

York County Jewish Community News

Cashing in For the Environment

by David Strassler

There is now a low energy, high reward way to help our Jewish teens and keep the Earth healthy. Join CLYNK.

All you have to do is take your returnables in our "special" green, labeled bag(s) to your local Hannaford CLYNK redemption area.

The deposit money will be credited to the Hebrew School's fund for our teen's annual NYC Jewish Cultural trip. Our goal is to raise \$1,000!

But, you need to use our special green, labeled bag(s) and follow the steps below. *Thank you very much.*



How to



for the York County Community Hebrew School Teens

1. **Pick up green bag(s) with our bar code sticker**
 - a. from the synagogue during Hebrew School on Thursdays between 4 & 6 PM.
 - b. from the synagogue when you come to any event.
 - c. OR call David at 967-5833.
2. **Fill green bag(s) with redeemable cans/bottles.**
3. **Drop green bag(s) at any Hannaford Market**
 - a. at the CLYNK redemption area.
 - b. After hours: Scan bar code label to open door of drop off chute.
 - c. No waiting--No counting--No hassle.
4. **Repeat Steps 1 - 3.**
5. **Please Remember: Each green bag costs us \$\$ so only take it if you know you will use it.**



we count

we take the CLYNK bags back to our recycling facility, home of our high tech Count&Crush machine where your bottles and cans get scanned and automatically counted. the value is instantly transferred into your CLYNK account.

we crush

after your bottles and cans you redeem are counted, they get individually crushed and sorted into separate containers according to their color and whether or not they are plastic, glass, or aluminum.

we recycle

the sorted scrap is then sent to recyclers who turn it into a variety of new products, such as bottles and cans, carpet, decking and lots more!

we care

when you CLYNK, not only are you receiving money for your efforts but you are also doing your part in helping keep our world safe and clean. we hope that by making the process more convenient and pleasant, more cans and bottles will be recycled and not found in our landfills and streams.

Librarian's Corner

by Maureen King

Jewish-themed books are wonderful gifts for Hanukkah! Try one of these eight new books for someone special on your gift list.

Young Readers of All Ages

Levine, Anna; Jodie's Hanukkah Dig; illustrated by Ksenia Topaz. Kar-Ben Publishing, 2008. Jodie's father is an Israeli archeologist, and she is thrilled when he takes her on a dig to Modi'in, the site where Judah Maccabee fought the Syrians. (Picture book, ages 5-8)

DaCosta, Deborah; Hanukkah Moon; illustrated by Gosia Mosz. Kar-Ben Publishing, 2007. When Isobel visits her Aunt Luisa, she learns about how Jews from Latin America celebrate "Januca" including the traditions of the Hanukkah Moon that is the "luna neuva" or new moon that always appears during Hanukkah. (Picture book, ages 4-8)

Hesse, Karen. Brooklyn Bridge. Feivel and Friends/ Macmillan, 2008. Fourteen-year-old Joseph and his sister Emily are expected to help in their family's stuffed Teddy bear business in 1903. A powerful story about Brooklyn's diverse immigrant population. (Historical novel for grades 6-8 by the author of Letters from Rivka).

Laskier, Rutka. Rutka's Notebook: A Voice from the Holocaust. Ya'ad Vashem/Time, 2008. A Jewish girl's diary was hidden under Polish floorboards in 1943, retrieved in 1945, and miraculously rediscovered only in 2006. (Holocaust diary for grades 7-12).

Family

Binder, Mark. A Hanukkah Present. Light Publications, 2008. A collection of short stories, all set in Chelm, the village of fools, take place around the holiday of Hanukkah. Written by Providence, RI resident Mark Binder, we were happy to host him in a storytelling workshop here in Biddeford four years ago.

Non-fiction

Sabar, Ariel. My Father's Paradise: A Son's Search for His Jewish Past in Kurdish Iraq. Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2008. Growing up privileged in California, Sabar comes to terms with his father's humble beginnings as a Kurdish Jew in Iraq.

