

The Jewish Traveler

GIBRALTAR

By Maxine Silverstein

My husband and I are very fortunate that we get to travel to many wonderful places — it's one of the big advantages of being in the travel business for twenty-three years. We do a lot of cruising, and some of the ports have proven to be extremely fascinating with lots of interesting Jewish sites. Gibraltar is one of those places. We cruised this past summer from Lisbon to Rome, and Gibraltar was our first port-of-call.

The first Jewish people in Gibraltar, who were Sephardic, had crossed the border from Spain before the Inquisition began in the fourteenth century. Jews were banned when Britain first took possession of Gibraltar in 1713, but they were later allowed in as traders. Finally, in 1749, they were granted full permission to live there. The community began to flourish and the Jewish population, which now includes many North African Jews, has risen to 2000 people.

There are now various Jewish facilities in Gibraltar, particularly four synagogues. Of those, the oldest is Shaar Hashamayim, which I have been fortunate to visit. Founded in 1768, it is a beautiful building with mahogany pews and marble floors. It also houses several of the city's 18 Torahs, one of which is more than 250 years old.

During our visit, I found a

Jewish bakery, butcher shop, and a deli called Uncle Sam's, which serves full glatt kosher food. There is also a Jewish grocery store. While there are no kosher hotels in Gibraltar, the White's Hotel and the Rock Hotel will provide vegetarian or fish dishes.

The mostly conservative Jewish community in Gibraltar observes the Sabbath and more than 80% observe kashrut. While Jews are not a majority, their presence in Gibraltar is well received. During the past three decades, Gibraltar has had a Jewish chief minister and a Jewish mayor.

No trip to Gibraltar would be complete without visiting the famous Rock. The large Upper Rock Nature Reserve, which covers most of the upper rock, has spectacular views and several interesting spots to experience.



Jewish influence is readily found in this small city, as evidenced by the Star of David on buildings in Gibraltar.

Cable cars make the climb up the Rock; and on a clear day, you can see Morocco from the top of the cable car station. The Rock's most famous inhabitants are the Barbary apes, the only wild primates in Europe. Some of these charming creatures hang around the Apes' Den near the middle cable car station, while others can often be seen at the top station.



Gary Silverstein pets one of Gibraltar's famous inhabitants, the Barbary apes.

The apes are people-friendly and will even come up to you and beg for food.

Wandering around the streets, we found a great downtown area with a variety of shops and restaurants. Marks and Spencer, a popular London department store even has a small shop in the city center. Because of Gibraltar's small size (barely two square miles), you can see all the sights in just a day, leaving no stone unturned. It's a perfect day trip from southern Spain. Or better yet, several cruise ships call on Gibraltar as they sail the Mediterranean. I think you will find this a fascinating and fun city. ☆



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"Yana's Friends" Returns to Charlotte for Two Weeks in May

By Amy Krakovitz

If you missed the one-time screening of *Yana's Friends* during the 2nd Annual Jewish Cultural Arts Festival in November 2000, make plans not to miss this showing in May, sponsored by the Charlotte Film Society.

Yana's Friends is an Israeli movie, directed by Arik Kaplan, about Russian immigrants in Israel. Yana (Evelyn Kaplun), pregnant and alone, is deserted by her husband. She shares an apartment with Eli (Nir Levi), a videographer whose love life might be the envy of any single man. Alongside this story line are the stories of the Russian musician who cannot find work, the family whose grandfather is confined to a wheelchair, and the landlady of Yana's apartment building, with the background of Iraqi SCUD missiles being rained upon Israel on a regular basis. This is not a heavy, sad or black story. It is light, sweet, sometimes funny, sometimes sad, but has many happy endings.

Yana's Friends will be showing at both the Manor and the Theaters at Birkdale as part of the Charlotte Film Society's Second Week Film Series.

The schedule at the Manor is as follows: May 11 - 9:15 PM; May 12 - 7:30 PM; May 13 - 4:30 PM; May 14 - 2:00 PM; May 15 - 9:15 PM; May 16 - 7:00 PM.



Evelyn Kaplun

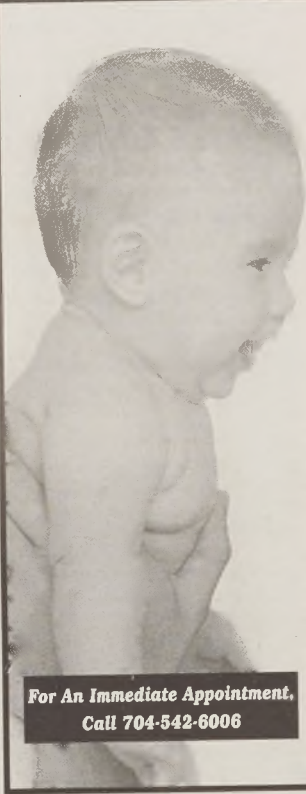
At the Birkdale, the schedule is as follows: May 18 - 9:15 PM; May 19 - 7:00 PM; May 20 - 4:30 PM; May 21 - 2:00 PM; May 22 - 9:15 PM; May 23 - 7:00 PM.

Please show your support for the Charlotte Film Society and see *Yana's Friends* at any of these many convenient times and locations. The more we as a community support their efforts, the more Jewish and Israeli films they will be able to bring to Charlotte. ☆



Evelyn Kaplun and Nir Levi

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