

**August 4, 2006**

## Readers' Choice: What the Chosen People chose

Just how powerful is the Jewish vote? Congress may still be up for grabs, but when it comes to the best of the Bay Area, j.'s Jewish readers hold the cards. It's our version of democracy in action.

Then there are the new kids in town. For instance, in the best chocolate category last year, the first and second place winners were Scharffen Berger and Joseph Schmidt Confections. Since then, Hershey Chocolate bought out both companies — and no, we don't claim any credit for that. **But all that shifting of the boardrooms left space for start-up Charles Chocolates to make a move, taking first place in the category in three out of four regions.**



### Best Chocolate

Chocolate is a business filled with competition. From Godiva to Hershey's to the chocolates in a bowl at your grandmother's house, there are many, many scrumptious options – so a local chocolatier must be exceptional to stand out. In the Bay Area, according to j. readers, tops are Charles Charles Chocolates in San Francisco, South Bay/Peninsula and Marin/Sonoma.

Chuck Siegel of Emeryville-based Charles Chocolates has been working with the confection all his entire life. From growing up eating chocolate from around the world to starting his own chocolate business, Siegel has had many years to perfect his recipes.