Cookbook

Fishbein, Susie & Taub-Dix, Bonnie. Kosher by Design Lightens Up: Fabulous Food for a Healthier Lifestyle. Mesorah Publications Ltd., 2008. The sixth volume in the popular *Kosher by Design* cookbook series, author Susie Fishbein teams up with the spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association for a healthy cooking theme.

Bloomfield, Jill & Ozur-Bass, Janet; Jewish Holiday Cookbook. DK Publishing, 2008. Recipes and fascinating lore about Jewish foods for grades 4-8, but fun for the whole family. From book: "Homemade bagels are the best!"

Stop by the Library to borrow any of these or one of our other many holiday books and cookbooks. Your next family celebration could be uniquely yours. See you at the Library!

Consider Giving the Gift of Donated Books for the Samuel Osher Memorial Library.

When you send your check, you choose the amount, the dedication(s) and the genre of books to be purchased. Our Library Committee will figure out what the library needs and send you a list of the purchases made with your contribution. PO Box 905 Kennebunk, ME 04043.

"Energy
Efficient
Dreidels"

www.janestones.com





Come join in the fun!
at Congregation Etz Chaim's
York County Chanukah Party

Sunday, December 21 at 5 pm

Music & Dancing 6 - 8:15 PM
with the Casco Bay Tumblers

Please bring a Dairy or Veggie Entree to share
Drinks and Desserts will be provided

Fresh Latkes from the Etz Chaim Kitchen
Made by Master Chef, Marc Feldman

Suggested Donation: \$6 per person
Parking is on the street or in the police station parking lot.

For more info, e-mail Julie bedlam@maine.rr.com
or Marc kporttkd@roadrunner.com

We hope to see you there!

The Real Hanukah

by Jack Schraeter

The Jewish feast of Chanukah ("Dedication") commemorates the restoration of Jewish worship at the temple in Jerusalem in 165 BCE, after Judah Maccabeus removed the pagan statuary. All of us have heard this Hanukah story about the reclaiming of the holy temple. What is not as much known is how it all came about and the battles that needed to be fought to gain Judean independence from the Greeks. This year we will examine the early battles and then next year, the later ones.

First, a little bit about our hero, Judas Maccabeus (aka: Judah the Maccabee). He was a Kohain and the third son of the Jewish priest Mattathias. He led the Maccabean revolt against the Seleucid/Greek Empire (167 BCE-160 BCE) and is acclaimed as one of the greatest warriors in Jewish history alongside Joshua, Gideon and David.

Judah was from the village of Modi'in. In 167 BCE, Mattathias (his father), together with his sons Judah, Eleazar, Simon, Jochanan, and Jonathan, started a revolt against the Seleucid/Greek ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who since 175 BCE had issued decrees that forbade Jewish religious practices. After Mattathias's death in 166 BCE, Judah assumed leadership of the revolt in accordance with the deathbed disposition of his father. The First Book of Maccabees praises Judah's valor and military talent, suggesting that they made Judah a natural choice for the new commander.

The Rebellion

In the early days of the rebellion, Judah received a surname Maccabee. Several explanations have been put forward for this surname. One suggestion is that the name derives from the Aramaic maqqaba ("makebet" in modern Hebrew), "hammer" or "sledgehammer" in recognition of his ferocity in battle. It is also possible that the name Maccabee is an acronym for the Torah verse *Mi kamokha ba'elim YHWH*, "Who is like unto thee among the mighty, O LORD!" (Exodus 15:11).

Mindful of the superiority of Seleucid/Greek forces during the first two years of the revolt, Judah's strategy was to avoid any involvement with their regular army, and to resort to guerrilla warfare, to give them a feeling of insecurity. The strategy enabled Judah to win a string of victories.

The Battle of Wadi Haramia was in 167 BCE and was the first hand to hand combat battle fought between the Maccabees and the Seleucid/Greek Empire. Judas Maccabaeus led the Jewish forces and the Seleucid army force was under the command of Apollonius.

