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"Man Who Saved a Million Yiddish Books" Speaks Oct. 9

ORANGE, Calif., Sept. 24, 2007 Aaron Lansky, famed as the man who rescued a million Yiddish books from basements, attics and dumpsters all across America, will give a lecture entitled *Don't You Know Yiddish is Dead?* at Chapman University at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 9 in Memorial Hall. The lecture is free and open to the public. Following the talk, Lansky will sign his popular book *Outwitting History: The Amazing Adventures of a Man Who Rescued a Million Yiddish Books*. Books will be available for purchase.

As a graduate student during the 1980s, Aaron Lansky embarked at the age of just 23 on an unusual mission: he set out to save the world's Yiddish books. By then an entire body of Jewish literature the physical remnant of Europe's Yiddish culture was on the verge of extinction. Precious volumes that had survived Hitler and Stalin were being passed down from older generations of Jewish immigrants to their non-Yiddish-speaking children, only to be discarded or destroyed.

Scholars then thought that only about 70,000 of these books remained in existence. But rummaging house to house across America through dumpsters, attics, basements, nursing homes and demolition sites Lansky ended up finding and saving more than a million Yiddish books. He went on to found the National Yiddish Book Center, where those books now are being preserved, reprinted and read by new generations. The Center houses what is now regarded as the literary legacy of millions of Jews who lived in Eastern Europe before the Holocaust.

Filled with inspiring and hilarious tales, Lansky's own bestselling book, *Outwitting History: The Amazing Adventures of a Man Who Rescued a Million Yiddish Books*, is a riveting story about his travels as he and his team of volunteers located and retrieved the precious and endangered Yiddish literature, in what has been called the greatest cultural rescue effort in Jewish history. With 75,000 copies now in print, Lansky's book is a collective love song to brilliant Yiddish writers from Mendele to Sholem Aleichem to Isaac Bashevis Singer and their enduring cultural relevance.

Aaron Lansky's lecture is presented by Chapman University's Rodgers Center for Holocaust Education as part of The 1939 Club Lecture Series, and is co-sponsored by the Office of the Chancellor, the Leatherby Libraries and the John Fowles Center for Creative Writing.