

KEREN OR

THE NEWSLETTER OF OR SHALOM

Or Shalom Jewish Spiritual Community, Vancouver BC orshalom.ca Tishrei/Heshvan/Kislev 5763 October/November 2002

FINDING HOLINESS BETWEEN HOLY DAYS

By Rabbi David Mivasair

The month of Heshvan, which begins with the new moon at sundown on October 6, is noted for having no holidays or special observances at all. This is particularly striking since it follows the month of Tishrei which is so full of sacred days. Beginning with Rosh Hashana and continuing through the Ten Days of Teshuva, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Hoshana Rabba, Shemini Atzeret and Simhat Torah, the month of Tishrei is exceptionally rich in celebration, imagery and heightened experience. In contrast, the following month of Heshvan is completely empty of holidays and celebrations. For that reason it is also called Mar-Heshvan: bitter Heshvan.

The very emptiness of Heshvan, however, doesn't have to be bitter. It can also be a gentle, quiet gift. Instead of our attention being attracted to one particularly outstanding aspect of the divine presence highlighted by a holiday or commemoration as in other months, the month of Heshvan encourages the undirected openness to seek out God's presence in the regular ongoing dailiness of life. Heshvan can be a month-long invitation to live with the consciousness of "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." We can find God's presence in the common experiences of everyday living. This sense of Heshvan leads a Hasidic teaching to reverse the two letters that make it "Mar-Heshvan" and instead call it "Ram-Heshvan" - high Heshvan rather than bitter.

There is a kabalistic teaching that Heshvan has no

THE REB SITE

holidays because it is being "reserved" for a holiday that is yet to be. This is based on Heshvan being the month in which King Solomon completed the first Temple in Yerushalayim (I Kings 6:38). Drawing from a midrash in Pesikta Rabbati, the Hasidic text Sefer Bnei Yissaschar projects that in a future Heshvan the Mashiah will dedicate the rebuilt third and final Temple, bringing the ultimate resolution of human strife and struggle in this world.

Rather than attach our dreams and visions of an ideal future to the "rear-view mirror" image of a physical Temple in Jerusalem where animal sacrifice will be

resumed, I believe the open consciousness of Heshvan leads toward a more symbolic understanding of the traditional teachings. If, indeed, "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," then perhaps in the quiet and openness of Heshvan we can see the entire world as the House of God, the dwelling place of the divine presence. We can aspire to one Heshvan in the not-too-distant future

when we and our fellow travelers in this world will dedicate as the "third Temple" this whole glorious planet and recognize it all as the Sanctuary for the indwelling of the divine presence. As we say in the Kedushah prayer, echoing the prophet Isaiah's vision, "Holy, holy, holy is YAH t'va'ot; the whole world is filled with God's presence." May we all take advantage of the quiet and openness of the coming month of Heshvan to bring that Presence even more into our daily lives and the lives of those around us.



OR SHALOM

HEBREW SCHOOL NEWS

By Bat-Ami Segal, School Coordinator

Or Shalom Hebrew School held its first classes on Wednesday, September 11. Students lit eleven Yahrzeit candles to commemorate the loss of so many lives in New York as a result of terrorist attacks. Nomi Fenson also spoke about Yom Kippur, when there is a special Yizkor service in the synagogue to remember loved ones who have died.

During the first classes, students and teachers talked about the coming year, and students wrote out their wishes for themselves and for the world at large. These wishes were presented in shul on Yom Kippur. We will hang the wishes in the succah for all to read.

The Or Shalom School, although small, with a current enrolment of 22 students, continues to provide families and their children with Jewish education, based on learning about Jewish values, traditions and culture. A fun-based, hands-on curriculum helps students to form their Jewish identity. Prayer and Hebrew study is also part of this program.

For more information about the school please contact Bat-Ami Segal at (604) 875-6560 or bfsegal@telus.net



REPORT FROM THE EAST SIDE FUND

By Michael Corber

The East Side Fund is pleased to report the completion of yet another successful year. In 5762 the Fund has sponsored approximately 1,000 meals for needy people at local restaurants.

Rev. Michael Batten of St. James Community Service Society writes: “Thank you very much for your kind donation of meal tickets. As you are probably aware, we are frequently faced with requests for emergency meal assistance. While we do budget for these requests, we are never able to meet every need. Your generous donation will help extend our Emergency Assistance Program further, and feed people who would otherwise go hungry.”