After the Maccabean revolt started, Judas relocated his guerrilla combat units at the northern part of the Shomron. Apollonius, governor of Samaria, was sent with the local Samaritan armies to link up with Seleucid/Greek forces from Jerusalem. Judah gained the element of surprise by ambushing the enemy army at Wadi Haramia, destroyed the much larger Syrian Greek army and killed its commander. After this victory, recruits flocked to the Jewish cause. Judah took possession of Apollonius's sword and used it until his death as a symbol of vengeance.

The Battle of Beth Horon was fought in 166 BC between Judean forces led by Judah and the Seleucid/Greek forces under the command of Seron. Judah gained the element of surprise and successfully routed the much larger army.

The Battle of Emmaus was fought in 166 BC between the Hasmonean forces of Judea, led by Judah Maccabeus, and the third expedition of Greek forces given by Antiochus IV Epiphanes to Lysias. The generals for the expedition were Gorgias, and Ptolemy, the son of Dorymenes and Nicanor.

Gorgias established his base camp at the town of Emmaus, along the western border of Judea, while Maccabeus' camp was located in the town of Mitzpah, north of Jerusalem. Word reached Maccabeus that Gorgias was leading 5,000 troops on a march against his camp and was planning to surprise the Jewish rebels in a nighttime attack.

Judas abandoned his camp and led his forces to Emmaus, to attack the Seleucid/Greek base camp that remained there. Gorgias found the camp at Mizpah empty and deserted. The only obvious place in the area to hide was the mountains. So Gorgias and his men scoured the hills for Jewish soldiers. They were unsuccessful.

Judah organized his men to attack the Emmaus camp, with units resembling a regular army, units of 10, 50, 100, and 1,000. They set up a fortified camp on the south side of Emmaus. Judas addressed his men, urging them to fight valiantly, "for it is better for us to die in battle than to see the evils of our nation and of the holies. Nevertheless, as it shall be the will of God in heaven, so be it done." (*cont'd on pg 5*)

Photos from Previous Hanukkah Parties



Remember the Oil Fund!

Our energy bill is going to be a whopper! Please give generously to keep our students, party goers & worshippers warm.

PO Box 905 K-bunk



(cont'd from pg 4)

Even though he spoke these words, Judah Maccabeus was seeking victory, not death or glory thru martyrdom.

Gorgias returned to Emmaus, only to find his camp destroyed with the rebel army in possession of the camp and in position against his troops. Gorgias did not give battle after the destruction of his base but fled to the coastal plains with Judas pursuing his army. It was considered one of the Maccabee's most important victories in the war for Judean independence.

And next year, I will tell the rest of the story!

Sources

- Book of the Maccabees I & II
- Josephus, Flavius. Antiquities of the Jews, Book 12
- Schalit, Abraham (1997). "Judah Maccabee". Encyclopedia Judaica
- Schäfer, Peter. (2003). The History of the Jews in the Greco-Roman World.

Challah Baking Workshop



Have you always wanted to get the inside tips on baking challah? How does that braid hold together during baking? How do I add the egg wash without getting burned globs where it hits the baking pan? How do I bake a challah for Friday Shabbat dinner when I get home at 4 or 5?

Master Bakers Maureen King & Debbie Rowe are offering a challah baking workshop on January 25 from 9 to 1. They will share the recipe for the famous Congregation Etz Chaim challah, truly the best in York County. Come learn, share, and socialize with other interested bakers.

Cost is \$15 and you will take home challah and a new, kosher challah mixing bowl. Please sign up by sending your name, phone # and check to: Challah Baking Workshop PO Box 905 Kennebunk. ME 04043.

