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Religious School Students Need You

The younger Religious School kids need to collect food for the Manchester Food Cupboard. We studied about how God gave us food while we were roaming around for 40 years. It is important to feed the hungry because



our population would go down if they didn't have enough food.

We went to visit the Manchester Food Cupboard. The Food Cupboard is closed for two weeks at the end of December and the Northshire Interfaith Council collects food for the hungry to help them out during that time. The Northshire Interfaith Council needs us to collect:

60 boxes of cornflakes (store brand- 18oz size)

60 boxes of instant oatmeal (store brand- 18oz size)

If you can help us with this collection please bring the cereal and put it in the box we made that is in the lobby of the synagogue. If you would want you can send a check to the synagogue and we will buy the cereal for you. Please make

Hanukkah Miracles

from Rabbi David Novak

Hanukkah coincides this year with "that other major holiday" so many of our friends and neighbors celebrate. Given the sharing of the calendar, it is natural that many people, Jewish and not, assume *Hanukkah* is a major Jewish festival. Yet *Hanukkah* is considered by our tradition to be a minor holiday because it was created by the rabbis based on an historic incident, rather than deriving from the *Torah*. This does not mean *Hanukkah* is not significant in its own right!

Hanukkah commemorates a Jewish victory by the Maccabees against a powerful adversary in the person of the Greek ruler Antioches IV and the Selucids in the Second Century BCE. That victory came in *Eretz Yisrael* after a relatively happy period of leadership where Jewish life was allowed to thrive. Under Antioches, however, Jewish life suffered and the Temple in Jerusalem was desecrated. The Jewish way of life was to be replaced by complete Hellenization - that is, everything would be imbued with Greek culture. The practice of Jewish rituals was outlawed. The

continued on page 2

the check out to Israel Congregation and put "Cereal Drive" in the memo line. We need to collect all of the cereal by Monday, December 8.

Thank you very much,
*Emet, Rachel, Ethan, Maria,
Michael and Baruch*

Tikkun Olam

Tikkun Olam has completed its fund raising activities for the year and we are now looking at and reviewing the activities of various charitable organizations in order to determine those to which charitable bequests should be made.

During this fiscal year, we have donated \$2500 to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund and \$1000 to the Interfaith Council of the Northshire's Emergency Needs Fund. In order to be sure that the greater Northshire community is aware of our participation and efforts on behalf of the entire community, Israel Congregation's president, **Morty Bunis**, sent a letter to the editor of the Vermont News Guide thanking the community for their generous support and informing them of our donation. A photo of **Rabbi Novak** and **Micki Lisman** holding a check for the Interfaith Council of the Northshire was included and printed with the letter.

We've also set the date for next year's Tag Sale. Start saving your giveaways now. Write August 30, 2009 on your calendar and plan to attend the Tag Sale as well as be a part of the organizational and fun-filled activities during the week prior to the sale!

Rabbi David Novak and Yuval Sela
invite you to their home
for a
**Hanukkah and Birthday
Celebration Brunch**

Sunday, December 21st, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

20 Donald Lane
Manchester Center, VT 05255

No gifts, please
Contributions to the
Manchester Food Cupboard

Hanukkah Miracles

continued from pg. 1

Temple in Jerusalem was no longer a place for traditional worship - instead, pigs were sacrificed there. The Maccabees restored worship in the Temple and Jewish political autonomy. Their rule lasted only a century. The story of *Hanukkah* lives on in the celebration of *Hanukkah*.

In the *Talmud*, some five hundred years after this uprising, the miracle commemorated is in the story of the oil that should have burned in the Temple for only one day - and instead burned for eight. Yet the historical miracle might be that a small group of people were able to prevail over a powerful political enemy which led to a period of Jewish political rule and the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Any way you look at it, the story of *Hanukkah* commemorates miracles. As the light dances off of the candles on your *hanukiah* (*menorah*), may it remind you of the miracles we experience every day of our being.

