

Autumn Leaves 2011: – Matzuva Update

Jewish New Year, Yom Kippur & Tabernacles....

Well, I must start off by apologizing about the delay in posting this update. It's not that Matzuva has slumbered recovering from a long hot summer but rather a case of being rather busy with trying to eke out a living and other communal responsibilities.

Firstly, Welcome Home to Gilad Shalit after 5.4 years imprisonment in Gaza and has now returned home to Mitzpe Hilla just 20 or so kilometers east of Matzuva. His release was the center of news with the exchange of one conscript soldier for over a thousand of mostly convicted terrorists jailed for some of the most heinous crimes against civilians.

Gilad Schalit

Gilad Schalit (22) born in Nahariya, raised in Mitzpe Hilla in the Western Galilee. He is the son of Aviva and Noam and brother of Yoel and Hadas. He joined the Israeli Defense Forces a year ago. Gilad is held in Gaza Strip by the Hamas since - 06/25/2006.



Home at last !!



THAT OLD-TIME RELIGION

The festival month of Tishrei including Rosh Hashana (Jewish New Year) was low-key at Matzuva with a short ceremony outside the moadon (clubhouse) when all residents received a sizeable quantity of various fruits from our orchards. Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) was different this year with two religious services taking place during the 25-hour fast day. At the Matzuva synagogue a traditional service based on pluralism, humanism and gender equality was held with a guest rabbi from the neighbouring Kibbutz Eilon. The synagogue has always been open to everyone who wishes to observe their religious traditions. With the influx of families to the Matzuva communal neighbourhoods a more orthodox element has settled at Matzuva who only accept separation of the sexes during religious services. This group held simultaneous prayers in one of the children's houses with a larger congregation reinforced by a religious group from the Tel Aviv area. Matzuva is a secular kibbutz that has always raised the standard of equality, tolerance and community and this was the first time that we have witnessed this division in the community. The Matzuva committee has to address this matter! The festival of Sukkot (Tabernacles) saw temporary booths being set up all over Matzuva (reminding us of the 40 year wandering in the Sinai desert) with the Torah

scrolls being paraded on Simchat Torah (Rejoicing of the Law) festival that signifies the joy of receiving the holy scriptures at a time of year when the cycle of reading the weekly portions of the law begins once again.

THAI'S ON THE MOVE After countless attempts to find alternative and better accommodation for our agricultural workers from Thailand, this week we will see them moving into new digs in the old carpentry shop opposite the now defunct weaving factory. It is without doubt the best accommodation for temporary workers in agriculture dare I say, the best in Israel. Besides rooms for 1-2 workers, there are dining, kitchen and leisure areas, showers, toilets, satellite TV, washing machines, etc. The Thailand ambassador in Israel will be a guest of honour at the opening ceremony. The kibbutz has made this special move in appreciation of the work of these Thai workers who are most happy and appreciative of their stay at Matzuva. Most, of course, save and/or transfer funds to their families in Thailand. The kibbutz mini-market also has a Thai section providing them with products and food from their homeland. This, in turn, has enabled the kibbutz to reconvert back their previous accommodation to its former function as a children's house (called "Anna Frank House").

STRANGE NOISES IN OUR GARDEN – The other week, my wife, Irene, and myself heard a strange noise emanating from the garden at the back of our apartment. We looked out the window and saw a multitude of young people spreading large white netting sheets and armed with ladders, pruning cutters, long poles, pails and large sacks. The penny finally dropped! They were members of the oldest age group of our kibbutz kids who having finished off harvesting the olives from the olive trees lining the approach road to the kibbutz (planted by ulpan students and volunteer guests over 20 years ago) as well as the olive grove to the north of the old dining room. We had one olive tree in the garden as did our neighbours below but climbing up olives trees at our age is not really a safe option. Of course, we knew it was for a good cause and we gladly supplied them with cold drinks. The cause or should I say the aim was to pick the olives, pack them into jumbo-size sacks and get them off to a local olive press. Following this, the first-class olive oil is bottled and is on sale to all comers. The revenues are for a vacation for the class down in Eilat in the south of the country. They really worked well and efficiently and we'll be buying a bottle of quality Matzuva olive oil.





Strange Noises in the garden – October 2011

Until the next update – keep well and be in contact.

Best wishes

Baruch

Matzuva – November 2011



MATZUVA'S 71st YEAR



101 YEARS OF THE KIBBUTZ MOVEMENT