Cousin Mottel said, "That boy's been Bar Mitzvah before!"

One thing for sure: no boy ever flunked his Bar Mitzvah!

The Sisterhood ladies catered a beautiful lunch. But we were so busy with the photographer I didn't have time to taste. (I also forgot to give away the centerpieces.)

Saturday night with dinner at the house for the out-of-towners I still didn't have time to taste. Or even to talk. (But I did get lots of advice on whose names I should mention in my column.)

I peeked at my son as he was raking in -- that is, accepting envelopes from the guests. And I noticed after he thanked each person for the "contribution," his eyes turned to the ceiling and his lips kept moving without saying a word. Then I realized why. He was adding up the amount of each check!

For my Bar Mitzvah bocher wants to get enough money to spend a summer working on a kibbutz in Israel. (Another year of baby

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The total number of tourists to Israel in the present year, will reach about

FRIDAY, NOV. 26, 1971 sitting jobs should do it.) But tell me, is it fair for a 13 year old boy to go to Israel and not his parents? (My husband doesn't have any money left from HIS Bar Mitzvah!)

With all the happy turmoil, we received only one telegram from someone that nobody knows, not even my mother.

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