Please join Rabbi Novak on Tuesday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m. for a Center of Learning seminar on "The Real Hanukkah: A Historical and Religious Overview of the Hanukkah Story."

Welcome New Members

Les & Lynne Abcug
Phyllis & Arthur Angstreich
Henry & Elise Meyer Feuerstein
Ben & Julie Levin
Norma Rosenblatt

Bikur Cholim

Bikur Cholim, or visiting the sick, is one of the many *mitzvot* we are commanded to perform. Having company lifts the spirits of those who are sick or isolated. Do you know someone who is ill and would appreciate a visit from Rabbi Novak? Please call the office at 802.362.578 to let him know.

President's Perspective

Every Jewish holiday is comprised of many components: its history, laws, customs, traditional foods, etc. Each component has been inspired in accordance with the holiday's singular message. Some of the components are obvious expressions of the holiday's motif, while others require thought to uncover their profound relation to the holiday's unique message. *Latkes* and *sufganiyot* are obvious representatives of the miracle of one cruze of oil that burned for eight days instead of one. The *hanukkiah* is kindled and displayed for all to see the symbolic light, illustrating the waging of the constant battle of light against the force of darkness.

But where does that leave the traditional *dreidel* game? How does the *dreidel* embody the *Hanukkah* message?

During the time of the Maccabees, Jews were imprisoned for the "crime" of studying *Torah*. While in jail, these Jews would gather together to play *dreidel*. Under the guise of idling away their time, they'd engage in *Torah* discussions and thus defy the enemies of Judaism.

Every *dreidel* has four sides with one Hebrew letter on each side. The four letters are:

Nun – the first letter of the word *nes*, which means "miracle"

Gimmel – the first letter of *gadol*, which means "great"

Hey – the first letter of *hayah*, which means "was" and

Shin – the first letter of *sham*, which means "there." (In Israel, the fourth letter on the *dreidel* is *pay*, the first letter of *po*, which means "here.")

What's striking about the *dreidel* is that its religious aspect isn't always apparent. The four Hebrew letters that form the acronym for the phrase "A great miracle happened there" are not discernable while it's spinning. At that point, it appears entirely letter-less and no different than any other spinning top. Life is eerily reminiscent of a *dreidel* game. In the course of our dizzyingly hectic day-to-day existence, we are often too preoccupied to take note of the "letters" that represent the large and small miracles – indeed, the miracle of life itself – that we encounter every day.

At regular intervals, we must give the *dreidel* a respite so as to permit us to reflect on its message, assessing who we are, what we have achieved with our efforts and how we can improve the community in which we live. And that, in significant measure, is what *Hanukkah* is all about. More than 2,000 years ago, the collective *dreidel* of a people came to an abrupt halt and the divine letters came into plain view. For eight days, the glow of the Temple's *menorah* illuminated a faith that the Greek oppressors had failed to dim.

Two millennia later, this message of *Hanukkah* remains the same. As we sit by the *menorah* or even while we are "players" in the game, it is time for us to find the letters in our own lives.

Morty Bunis

Celebrating the Accomplishments of our Youth

Justin Tegen won first place in the Reasons to Adopt a Shelter Dog essay contest sponsored by the Second Chance Animal Shelter in Shaftsbury, VT.

Larry Stark was admitted to the Manchester Elementary Middle School Jazz Band as trombone player.

Elijah Brown was elected 7th Grade Student Leader at Manchester Elementary Middle School.

Whitney Marmar was selected All League (Marble Valley Soccer League) and All State for soccer. She was the only female BBA soccer player to receive this recognition.

Joel Revo was a touchdown phenomenon for the Manchester Junior Bulldogs, which went all the way to the championship game "Super Bowl" in Castleton.

Religious School

November found two special events happening in **Alison Hill's** Judaica classes at the ICM Religious School. Our younger students took a field trip next door to the Manchester Food Cupboard where they could see first hand the *mitzvah* of feeding the hungry in action. The class is spearheading a project between now and the December holidays where they are collecting corn flakes and oatmeal for the holiday food needs of the community. They have made a special box for your donations, located in the vestibule of Israel Congregation. (See page 1 for more information.)

