

The Cactus Starts To Bud

By Dr. Edward Simon

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Edward Simon is a research virologist at the Purdue University Department of Biological Sciences, and a renowned writer and speaker on many subjects, Medical and Judaic. A relatively frequent visitor to Las Vegas, Dr. Simon has developed an extreme fondness for Las Vegas and its Jewish community. Dr. Simon has been invited to be one of our guest speakers in our 1987 lecture series. After a recent visit to Las Vegas, Dr. Simon submitted an article about our city to several Jewish publications, including the L.A. B'nai B'rith Messenger, Jewish Press, and National Jewish Post and Opinion. The following is the text of that article by Prof. Simon.)

Last year I wrote about Las Vegas, a Jewish oasis deep in the Nevada desert. On a recent trip to attend the biennial B'nai B'rith International Convention, I found out that the cactus was starting to bud.

Dr. LeRoy Bernstein has recently become the first certified mohel in the history of the city. Dr. Bernstein, a pediatrician, came to Las Vegas in 1982 and soon realized that most of the "ritual" circumcisions were being performed by local doctors some of whom were not even Jewish. The closest mohel was 300 miles away in Los Angeles and he was rarely used.

Eventually, he was asked to perform circumcisions himself, but felt most uncomfortable about doing so since he did not have the proper halachic (Jewish Law) background. Ultimately Dr. Bernstein took the bull by the horns and spent a year receiving training in the rituals and laws of Brit Milah from Rabbi Samuel Zadok, an Israeli scribe and mohel now practicing in Los Angeles.

Most of the time was spent in home study, but he did attend practical sessions as well. Since he

was well versed in the medical side of the procedure, he was able to progress more rapidly than most people. Finally, he was examined by a Bet Din (rabbinical court) under the auspices of the Rabbinic Assembly of Los Angeles and given Smicha (certification) as a mohel by them.

Dr. Bernstein is a member of the five year old orthodox Congregation Shaarei Tefilla and frequently attends its morning minyan. His ten year old son, Jay, who often accompanies him to shul, is an outstanding swimmer who has won many trophies in Nevada and California, and recently won the Nevada State Swimming Championship in the 10 year old division. His daughter, Melanie, is also an excellent swimmer and both Melanie and Jay are straight-A students. Melanie participated in a 6 week tour of Israel this past summer. Both children have attended the Hebrew Academy of Las Vegas.

While in Las Vegas I attended services at Shaarei Tefilla, and found them to be as heimish as ever. Several other visitors were also present, and as usual the members of the congregation provided us with transportation to and from our hotels.

Although the congregation still lacks a Rabbi, fund raising for a mikva (ritual bath), which was only a distant dream last year, is now under way, and their new building is already becoming crowded. Land for expansion, and a small building for the Hebrew school, have already been purchased.

Las Vegas is not for everyone -- not even for a visit -- but with Shaarei Tefilla, a religiously trained mohel, a day school, and a mikva on the way, a solid basis for a strong Jewish life seems to be present. The cactus is budding, I can't wait to see it in bloom.

Jewish Community's Super Sunday And Convention

The Jewish Federation of Las Vegas will once again hold its SUPER SUNDAY Phonathon at the Riviera Hotel's Convention Center on SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 1987 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Volunteers are still needed to help man the telephones in an effort to reach every Jewish household to ask for their support for the humanitarian programs of the Federation and the United Jewish Appeal.

With the theme of 'One People One Destiny' came the idea of a community-wide convention inviting all Jewish people to visit with our different organizations, see their displays and find out what's happening in the Jewish community.

Though there will be much excitement, entertainment and refreshments, SUPER SUNDAY is an intense day of campaigning for pledges for the 1987 Federation/United Jewish Appeal campaign. "This campaign is the primary means of support for vital humanitarian services in Las Vegas, among the people of Israel and in Jewish communities throughout the world" said Marty Loeb, Chairman. "With this money, we support hospitals, schools, programs for the aged, family services, vocational training for new immigrants.....literally thousands of life sustaining programs and facilities."

Along with his co-chairmen, Harvey Eisner, Andy Katz and Wendy Wiener, Loeb stressed the need for volunteers to help in this event which is also being held on a national scale. Thousands of people will be working together in this annual telephone marathon to get pledges from people who share their interests in providing for Jewish needs.

More information can be obtained by calling the Federation office at 732-0556.

HAPPY CHANUKAH

TO THE ENTIRE
JEWISH
COMMUNITY

FROM DON AND RUTH RICE
AND BOTH LOCATIONS OF



**Dutch Boy
Paints**

TWO LOCATIONS
TO SERVE YOU BETTER!
D.I. at Eastern 818 S. Main St.
NEXT TO VON'S
737-3167 382-2550

**Happy Chanukah
TO THE
JEWISH COMMUNITY**



22 E. OAKY AT LAS VEGAS BLVD. LAS VEGAS OPEN 24 HOURS	3681 MARYLAND AT TWAIN LAS VEGAS OPEN 24 HOURS	3488 S. JONES AT SPRING MOUNTAIN LAS VEGAS OPEN 24 HOURS	2716 NO. GREEN VALLEY PARKWAY HENDERSON OPEN 24 HOURS	574 N. EASTERN AT BONANZA LAS VEGAS OPEN 24 HOURS
----------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------

4810 E. TROPICANA AT HELLIS LAS VEGAS OPEN 24 HOURS	232 N. JONES AT FRENCH LAS VEGAS OPEN 24 HOURS	2021 CIVIC CTR. NEAR LAKE MEAD LAS VEGAS OPEN 24 HOURS	6115 W. TROPICANA AT JONES LAS VEGAS OPEN 24 HOURS
--------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------

350 N. HELLIS AT STEWART LAS VEGAS OPEN 24 HOURS	680 S. RANCHO AT CHARLESTON LAS VEGAS OPEN 24 HOURS	3750 FLAMINGO AT SANDHILL LAS VEGAS OPEN 24 HOURS	1941 N. DECATUR AT LAKE MEAD LAS VEGAS OPEN 24 HOURS
-----------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------

OPEN 24 HOURS