

# **The Schmooze** **Stories with a Yiddish Twist**

## **DECORATING WINDOWS**

\*The Yiddish word for “window” is “fentster.”  
The Yiddish word meaning “to decorate”/adorn is “baputsn.”

*by*  
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**Syosset, New York**

Two thoughts on windows:

“If it’s reality you want, I suggest you look out the window.”  
Peter Stamm, *All Days Are Night*

“The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows.”  
Sydney J. Harris

1983: The abandoned tenements in the Bronx had become a national symbol of urban decay. Then came an idea to spruce up the neighborhood (di shkheyneshafy”), to lift the morale of residents, discourage vandals and addicts who haunt abandoned buildings and make a better (“beser”) impression on the thousands of motorists who pass the area daily.

Anthony B. Gliedman, the Commissioner of Housing Preservation and Development said, “We want to brighten up the face of the neighborhood while waiting for new Federal programs to rebuild the neighborhood. We don’t want anybody to think we’re doing this instead of rebuilding.”

Under Gliedman’s program, Vinyl decals were placed over their gaping windows. This depicted a lived-in look of curtains, shades, shutters and flowerpots (“blum pats”). He felt that “The decals are a little off-putting

to the person breaking in. They show that the neighbors care.”

How did the public react to the fancied-up facades? It ranged from skeptical to let’s wait and see.

2016: In May, bored office workers have started a “window war” on Canal Street, in NYC. This area is known for being home to some of the city’s best ad agencies. The windows are getting filled up with amazing Post-it drawings.

It all started after one agency Post-it noted “Hi,” in the window. Then came those yellow Post-notes carrying other humorous (“humoristish”) comments:

“Hello From The Other Side”

“T.G.I.F.” (Thank God It’s Friday)

“Sup” (What’s up?)

“Marry Me?” (Is it a proposal? Is there a “diment” ring?)

“5 PM Yet?”

Offices at 75 Varick Street featured Post-it images of the late Prince’s symbol, the ghost image from Ghostbusters and various Angry Birds. Soon there were pictures of a rainbow (“regn-boygn”), Marilyn Monroe, Spiderman, Dr. Seuss’ The Lorax, and Marge and Maggie from the Simpsons.

Arthur Fry, inventor of the Post-it Note, must be so happy (“gliklekh”). His company is sending boxes of the iconic note to several offices to keep the creative war going.

Who’s the real winner (“geviner”) in this war? The ad agency representing Post-it!

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Rabbi Lynne Landberg (“The Talmud Says Sanctuaries Must Have Windows; A Rabbi Tells You Why,” March 4, 2013), wrote,

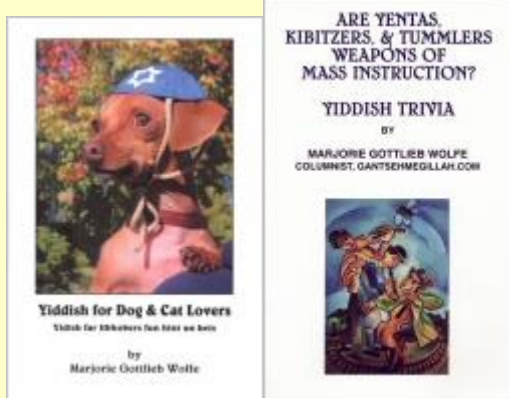
“The Talmud teaches that a synagogue must be built with

windows in the sanctuary. I believe this is so we can see who is outside and unable to join us. As Jews we have to maintain “mental windows” everywhere so that we understand that those whom we refer to as ‘shut-ins’ are not shut-in. They are cruelly shut out of the life many of us take for granted.”

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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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