

A Tragic Thing Happened To Me On The Way Back From The Drug Store

By Morris Speizman

Our good doctor gave my wife a prescription to help cure her bronchitis. The pills were ordered from a local drug store, so I came by to pick up the prescription.

After arriving home, I noticed to my horror that we had forgotten to instruct the prescription clerk to put the pills in an "easy-open" bottle. My wife's condition was such that she could not even bend the petal of a rose, let alone press-down-hard-and-turn, in order to open the bottle.

This brought to my mind the fact that most senior citizens don't have the vitality with which to attack these monstrosities. Only young children and perhaps some younger adults have the strength and determination to fathom the mystery of turn-squeeze-rotate-and-pull-up-at-the-same-time technique.

I returned in high dudgeon (a pithy phrase) to the prescription clerk and asked her to give me an easy open bottle. She said, "I can't do that because I have to have a prescription on the bottle which lists the ingredients, the doctor's name, and all the other vital statistics, otherwise, it is simply not "kosher". I replied, "Forget the prescription. Just give me another little bottle". Whereupon, she



gave me a bottle with an easy opening cap and charged me 25¢. If she had considered this sale a normal sales transaction, she would have added the 1¢ sales tax. The fact that she did not proves to me that it was merely a punitive gesture because I had the temerity to ask for something which common sense would dictate.

The moral of the story is to make sure that every prescription you get is marked - "Put in easy opening bottles". Better still, it might be business policy for every drug store to instruct their prescription clerks to ask senior citizens whether they want the prescription in an easy open bottle before filling the order. I doubt whether this would work because it is too simple and harried prescription clerks are too busy to think of such a minor act of human kindness. Besides, they can easily twist-turn-and remove the cap themselves, so why shouldn't everybody else be able to do so?

On The Issues... Happy Endings

Ira Gissen, Director
NC/VA Region
Anti-Defamation League of
B'nai B'rith

In our previous "On The Issues" column we discussed two problems involving offensive license plates. As reported, we initiated steps to bring these concerns to the attention of appropriate state officials. We would now like to share with you the results of our efforts. What follows is a letter that we received from the Commissioner of the Commonwealth of Virginia's Division of Motor Vehicles:

Dear Mr. Gissen:

Thank you for your letter dated May 14, 1984, bringing to my attention the license plates KKK-KKK.

When our committee reviewed letters and word combinations that should be withheld from issuance, they did include KKK. Little did they realize that someone might double the letters and get KKK-KKK.

Please be assured that the offensive license will be recalled.

Sincerely,
Donald E. Williams
Commissioner

A somewhat more complicated issue was raised by the complaint of the Christian lady who objected to the license plate which carried the legend "JEW-PEW." The license plate was based upon

the initials of the licensee. What was particularly distressing to our Christian correspondent was the gratuitous lecture that she received from an official of the Division of Motor Vehicles in response to her complaint about the offensive license plate. It is good news to report that both matters have been resolved satisfactorily.

In response to the complaint about the offending license plate as well as the impromptu lecture, the Commissioner of the Division of Motor Vehicles has written (in part) as follows:

The letter was shocking and on behalf of DMV, please accept my sincere apology.

We do have an offensive word committee made up of persons from all walks of life and you would be surprised just how many offensive word applications are turned down.

The license plate in question should never have been issued but I suspect that when they saw the man's name and the initials were JEW, they surmised that it would be alright to issue.

When we first considered using up to six letters and/or numbers on license plates, we had no idea that anyone would even want a plate with an offensive word on it but, unfortunately, there are some who do.

Our program also calls for cancellation of a plate if the word on the plate appears to be offensive. We will recall the plate and offer another combination. While we strive to do the right thing it doesn't always happen the way it was originally planned...In this instance, I thank you for bringing this matter to our atten-

tion and once again tell you how sorry I am that it happened.

In addition, our Christian correspondent received a letter of apology from the official who inappropriately responded to her complaint. We have no desire to embarrass him and therefore we shall not divulge his identity but his letter is worth reading in its entirety:

I am writing to you regarding your letter to Mr. Ira Gissen of the Anti-Defamation League, relating to a license plate bearing the letters "JEW-PEW", and your telephone conversation with me.

I read your letter with much concern that I had offended you with statements that have been taken as being disrespectful and unkind. I have nothing but the greatest of respect for the concerns of the citizens of this Commonwealth and I regret that my statements were construed to be distasteful or offensive. Also, I certainly would not intentionally advise one in matters that are inappropriate to the purpose of this office. I have called a meeting of our Offensive Word Committee for the purpose of a further in-depth review of our policy regarding a person's initials and other deciding factors in the approval or denial of certain requests. In view of your letter, I feel that changes will be made and the license plates in question will be recalled from the current owner.

Please accept my most genuine apology if I offended you in any way during our conversation. I certainly never meant for it to be anything but respectful and courteous.

Regional UJA "Geshet" Missions To Bring Young Leaders To Israel

More than 1,250 young Jewish leaders from across the nation will visit Israel between December 2, 1984 and March 12, 1985, as participants in "Geshet," a series of five regional United Jewish Appeal Young Leadership Cabinet missions. The series will include four optional pre-missions to Poland and one to Czechoslovakia.

"Geshet" is the Hebrew word for bridge and these missions will serve as a bridge between young American Jews and their peers in Israel. The visits will provide several opportunities for young American Jews from the various UJA regions to meet their Israeli counterparts and to realize that no matter how we may differ, our similarities are more important than our differences.

"Geshet" missions present an excellent chance to explore in depth modern Israel and the rich history and heritage we all share.

Highlights of the mission itinerary include meetings with young members of the Knesset and home hospitality with young Israeli leaders; visits to Jerusalem, Kibbutzim, Galilee settlements and high-tech industry, and seminars on Holocaust-to-rebirth at Yad Vashem, Israel-Diaspora relations and the current Middle East situation.

Mission members will also see the firsthand results of UJA/community campaigns in

Project Renewal neighborhoods, a Youth Aliyah village and an absorption center for Ethiopian Jews.

The young leaders from UJA's Regions I, III, IV and V who take part in their region's optional pre-mission to Poland will visit various sites in the area of the former Warsaw Ghetto, including the Ghetto Monument and the Mila 18 memorial marking the location of the Jewish fighters' headquarters bunker, and the Jewish Historical Institute and Martyrs' Museum. They will also tour the alte Schul in Cracow, the oldest existing synagogue in Poland, and make a pilgrimage to the Nazi concentration camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau.

Participants in Region II's optional pre-mission to Czechoslovakia will tour the former Jewish ghetto of Prague and the State Jewish Museum, the source of the "Precious Legacy" exhibition. They will celebrate the Sabbath in the Altneuschul, the

oldest European synagogue still used as a house of worship, and share a sabbath dinner with members of the Jewish community.

This pre-mission will also include visits to Terezin concentration camp and the ruins of Lidice, the village destroyed by the Nazis in 1942.

The Region I mission will take place March 3-12, 1985; the dates for Region II are December 2-11, 1984; participants from Region III will visit Israel January 13-22, 1985; Region IV's mission is scheduled for February 10-19, 1985, and the final mission in the series, from UJA's Region V, is set for February 24-March 5, 1985.

The pre-missions will depart three days earlier.

Further information on the "Geshet" missions is available from local federation offices or from Theodore A. Young or Lori Baron, Young Leadership Cabinet, UJA, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10104, (212) 757-1500, ext. 387.

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