

# KEREN OR

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THE NEWSLETTER OF OR SHALOM קרן אור

Or Shalom Jewish Spiritual Community, Vancouver, B.C.

Kislev/Tevet/Shevat 5762

December 2001/January 2002

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## LIGHT WHEN THE NIGHTS ARE LONG

By Rabbi David Mivasair

When I was writing for the last *Keren Or*, summer crossed over into fall. As each day was done, the sun inched its way south along the dusky horizon. Darkness came earlier and with it a chill. Now, as the darkness deepens, this month of Kislev will bring us to the edge of winter. The secret of Kislev, though, is that under the cover of darkness there is always the spark of light. At the darkest time of year, the long moonless nights just around the solstice, Hanukka comes to remind us never to lose hope. As the candles glow and grow from one to eight, we see ourselves striking the spark that recovers the light obscured in the darkness.

Darkness comes in many forms. During the past few months, many of us have been confronted with another darkness. This one has been an echo of the hoshech, the penultimate plague in Egypt, when *lo ra'u ish et ahiv* — people couldn't see each other as brother and sister. It has become painfully clear, yet once again, how the divine image in the human form has become obscured.

We can become lost in the darkness. The experience of pain, of conflict, of sharp disappointment that we encounter in the world around us and in our own most intimate lives can block from our hearts the wealth of goodness that fills the world as well.

Even when the darkness is deepest, the light is still present. There is a teaching in kabbalah that the 36 tiny flames we light throughout the nights of Hanukka correspond to the first 36 hours after the

### THE REB SITE

creation of Adam and Eve when they gazed upon the world from one end to the other in the primal light before it was hidden away at the first sunset at the end of the first Shabbat. That hidden light — the *or ha-ganuz* — is present throughout Creation, but often so obscured that we don't even see it. In lighting our own lights night by night throughout Hanukka, we remind ourselves of the hope that the *or ha-ganuz* is only hidden, not extinguished, and our own role in bringing it forth.



*This photograph was taken by Jackie Olenick, a Judaica artist in Miami whose website [www.cybershuk.com](http://www.cybershuk.com) is a great resource for Hanukka giving. Turn to Page 3 for Hanukka gift ideas from our community.*

In answering the question, "*Meh Hanukka* -- What is Hanukka?", the rabbis in the Talmud shifted the focus from the physical, military victory of the Maccabee army to the miracle of the light lasting through the very real time of darkness. The haftara they chose for the Shabbat of Hanukka is from the prophet Zecharia, "*Lo ve-hayil ve-lo ve-choah . . . Not by power, not by might, but by My spirit.*"

The rabbis of old offer us a teaching for our times as well. If we wish to bring light to the darkness we encounter, whatever its form, it will not be by

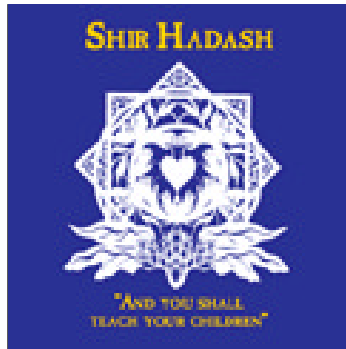
our own physical power but opening ourselves to the Spirit that is present throughout Creation.

During the coming weeks, the sun will reach its lowest point on the horizon. The days will be shortest and nights longest. Particularly now, many of us are likely to be grappling with a new sense of darkness in the realm of human affairs. During this month of Kislev, may we be strengthened by the Spirit to hold on to the light that we've known all our lives and to bring it forth.

## YOUR GUIDE TO GIFTS

### MUSIC TO LIFT THE SPIRIT

For Hanukka gift shopping, remember the beautiful music CDs produced right here to share with your friends and family. Incorporating many songs sung at Or Shalom, the Shir Hadash albums by Myrna Rabinowitz, Hanna Tiferet Siegel and Harley Rothstein are "Or Shalom — Sons of the Heart" and "And You Shall Teach Your Children."



Another sweet choice is Arik Labowitz's new CD "Simu Lev." Arik's voice and music are very soothing, meditative and beautiful.

And for those of you who don't recognize the name, Arik is Myrna's future son-in-law.

The Tzimmes albums of Jewish world beat music also make welcome gifts: "Sweet and Hot," "A Lid for Every Pot," and "Klezmyriad."



All the above are available at Temple Sholom Giftshop or from Myrna Rabinowitz at 604 873-8936 or [mrabinow@shaw.ca](mailto:mrabinow@shaw.ca)

Myrna also has some "Echoes of Reb Shlomo" CDs as well as some of Hanna Tiferet Siegel's and would be happy to recommend other Or Shalom recording artists.

