

Autumn leaves...but no rain

It's funny but wherever we live we always talk about the weather – it doesn't matter if you are from Alaska or Sweden or Hawaii or southern Spain it's always a topic. So it is at Matzuva especially as we are a fruit farm.

My wife, Irene, and I, went to visit family in Holland and England. We left in the evening of the 2nd day of Rosh Hashana (Jewish New Year) in a prolonged downpour the blessed first rain since the spring. We returned home from Amsterdam on a rainy day 13 days later. Believe it or not we didn't get a drop of rain in Europe in between those dates. Back at Matzuva it was business as usual except that this week we've already had temperatures of 40°C. two days running.

Nevertheless, we have a good year in agriculture, not as good as last year's bumper but still good. This is the time the country fervently prays that we get some rain but our answers are as yet unanswered. The Jewish festivals here went off very well thanks to an active cultural committee. The Matzuva synagogue was filled to capacity on Yom Kippur and an Atonement Day symposium in the moadon (clubhouse) was also well attended.

We celebrate the success of two of our Matzuva sons. *Amir Kars* (son of Tirza and Shaul) and *Yonatan Dominitz* (son of Shaul and the late Muriel). Amir published his children's book called "*The Hen who knitted a sweater for her egg*" and Yonatan is a panelist in the "Golden Drum" competition and is today an expert in the field of inventive and creative thinking and has been awarded more than 15 prizes in the "Cannes Lions" competitions.

Mutual Aid: This important facet in any kibbutz society is its resolve to look after members not as fortunate as others. This is very much the case at Matzuva despite the hard times that the community has experienced since 2004. Special funds have been set aside to address this need and it has now been decided to amalgamate the two sub-committees dealing with these matters. The intention is to reduce the size of the committee that handles appeals for assistance deemed 'catastrophes' and others who find it difficult to meet financial or social demands. Grants or loans are provided on merit if approved by the sub-committee and on the basis of a means test.

The Water Tower: This landmark has been cleaned up and renovated but emptied of water regularly and refilled by the water company in order to have a supply of fresh water in time of need. This is a considerable waste of precious water. Therefore, the kibbutz has decided to link it back to the main supply to the kibbutz as was the case previously thus ensuring that the water entering the tower is continually fresh.

Preserving the Past: There are still a few buildings and structures left from the early days of Matzuva and it is important to preserve them for posterity. These include defence towers, the Nissen hut from mandatory times, 'The slick' (pre-state ammunition pit) etc. Other old buildings have been used as foundations for new housing that incorporate the original building blocks. The matter will be raised in committee in the near future.

Extra-mural Education at Matzuva: It has always been a policy of kibbutzim to ensure that children are in a day-long educational framework usually from 7 a.m. in the morning until the late afternoon. This is both beneficial to the children and a solution for parents who work long hours. Once these afternoon activities were covered by the "communal kitty" but today's reality is that the cost of extra-mural activities are met by parents of these children. These costs are not cheap and the dilemma facing the kibbutz committee

is will members who have no direct connection with this educational activity dip their hands into their pockets to subsidize it. Today's kibbutz budget that is already overstretched has to subsidize pensions, various functions including the clinic, buildings and materials, mutual help fund, etc., etc.

Communications: The Bezeq telephone company has completed more or less the link-up to homes at Matzuva and now Bezeq International, the Internet server, is in the process of fitting their modems in each household that has ordered the connection. The festivals have set back the time schedule but being a conglomerate they've already charged member's credit cards in advance without yet providing the service.

School Pick-up Point at the Matzuva Community Village: The regional council has ordered a covered bus stop for youngsters and will be in place at the beginning of November.

New Chairperson for the Kibbutz Committee: The incumbent, Yishai Efroni, has been appointed to a central role at the regional council and in order to avoid any clash of interests will relinquish his position as committee chair. Ronny Ben-Zion will take over the role and Yishai will continue to be on the committee as one of the rank and file members.

Representatives of the community village opted on to the kibbutz local committee: Two residents of the community village, Yoram Rotstein and Nitzan Eisenberg, have begun to sit on the committee having been nominated by the Matzuva Appointed Committee chaired by the Trustee. The linkage between the two communities, the kibbutz and the community village is vital for the future of Matzuva in all facets of life. There have been some queries regarding the process of their being opted on to the committee mainly regarding voting rights but hopefully this will be ironed out amicably.

"Matzuva – Towards the Future": Meetings and lectures are now underway to find an agreed formula of how Matzuva is to function as a community in the future. As mentioned in the past, sub groups are being formed in order to cover a wide spectrum of economic and social aspects of life as well as many other issues. The coordinator of this initiative is *Anat Elgarishi*, a former girl soldier who subsequently married Uri who runs the Matzuva minimarket. Anat is now a registered nurse in Nahariya.

Matzuva Entrepreneurs: Besides the many members who work for companies outside the kibbutz we also have home businesses. A regular contributor to the Matzuva newsletter is new member *Roni Sharon* with his PC-Ron computer firm. Roni also publishes tips and advice to our many Internet surfers and buffs. We also have talented member *Kobi Kadosh* with his colourful "Galilee Weather Vanes" made of wood and using old fan propellers to catch the winds of Galilee. The "Main Course" or "Farmer's Fare" (depending how you read the Hebrew" is our gourmet restaurant on the site of the old laundry building. It's run by new member *Amir Tzalel*, a talented chef who's business meals at lunchtime and a-la-carte in the evenings attract residents and visitors to the Western Galilee. On Fridays, take-away portions are available to Matzuva residents that wish to enhance the Friday Erev Shabbat meal.

Until next time, Take Care
Regards
Baruch