

York County Jewish Community News



Chanukah Party at Congregation Etz Chaim: December 2007/Kislev 5768: Dancing, Swinging, Serving, Frying

What a Party!!!

Over 125 people came out to celebrate Chanukah in style at the annual party at Congregation Etz Chaim. The food for the potluck was scrumptious and Latke Chef Marc Feldman's latkes are more delicious with each year. After eating their fill of dinner and latkes, partiers moved upstairs to "dance it off" to the music of the Casco Bay Tumblers. But that's not all: Desserts were rich & decadent.



Dancers from Left to Right: Andrea, Marcy, Joyce (back to camera), Sandra & Stefanie.

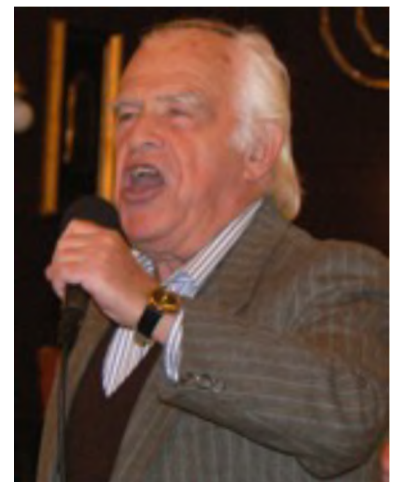
Just before a snow storm blew into the community, people arrived at the synagogue with their appetites and their home made entrees. As soon as they opened the door and stepped inside, the smell of freshly made latkes brought smiles to their faces. And that wonderful, seasonal smell still lingered in the building on Thursday, when students arrived for Hebrew School.

The gelt was plentiful and dreidels spun wildly on table tops and floor spaces. Games were played in various parts of the building with the victors happily gobbling chocolate.

Dancers of all ages participated: Learning new steps, teaching old steps, remembering melodies, singing along with the band.

Songs were sung in English, Spanish and Yiddish. Band members taught us how to count the candles of Chanukah in Spanish.

As you may recall, the storm began long after the clean up was finished (midnight) and continued throughout the next day, dumping snow, making driving treacherous and canceling school in each of the surrounding communities. The organizers scheduled this party well!



Ilya Temkin sings a Yiddish melody

Todah rabbah to:

- All the cooks who brought delicious dishes.
- Julie Campisi & Maureen King for organizing the event.
- Barbara, Sandra, Debbie, Elayne & Susan for their help.
- All who helped serve, set & clean up
- Stuart Nudelman for the photos.
- Master Latke Chef Marc Feldman.
- Abe Feldman for his work washing & prepping 40+ lbs of potatoes, or there would have been no latkes for Master Latke Chef Marc to cook!

Holidays & Celebrations

Tu B'Shevat --from <http://jewishappleseed.org/apple/tubishevat.htm>

Tu B'Shevat, sometimes called Jewish Arbor Day, is a holiday filled with festivity and meaning. The name of the holiday comes from the day on which it occurs on the Hebrew calendar, the 15th of Shevat. The Hebrew letters that spell the number fifteen can be pronounced as "Tu."

Just as Rosh Hashanah is the birthday of the world, Tu B'Shevat is a birthday for trees. In texts dating from the first centuries of the Common Era, we learn that Tu B'Shevat was the day that separated one agricultural year from the next. Today we celebrate Tu B'Shevat to thank God for the gifts of creation, especially foods that grow on trees and the beauties of nature we enjoy. The holiday also reminds us of our responsibility to care for the earth that God created in order to preserve it for future generations.

One of the ways Tu B'Shevat is celebrated is with a special ritual called a seder, which means "order." The Tu B'Shevat seder was developed in the 16th century by Jewish mystics called "Kabbalists," who used the Passover seder as their model.

At the Tu B'Shevat seder, along with the appropriate prayers, the Kabbalists would consume various types of food and drink, each of which would be given a symbolic meaning. Modern Tu B'Shevat seders are celebrated by eating special foods, with appropriate prayers,....stories, poetry, songs,

and discussions about nature and the environment. In Israel, Tu B'Shevat signals the coming of spring, as flowers begin to appear and the earth reawakens. It is also a time to plant a pot of parsley that will sprout, grow and be ready for use at Passover.

Throughout Israel's modern history, Jews have celebrated the holiday with ceremonies for the planting of trees. Tu B'Shevat is also a day of national pride, when Israelis recall how the early pioneers made the desert bloom.

Potluck & Tu B'Shevat Seder Friday, January 18: 6 PM
Bring your favorite potluck dish (no meat) & come celebrate the beginning of Spring (in Israel, of course). The seder is a beautiful celebration of the progression from winter to spring, including the tasting of wines, fresh fruits and nuts.

If you have questions or want to help out, call Caren at 361-1377.

