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 Editor and Publisher Jack Tell
 Business Manager Bea Tell, 870-1255
 Vegas News Helene Stadler, 384-3685
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A Delicate Balance

Congresswoman Bella Abzug of New York in a recent speech made an interesting distinction for Jews. She said there was a difference, for instance, between friends of Israel who have a real concern for it and Senators Buckley of New York and Jackson of Washington. She pointed out that Buckley's friendliness to Israel could be motivated by cold war policies and that Senator Jackson's sudden emergence as a friend of Israel could also be attributed to his intent to become a Presidential nominee.

There are two sides to the point made by Mrs. Abzug. The first is that her analysis could be true. The second is that in the case of Israel, with her back up to the wall, her motivations might be compelling. But a delicate balance could be achieved in securing the friendship of officials in the American government who are motivated by sincere concern for Israel's welfare and agreement with her policies. It is even perhaps to the interest of Israel to welcome among her friends all those who are critical, but nonetheless support her position.

This is not an easy stance to take but it behooves Israel as well as the Jews of the United States to take principled postures. It is also in the tradition.

Two Girls Poetize

By RABBI SAMUEL SILVER

In the golden days a Bar Mitzvah boy would deliver a discourse on Torah.

Later some Bar Mitzvah boys gave "Thank-You" talks. Some still do. The old "Today I am a man," talk has given away to more mature presentations by some of our youngsters.

Sam Levenson kidded this kind of talk and told about the lad who began, "Today I am a fountain pen."

One rabbi based his sermon on that Levenson gibe, saying that every one of us should be like a fountain pen, writing new chapters of glory and creativity in our lives.

In the olden days there was no such thing as a Bar Mitzvah. There is now.

And in Jacksonville, Florida, two girls who became Bat Mitzvah (the correct term is Bnot Mitzvah) the same night collaborated on a lovely poem I'd like to share with you, with thanks to Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins who sent it on to us. The girls' names are Ami Esman and Loru Plotkin and this is what they composed.

Dear God, we stand here today in humble gratitude

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YOUR RENEWAL IS APPRECIATED

Before all who have helped us develop our attitude

Of pride and delight in the ways of a Jew;
 We hope this heritage will always be true:
 To keep the Sabbath tradition alive
 Is one of the goals towards which we strive
 To light the candles, to sip the wine
 To break the challah before we dine,
 All this in a home of love and goodwill
 That's what we girls one day will fulfil.
 To all of our family with us this day,
 To our teachers and friends we want to say:
 For your love and attention and affectionate care
 We offer before you our thankful prayer.

Pretty good for 13-year olds, wouldn't you agree?

TELLING IT LIKE IT IS

(Continued from Page 1)

not saying one word all year yet rating the most controversial news headlines of any Las Vegas anytime....

Paul Price, for writing one decent column all year. In case old Pauly is curious as to which one it was, we commend him for his stand behind Lonnie Zarowitz, a positive miscarriage of Nevada justice. We hope the year 1972 brings at least two winning efforts by old Pauly....

Hank Greenspun, for beating out every newspaper advertising salesman in the nation in gross sales. Hank sold a whopping 15-year advertising contract to the Hughes Hotels for the sum of \$500,000 paid in full in advance via his pal Robert Maheu. The advertising contract was signed back on May 15, 1967, but the modest Hank Greenspun decided not to brag about this one. Not when he was still billing the Hughes Hotels for their regular advertising. To add the icing, old Hank sold this 15-year contract without offering the slightest rate discount over this extensive period. What a salesman! So Hank gets the slap on the back from ad salesmen all over the country since his coup was discovered at the end of this past year of 1971....

Sam Boyd, Jackie Gaughan, Jimmy Gay, et al., for bringing to Las Vegas a first rate class hotel and casino operation, the Union Plaza in the downtown area....

Joe Delany, for remaining a reporter, not an arbitrator, in the current negotiations between AGVA and strip hotel owners with regard to review type performers. The battle could be a long and tough one if both sides are not flexible.

Jay Sarno, for laughing in the face of criticism and continuing to update for Las Vegas the most novel fun house in town, his Circus Circus....

Don Digilio, for giving this town impressive journalistic commentary and reporting which is so sadly lacking here....

Ralph Pearl, for trying to buck the system once in awhile....

