

TRAVEL TALES

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE JEWISH TRAVELLER

By MIKE COHEN

HOCKEY NIGHT IN BROOKLYN: I have always wanted to see a professional hockey game in New York City. That recently became a reality when I took the trip from the Algonquin Hotel near Times Square to the Barclays Center in Brooklyn to watch the hometown Islanders face off against the Toronto Maple Leafs. And I did so from the press box.

It is less than 30 minutes by subway, taxi or car. The 2015-16 season marks the first in Brooklyn for the Islanders. The team spent its entire 42 history at the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Uniondale, NY, aka Long Island. With the arena outdated and no new facility on

turned towards the Barclays Centre – home of basketball’s Brooklyn Nets. The announcement of the move was actually made three years ago. The Islanders have a lease here until 2040.

There is some nice Jewish flavor to this team, starting with one of the new co-owners Scott D. Malkin, who along with partner Jon Ledecky is in the process of assuming majority control of the team from Charles Wang. Communications Manager Jesse Eisenberg is Jewish as is Barry Baum (executive vice-president of the Barclays Center and the Brooklyn Nets and Mandy Gutmann, communications director for Barclays Center and Brooklyn Nets. The number of fans I saw wearing kippas gave the arena a further Jewish flavour.

Located in the heart of Brooklyn, at the crossroads of Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues, Barclays Center boasts one of the most intimate seating configurations ever designed for a modern multi-purpose arena. For hockey the capacity is just over 15,000; 17,732 for basketball and up to 18,000 for musical or other performances. It opened on September 28, 2012.

Most of the team’s loyal fan base is still in Long Island. Fans either drive in or take the train. I spoke to many of them as I walked through the arena. While some complained about the

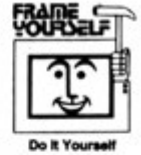
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help of that loan. Twenty years later, Fathia has bought a house and hopes to build an extra room to accommodate more goods to sell. Just this week, she said, a woman bought 10 dresses for a wedding party.

Over the past 20 years, Fathia has taken seven loans from the Gaza Women's Loan Fund, ranging from \$3500 to \$5000, and always pays them back on time. Her husband Ahmad helps with market-

ing the goods and often lends a hand to glue beads on the dresses to add a bit more glamor for special occasions.

"We get a lot of items depending on the season — wedding dresses for summer, wool clothing for kids in winter."

Fathia said she is proud of what she has accomplished for herself and her family. "I sent two kids to university and I feed my family."

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commute of at least 45 minutes, they pledged to still support the team. Eisenberg told me the adjustment is going well and that sponsorship opportunities in Brooklyn far outweigh those in Long Island, where the team still practices. The players are doing their best to make

the change work as well. After the game I stood outside the Isles' dressing room as a slew of players came out to take part in promotional meet and greets.

JEWISH COMMUNITY: There are three specific Brooklyn neighborhoods which are home to unique *(Please turn to following page)*

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and tight knit Jewish communities. Borough Park is home to the largest Orthodox Jewish community in New York – in fact one of the largest Orthodox Jewish communities outside of Israel and one of the largest concentrations of Jews in the United States. Crown Heights is home to a large Jewish community. Middle class Jews started moving to the neighborhood in the 1940s through the '60s. The area became home to a number of large synagogues including the Bobov and Chovevei Torah, as well as prominent Yeshiva elementary schools. Then there is Williamsburg. Hasidic Jews began moving into the neighborhood before World War 11,

later followed by Holocaust survivors and religious, non-Hasidic Jews. Eventually a Rebbe of the controversial Satmar Hasidic sect established leadership in the area, and today Williamsburg's Satmar population is the most dominant. There are about 73,000 Jews belonging to the Satmar sect, and the neighborhood is home to the headquarters of one faction of the Satmar Hasidic group. In total, the area is home to tens of thousands of Hasidic Jews belonging to various sects.

Follow Mike Cohen's travels at www.sandboxworld.com/travel and on [Twitter@mikecohen](https://twitter.com/mikecohen). He can be reached at info@mikecohen.ca



ALL 500 PALESTINIAN WORKERS WHO WERE employed at this SodaStream factory in Mishor Adumim have now lost their jobs. Last year, after succumbing to pressure from the BDS Movement, SodaStream closed this plant. The company was able to get permits for some 100 of its Palestinian workers, enabling them to move to the plant near Beersheba. These workers, however, were unable to get their permits renewed. It's a strange sort of victory for the BDS movement. There are few jobs in the West Bank and even when employment is found the monthly salaries are half of those made by Palestinians working at such plants as SodaStream.