A Song for your Pesach Seder
(to the tune of The Twelve Days of Christmas)

- For the First Plague of Pesach,
Pharoah came to see
A River that was all Blood--y.
- Second: Green Jumping Frogs,&..
- Third: Big, White Lice,
- Fourth: Wild, Scary Beasts,
- Fifth: (slow) Cows with Disease,
- Sixth: Boils causing Itching,
- Seventh: Hail as Big as Golf Balls,
- Eighth: Tons of Flying Locusts,
- Ninth: Days of Pure Darkness,
- Tenth: Death of the Firstborn,

---from www.Kosher4Passover.com

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at Congregation Etz Chaim**

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AND IMPROVED...
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**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

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Passover Kosher Wine Tasting Sunday, April 6: 3 - 5 PM

If you missed it before, you will not want to miss it again. The Kosher for Passover Wine & Appetizer Tasting is a phenomenal event. Kosher wine has come a L-O-N-G way from Manishevitz! Come taste for yourself: Merlot, Rioja, Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay, Cabernet, Sparkling White, and Red Muscat from wineries in France, Italy, Australia, Israel & California.

If you need childcare for this adult event, call Susan at 324-7263.

Upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah

We have several bar & bat mitzvah scheduled in the next few months. The community is always welcome to come celebrate our students' accomplishments by coming and joining in the Shabbat AM service.

A Song for Your Pesach Seder *(to the tune of White Christmas)*

I'm dipping greens in salt water
Just like I did the year before
Greens remind of springtime
and parsley's so fine
and parsley's so fine
While salt echoes tears, you know.

I'm dipping greens in salt water
Just like I did the year before
May your greens be dipped
with each bite
As you join together Passover night.

Purim Potluck & Party Friday, March 6 PM

It's crazy fun----It's Purim! We will have the reading of the Megillah and a Spiel or two. Hamantaschen, Costumes, Games, Prize Tickets and a Prize Gallery, Potluck & Pizza. What more could anyone want??

Thoughts about Lot's wife (Idit) from a nine year old girl:

"I know why the Torah says Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt. She didn't really die, you see, she looked back like grandmothers did during the Holocaust and she couldn't stop crying because of what she saw.

"She looked back to make sure all of her family was keeping up with her and she couldn't find one of the children, so she went back to check. Where she stood, she left this huge pile of salt from her tears. And maybe she really is out there somewhere in the world still looking for one of her daughters. Because that's what a Jewish mother would do. And if it was my mother, I would still be waiting for her, every day." ----from Milgram, Rabbi Goldie. Meaning & Mitzvah, page 132. (2005) Jewish Lights Publishing: Woodstock, VT.



Synagogue Contacts

Please mail Membership dues to PO Box 905 Kennebunk, ME 04043

Memorial Plaques, Prayerbooks, Etz Chaim books of Torah

David Strassler 967-5833

Hebrew School/Services

Beth & David Strassler 967-5833.

Sunday School

Jeff & Adrienne: 284-9002

Shabbat Potlucks: Caren: 361-1377

Library Donations: Beth

Questions: mail@etzchaimme.org

Community Events

Jan 5 & 12: Shabbat Svce: 9:30

Jan 18: Tu b'Shevat Potluck/Seder

Jan 20: Sunday School: 9:30

Feb 2 & 16: Shabbat Services

Feb 23: Phipps-Costin Bar Mitzvah

Feb 29: Shabbat Potluck & Service

March 1 & 15: Shabbat Svce: 9:30

March 9: Sunday School: 9:30

March 21: Potluck & Purim Party

April 5 & 19: Shabbat Services

April 6: Sunday School: 9:30

April 6: Passover Kosher Wine & Appetizer Tasting: 3-5 PM

April 10: HS Model Seder

April 19: First Seder for Pesach (Sat)

April 20: Second Seder for Pesach (Sun)

May 3: Charlotte Pierce Bat Mitzvah

May 17: Shabbat Service: 9:30

May 22: Community Event: 7 PM

June 7 & 21: Shabbat Services

June 21: Beniam Hollman BarMitzvah

July 12: Elyse Oliver Bat Mitzvah

Hebrew School Update

by Beth & David Straasser

We are excited to announce that we have hired a new teacher and administrative consultant, Susan Horowitz. Sue brings many years of Hebrew School experience to Biddeford. Her teaching responsibilities include teaching music to the Alef and Bet classes and cultural studies to the Gimmel class. Her other responsibilities are as an administrative consultant to the principals and the education committee.

Dalet I Class: Last week, the students braided & baked challah under the supervision of our own Challah Master Baker, Debbie Rowe. Their finished products went home with several well deserving teachers.

In early December, the Dalet I & II classes and several parents brought the lights of Chanukah to The Monarch Center in Saco and The Atria in Kennebunk. Jewish residents joined in candle lighting and reciting the blessings. Freshly made latkes were provided by Denise Hammond for all the Atria participants & Chef David Ste. Marie for all at the Monarch Center.

Dalet I meets at Wiggle Weigle Books in downtown Biddeford.



The class focus on giving to the community comes from their Torah learning as they discuss specific passages and relate concepts to modern, everyday Jewish life.

Congregation Etz Chaim

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Kennebunk, ME 04043

