



# The Schmooze

## Stories with a Yiddish Twist

### A “HEYM” FIT FOR “DI MALKE”

Note these Yiddish words:

- “heym” = home  
“Malke” = Queen  
“farrikhtn” = to repair  
“rirn” = to move  
“(ayn) pakn” = to pack  
“der tupitser” = the upholsterer  
“der samet” = the velvet

by  
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*Syosset, New York*

“IF YOU CAN’T HIDE IT, DECORATE IT,” said comedienne Carrie Snow.

And Judith Viorst gave this decorating advice: “In picking out upholstery for your living room furniture, know that children and velvet should never be allowed in the same room together. Velvet chairs seem to stir an urge in a child to spit up on them, wipe his Hershey’s-chocolate-covered hands on them, have a major lapse in toilet training on them.”

Oscar Wilde, lying on his bed in his Paris apartment, took a look around the room and muttered, “This wallpaper is killing me, and one of us has got to go.” Whereupon he lapsed into a fatal coma.

The Irish writer was in rental quarters and nearly destitute, so he could not have replaced that wallpaper he so detested.

Recent headlines from Newsmax:

## BUCKINGHAM PALACE REPAIRS MAY GIVE QUEEN THE BOOT

Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip have “tsuris.” They may have to move out of Buckingham Palace for up to a “yor” (year) because of urgently-needed work on their London “voynort” (residence).

An assessment of the 300-year-old building indicates that it needs a major overhaul. The repairs involve complete rewiring, replacement of “fartsaytik” (ancient) plumbing, the removal of asbestos, renewing lead roofing, relaying paths, and refurbishing the State Glass “shpayzkamer” (Pantry), the area from which food is served during official functions.

The Queen lives in a nine-room “dire” (apartment) within the Palace, which has 775 rooms. The Palace is used for State visits, banquets, “gortn” (garden) investitures and receptions.

All of the Royal household’s 426 staff would also be relocated during the work. And there would be a loss of “hakhnose” (income) if the Palace is closed during the summer. More than half a million paying visitors go to the Palace each summer.

The “prayz” (cost) of the renovation: \$237 - \$240 million dollars.

In January 2014, lawmakers accused the royal household of neglecting repairs at the Palace. Note: The Yiddish word meaning “to neglect” is “farlozn.”

Decorating can be a challenging job: In 1984, residents of Donald Trump’s newest building, Trump Plaza, complained about the color of the lobby. The developer sent his decorators--Angelo Donghia and Trump’s wife, Ivana--back to square one.

Orange and gold carpeting, wallpaper and furniture were installed in the tower, at Third Avenue and 61st Street, after buyers--who include John Y. Brown, Dick Clark, and Martina Navratilova--began moving in.

Trump didn’t like the “experimental” decor. The result: Mr. Donghia did his signature gray-and-beige scheme.

Years ago, Elizabeth Taylor spent \$5 million on a “fixer-upper” home in Laguna Beach, California. The 6,000-square-foot, five-bedroom home is in a gated community about 60 miles south of LA. Built in 1969, it was described as “a fixer.” Laguna Beach is a scenic seaside town that is home to a thriving community of artists. Jacqueline Kennedy, appalled by the mediocre reproductions, she formed a Fine Arts Committee for the White House and in 1962, conducted a televised tour of her tastefully appointed White House. More than \$1 million in art and antiques were contributed and the TV tour kept the donations coming.

Nancy Reagan: No public funds were used, but she was reviled for spending \$209,508 for red, ivory and gold Lenox china, which debuted in 1982.

And, finally, Billy Crystal, writes about his wife, Janice, who decided to enlarge/renovate their 1979 house; she added an airline terminal. They started work in 2012, and the lead contractor’s estimates that “they should wrap everything up in the year 2037.” He wrote, “They finished the Empire State Building in less time than it’s taking us to redo this house, and that has 102 stories with a basement.”

So, what happened? The construction chief found termites. “They flew out of the living room floor and ceiling with their little wings, like the confetti that’s shot out at the end of the Super Bowl.” Crystal continues, “The termites were in tuxedos and evening gowns, the band was playing, they had on bibs and they were eating prime rib, which in this case was the back of my house.” Crystal said that his house was a “twenty-four-hour termite buffet.”

Then, to make matters worse, as the workers were digging out the hillside to build a retaining wall, they found bones. The health department put up crime tape; it looked like a murder scene. Were they human bones? After three days, it was discovered that the bones were from an elk or a deer.

At the time that his book (“Still Foolin’ Em - Where I’ve Been, Where I’m Going, and Where the Hell Are My Keys”), was published, the house was 99% done...and the grandkids can sleep over and he can wake up to the sound of them playing.

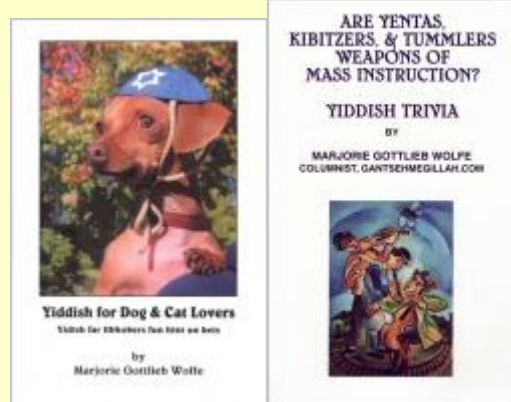
Good luck, Queen Elizabeth. Good luck, Billy Crystal.

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MARJORIE WOLFE agrees with Billy Crystal: “When you decide at age sixty-five to do a total renovation and expansion of your house, that’s your way of spitting in the eye of the term life salesman and saying, ‘I may be sixty-five, but I plan to live and work another thirty years so I can pay off this home equity loan.’”

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**Marjorie Gottlieb Wolfe is the author of two books:**



**"Yiddish for Dog & Cat Lovers" and "Are Yentas, Kibitzers, & Tumblers Weapons of Mass Instruction? Yiddish Trivia." To order a copy, go to her website: [MarjorieGottliebWolfe.com](http://MarjorieGottliebWolfe.com)**

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