

Bulls Head cartoonist links generations through humor

School of Visual Arts graduate's next project is a series of children's books of Yiddish humor

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The 13th day of Teves in 2009 (Jan. 9) is National Static Electricity Day.

The 12th of Nisan (April 6) is Plan Your Epitaph Day.

And a year from today, the 28th of Sivan? National Vanilla Milkshake Day, of course.

These obscure holidays are just some of the wonderful things included in "A Yearly Shpritz of Jewish Bits: The Ultimate Illustrated Calendar of Jewish Humor (New and Old)," created by Bulls Head cartoonist Chari Pere.

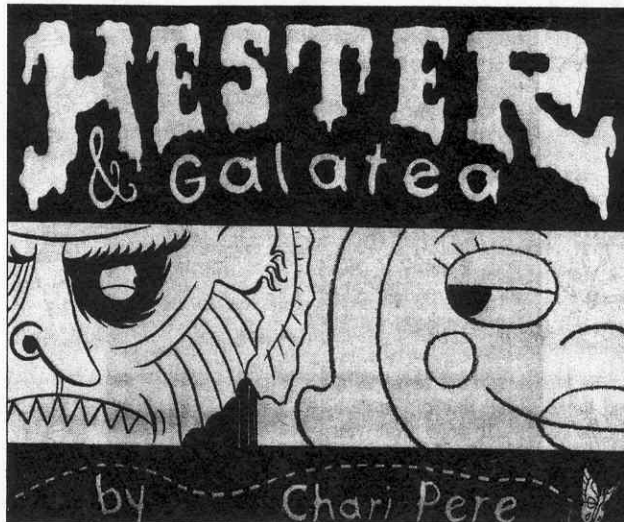
This is a young woman who is going places, and in fact, left yesterday for Jerusalem and a six-week fellowship that just might help her with a plan to write and illustrate a series of children's books based on old Yiddish humor.

Ms. Pere was one of fewer than 20 social-minded fellows from around the world chosen for a program that gives participants time to work on their projects and the opportunity, at the program's conclusion, to "pitch our projects to a group of Jewish philanthropists," who just might provide financing to make them a reality.

A graduate of the Yeshiva of Flatbush and the valedictorian of this year's graduating class at the School of Visual Arts in Manhattan, Ms. Pere, 22, has been drawing since the age of 1 and studying art since she was 6.

For many years she studied with Jeanne Meisels at the Art Lab at Snug Harbor Cultural Center in Livingston.

Her cartoons are drawn in a variety of styles and always



Ms. Pere's junior thesis at college was a comic book about a girl who uses her imagination to change her own reality.

seek to deliver a message, tell a story or just make someone smile.

"I love fine arts, too, but I just like making people laugh too much," she said.

Among her many talents, perhaps the one that serves her best is her instinct for making the most of every opportunity.

From a Birthright trip to Israel, she found herself co-chairing a Jewish arts festival at the West Side Jewish Center in Manhattan.

From a solo exhibit at the Gravesend Library in Brooklyn, she got a commission to do the back cover of a magazine published by the Presentense Institute of Creative Zionism for Israel's 60th anniversary. From that, she got the Presentense fellowship in Jerusalem.

"You never know what's going to lead to something amazing," she said.

Even bad experiences offer valuable new insights, she said. The loss last year of her grandfather, a Holocaust survivor, has given her a new resolve to link older and younger generations of Jews through humor.

A mishap-laden trip to Is-



PERE: The valedictorian of her class at the School for Visual Arts is off to Jerusalem to begin a six-week fellowship.

rael with her family turned into more material for her cartoons.

"When bad things happen, you learn from them," she said. "There's a lot of emotions you can put into comics that you hadn't even felt before these bad things happened. Always try to look for the light."

Although Judaism is cen-