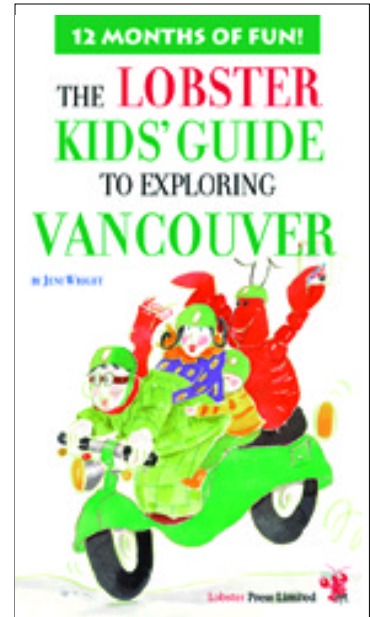
### GEMS FROM JENI

Jeni Wright's books and children's cassettes, "Rockysaurus and Friends," are available by e-mailing [jennwright@telus.net](mailto:jennwright@telus.net) or phone 604 266-3644.

The chapters.indigo review says: "The Lobster Kids City Explorers guides are written for parents by parents, with plenty of exciting kid-tested ideas. Each volume offers in-depth listings for many fun and educational outings, as well as kid-friendly restaurants and birthday party suggestions. These informa-

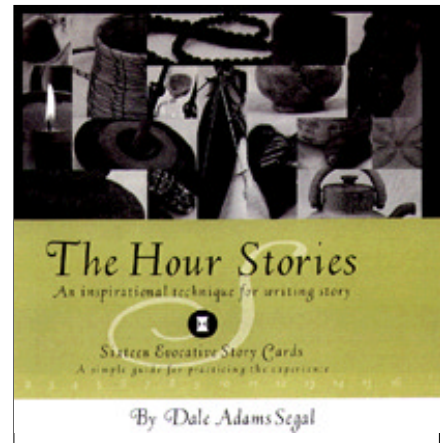
tive guides rate each major entry and provide directions, prices, times and quick reference icons. "The Lobster Kids Guide to Exploring Vancouver" helps you and your children enjoy all the entertaining and informative activities and opportunities that Vancouver has to offer.

Books are \$20 and cassettes \$12. There is a 10 percent discount for Or Shalomniks.



### FOR THE WRITER IN YOUR FAMILY

"The Hour Stories" cards by Dale Adams Segal open the portal of writing, nurturing one writer or a circle of writers. It supports those who want to tell their stories, those who are not certain where to begin, as well as those who, already writing, seek a new source of inspiration.



A packaged set includes The Story Guide, meditation, visualization, and 16 story cards. For information, call the Writing Tables 604 255-5485.

### ADULT HANUKKA PARTY DEC. 9

The "adult oriented" Or Shalom-sponsored Hanukka Party will be held on Sunday, Dec. 9, at Bar None, 1222 Hamilton St., in Yaletown.

There will be drinks, live reggae music, sufganyot, latkes and lots of happy people. Be there or be square.



## ADAM VA-ADAMAH'S 'EIGHT DAYS – EIGHT ACTIONS' PROGRAM

**O**n Dec. 9, the festival of Hanukka comes around once more. The story of Hanukka tells of the rededication of the temple, when a small jar of only enough oil to burn a lamp for one night miraculously sufficed for eight days.

Adam va-Adamah, B.C.'s Jewish environmental group, will be marking this Hanukka with a community program based on the reality that we, too, live in a world in which oil and other non-renewable resources are in increasingly short supply. Not only that, our use of fossil fuels is the major cause of global warming. At present rates of consumption, we are simultaneously depleting the Earth and overheating it at such a rapid rate that our only hope might lie in a miracle just like happened to the Maccabees.

But we can't live our lives waiting for miracles. Instead, there are things we can do with the tools and means we have at hand to solve the energy crisis.

Families, schools, synagogues and youth groups are invited to honour Hanukka by bringing meaningful and valuable environmental actions to the centre of their holiday celebration. Each night of Hanukka, when the candles are lit, families will read together the description of an action they will observe that day in order to ease energy consumption.

### EIGHT DAYS – EIGHT ACTIONS:

**Day 1:** Let there be sustainable light. Change one regular bulb in your home to a CFL (Compact Fluorescent Light). They last 10 times as long as standard incandescent bulbs and use only a quarter of the energy to produce the same amount of light — a modern Hanukka miracle! (To find CFLs near you, contact your local hardware store)

**Day 2:** Turn down the temperature of your water heater to the warm setting (49C/120F). Water heaters are the second-largest energy users in the home, averaging about 20 percent of all household energy use. By changing the setting from maximum heat, you'll not only save energy, but also avoid scalding your hands!

**Day 3:** Lower your thermostat 1.5C/3F. Did you know that by lowering your thermostat this small amount, you can reduce your energy consumption by nearly 10 percent? Put on a sweater instead of turning the heat up and watch your hydro bill shrink.

**Day 4:** Skip a car trip. Today, walk, run, skate, bike or take public transport instead of a car. Plan ahead for safe routes and different travel times. Take the challenge to travel smarter and cleaner.