Alison's older Judaica class had a visit from Dr. David Schneider, a physician and *mohel* from Rutland. This class is studying the Jewish lifecycle and Dr. Schneider explained to the students begin-

ning of life rituals in Judaism for both male and female children.

Also in November, we had our second monthly Family *Shabbat* Service which was well-attended and included **Dina Bronson's** special *challah* shaped like a turkey! The next Family *Shabbat* will be on December 5 and will feature musical entertainment by **Gary Marmar**. We hope to see you there.

As a reminder, there is no school during the winter holiday break (December 24 and 31), but we will have our *Hanukkah Shabbat* celebration on Friday evening, December 26 at 6:30 p.m. Make plans to join us as well on Sunday, December 21 at 4:00 p.m. on Israel Congregation's front lawn as we light our *hanukkah!*

Rabbi David Novak

Breaking News from the ICM Library

A CATALOG OF OUR BOOKS IS NOW AVAILABLE ON LINE ON YOUR HOME COMPUTERS

The ICM library committee is pleased to announce that a catalog of our holdings is available and can be accessed by you on your home computers. The catalog is hosted by Librarything which is a community catalog service. This means that the catalog is physically resident at Librarything and can be accessed by going to the proper web site. It also gives us the advantage that comments and reviews related to our holdings by other libraries are available to us.

In order to access the catalog, please follow the directions below:

1. Please access the ICM website at www.israelcongregationvt.org
2. Currently on the home page is a link to the catalog. If that link is missing, click on the library link on the left hand side. There you will find a link to the catalog.

3. Once the catalog appears, there are many options that you have:
 - a. If you want to find out more about Library thing, click on the Home tab and you will be routed to its home page.
 - b. If you want to scan the catalog, it is now available to you. You can alphabetize the catalog by title or author by clicking on the title or author heading. You can alphabetize either ascending or descending by clicking on the heading once or twice. You can search for a specific book by entering information about the book (title, author, key words) in the search box on the upper right hand side of the catalog page.

Please note that the catalog is a work in progress. New titles are being added all the time. We are also in the process of filling in the blanks that you will notice for some of the entries. If you see any problems with the catalog, please notify us so that the problems can be addressed. We hope that you enjoy the catalog and will use it to find books that you would like to borrow from the ICM library.

Stan Reisman, Library Committee Chair

Book Notes

Outwitting History: The Amazing Adventures of a Man Who Rescued a Million Yiddish Books

By Aaron Lansky

In 1980, a 23 year old student named Aaron Lansky set out to rescue the world's Yiddish books before it was too late. With little more than his own *chutzpah*, Lansky issued an appeal for unwanted Yiddish books and the results were overwhelming. *Outwitting History* is an adventure tale of a man who went from house to house collecting treasured books accompanied by often hilarious stories of his interactions with the owners of the books. Lansky and a team of young volunteers crisscrossed America, *schlepping* books from attics and basements, demolition sites and dumpsters, while the owners of the books insisted on giving them a little *nosh* – gefilte fish, kasha, blintzes, and kugel.

When Lansky started out, experts believed that fewer than 70,000 Yiddish language books still existed. Today, over 1.5 million books have been saved. Lansky founded the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Massachusetts to house the books and to make them available for reading and Yiddish studies. Today, the Book Center is undergoing an expansion to double its size.

The great Yiddish scholar Max Weinreich arrived in New York during World War Two and opened his door to new students of Yiddish. Many thought his work was hopeless since half of the world's Yiddish speakers had been killed in the Holocaust. Asked why he persevered, he answered, "Because Yiddish has magic, it will outwit history."