One teaching I have received from my work in this area is that there are two important resources available to all of us, even the most disadvantaged. Those assets are good manners and a sense of humour; courtesy and a smile cost nothing, but are worth a great deal. As an example, some of my favorite encounters have been with a shopping cart gentleman about whom I have written previously. I saw him most recently last week. He had installed himself on a traffic island on Québec Street near Science World where he had set up a cast-off card table and chair, looking very much like a displaced CEO in a makeshift office. I gave him some meal coupons and wished him: “You have a good day.” Then he said, “And you, sir, have a heart of gold.” And with that handed me a small heart shape cut out of gold paper. I am touched by the grace and dignity of this person who always has a token of appreciation at hand.

On behalf of all concerned, I relay much thanks to the financial contributors and to The Board of Directors for their continued support of The East Side Fund.

A more detailed description of the East Side Fund can be found at www.orshalom.ca/EastSideFund.html.

For more information about the East Side Fund contact Michael Corber at (604) 681-7775 or mcorber@instanetservices.com.

MAHTOVU

CHILDREN'S SHABBAT PROGRAM

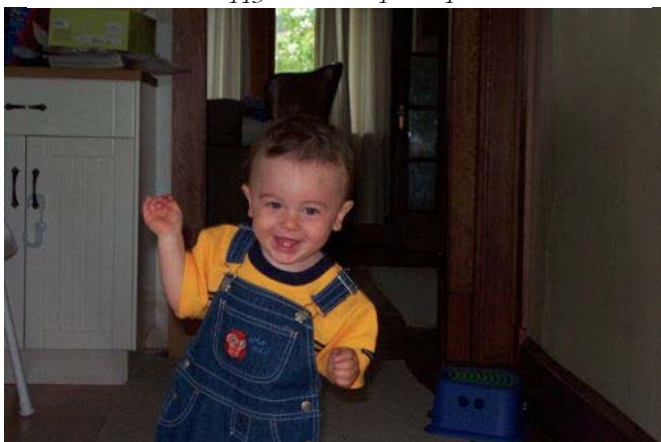
by Razel Ross

We are excited to offer a new children's Shabbat service for kids between the ages of three and seven, led by Razel Ross and Melanie Yearow. The service lasts approximately one and half hours, and concludes with a mini-kiddush with the appropriate b'rachot for bread and grape juice. Each service focuses on an enriching Jewish spiritual theme revolving around a Jewish holiday or Torah story. The service includes traditional stories, Hebrew songs, movement, bibliodrama, parshat of the week and b'rachot. We introduce the children to simple Jewish meditation techniques, and periodically include special guests to enhance our program.

We held two successful services over the High Holydays at the JCC. Future monthly Shabbat Services will be held at Or Shalom (in the basement) from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on October 26, November 30 and December 21, 2002, and the program will continue until June 14, 2003. For more details, brochures are available in the lobby of Or Shalom. If you would like your child to participate in the program, or if you have any questions, you can reach Razel Ross at (604) 897-0682.

We would like to thank the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Vancouver for funding this program.

A happy Mahtovu participant.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

FAMILY DAVVENING NOVEMBER 23

All parents and grandparents are invited to come with their elementary school-aged kids to a Shabbat morning of Family Davvening on November 23. Reb David, Anna Paperny, Kira Levy, Naomi Krajden and Sarina Kier will lead beautifully simple, deep and lively Or Shalom-style Shabbat davvening and meditation for kids, read a brief selection of the Torah parsha and will lead a drash-a-drama to explore an issue in the parsha. We start at 11:00 and end by 12:30. Please consider bringing a snack to share in a kiddush afterward. Please pass this on to anyone who you think would be interested.

ALEPH KALLAH 2003 ADVANCE PLANNING MEETING AT OR SHALOM

Every two years the Jewish Renewal movement organizes the ALEPH Kallah, a weeklong summertime gathering attended by hundreds from all over the world. The 2003 Kallah will be nearby at Western Washington University in Bellingham from June 30 to July 6 on the theme "Creativity, Hope, and Healing: Our Future Renewed." It is an excellent opportunity for Or Shalomniks to connect with the wider Jewish Renewal movement and learn from some of greatest teachers of our times.