**Day 5:** Start a scrap paper pile with used pieces of paper (that only are printed on one side, for example). You can use the backs for printing drafts of documents, writing notes, making shopping lists, etc. And this paper gets double the life! Go one step further by buying recycled paper products and you've completed the recycling loop!

**Day 6:** Honour Shabbat by turning off your TV, computer, video games or music. Choose at least one item and try keeping your energy use on Shabbat as low as possible. If you already keep Shabbat, find something extra to turn off.

**Day 7:** Have a candlelight dinner. Shut off all of your lights for an hour and enjoy an evening of latkes with the Hanukkah glowing. (You may want to light a few extra candles; it is traditional that we do not use the Hanukkah as a functional lamp.) It can be a romantic dinner or special holiday memory for your kids!

**Day 8:** Rededicate yourself to protecting the Earth by writing out a Hanukka Pledge to last all year. Choose specific actions that will reduce energy use.

Then, fulfill the mitzvah of "publicizing the miracle" of the oil by sharing your rededication with family and friends, and asking them to join your efforts.

Adam va-Adamah is part of a North America-wide movement to follow Jewish principles that guide us to act responsibly and prudently in dealing with the natural world. This response has been rooted in and drawn from the traditional wisdom and ethics that is the spiritual legacy of thousands of years of Jewish observation and thought. Adam va-Adamah ([www.adamvaadamah.org](http://www.adamvaadamah.org)) is the regional affiliate of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life ([www.coejl.org](http://www.coejl.org)). Adam va-Adamah organizes community activities, primarily educational and motivational.

For more information or to bring the Hanukka program to a community group, contact Susanna Haas at [shaas@sfu.ca](mailto:shaas@sfu.ca), or call 604-872-7380, or fax 604-872-4406.



*Skip a car trip for Hanukka.*

## BE CONSCIOUS OF FOOD ALLERGIES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

By Helen Aqua

The holidays are coming — Hanukka, Christmas, New Year's. And so are the holiday get-togethers — the office socials, the club year-end meetings, formal groups, informal groups, family, friends. It's a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate caring for others by being sensitive to the reality of people having allergies to foods, scents and pets.

Face it, people are so reluctant to speak of their personal needs. They will turn down invitations and decline to attend and maybe the reason is so simple and can be overcome — if only it is known.

So ask: "Is the menu a problem? Do you have any food allergies or special dietary needs?" This covers digestive intolerance, illness or conditions such as diabetes, Crohn's Disease and lupus and restrictions due to medications such as no hard alcohol or wine. It could also mean food by "choice" — kashrut, vegetarian, vegan, and not consuming caffeine or alcohol (both found in food and in beverages). And don't forget that we're definitely not all like Mikey, who will eat anything. We probably all have some foods that we avoid because we just don't like them.

Perhaps the question should be: "Are you allergic to perfume? Or pets?" Maybe even after asking, you won't find out. Some folks are really private, some don't want to "bother" others, some just don't feel like bringing up the subject having spent a lifetime of being ignored.

Try a little harder. Let your friends and guests know what you are planning to serve — perhaps that will allow someone the opening to say "I can't eat any of that, could I bring . . . or could you also serve . . ." At the very least, keep package labels and recipes handy so when a person asks "Can you tell me what's in this" you can.

If someone is definitely intolerant to certain food ingredients, find out either directly from them or elsewhere (books, dial-a-dietician, the web) what substitutes are available. There are many, many allergies from the well-known peanut and fish to lactose, eggs, gluten, wheat, the nightshade family, monosodium glutamate (MSG) and many others.

Granted, it will take a little more time than usual to buy retail products (ready-to-eat or raw ingredients) that meet your guest(s) requirements because you will have to carefully read the ingredients' labels. Most products have a kosher equivalent — get in touch with BCK by phone or through their website to see a list of all the

different North American kosher symbols. Kosher products are always labelled in great more detail than required by federal law. Kosher does not mean, however that the product is guaranteed OK for vegetarians or diabetics, sodium-restricted diets or for those avoiding MSG. Kosher guarantees that the product has gone through the equivalent of an ISO 2000 type process that ensures the integrity of the production of the product according to kashrut. With luck, the kosher products might be GMO-free, or vegan or great for celiacs, but they are primarily being produced to adhere to kashrut.

If an event is being held at a restaurant or involves outside catering, talk to the manager or head chef about any special needs. If they want the business they will listen and accommodate, if they won't/can't accommodate, then it would be a good opportunity to source out alternate locations or caterers. It works best if this can be done ahead of time, but be sure to find out if they can accommodate special requirements on short notice.

**Pets:** If you are entertaining at home, always let your potential guests know whether you have a pet. If the person is allergic find out what you might need to do so your guest can have a pleasant visit. For instance, we have a cat, and a friend who is very allergic asked that I thoroughly vacuum the day before she was coming for dinner. And, of course, the pet was kept upstairs for the duration of the visit.

