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TRAVEL TALES

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE JEWISH TRAVELLER

By **MIKE COHEN**

WHERE TO STAY IN NEW YORK CITY: Travelling to New York City can become pretty addictive. My family and I recently wound up there for a rare summer trip, stopping off for five days en route to Wildwood, New Jersey. There is no greater gift when it comes to accommodations in New York City than finding a place near Times Square. Last year we discovered the historic Algonquin Hotel (www.algonquinhotel.com). On our most recent trip,, we were fortunate enough to secure reservations again. Located in the heart of Midtown Manhattan, this jewel of historic New York hotels commands the center of 44th Street, just a block and a half away from Times Square. The Algonquin first opened its doors in 1902.

Today it is part of the Marriott chain's Autograph Collection, an evolving ensemble of strikingly independent hotels.

For 100 years, the Algonquin has been greeting and lodging the country's most prominent writers and literary personalities, as well as the leading figures of the American stage. The hotel is best known, perhaps, for the members of the Round Table, a group of luminaries who had in common both the ability to fire blazing witticisms and to withstand being on the receiving end of them. The tone they set during their daily meetings set the literary style of the 1920s. After World War I, *Vanity Fair* writers and Algonquin regulars Dorothy Parker, Robert Benchley

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TRAVEL TALES

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and Robert E. Sherwood began lunching at the Algonquin. Though society columns referred to them as the Algonquin Round Table, they called themselves the Vicious Circle. "

Each of the 181 rooms and 25 suites features a comfortable well-lit work desk, as well as complimentary Wi-Fi. Always one step ahead of everyone else, the hotel was the first to offer accommodations to actors and single women travellers. We stayed in a very comfortable one bedroom Noel Coward Suite, named for the legendary playwright, composer, actor, singer and director. There are framed Playbill covers from Coward's productions in the room.

The layout was ideally suited for us. There is a nice sized entrance, with the master bedroom to the right, a large bathroom straight ahead and the living room with a pullout couch to the left. But that

is not all. The latter is also somewhat of a library, with shelves of books to choose from. You can also download the special Folio app, which will provide access to a wide variety of ebooks you can read as long as you remain on the premises.

Delighting thirsty revelers when it opened at the end of Prohibition in 1933, The Blue Bar has moved – both physically and eruditely – through decades of Times Square hotel bar trends. There is also The Round Table Restaurant and the casual Lobby Lounge.

In the book the *Algonquin Kid: Adventures Growing Up In New York's Legendary Hotel*, author Michael Colby tells the story of his grandparents Mary and Ben Bodne and how they came to build this legendary landmark. Southern Jews, they owned the hotel from 1946 to 1987. As a kid, Colby and siblings visited their grandparents every weekend. Colby took up permanent residence in the hotel at the age of 18 and made his way into the theater world as a librettist, composer and lyricist. His

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musical, Charlotte Sweet, an all-sung, all-rhymed original musical with libretto by Colby and music by Gerald Jay Markoe, received three Drama Desk Award nominations and was critically lauded as

"adorable, strange and delectable" by the New York Times, "

Mike Cohen can be reached at info@mikecohen.ca. See his travel advice column at www.sandbox-world.com/travel.

WORLD IN REVIEW

(Continued from page 3)

"fully vetted at the time of his hire".

But Allen's "political beliefs" were just a bit too much for mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. even if the mayor's office initially claimed that it does not hire attorneys on the basis of their political beliefs. First the Southern Poverty Law Center reported that Allen had paid dues to the neo-Nazi National Alliance. He had also paid the \$25 fee to attend a 2007 conference on Holocaust denial. Allen reportedly

told Iran's Press TV in 2012 that Israel's Mossad spy agency was responsible for 9/11.

Allen, 65, did not deny his past. He said he was drawn to the National Alliance because "I was in the U.S. Army from 1978 to 1982 and I had some pretty awful experiences with black people there, to be honest". Allen further argued that his "crazy ideas" do not affect his legal work and that his past affiliation was a
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