



<http://israelity.com/index.php?s=chelm-on-the-med>

[Comedy of Israeli errors](#)

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Raised in the metro Washington, DC area, Daniella Ashkenazy (pictured) has been living in Israel for over 40 years and working as a journalist for about half of that time., currently covering the environmental beat for [The Jerusalem Post](#)'s weekend Metro section.

Launched a few months ago, Ashkenazy's [Chelm-on-the-Med](#) website is an ever-growing collection of local soft news items – those curious, often humorous stories that would sound like they are urban legends if they weren't in the mainstream news media.

Among Chelm-on-the-Med's gems are the tale of a farmer who used his [LoJack](#)-like car theft recovery device to recover bales of hay that had been stolen from him, a Knesset proposal to combat the ever-lowering water levels of the Dead Sea by importing water from Turkey, and a Hassidic man who proposed throwing books of Psalms at enemy entities as a poetic response to falling rockets (because in Hebrew, the word for missiles, Tillim, is similar to the word for Psalms, Tehillim).

Chelm-on-the-Med's beat is relatively similar to ISRAELITY's in that both sites attempt to take Israeli life out of the realm of hard news and into the realm of real life. As Ashkenazy puts it in her FAQ....

Beyond life and death issues, Israel is an outrageously amusing and lively place to live, and it's strange that Jews, famous for their humor from Charlie Chaplin to Seinfeld, haven't a clue about the humorous side of Israeli life.

She also sees the site as a useful tool for spreading a positive image of the country, especially among Diaspora youth:

A lot of things that make some adults uncomfortable will be viewed as very cool by adolescents. In fact, I think the zany, irreverent intriguing encounter with Israel that Chelm-on-the-Med offers will make Jewish kids think Israel is a very neat place – a vast improvement from the image of a gloomy and dangerous...and yes, dead serious and humorless 'tight-ass' country that focus groups have found.

Although the site is relatively new, the concept is not. In the late Eighties, Ashkenazy launched the column under the moniker "Gleanings" in the now-defunct Israel Scene magazine, and it has run in a variety of additional publications under other names as well.

Tags: [Chelm-on-the-Med](#), [comedy](#), [Daniella Ashkenazy](#), [fluff](#), [Gleanings](#), [hasbara](#), [image](#), [Israel Scene](#), [journalism](#), [media war](#), [news](#), [soft news](#), [urban legends](#)