**Cosmetic Scents:** More and more people are discovering how physically ill certain scents can make them. Usually the person experiences a reaction that affects their breathing, or produces coughing spells or non-stop tearing of the eyes. None of this is pleasant. Whenever you are going to be with a group of people take the time to inquire beforehand if they have any allergies to scent. Scent, by the way, is not limited to bottled perfume. Certain makeup products, aftershave and deodorants have subtle added perfumes that are "poison" to those with allergies. And so are some fresh and dried flowers.

**A New Resolution:** Obviously, allergies to food and perfume and pets aren't confined to just this upcoming holiday season — they are year-round. So why not start a new life-long habit for which you will be repaid over and over — ask guests and group participants if they have any allergies or foods they must avoid (this includes liquid refreshments). If you are entertaining at home, mention that the family has pets. And, since you never know who might be allergic to perfume or other scents, start choosing your products with that in mind. You will be blessed.

## BOARD CHOOSES FOCUS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY

The Or Shalom Board of Directors has identified four main areas where it plans to strengthen our community over the coming year.

In the area of child and youth programming, we aim to continue and strengthen regular Shabbat morning children's program, strengthen the school and decide about the feasibility of other youth and family programs.

With membership we plan to enhance our welcome and inclusion of new members, and raise the level of participation of all members.

With regard to spiritual leadership, we plan to manage the process whereby our spiritual leaders work together and with the community in our continuing search for higher forms of spiritual practice. The board will consult extensively with the community for feedback before deciding in the early summer on Rabbi David's contract renewal.

On the financial side, we plan to foster fundraising and donation practices to increase the efficiency of our fundraising efforts and to strengthen our financial position.

### THE CHOSEN PEOPLE: NEW EXECUTIVE

The officers are now in place for this year — Kevin Solomons and John Fuerst as co-chairs, Maurice Bloch as treasurer and Carol Ann Fried and Lisa Hardin as co-secretaries.

The first board meeting for this year took place Oct. 17, followed by a day-long board retreat on Nov. 4. The next board meetings will take place at Or Shalom, on Dec. 20 and Jan. 17, both Thursdays, at 7 p.m. All are welcome. If you wish to provide feedback or possible agenda items, please call or e-mail co-chairs John Fuerst or Kevin Solomons.

### OPPORTUNITIES ON COMMITTEES

Becoming a committee volunteer can be a fun and fulfilling way to contribute to the Or Shalom community and is a great way to get to know other Or Shalomniks on a deeper level. This is going to be an exciting year with many new projects and challenges.

If you are thinking of volunteering or would like to

know more, we would love to hear from you. Call or e-mail a board contact person or the Or Shalom office. Also watch for postings about committee functions and their membership on Or Shalom bulletin boards and on the website over the next few weeks.

The board contacts for committees are:

- **Adult Education** : Barry Goodman
- **Bayit** : Mary-Anne Sturley
- **Building** : Lisa Hardin
- **Communications** : Lisa Hardin, Azima Buell, Rory Richards
- **Donors** : Micha Menczer
- **Finance** : Maurice Bloch
- **Fundraising** : Rory Richards
- **Gemulit Chesed** : Maurice Bloch, (personal support) Earl Goldstein
- **New Members** : Earl Goldstein, Sue Ackerman
- **Personnel** : Alina Wydra, Carol Ann Fried, Lisa Hardin
- **Refugee** : Sandi Moussadji, Alina Wydra
- **Ritual** : Barry Rabinowitz, Barry Goodman
- **School** : Sandi Moussadji
- **Youth** : Rory Richards (interim contact person)

### BOARD MEMBERS CONTACT LIST

- Sue Ackerman, susan@intergate.bc.ca, 736-8221, cell 783.0388
- Maurice Bloch, mbloch@telus.net, 266-4204
- Azima Buell, azimab@vcn.bc.ca, 731-0572
- Carol Ann Fried, freedom@ca.inter.net, 736-4110, fax 736-4193
- John Fuerst, fuerstandgill@telus.net, 254-9234
- Earl Goldstein, earlpearl@shaw.ca, 738-5283, cell 761-4423
- Barry Goodman, bgood@vcn.bc.ca, 876-1492, cell 779.8149
- Lisa Hardin, lhardin@imag.net, 215-3395
- Micha Menczer, menczer@telus.net, 877-1208, fax 877-1856
- Sandi Moussadji, moussadji@primus.ca, 875-8791
- Barry Rabinowitz, brabinowitz@reid-crowther.com, 873-8936
- Rory Richards, roryrichards@hotmail.com, 669-0664, cell 837-7679
- Frank Segal, bfsegal@sprint.ca, 875-6560
- Kevin Solomons, solomons2040@shaw.ca, 739-2040, cell 771-4963, fax 739-2923
- Mary Anne Sturley, shifrah\_adar@hotmail.com, 325-0645
- Alina Wydra, alina@axionet.com, 732-8667, cell 551-9029, wk 733-4321