ALEPH Kallah director Cindy Gabriel will be coming from Boulder, Colorado to Or Shalom on Sunday, November 3, to meet with anyone in our community who would like to explore being involved in planning and organizing certain aspects of the Kallah. Serving on the planning committee is an exceptional way to build community and deepen relationships. Some positions on the planning committee are associated with work-study scholarships to the Kallah. The meeting with Cindy will be 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. ALEPH will provide pizza, salad, drinks and childcare. If you are at all interested in coming to the meeting or have questions about the Kallah, please contact Reb David at (604) 872-1614.

FINDING YOURSELF IN THE SIDDIR

On three Shabbat mornings before the davvening begins, Reb David will offer teaching and explanations to better understand the parts of the davvening, the specific prayers and how they flow one into another. Each session will focus on a different part of the service. These three classes will be held from 9:15 to 10:00 a.m. on October 26, November 9 and December 7.

ADAM VA-ADAMAH ECO-RETREAT

Adam va-Adamah Environmental Society (www.av-a.org), regional affiliate of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, will hold its annual Eco-Retreat during the weekend of October 25-27, 2002. The weekend will include a variety of activities for individuals and families, in a Shomer Shabbat environment. Activities will include optional Shabbat services and observances, nature walks and outdoor education, Jewish environmental teachings and more. Rabbi Ross Singer will lead Shabbat services with Carlebach-style davvening with Rafael Richman. The retreat will take place at Sunwolf Outdoor Centre, located at the edge of the Cheakamus River, in the spectacular beauty of the Squamish/Brackendale area, about an hour and a half drive from Vancouver. Early bird registration fee is \$130/person for payment received by September 20. Regular fee is \$150/person. Deadline for registration and payment is October 4. Fee includes kosher vegetarian meals and accommodation. Adam va-Adamah will coordinate carpools.



A recent Adam va-Adamah retreat

“Judaism offers a rich tradition of teachings about the environment and nature. The annual Eco-Retreat gives singles and families a chance to experience the amazing outdoor beauty of BC in a Jewish context,” says Cheryl Sharvit, the event organizer for Adam va-Adamah. To register or for more information, contact Cheryl at (604) 215-2544 or avaretreat2002@yahoo.ca. Payment must be received by the early bird or registration deadline. Include the following information with your

YESOD FUND

A FUND FOR JEWISH LEARNING

By Sandi Moussadji

Or Shalom has established a new scholarship fund to assist individuals wishing to pursue studies in disciplines which provide leadership to Jewish communities. The fund will be known as Yesod (Foundation): A Fund for Jewish Learning.

Donations to the scholarship fund are tax deductible. Cheques should be made payable to Or Shalom—Yesod Fund. Mail to Or Shalom, 710 East 10th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V5T 2A7. To charge your donation to a credit card, call the Or Shalom office at (604) 872-1614.

Guidelines for applicants can be obtained from the Yesod Committee.

Thank you Chevra, for your generous donations.

The Yesod Committee,
Reva Malkin (604) 987-2808
Sandi Moussadji (604) 875-8791

TODAH RABAH

From Marty Puterman

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Reb David, Reb Hillel and the Or Shalom community for their support following the recent death of my mother.

registration: the number of people in your party and their names; contact information (address, telephone, email) whether you have transportation or require it; if you have transportation, whether you can take others and how many; any special dietary needs. Send cheques to: Adam va-Adamah Environmental Society, 201-4088 Cambie Street, Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 2X8.

THE GESHER EXHIBIT TOURS CANADA

The Geshher Exhibit of art and poetry is the culmination of six months of work by eighteen Holocaust Survivors, Child Survivors and members of the Second Generation who wrote, painted and talked together as a way to bridge the silence between the generations impacted by the trauma of the Holocaust. Meetings of the participants were facilitated by artist Linda Frimer, psychologist Alina Wydra, writer Dale Adams-Segal and scribe/coordinator Reisa Schneider. This exhibit premiered at the Holocaust Centre in the summer of 1999.

The Geshher Exhibit recently returned from shows in Edmonton and Saskatoon and will be on display at the Gallery at Ceperley House, 6344 Deer Lake Ave, Burnaby from September 21 to November 17. Hours are Tuesday to Friday 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. The gallery is open until 8:00 p.m. the first Thursday of the month. Later this year the exhibit will travel to Calgary, London (Ontario) and Montreal.

