

Tim Boxer

## Seder Theme: Let's Eat

It was two hours into the Downtown Seder. They hadn't yet reached the dinner portion of the Haggadah. So the duo called What I Love About Jew offered an appropriate hymn with a chorus that went: "They tried to kill us, we survived, let's eat. They tried to kill us, but we were faster on our feet."

At each chorus the audience repeated "Let's eat!"

"We've been drinking the wine of affliction all evening," said **Rob Tannenbaum**, one half of the duo. "There are audiences you don't want to play for — Jews who haven't eaten for two hours."

His partner, **Sean Altman**, said his father was assimilated. He didn't know to read the Haggadah from right to left. He opened the book and read, "The seder ends."

"We had a very short seder," Sean said.

**Michael Wax**, author of "Born to Kvetch," observed that Passover commemorated the liberation from bondage to kvetching. The first known kvetch in history occurred when the freed slaves complained, "What, there's a shortage of graves in Egypt? You had to take us out to die in the desert?"

If there were any theme to the sixth annual Downtown Seder (aside from "let's eat"), produced by **Michael Dorf** at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, it was the three-year genocide in Darfur. **Ruth Messinger**, head of the American Jewish World Service, thanked fellow seder participant Rep. **Jerrold Nadler** for his efforts and urged the 420 guests to come to the Save Darfur rally on April 30 in Washington, DC.

The seder participants were an eclectic mix of Jews and non-Jews. Among the Jewish performers were singer **Neshama Carlebach**, comedians **Judy Gold** and **Marilyn Michaels**, **Ruth Westheimer** (best known as Dr. Ruth), singer/guitarist **Dov Rosenblatt**, Guns 'n Charoses, singer **Joshua Nelson** and the Koshers Gospel Singers, **Lou Reed** and **Laurie Anderson**.

### Spoken Like A Litvak

At a Jewish National Fund briefing at his Manhattan law firm, Englewood Mayor **Michael Wildes** mentioned the blue and white pushke his mom kept in the kitchen.

"Excuse me," said **Hai Linden**, "it's pishke." (Obviously a Galitzianer; Wildes is a Litvak.)

The star of TV's "Barney Miller" and spokesman for the JNF, recalled how his mom used to lift him up so he could drop a coin in the pushkh, er pishke, on the butcher's block. The kid would cry that his nickel was gone and mom would say, "It's all right, they're building a country for the Jews."

Linden said his family was not religious but mom kept a kosher home. Dad was a co-founder of the Order of the Sons of Israel, now known as Bnai Zion. "His life revolved around the potential of a Jewish state," Linden said.

"I came home from school one day in 1948. I found my father

sitting alone in the dark. I turned on the light. Tears were coming down his cheeks. It was the day Israel was declared a state."

### Hoping For Leadership

**Moshe Feiglin** says Israel is not making use of its main weapon in its war for existence — justice. When Arafat spoke of justice, Israel spoke compromise.

"If we lose the sense of justice, we will lose," Feiglin says. "We will lose until we get a leadership that will take back that sense of justice."

Feiglin is president of Manhigut Yehudit, a right-wing religious faction of Likud and a rival of Benjamin Netanyahu. Feiglin envisioned Bibi leaving Likud after it loses the elections. Feiglin is standing in the wings, waiting to take over the helm of the party.

"Maybe," he hoped, "the swing will take us to leadership of Likud and leadership of the entire state of Israel."

He told 450 enthusiastic supporters of Manhigut at its fourth annual dinner at the Sands Country Club in Atlantic Beach, L.I., that he is ready to lead Israel as prime minister with a sense of justice. ■