

# Foolish news of Greater Phoenix

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## Paradise Valley woman strives to improve Jewish-alien relations

Zena Himmelfarb spends most of her days sitting in front of the enormous console that occupies the west wall of her Paradise Valley home.

"This is my life," she told Jewish News. "My connection."

The console allows Himmelfarb to scan the airwaves for signals from outer space, of which she says there are many.

"The things I hear!" she says, her eyes widening. "I've only been able to translate some of it, but what I have translated is fascinating."

The communications come primarily from a planet beyond our galaxy that Himmelfarb calls Herb.

"I wanted to give the planet a regular name, something people could relate to," she explains. "That way, earthlings will be more open to the inhabitants of the planet. I mean, how bad could someone from a



An Herbivore dresses up as Queen Esther for a Phoenix Purim celebration.

place called Herb be?"

According to Himmelfarb, the residents of Herb, whom she calls Herbivores, are a

peaceful group.

"They're interested in us, in our culture," she says. "And they're especially interested in Judaism."

That, Himmelfarb says, is her doing. A member of Temple High, Himmelfarb keeps the Herbivores up-to-date on her activities within the Jewish community.

"They know all about Passover," she says, "and Purim. They've even joked about turning up at my next Purim party disguised as earthlings. I laughed so hard."

Himmelfarb says the Herbivores are especially intrigued by the various foods associated with the Jewish holidays.

"Well, they don't eat," she says, "at least not as we know it. And the idea of consuming all those interesting shapes — matzo balls and hamantaschen and macaroons — that just fascinates them."

## Editorial disclaimer

Purim is one of Judaism's most joyful holidays. Celebration customs include masquerading in costume, festive meals, many l'chaims (Disclaimer: Jewish News does not endorse drinking alcohol), and Purim spoofs.

Joy is often accompanied by laughter, and the point of this Purim page is to take a break from the often-distressing news of today's world and help our readers laugh, or at least smile.

So don't take this page too seriously — it's a joke.

## Ancient diary discovered

TED ROBERTS

Following is an excerpt from a recently discovered diary by King Ahasuerus.

2 Adar 3360

Well, what did they expect me to do? I mean it's the dawn of history and a man owns his wife like he owns his chariot. Besides, I'm the King. My ears never hear the word "no." My commands can move 350,000 peasant families from India to Ethiopia, so why should I have a problem moving Vashti, the Queen, from her opulent bedroom (which I paid for) to the banquet hall where me and my buddies are watching Tuesday night wrestling and drinking wine? I mean, it's only a couple hundred cubits away. And is it not written in the laws of the Persians and Medes that a woman shall obey her husband — especially if a golden crown sits on his brow? Can you hear my subjects when this gets around? If the king can't command his queen, how can he command 2.5 million screaming wrestling fans with swords? First thing you know I've got a revolution shaking the throne.

What better solution than to throw a red-hot singles weekend in Shushan highlighted by a masquerade ball and a beauty contest — so I could pick a new queen. OK, so Haman suggested the beauty contest. I wish he'd spend more time on foreign policy than watching the babes bathing in the moat. Those Amalekites are all the same. In fact, I never liked the way he looked at Vashti. Maybe I should have made him ambassador to Yemen.

Of course I was disguised — mask and all. My profession? I was in the wholesale melon business — I told the ladies

— specializing in casabas.

First, we had one of those three-minute timed chats. You sit across the table from your partner and talk till the big guy with the mallet hits the gong. Then you move on to a new partner. Girl #3 was a winner. Esther was her name. And she liked me, I could tell. Full of curiosity — wanted to know all about my business. Is a Shushan-grown casaba better than a coastal plains honeydew? I was in over my head. How much are watermelons a pound? Who knows? But she was a winner. I had to give my name, of course. A. Hash Veros, I told her. My friends call me "Hoshie." (Clever? Wait'll the guys at the staff meeting hear that one.)

I made sure she won the beauty contest, too. Haman was as sour as a rotten melon that laid in the field too long. For some reason, he doesn't like this girl. I'm thinking of making her my queen. Wonder what her religion is. We talked about everything but religion. Wonder why she turned down the delicious barbecued pork ribs?

Haman almost ruined my act. Here I am trying to play the suitor and he's pulling me aside — babbling in my ear about some demonic plan to stomp out the Jews. Hot young melon merchants out on the town don't have serious consultations with whispering advisers while they're doing the Shushan two-step. For just one night I wanted to be Hoshie Veros: melon merchant, instead of Ahasuerus — emperor of the Persians and Medes. But tomorrow, I'll be back on my throne and with a little luck, I'll have Esther beside me.

Ted Roberts is a freelance writer based in Huntsville, Ala.

## Briefs

### Finding roots

Due to the popularity of genealogy and the trend of returning to tradition, many Jewish college-age students are returning to their ancestral names. Many immigrants from Eastern Europe had their names shortened when they came to Ellis Island and "I see this practice as honoring my great-grandparents," explained Maximilian Herszkowiczow, who until four months ago was Max Herz.

### An alphabetical jumble

Several Valley organizations will participate in a communitywide informational fair on Thursday, April 31, at the ILJCC. Groups that will have booths include ADL, AIPAC, AJC, AJHS, AJTC, BBYO, BJE, EVJCC, JCRC, JFCS, JNF and the VOSJCC. It should prove to be a very educational afternoon. The program is partially funded by JCF. Exact time TBA.

### Holy smoke?

A kabbalah-based group in Berkeley, Calif., is advocating a new Shabbat practice. Members claim that inhaling smoke from Shabbat candles leads to a higher spiritual plane. "This practice brings us one step higher," says Christina Redstring. "We are actually inhaling spirituality."

### Jewish News seeks reporter

The editorial staff of Jewish News is filming a season of a new reality show, "The Reporter." A staff of seven fledging reporters spends six weeks in the Jewish News office, testing their skills at reporting, copyediting, proofreading and meeting deadlines. Each week, the production department determines which reporter caused the paper to miss its deadline and the culprit is "fired." The last reporter remaining will become a full-time reporter at the Jewish News.

## Milestones



### Bot Mitzvah

Rob Ginkelstein-Finkelstein-Cohen, son of Andrea Ginkelstein-Finkelstein-Cohen and Marty Cohen of Phoenix, will become a bot mitzvah Saturday, March 26, at Epcot Center.

Grandparents are Esther Ginkelstein-Finkelstein and Michael Finkelstein and Arthur and Cynthia Cohen.

Rob is a student at Jon Stewart Middle School and his hobbies include baseball, skateboarding, computers and collecting cans.