

TRAVEL TALES

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE JEWISH TRAVELLER

By **MIKE COHEN**

RETURN TO VANCOUVER: I recently returned from a trip to Vancouver (www.tourism-vancouver.com) for my first time in five years.

WHERE TO STAY: We were fortunate to discover a new spot, the **Sunset Inn & Suites**

(www.sunsetinn.com). Located at 1111 Burnaby. Guests are welcomed with a long list of amenities. Moreover, this is not one of those hotels that promotes "extra" services that in the end increases the cost of your stay.

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If you ask him, Chef Felice success is due to the simple fact that he shares with his guests, the same preferences for a unique blend of pleasurable and palatable savours that you are invited to come and experience for yourself!

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TRAVEL TALES

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The executive one-bedroom suites are one of the newest offerings at the property. They have been extensively redecorated and offer a luxurious, relaxing setting that is more similar to home than hotel. These spacious apartment-style accommodations have a luxurious king size four seasons Enlighten Series by Spring Air, which are also the very first beds to be certified as "Asthma and Allergy friendly." You also have a fully equipped kitchen (great if you are keeping kosher and preparing your own meals), a separate dining and living room with a double size sofa bed, plush bathrobes and slippers, a 42" LCD TV and DVD player in the living room, 32" LCD TV in the bedroom and a full HDTV Plus television channel lineup on both the living room and bedroom televisions. There is also an ipod/iphone player and charger clock radio, wall mounted air conditioning units in both the bedroom and living room and a private balcony.

The hotel has free gated parking for one vehicle during your stay, a true rarity for downtown Vancouver; a locked bike room; new and greatly improved high speed wireless and hard wired internet; a continental breakfast you can take back to your room, a daily newspaper delivered to your door and free local calls.

The Sunset Inn & Suites gives you all the best perks, complimentary with your stay. Centrally located, it

you to explore the city's best attractions on foot. You are also surrounded by restaurants, grocery stores, dry cleaners, and banks. Nestled on the edge of the West End neighborhood of downtown Vancouver, you are just steps away from the beach as well as many Vancouver landmarks: Stanley Park, the seawall, Robson St., Granville Island, and Vancouver's business district as well as trendy shops, theatres movies, groceries, and the Aquatic Centre for fitness. For more information call toll-free at 1-800-786-1997 (within North America).

CAR RENTAL: In preparing for my Vancouver trip, I made the rounds with the different rental car companies. Whether I called them directly, went online or tried the Priceline.com or expedia.com routes, the prices were always much too high. Then I came across Lo-Cost Rental Car (www.locost.com), an outfit based just a stone's throw from the Vancouver International Airport.

Lo-Cost strives to be above their competition in every way possible. This includes no charge pick-up/drop-off and seven days a week working hours, guaranteed lowest rental rates and first class multi-lingual customer service reps. The company has been around for more than 30 years, not surprising given the price and service it offers.

You can reserve online, but what I liked was the ability to speak to people on the ground and not some random operator who had no idea of

what I wanted. The hours of operation are 9 am to 6 pm weekdays; 9 am to 5 pm Saturdays and 10 am to 4 pm Sundays. After hours vehicle pick-up/drop-off options are available. (www.locost.com/contact-us/)

Lo-Cost is conveniently located in down-

town Richmond, directly across the street from Lansdowne Mall, steps away from Lansdowne Sky train Station on the Canada Line, five minutes from YVR Vancouver International Airport and 17 minutes away from downtown Vancouver by Sky train. For more details call 604-303-9970 or 1-888-556-2678.

JEWISH COMMUNITY: Vancouver is home to Canada's third largest Jewish community, with a current population of 25,740. That is up from 16,565 in 1991 and 22,000 in 2001.

There are seven mainstream Jewish congregations in Metro Vancouver, one non-denominational congregation in White Rock, five Chabad houses and two Kollels. The Reform synagogues have the most members, closely followed by the Conservative and then Orthodox congregations. It is estimated that approximately one third of the identified Jewish community are synagogue members.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver conducts the *(Please turn to following page)*



MAYIM HOYA BIALIK, seen on the *Big Bang Theory*, has a doctorate in neuroscience and while she grew up in a Reform home, is now Modern Orthodox.

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(Continued from preceding page)

community's central fundraising initiative, the Federation Annual Campaign, which supports 40 partner agencies locally, nationally and in Israel. The Jewish education system includes five pre-schools, five day schools and nine supplementary schools. Youth and student organizations include Vancouver Hillel Foundation ([hillel.ca\), which serves Jewish students attending the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University and the University of Victoria, as well as other colleges in Metro Vancouver.](http://www.vancouver</p>
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Mike Cohen's email address is info@mikecohen.ca. Follow his travels at www.sandboxworld.com/travel and on Twitter @mikecohencsl.

SHIVA LEADERS

(Continued from page 9)

attendees for a minyan, because "as we know in Reform Judaism, women are people too".

Over the years, I have been privileged to lead many services and for some wonderful families while on shiva patrol. I remember David Applebaum, Simmie Burstyn, Vicki Campbell, Steve Flagg, Florence Forer, Mannie Grossman, Merele Hammell, Leon King, Anne Kligman, Rose Kopytowski, Joe Sklar, Robert Strom, Jerry Rosenberg, to mention a few.

So why do I do it? True, it is a mitzvah, and

one can never do enough of those.

The simple fact is that this helps keep me in touch with my faith. The experience reminds me just how precious life and family and friends are to each of us, and how important it is for those who believe and those who have strayed from Judaism to participate in a very important life cycle event. Last, but not least, dare I say, I appreciate nearly every gig, often reconnecting with people with whom I have lost touch.

One more observation. Tough to lead a shiva

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