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# PLEASE HELP BRING A REFUGEE FAMILY TO CANADA

*By Sandi Moussadji*

In July I heard about a family from Sarajevo, the Stayic family, who are trying to immigrate to Canada. Over the next few weeks I found myself thinking about this family, comparing them to my family, becoming more aware of the freedoms and choices I have. I found myself thinking about this family often as I was at my favourite sushi bar. Let me tell you about them:

Vesna (born 1956) is a medical doctor, specializing in anesthesiology. She worked in Sarajevo City Hospital before the war. She now works in the Kladovo Hospital, Serbia, as an anesthesiologist for 100 Deutsche Marks (\$72 Cdn) per month. With this salary she supports her family. She speaks English.

Zoran (born 1958) has a BA in economics. He worked for seven years as an accountant for one of the biggest companies in the former Yugoslavia — UNIS — and then worked as a fraud inspector with the Sarajevo Police Department until the war. He is currently taking courses in English.

Their son Ogi (born 1983) is a student in high school, with majors in mathematics and computers. He speaks English and French. He will soon graduate from high school and will be eligible for the draft into the Yugoslav army when he is no longer in school. Their daughter Anja (born 1992), is just a cute kid.

The family's home is in Sarajevo where they lived until the war. When the siege began in Sarajevo, their neighbourhood was under Serbian control. It was unsafe for a mixed-marriage couple and their child. When Zoran was called up into the Serbian forces they decided to leave, and went to Zoran's relatives in Serbia, where Anja was born three months later.

In Serbia they waited for the war to end, living as refugees off their life savings. Zoran was hiding from military authorities and Vesna got a job in the hospital. Because she has an ethnically ambiguous name, people are unaware of her Muslim identity. She lives in fear that she will be fired if her true identity is discovered and she will be unable to support her family. The whole region continues to be unstable and mixed families are still very much at risk.

Vesna and Zoran simply want to provide a safe and open future for their children.

Despite their situation, the family was turned down for entry into Canada as refugees. This was really because of a technicality. Although they formerly had refugee status, this status changed when the new

government in Yugoslavia made an offer to refugees such as Vesna and Zoran to begin the process of citizenship in Yugoslavia. At that time the Canadian government changed their policy and declared that only individuals and families who were living in refugee camps and were unemployed would be considered as refugees. Although the Canadian government no longer considers them refugees, Vesna and Zoran know that their family's lives are in danger. They have a strong need to bring their children to live in a stable democracy where they will have opportunities for a brighter future. Therefore, they have applied for entry to Canada as independent immigrants. Their file is now in process at the Canadian Embassy in Vienna and they are very hopeful that they will receive permission to immigrate this winter.

In order to immigrate, the family must have \$16,000 Cdn in a bank account in Canada as an indicator of their ability to support themselves for one year. A further \$2,000 is required to cover the "landing fee." A total of \$18,000, which the Stayic family does not have.

After several more visits to the sushi bar and continued thoughts of the Stayics I found my sushi not so satisfying. I decided during the month of September, instead of spending money at my favourite sushi bar I would send a donation to the Or Shalom Refugee Fund. At the end of the month I was amazed at how much I had saved (and rather embarrassed at realizing how much I usually spend at that sushi bar.) I sent a cheque c/o Sandy Berman and now I'm back at my favorite sushi bar, feeling satisfied.

Or Shalom has generously agreed to accept donations for the Refugee Fund to assist the Stayic family. They will provide all donors with a tax receipt at the end of the year. Or Shalom has a proud history of assisting people from the former Yugoslavia to come to a safe haven here in Vancouver and re-establish their lives.

At this time an informal sponsorship group has begun to raise funds for Vesna and Zoran and their children. Already, \$6,000 has been raised; our goal is to have \$18,000 in the bank by the spring of 2002.

I'm asking if you too can find some extra money for the Stayic family.

Please contact me ([moussadji@primus.ca](mailto:moussadji@primus.ca), 604 875-8791) if you have any further questions or wish to make a donation. Your cheque(s) should be made payable to Or Shalom and forwarded to: Sandy Berman, 3950 Willow St., Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 3R3.

## FAMILY DAVENNING SET FOR DECEMBER AND JANUARY

Parents are invited to come with their kids from pre-school through elementary school age to join in our monthly Family Davvening with Reb David, Anna Paperny, Kira Levy and Solly Markovitch on Dec. 22 and Jan. 19.

We'll gather downstairs at 11 for a child-oriented half-hour of Or Shalom song and prayer. We'll read part of the weekly Torah portion and then together we'll learn even more Torah by creating a drash-a-drama, putting ourselves right into the story and acting out how we would have behaved if we had been there.