Forrest Duke, for consistent, informative entertainment news. May all the accidents to Forrest have already happened in 1971....

Danny Thomas and Jack E. Leonard, who talked and moaned the county commission right out of a five per cent tax levy on entertainer's salaries. What the usually hard commission failed to realize was that these men are actors. They are trained to make you laugh or cry or even change your mind. The five per cent tax levy was a very important one. Think about it fellas when your welfare money runs out in January....

Jack Tell, who has guts twice the size of ordinary humans. All that our dad has been standing and fighting for during the past seven years is coming to light via documentation and reports in other newspapers. May he find 1972 a very healthy year....

We told you the above observations were merely the hindsight of a Monday morning quarterback reflecting on the issues and people who made the news in 1971. They may be taken seriously or lightly, whatever the case may be. However, if anyone cares to take issue, please let us know and we may print your observations on 1971.

TEL AVIV (WNS)--Absorption ministry spokesmen revealed they were expecting a planeload of immigrants a day from the Soviet Union during the week of Dec. 12-18. They said if the rate of influx continues, more than twice as many Jewish emigres will arrive in December than in all of 1970.

TELL TALES

"One Man Plus The Truth Constitutes A Majority"

BY JACK TELL



(Continued from Page 1)

less fortunate in his native town in Asia Minor. He was elevated to Bishop of Myra and in the 9th century was canonized. His Dutch name was Santa Claus.

The furthest reference to a Christmas tree is a legendary story of a wounded Swedish officer being cared for by the people of Leipzig during the 30 Years War in the 17th century. As an offer of gratitude, he set up a lighted tree in a church on Christmas Day.

The Christmas tree was introduced to America in 1747 by Germans settling in Pennsylvania. Five years later the Moravian sect decorated their trees with lighted candles. Catholic and Protestant colonists from Holland introduced the annual St. Nicholas visitation to America.

Early colonists were divided in the recognition of December 25th. Members of Church of England, Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Episcopalian and certain German sects honored the holiday. Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians and Puritans ignored the date. It was on the night of December 25, 1776, George Washington crossed the Delaware River to defeat the Hessians celebrating Christmas at Trenton.

Fantasy had Santa arriving in a cart, a wagon, on mule, drawn by goats and other means of transportation until Clement Moore's "A Visit From St. Nicholas" in 1822, and thereafter the popular conception was a sled drawn by reindeer. In 1847, the first classroom Christmas tree was decorated in a New York City Episcopalian Sunday School.

The individual states commenced declaring Christmas a legal holiday. Alabama, which, like all southern states celebrated Dec. 25 with fireworks a la Fourth of July, was the first, in 1836, and the rest followed suit; California, 1851; Nevada, 1861; Utah, 1882; etc., with Oklahoma being last in 1890.

As late as 1855, all religions were still not in accord in their tolerance of the holiday. The Dec. 26 edition of that year's New York Times stated: Churches of Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists were not open yesterday. They do not accept the day as a Holy one, but Episcopalian, Catholic and German churches were open. Inside they were decked with evergreens. However, by 1880, all evangelical churches were accepting Christmas.

Passing of Christmas gifts in those days was not emphasized, except the wealthy were expected to be generous to the poor. In the middle of the 19th century, due to the influence of Charles Dickens' writings, singing of Christmas carols became prevalent, and the sending of cards began in 1875.

The classic editorial which began, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus," in response to a child's query, was written by Francis Church for the New York Sun of Dec. 21st, 1897.

In recent years Santa Claus has become to be known as a communal folk figure. A Pennsylvania judge ruled in 1936, that any doubters of Santa Claus who appeared before him would be held in contempt of court. The court citation read: Santa is not a figment of the imagination but an actuality. He is the symbol of kindness, a token of smiling charity and a badge of all that is cheerfully benevolent.

Commercial exploitation of Christmas has become systematic and thorough, impelling Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians and Jews, to band together in Milwaukee in 1949 and decree to put Christ back into Christmas.

Meanwhile millions of non-Christian homes in scores of non-Christian countries, including Japan and India, have taken unto their own the kindness and charity and cheer of Christmas and proudly display decorated and lit trees on December 25th.

All this proves the true sense of Christmas has not waned -- its just that the Spirit of Christmas has overwhelmed and is about to inundate all humans in the four corners of the earth.