

OPINION

THE JEWISH STAR

Serving the Orthodox communities of the South Shore

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The Jewish Star is an independent community newspaper. All opinions expressed are solely those of The Jewish Star's editorial staff or contributing writers, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of advisory board members.

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It's Better To Be Right Than First

Editorial

Even with a noble sentiment like that (see above) guiding a newsroom, errors will still creep into a newspaper or onto a news broadcast. Sometime, they fail to creep in, as it were, in the case of significant omissions. Sure, it's aggravating — it's certainly embarrassing, sometimes very much so — but it also helps to keep journalists on their toes. It also provides employment for the people responsible for writing the 'corrections' column. This is not a good line of work for the faint of heart or for people convinced of their own infallibility (although the field of journalism does seem to get a lot of those, anyway).

Often, a story has to be held. Simply, not enough information has been gathered to print (believe it or not, this happens all the time in responsible newsrooms).

Sometimes, you hold a story and you get scooped. Someone else

printed first (with or without enough information). Other times, holding the story turns out really well. The story turns out to be even "better" or more interesting, than first thought. Or someone might decide to 'blow the lid off' what previously was a secret, and spill the beans. Some reporters can enjoy the warm feeling when that happens for quite a while — at least until the next deadline.

Why are we sharing this; and sharing it here, of all places, using this valuable editorial space for journalistic navel-gazing? Because we're really using this valuable space as a help-wanted ad.

Our goal is to be a newspaper that's enjoyed and read up and down the South Shore, not to mention over the Nassau County line into Far Rockaway and Bayswater. And our focus is fairly unique. How

many weekly publications can you name that are in the business of presenting traditional, responsible journalism on issues of interest to the Orthodox community?

To accomplish that task week in and week out: Writers Wanted. If you currently are a professional journalist, possibly employed in the secular media, who happens to be shomer Shabbat, and would like to pick up a little work on the side covering the home front, send an e-mail to mfertig@thejewishstar.com. Also, if you are, or you know, a journalism student (graduate or under-graduate), someone who's active on their high school newspaper, or someone who has been a reporter or editor in the past and would perhaps like to pick up their old skills on a part-time basis, send us an e-mail. You never know to what interesting places and assignments it might lead.

As for everyone else, thanks for reading!

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Letters

What is Death?

To the Editor:

In his recent letter to the editor, HODS founder Robby Berman cites the opinion of the Israeli Chief Rabbinate accepting brain death as halachic death. Anyone who will review the decision of the Chief Rabbinate, as provided on the HODS web site (www.HODS.org, click on 'halachic issues,' then 'documents'), can see that their ruling was limited in scope, and required certain conditions which are clearly not met in organ donation in the United States. Extending the opinion of the Chief Rabbinate to the current situation in the U.S. would require the consensus of major halachic authorities. The Chief Rabbis have not granted such permission.

Therefore, Mr. Berman's claim that HODS is mainly an educational organization which does not require rabbis on its board - apparently in response to Dr. Zacharowicz's statement that HODS does not have a single practicing rabbi on its board of directors - signals a fundamental lack of understanding of the intricacies of halacha. How can an organization devoted to educating lay people and professionals regarding a complex halachic matter involving life and death, not have leading halachic authorities on its directorship?

The conclusion of the New York Times article (Saturday, Nov 18th) on the HODS conference, which noted the "near unanimity" of orthodox rabbis in favor of brain death, is obviously not true [unless he meant the rabbis who were speakers at the conference].

In Israel the consensus of the leading halachic authorities, living and deceased, is that halachic death requires cardiopulmonary cessation, not having accepted the chief rabbinic's decision.

As believing Jews, we must

respectfully approach our Gedolim, our leading halachic authorities, and seek their guidance. Without the insight and constant direction of our Gedolim - even though one's intentions may be altruistic - instead of fulfilling Hashem's wishes, one might be doing the opposite. Until such time as we have more direct access to Divine wishes, with the coming of Mashiach - may this happen speedily in our days - we must rely on the da'as Torah, the halachic opinion, of our sages, an approach which has preserved us as a people for thousands of years.

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The writers are co-founders of the annual Yarchei Kallah Seminar on Jewish Medical Ethics (www.j-c-r.org).

Stop Shopping in Fear

To The Editor:

With reference to your article "Fed the Meter" (11/24/06) it is time that the trustees withdraw the parking meters so that the residents of this community can shop without fear of getting a

\$25 ticket. It is a total disregard of the financial well being of our residents to charge \$25 for parking at an expired meter, just for being a few minutes late.

Has any one ever questioned the need for Justice and Village Courts? What is their budget? Where does the money go that is received? Would it be easier and less expensive if all parking tickets were returnable in Nassau County District Court? Just think of all the money the residents could save if there were no meter maids, attorneys, judges and clerks. Perhaps, the Justice Court itself can be sold to a developer.

NYS Chief Justice Judith Kaye has announced that sweeping reforms will be made in the Justice and Village Courts (See, Series of Reforms Planned For Local Justice System New York Law Journal November 22, 2006).

With the high real estate taxes we pay, there simply is no reason to have meters or a Justice Court. I urge the business community as well as the residents to contact the trustees and have them withdraw the meters. Until then, simply park in private parking lots that do not fine you for the "privilege" of shopping in Cedarhurst, or shop before 8:30 AM.

LEON I. BEHAR, ESQ.
 Woodmere

CORRECTIONS

In "In Kiruv, Caring is Ninety Percent of the Job" (11/17/06) the correct web address of Project Inspire is www.projectinspireonline.com.

In "Fed the Meter, Got a Ticket Anyway?" (11/24/06) the cover photo was taken in Cedarhurst, not Lawrence. The meter maid is, in fact, an employee of Cedarhurst. The Star regrets the error.