Book Review

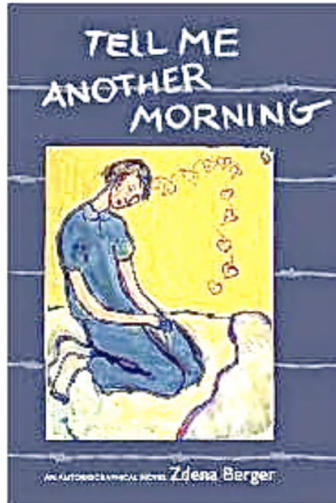
by Laura Slap-Shelton

Tell Me Another Morning

by Zdena Berger

Cover art by Charlotte Salomon
Paris Press, Ashfield, MA 2007

In Tell Me Another Morning the protagonist, Tania, a 14 year old, living her life in Prague, is suddenly taken with her family to a Nazi concentration camp. Ultimately, it is the friendship and bond of Tania and her two girl friends, Ilse and Eva, which allows them to survive the horrors of the camps.



Included in what Tania endures is the early murder of her brother and her mother's choice to stay at a concentration camp and die with her father rather than go with Tania to another camp. As she grapples with her imprisonment and loss, she also grapples with adolescent development including tentative relationships with men, and her evolving understanding of the world.

Tania's story is revealed in short poetic vignettes, each one serving as both self-contained moment and part of a narrative sequence moving Tania and her friends from morning to morning until the miracle of their release four years later. Berger's writing is so clear and illuminating that even the most painful moments have a transcendent quality. For example, after her parents announce that they will stay and die together, Tania reflects:

"... I should know more of the lives we had. I cannot remember more. Perhaps there was no more. I am losing my past now. Their past. What was it in their past that now they go together that way with their hands joined?

The fire does not reach into the sky; the smoke has colored the night. The colors of my days- Sunday fades to Saturday, changes to Wednesday, drops to the color of sleep. The colors are gone.

At the thought of my living now beyond them, I straighten my back against the barracks. All that there is of life, I have to go on living-- alone. That is what they want me to do.

I stand up and start to walk. Before each barracks, the lights hang round. I walk through the white circles and under each bulb my shadow is short. But between them, the shadow grows. I hurry now to reach the next circle where, in the center of light, my shadow is a child again." Pp.95-96

Berger's own journey led her through Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, and Bergen-Belson. She was freed by the British army in 1945 and went initially to live with an aunt. She then moved to Paris where she worked for the United States Army and the American school until immigrating to the United States and settling in California. Her friendships with the women who are Ilse and Eva in the novel continue to this day.

In an interview with Paris Press, Berger noted that her primary purpose for writing this novel was, "To share the experiences that we went through---not only I but thousands of others. To make a truthful and powerful statement about the life in concentration camps from the perspective of a teenage girl..." She noted that what makes her story unique is the relationship between the three girls which forms the core of the story and also the core of their survival.

Paris Press has created both a *Reader's Guide* for book groups and study groups. and a *Study Guide* for middle school, high school, and college students and teachers. Both can be downloaded for free from the website. There is also an audiocast of the author discussing her book.

Please take a moment to visit the Paris Press website to learn more about the other wonderful works Jan and her crew have published. I am hoping that we can invite Jan to Congregation Etz Chaim to speak with us about her experiences of publishing *Tell Me Another Story* and working with Zdena Berger.

www.parispress.org



**Darrell Cooper Presents
in Biddeford** by Joe Strassler

“The worst time to prepare for death is when it occurs.” This was a main theme of the presentation given by Darrell Cooper, administrator of the Portland *Chevra Kadisha* on November 20th.

A *Chevra Kadisha* is a Jewish funeral home in which individuals who have departed this world are prepared for burial in accordance with *Halachab*, or Jewish law. These rules for dealing with the deceased revolve around preserving the individual’s dignity as though the person was still alive.

Indeed, the belief is that the individual is present throughout the process because the *neshama*, or soul, hovers around the body until burial. It is for this reason that a *Shomer* stays with the body at all times reciting psalms until the casket is placed into the earth. Such an individual could be a friend, family member, or volunteer: Someone who is able to read the psalms in Hebrew. By volunteering for this role, an individual is performing the highest level of mitzvot, *Chesed Shel Emmet*, kindness through truth.

Cooper also discussed some of the practical aspects of funeral preparations, stressing the importance of planning ahead and making sure others are clear on the wishes of the deceased and the costs involved.