This is an amazing story which should inspire any one who reads it. The

CENTER OF LEARNING

- December 9** *The Real Hanukkah Story* Find out what *really* happened historically to create the *Hanukkah* holiday and the source of the story of the oil that burned for eight days. 7 pm with Rabbi Novak
- December 11** *A Culinary Hanukkah Trip* Join **Yuval Sela** in the ICM kitchen to make different kinds of *latkes*, *sufganiot* (donuts sprinkled with sugar), and stuffed filo cookies. 6 p.m., reservations requested

First Tuesdays

- December 2** *Havurah Zamir: Theodicy: Interpretive Selections* Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (*The Brothers Get Acquainted; Rebellion; The Grand Inquisitor*) and Vasily Grossman's *Life and Fate*. Reading excerpts from two great Russian novels, participants will be presented with the daunting challenge pitting Divine Wisdom against the morality expressed by human free will in an attempt to decipher how evil thrives in a world supposedly controlled by a beneficent divinity. 7 pm with **Paul Ross**

Book Club

The Book Club will be taking a short hiatus during the holiday season. Watch the Shofar for future Book Club announcements.

book is available in the Israel Congregation library in the biography section. Information on the National Yiddish Book Center and its activities is available on line at www.yiddishbookcenter.org

Stan Reisman

Ma'aser Sheni



The Torah required three tithes of the Israelites. The first, Ma'asher Rishon, was given to the Temple priests. The second, Ma'aser Sheni, supported the general community, benefiting both giver and receiver. The third, Ma'aser Shlishi, provided funds for the poor. Our congregants participate in the mitzvah of Ma'aser Sheni by contributing to funds that benefit the synagogue and its members.

Thank you for your donations!

GENERAL FUND

Richard & Barbara Feingold in honor of Ashley Cohen's 4th birthday and in honor of the birth of **Janet Kleinberg's** granddaughter • Stanley Harellick with appreciation to ICM for being such a welcoming Jewish community during *Shemini Atzeret* • **Georgia & Gene Mittleman** in memory of Benjamin Schulberg • **Elsa & Michael Suisman**, in memory of Edward Daspin • **Robert & Iris Taylor** with condolences to Mrs. Sandy Sheppard on the passing of her husband and condolences to Mrs. Joan Simmon on the passing of her husband

SHABBAT DINNER FUND

Doris Bass in honor of **John Sobel's** birthday and in honor of the birth of **Janet Kleinberg's** granddaughter

TIKKUN OLAM

Roberta & Al Michaels in honor of **Rachel Rokes' Bat Mitzvah**

HOROWITZ CHILDREN'S EDUCATION FUND

Justin & Marion Mueller, in honor of **Rachel Rokes' Bat Mitzvah**

RABBI'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Judy Rudiakov in memory of Michael Rudiakov • **Ina & Al Rubin** • **Paul Waters** with condolences to Sandy Shepard on the loss of her husband, condolences to **Ed & Marilyn Rice** on the loss of Marilyn's mother and condolences to Marvin Kelner on the loss of his mother

Community Food Cupboard Wish List For December

The Community Food Cupboard December donation wish is for healthy snacks to help families with children who will be eating more at home over the holidays.

The Community Food Cupboard thanks the younger students of the Israel Congregation Religious School for their advice and input!

Individual Applesauce Cups

Cold Cereal

Raisins

"Goldfish" or Cheese Crackers

Microwave Popcorn

Granola Bars

Sponsor a *Shabbat* Dinner

We encourage members to support our communal *Shabbat* Dinner by sponsoring a dinner in honor of a life cycle event, achievement, anniversary, birthday, or for any other *simcha*.

The cost to sponsor a dinner is \$180. This amount will cover the food, serving, and clean-up expenses regularly provided by the synagogue. Attendees will still be expected to augment the meal by bringing a potluck dish.

A sheet of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about *Shabbat* Dinner sponsorship is available from the office.

Open Dates for sponsoring a *Shabbat* Dinner:

December 29
January 2, 9, 23
February 6, 13, 20
March 6, 13, 20

Add to Your Calendar

- January 9 *Shabbat* Dinner sponsored by **Cheryl Ullman**, in memory of Peter Jannke
- January 30 *Shabbat* Dinner sponsored by **Rosalie & Lee Fox**, in honor of their 25th Wedding Anniversary

Please join us for these special dinners and bring a meatless dish to share.