The exhibit opening will be held Thursday, September 26, from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. There will be a reception followed by a slideshow and lecture by Linda Frimer and a poetry and prose reading by the participants from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m.

Educational material for schools to support teachers in preparing their students for the exhibit with information about the Holocaust and the Geshher project is now available in connection with the exhibit. Additional programming through Ceperley House includes tours and outreach workshops for school classes.

A workshop, "Connections: Explore Your Personal Family History," will be given by Linda Frimer and George Littlechild October 18-20. For more information about this and other programs in connection with the exhibit call (604) 205-7339.

RECENT DONATIONS

Community Fund

- In honour of the marriage of Cathy Paperny & Ron Ritch
 - In honour of Itzchak Marmorstein
- In appreciation of Reb Hillel for the baby naming
 - In honour of the wedding of Arik & Aliza
 - In honour of Dina-Hasida Mercy
- In memory of Ellen Frank's mother, Marion Novik z"l
 - In memory of Wilhelmina Puterman z"l
 - In loving memory of Henry Adams z"l
- In honour of Roslyn Kunin's Order of Canada
- In honour of Debra Wolf's generosity of spirit
 - In honour of Mary Adlersberg
 - In memory of Len Wexler z"l
 - In memory of Clara Hamovitch z"l
 - In memory of Len Wexler z"l

Building Fund

- In honour of Rabbi Mivasair
- In memory of Len Wexler z"l

Refugee Fund

- In memory of Ellen Frank's Mother, Marion Novik z"l

Lisa Nemetz Education Fund

- In honour of Laurie Nemetz's birthday

Adam va-Adamah

- In honour of Rabbi Mivasair's commitment to social justice

East Side Food Fund

Book Fund

Tzedakah Fund

School Fund

Len Ryant Memorial Fund

B'nai Mitzvah Endowment Fund

Rabbi's Fund

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HEAR, OH OR SHALOM!

By Avi Dolgin

A new sound system has been installed!

Frank has worked for weeks with a number of consultants to buy the microphones, mount the speakers, install the wiring, and configure a mixing box.

Finally, those of us with the “hidden disability”—hearing impairment—can participate. No more wondering what the joke was that everyone is laughing at. No more straining to hear the speech the nervous Bat Mitzvah girl has laboured on for weeks. No more missing half of Shacharit because today's leader lacks a booming voice.

But there's a catch!

The sound system requires people of sound mind and body to operate it. We need about seven people (a perfect Jewish number) who will do occasional shifts setting the system up on a Shabbat morning, making sure the loudness is correct for the changing leaders and putting the microphones away when the service is over. The good/bad news is you get to be there for everything from Psukei D'Zimra to announcements—but only about once every seven weeks.

This job can easily be done by men or women, by recent b'nei mitzvah or by elders, by those with good hearing or those without. It's a way to put something into the community while simply coming to daven.

Frank is operating the system alone during September. WE NEED A GROUP OF PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER NOW. In early October you'll be trained to run it. And we'll then set up a schedule that meets your personal convenience.

On behalf of the many of us at Or Shalom who try to live with a hearing impairment in a community that often makes no notice of our difficulty, I ask for your help. Volunteer by contacting me at dolgin@telus.net or (604) 879-4466.

We also ask for your financial contribution. We built the system “on spec” and now we have to pay for it.



COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERING

By Bette Thompson

Pictures to be hung in the Bayit

The pictures are currently in Reb David's office. Please check with the Bayit committee as to where they should be hung.

Honourable burial of Sifrei Kodesh

All Sifrei Kodesh (Holy books) and Sheimot (anything on which the YHVH name is written in Hebrew) which have completed their lifespan and can no longer be used with dignity. There are a number of old siddurim, machzorim, Tanakhs and other books which are falling apart and should be given their final rest.

The project would involve gathering all those books, arranging with a Jewish cemetery to bury them . One could also ask other synagogues if they would like to join Or Shalom at this time, to bury their Sifrei Kodesh and Sheimot as well.

Editor-In-Chief (NEW!)

A capable individual is required to coordinate the publication of Keren Or, the bimonthly newsletter of Or Shalom. This is an excellent opportunity to connect with many other members of our community and to be involved in many aspects of Or Shalom life. This can be excellent experience for someone wishing to enhance his or her resume. Contact Michael Corber, Tel: (604) 681-7775, E-mail: mcorber@instanetservices.com.