Since there is no Jewish cemetery in this area, burial of individuals from our congregation has typically been in Portland. There is no shortage of plots, but figuring out these details before the time of death assures a peaceful rest for both the living and the deceased.

*Darrell’s presentation may be viewed at
www.etzchaimme.org/dcooper*

MJFF Comes to Biddeford

by Kari Wagner-Peck, MJFF Director

The Maine Jewish Film Festival (MJFF) is honored that Congregation Etz Chaim will be the *Closing Night Film Sponsor* for our 2009 festival. The screening will take place in the Biddeford/Saco area at a venue to be determined. It will be the first time in 12 years that MJFF's closing film will be screened outside of Portland.

Our theme this year is *The Diaspora Experience: What it Means to be From Away*. Part of our exploration of the Diaspora will be wandering to other cities in the state to bring the best in Jewish cinema to new audiences. We are thrilled to be coming to Biddeford and we are particularly grateful to Beth Strassler who has been instrumental in making this partnership a reality.

The festival runs March 21st thru 29th.

Synagogue Board of Directors

- Jennie Aranovitch Alan Fink
- Cynthia Kurtz Jack Schraeter
- Marc Feldman & Maureen King
- Michael & Sue Rubin
- Arnold & Barbara Shapiro
- Beth & David Strassler

Reach any of us at mail@etzchaimme.org

**York County Jewish
Community News**

is published four or five times each year. It is intended to announce & report on Jewish community events in York County, and especially at Congregation Etz Chaim in Biddeford. It offers local perspectives on historical & contemporary aspects of Jewish life.

Beth Strassler, Editor
mail@etzchaimme.org

Go Green! Receive your newsletter via e-mail & *in color!* Write mail@etzchaimme.org & ask to “Go Green”!

**York County Jewish
Community Calendar**

December

- 6 & 20 Shabbat Services: 9:30 am
- 14 Sunday School: 10 am
Topic: Hanukkah
- 21 York County Chanukah Party & Potluck (Sunday): 5 pm
- 21 First Night of Chanukah
- 25 No Hebrew School/school vacation

January

- 1 No Hebrew School/school vacation
- 3 & 17 Shabbat Services: 9:30 am
- 23 Shabbat Potluck: 6 pm
- 25 Challah Baking Workshop: 9 am

February

- 7 & 21 Shabbat Services: 9:30 am
- 13 Tu b'Shevat Potluck/Seder: 6 pm
- 19 No Hebrew School/school vacation

March

- 7 & 21 Shabbat Services: 9:30 am
- 8 Sunday School: 10 am Tu b'Shevat
- 13 Potluck & Purim Party: 6 pm
- 15 Passover Kasher Wine/Appetizer Tasting (Sunday): 3 - 5 pm
- 21-29 Maine Jewish Film Festival
- TBA MJFF comes to Biddeford

literature which have gone out of print. I am proud and grateful to say that I am so lucky.

My childhood friend, Jan Freeman, founded and runs Paris Press, a small not-for-profit 501© (3) press which publishes “literature by women that has been neglected or misrepresented by the mainstream publishing world.” Paris Press has the tag line: “daring and beautiful books” and the press not only finds and brings back important works, but honors them in beautifully designed volumes.

Tell Me Another Morning by Zdena Berger, is one such book. In it Berger tells her story of surviving the Holocaust as a teenager. First published in 1961, the book was very well received, but allowed to go out of print. Now it is once again receiving the recognition it deserves as a work which belongs in the pantheon of Anne Frank and Eli Wiesel.

See Laura’s Book Review on page 6.



Melanie Shelton (L) (a bat mitzvah of Congregation Etz Chaim) & Laura Slap-Shelton (R) had a wonderful time helping Jan Freeman send out her recent business mailing.

Not everyone is so lucky as to have a childhood friend who grows up to be a wonderful poet and the founder of a press which brings back women’s poetry and

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Chanukah begins at sundown on December 21st