We'll have a little kiddush for ourselves downstairs a bit after noon and then go upstairs to sing or share our drash-a-drama with everyone else by 12:30.

Please phone in advance to let me know if you plan to come. (Even if you don't phone, please come anyway!) Please bring sweets or fruits to share. We'll supply the grape juice.

— *David Mivasair*

## MEDITATION SERVICE ONGOING

You're invited to Jewish meditation Shabbat services, which are held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. every Shabbat ongoing, except Dec. 29, with Leonard Yehudah Angel at 865 Durward Ave.

The service begins with 9 a.m. morning blessings, some melodies, meditation, more melody, walking meditation (outdoors) meditation and halleluyahs, and then meditation and shaharit blessings with the Shema, Amidah, and other niggunim. Then there is a kiddush lunch and Torah study.

For information, call 604 876-6925.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO SPONSOR KIDDUSH

There are many kiddush mitzvah opportunities coming up. The current schedule shows that Dec. 1 and 8 are open for sponsoring as is all of January. Sponsored kiddushes in December are Dec. 15 for Rosa Zetler's Bat Mitzvah, Dec. 22 for Leonard Wexler's birthday and Dec. 29 sponsored by Al Pasternak.

The kiddush schedule is on the calendar on the website, orshalom.ca. Also on the website is the Guide to

Kiddush, Kitchen & Kashrut — a how-to document which covers virtually every aspect of food at Or Shalom. You'll find it on the site from the Foods section of the Assiya page.

Remember, sponsoring a kiddush does not need to be an ordeal. Simple is good. E-mail me at efrank@sfu.ca or call between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. at 1-604-886-4651 (in Gibsons) to book one.

— *Ellen Frank*

## NEW MEMBERS

**Sam Greenspoon and Lisa Shatzky** — Sam, Lisa and their three children — daughter Jordyne, 7, and sons Benjamin, 5, and Jonah, 2, — commute to Or Shalom from their home on Bowen Island. They are very involved in protecting the environment on Bowen and elsewhere in B.C., particularly the ancient

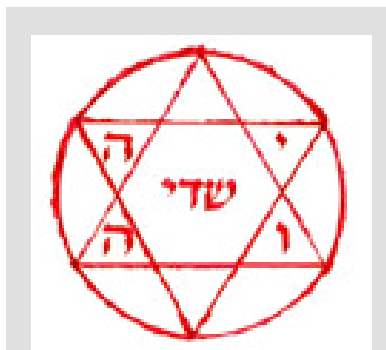
temperate rainforests on the northern coast in this province. They love hiking, camping and kayaking, and their home is ALWAYS open to anyone from Or Shalom who would like to come for a visit. Sam is a hospital social worker and practises tai chi. Lisa is a family therapist and published poet, and is currently writing a collection of short stories. They have both been involved in a few Kaballah study groups, on Bowen and in Vancouver, and are thrilled to be part of the Or Shalom community, with all its music, celebration, joy, and welcoming people. In particular, they love the diversity of ideas at Or Shalom, and the respectful and gentle way that people appear to be with one another. They look forward to becoming more involved in Or Shalom projects. They have lived on the West Coast for 13 years, and are both originally from Montreal.

— *Miriam Eguchi*

**Pamela Fages** — Pamela is delighted to become a new member of Or Shalom. She is originally from Winnipeg and moved to British Columbia 10 years ago. She works as a nurse and has been contemplating becoming more involved in community. After attending the service during High Holidays, she knew it was a good fit for her. She looks forward to participating in the future and has already signed up for Adam va-Adamah. "Can't wait," she says.

— *Carol Pearlstone*

*New members and those interested in Or Shalom are encouraged to phone Carol Pearlstone at 604 669-5173 or Martha Barker at 604 986-6309.*



Or Shalom wishes to thank Aviel Barclay for her permission to use her design "Fire Amulet" in the bookplates inserted into new mahzorim and other books donated to Or Shalom. Aviel is a Judaic scribe and member of Or Shalom. Her work can be viewed at [www.princeheron.bc.ca/aviel/](http://www.princeheron.bc.ca/aviel/).

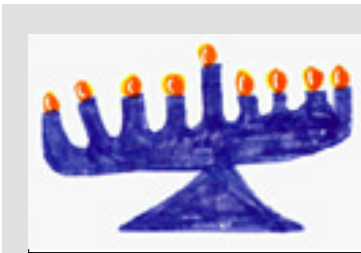


## OUR HEBREW SCHOOL IS SMALL BUT ACTIVE

By Bat-Ami Segal, Hebrew School Co-ordinator

The Or Shalom Hebrew School is in full swing after the many holiday breaks. The school remains a small school with 22 enrolled students from Kindergarten to Grade 7. The teachers for the school, this year, are Nomi Fenson, Sharona Beck and Bella Grinhute. We also have a student aide this year, Steven Beck, a former student of the school. Rabbi David Mivasair is taking an active role this year in the teachings of spiritual education for the older grades.