Mazel Tov

to **Phyllis and Steve Gottdiener** on the *Bat Mitzvah* of their granddaughter Emma Gottdiener

December Calendar of Events

- Dec. 2 **First Tuesdays:** *Havurah Zamir*: Theodicy: Interpretive Selections, with **Paul Ross**, 7 pm
- Dec. 3 **Religious School**, 3:50 pm
- Dec. 5 **Family *Shabbat*** with Rabbi Novak and **Gary Marmer**, 6:30 pm followed by our Community Dinner, sponsored by **Frank and Merrily Lewis**
- Dec. 6 *Shabbat* Worship, 9:30 am
Parashat Vayetzei
- Dec. 9 **Center of Learning:** The Real Hanukkah, with Rabbi Novak, 7 pm
- Dec. 10 **Religious School**, 3:50 pm
- Dec. 11 **Center of Learning:** A Culinary Hanukkah, with **Yuval Sela**, 6 pm (reservations requested)
- Dec. 12 Friday Evening *Shabbat* Worship, 6:30 pm followed by our Community Dinner
- Dec. 13 *Shabbat* Worship, 9:30 am
Parshat Vayishlach
Baby Naming of Jackson Kunisch, son of Jamie and Kenny Kunisch, grandson of **Franci and Tom Carieri**, great-grandson of **Laney and Larry Davis**
- Dec. 17 **Religious School**, 3:50 pm
Religious School Hanukkah Celebration
- Dec. 19 Friday Evening *Shabbat* Worship, 6:30 pm followed by our Community Dinner, sponsored by **Sasha Kent and Arnie Katz**
Sasha Kent and Arnie Katz nuptial renewal
- Dec. 20 *Shabbat* Worship, 9:30 am
Parshat Vayeshev
- Dec. 21 **Congregation Brunch**, 11 am, celebrating Hanukkah and birthday of Rabbi Novak
- Dec. 21 **Hanukkah begins**, light candle at sundown
Lighting of ICM hanukkiah, 4:00 pm
- Dec. 26 **Congregational Hanukkah Celebration**
Shabbat Worship, 6:30 pm
Hanukkiah Lighting,
Special Hanukkah dinner
- Dec. 29 **Eighth night of Hanukkah**, light candle at sundown

Our newsletter goes to more than 400 households in eight states! You can place ads of any size, from business cards to whole pages. For rates, contact the office at 362-4578.



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**Mitzvah
Opportunity!**

A congregant is working to find a used donated vehicle for someone who is in desperate need of transportation, having had their vehicle stolen.

If you would like to consider making such a donation, please contact Rabbi Novak at rabbi@israelcongregationvt.org or at 362.4578.

Hanukkah stamps are available at all post offices and can be used all year long.

The Tree of Life on the wall in our Social Hall is adorned with leaves that commemorate events in the lives of our congregants. To inscribe your family event or Simcha call the office at 802.362.4578.



**Israel Congregation
of Manchester**
*Enriching Jewish Community
in the Northshire*

Israel Congregation has about 230 member families of diverse Jewish backgrounds, both full-time and part-time residents of southern Vermont. We provide weekly Shabbat and holiday services, a religious school, adult education, life cycle events, and cultural and social programming, in a warm and welcoming environment.

An integral part of Jewish life in the Northshire for more than 70 years, Israel Congregation has been at its current location on Rte 7A, 1.2 miles north of Rte 11/30, since 1985. Our building is ADA accessible.

Kabbalat Shabbat Service: 6:30 pm, Friday
(followed by Congregational Dinner)
Shabbat Service: 9:30 am, Saturday
Religious School: 3:50 pm to 6 pm, Wednesday
Office Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, M-Th,
9:00 am to 1:00 pm Fridays
Telephone: 802.362.4578

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Michael Cohen, Rabbi Emeritus
Lynda McCann Gillman, *Administrator*

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