We have a newly formed Hebrew School Committee. Our new chair is Phil Moses. He has an



### HANUKKA POTLUCK FOR ALL ON DEC. 12

The Hebrew school's annual Hanukkah Pot-luck celebration is open to all Or Shalom families. This will be held at the shul on Wednesday, Dec. 12, at 6:15. Please bring something potluck and let Bat-Ami Segal (604 875-6560) know that you intend to come.

and the secretary will be a rotating position. The co-ordinator liaison and board liaison is Sandi Moussadji. Other members of the committee are Leslie Wagman and Lance Berolowitz. The teacher representative is Nomi Fenson.

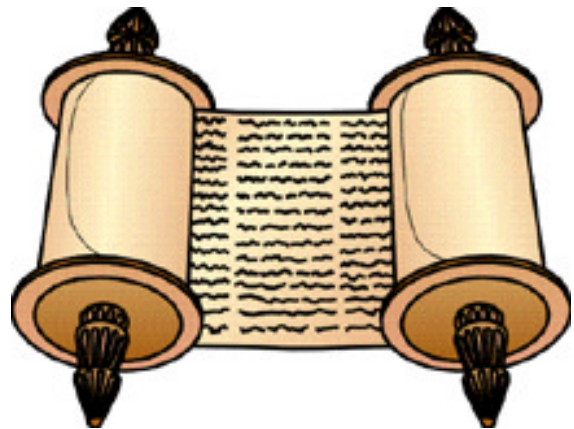
This committee is a very important link in the smooth runnings of the school. Claudie Snarch, past chair of the school, served for many years on this committee and worked tirelessly for the well-being of the Hebrew school. We will miss her.

Students from the school participated in the Young

Authors Tea, which was part of the annual Jewish Book Fair at the JCC. Students also went to the book fair to hear well-known author, Lillian Boraks-Nemetz, read from her books "The Lenski File" and "The Old Brown Suitcase."

Some changes this year in how we teach Hebrew will be made, as soon as we get the new texts. We will be teaching Hebrew through a text called "S'fatai Tiftach," which teaches Hebrew through the siddur. At the very beginning levels, students will learn the word Baruch starts with the letter Bet, thus not only learning the basic aleph-bet, but the beginning word for all prayer. The final goal of course is that students will be fluent not only in knowing Hebrew, but will also be very familiar with the siddur prayers. We hope to use this text through out the school, thus ensuring a consistent and progressive way of teaching Hebrew and prayer from year to year.

We would like to increase the enrolment at our school, so please tell everybody you know about our school and have anyone interested in more information contact me at the shul or my home phone number, 604 875-6560.



### DIGGING DEEPER: SHABBAT AFTERNOON TORAH STUDY

Dig into classic rabbinic and hasidic teachings on the weekly Torah portion on Shabbat afternoon with Reb David.

In December we'll explore two parshiot in Genesis: VaYishlah on Dec. 1 and VaYigash on Dec. 22. We'll dig into parshat Bo in Exodus on Jan. 19.

We'll look for personal meaning in the parsha beyond the simple pshat level of understanding and reach into the realms of remez, drash and possibly even sod. We'll draw from the original Hebrew and be sure everyone moves together through the texts. It'll be a good opportunity to apply and stretch some of the Hebrew learning our community's been doing on all levels over the past few years.

## ADULT BNEI MITZVAH TO MEET DEC. 8

Many Jewish adults who never celebrated having become a Bat or Bar Mitzvah when they were younger are interested in the growth that they can experience by deepening their connection with Torah as adults.



Lisa Hardin, Bette Thompson and a number of other adults interested in learning and planning toward a Bat or Bar Mitzvah will meet with Reb David on Shabbat, Dec. 8, at about 1:30.

Everyone who may be interested is welcomed to come and explore what it would mean to learn to leyn Torah, to pre-

pare a Dvar Torah and possibly to lead some of our davvening.

The goal is to encourage and support everyone who is interested, enabling them to fulfill their own vision of growth and achievement for themselves while raising the level of learning in our community as a whole.

## BROAD AND DEEP: IMMERSION AND CONVERSION COURSE

Our Shalom's Immersion and Conversion course, which began with a class of nearly 20 in October, is open to anyone who is interested in gaining solid foundational knowledge of Jewish religious life.

Beside the basics, the course explores deeper levels of meaning and personally satisfying practices and understandings. The course is designed for Jews who want greater clarity in their own religious life as well as for non-Jews interested in exploring Judaism as a personal spiritual path. Topics will include the beauty of Shabbat, the sacred cycle of the year, our relationship with prayer, kashrut, holy texts, Israel, diversity within Judaism and others.

The class meets on alternate Tuesday evenings 7:30 to 9. It is free for members; non-members \$36 donation. For more information, phone Reb David at 604 872-1614.

## RECENT DONATIONS

### Bnei Mitzvah Endowment Fund

- In appreciation of Sheryl Sorokin
- In appreciation of Hillel Goelman
- In appreciation of Ruth Stewart and Rose Hsu
  - In appreciation of Jude Platzer
- In appreciation of Claudie Snarch
  - In appreciation of Rae Mate
- In appreciation of Vita Kolodny
- In appreciation of Kymn Goodman
- In honour of Naomi Kradjen's Bat Mitzvah

### Book Fund

- In memory of Alain Fournier, z"l
- In honour of Rahel Bailie's grandson, Aaron Ausmus-Elias

### Building Fund

- In honour of Wendy Oberlander
- In honour of Emma Hassal's Bat Mitzvah
  - In memory of Esther Miller, z"l

### Community Fund

- In memory of Rubin Pinsky, z"l
- In memory of Frances Horwitz, z"l
  - In memory of Frank Siden, z"l
- In memory of Barbara Bluman, z"l
  - In memory of Dora Wise, z"l
- In honour of Solly Markovitch's Bar Mitzvah
  - In honour of Pam Ratner
- In celebration of my visit with cousin Micha

### Len Ryant Or Shalom Children's Fund

- In memory of Frank Siden, z"l

### Lisa Nemetz Or Shalom School Education Fund

- In memory of Barbara Bluman, z"l
- In memory of the victims of the WTC tragedy

### Rabbi's Fund

- In honour of Reb David
- In appreciation of Reb David

### Refugee Fund

- In honour of the birth of Vicki Robinson's granddaughter, Ariella Elyse
  - In memory of Judith Mate, z"l

### Tzedaka Fund

- In honour of David Mivasair
- In honour of Hillel Goelman
- In honour of Bat-Ami Segal
- In honour of Michal Mivasair
- In honour of Alan Aderem's recovery from illness

Acknowledge a birthday, graduation, any auspicious occasion. Celebrate a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, anniversary, marriage, birth, etc. Honour a Yahrzeit by donating to any of the Or Shalom funds.

## MILESTONES

**Judith Maté** (née Lövi), mother of George, John, and Gabor, passed away on Nov. 5 at age 82. Her sons, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, and many friends were present as Judith's earthly remains were buried at Schara Tzedek cemetery, beside those of her beloved late husband, Andor.

Born in Czechoslovakia, Judith survived the Nazi genocide with her infant first son, coming close to death in the Budapest ghetto. Her parents were killed in Auschwitz, a loss she mourned all her life but bore with courage and dignity — as she did the progressive muscular dystrophy which increasingly debilitated her body, but never her soul or mind.

Judith lived a beautiful death, seeking and receiving assurance from the family that they would be able to accept the loss of her physical presence and to hold together after her passing. She let go of life gradually, peacefully, while making her goodbyes to all those who loved her and whom she loved. Family were with her every moment in the last two weeks. Her sons slept in her room the last two nights. Gabor writes: "We awoke at 4 a.m. Monday to find her gone. I feel a shifting mixture of celebratory gratitude for how she lived and died, relief that she has reached the end of her journey on her terms, and sorrow. The world will never be the same."

Those wishing to make donations in Judith's honour may do so at the Lövi Memorial Fund of the Holocaust Education Centre at the JCC. The fund supports efforts to inform students in British Columbia about the Nazi genocide

## NEWS AND SCHMOOZE

**GRATITUDE** I want to thank everyone at Or Shalom for their care and words after the death of my father, Frank Siden (26 Sept 2001/9 Tishrei 5762). It is a very good feeling to belong to such a special and supportive community.

— Hal Siden



**STAY IN TOUCH WITH OR SHALOM BY E-MAIL** To subscribe to the Or Shalom e-mail list to share announcements of events, personal notices and discussion of issues concerning the community, send an e-mail to [majordomo@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:majordomo@interchange.ubc.ca) with *subscribe or-shalom* in the body of the message. To only receive occasional announcements with no discussion, write to [mivasair@aol.com](mailto:mivasair@aol.com).

## INTERESTED IN A JEWISH COMMUNITY KITCHEN?

Jewish Family Service Agency is embarking on an initiative to set up one or more community kitchens within the Jewish community in Greater Vancouver. Community kitchens can offer target populations the opportunity to feel more involved and connected to the wider Jewish community. This initiative is directed at building community that is an important element of this project.



A Community Kitchen is a group of people who meet regularly to cook healthy and economical meals. Everyone participates in the shopping, preparation and cooking. Community Kitchens create opportunities for people to learn new skills in a fun, social atmosphere. The only requirement to join is an interest in food.

If you are interested in being part of a Community Kitchen or to learn more, call Melissa Tapper at 604 257-5151, or e-mail at [communitykitchen@hotmail.com](mailto:communitykitchen@hotmail.com).

## KEREN OR קרן אור

(Beam of Light)

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