



Winter 2011  
Volume 9 Issue 3

# Beth Chaverim

Humanistic Jewish Community



## Upcoming Events

**Chanukah Dinner**  
Friday, December 9th

**Adult Education**  
December 5  
January 9  
February 6  
*Barnes & Noble, Lincolnshire*  
7:15 pm

**School Winter Break**  
December 18, 25, January 1

**Chanukah Begins**  
Tuesday Evening December 20

**Book Club**  
January 16  
The Little Bride  
By Anna Solomon  
February 13  
Pictures At An Exhibition  
By Sara Houghteling

**E-Auction**  
March 18–25

**Community Seder**  
Saturday, April 7



## The Challenges of Chanukah

As the days grow shorter, we anticipate the holiday of Chanukah. This Festival of Lights is celebrated as an occasion to bring light into the world at a seasonal time of darkness; and of course metaphorically as an occasion to shed light on the subject of religious freedom. Chanukah is filled with much merriment as we have special foods and songs as well as legends and myths that accompany the holiday. Though Chanukah is a minor festival, it is important for what it teaches us about assimilation, acculturation and Jewish identity. It presents its challenges to us as we try to be true to the historical events that led up to it without detracting from the centuries of celebrations that they have spawned.

In 165 B.C.E. a group led by the Maccabees fought the Assyrian Greeks and prevailed, ultimately regaining control of the Temple in Jerusalem. In point of fact, the Maccabees were also fighting against the Hellenistic Jews, those Jews who were proudly Jewish but also adopted Greek ways. Hellenistic Jews were acculturated if not fully assimilated; with acculturation meaning the adoption of the ways of the larger culture and assimilation meaning simulating what the general society has often to the point of losing one's own identity. They could be considered early precursors to Humanistic Jews, with the Maccabees representing the more zealously observant. What are we to make of the history that then celebrates the

Maccabees? Perhaps it is that religious freedom must be protected so that Judaism remains a big tent with room for all its varieties. The Maccabees went on to establish the Hasmonean dynasty that lasted 150 years. It was the only time of Jewish self-rule until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. However, the Hasmoneans were not heroes, but rather a brutal regime that snuffed out all opposition. Again the troubling facts of history come forth.

Further, there is the celebration of the holiday itself as we engage in gift giving, often one gift per night. This too developed as an instance of acculturation as Jews in lands with much interaction with Christians saw their Christian counterparts celebrating Christmas with gifts and wanted to simulate their practice. Likewise, with the dreidel game that had its start in Germany as a spinning top game with gambling aspects to it. Jews wanted to simulate this practice too, so they created their own top with the Yiddish letters (“nun”, “gimel” “heh” and “shin”) standing for “nothing, all, half or put” that described the rules of the game. Later, the same letters in Hebrew came to be the acronym for “a great miracle happened there.” The foods we eat are often fried in oil to commemorate the myth that when the Temple was rededicated (for the word Chanukah means rededication), there was only enough oil to last for one day but it somehow lasted for eight. *(Cont'd page 2)*

## From The Steering Committee....

Dear Members:

The leaves are falling and it's time to enjoy the colors.

We have had a very busy and full fall so far. We have Sunday School in full swing. Some of the school events we have had so far have included delivery of food packages to the Jewish poor for Rosh Hashanah, a beautiful and memorable Sukkot celebration at the Rusnak's as well as a field trip to the Adler Planetarium. As part of the "I Witness the Holocaust" program, we hosted a Holocaust survivor speaking to the 7th grade and families. Be sure to read Jordan Barhydt's account of Barbara Steiner's visit in this issue. Our next Holocaust speaker will be **Sunday, December 4**; all are welcome. In addition, in January the seventh and eighth grade class will go on a field trip to the Illinois Holocaust Museum in Skokie.

We launched our Literature, Laughter and Legacy series with two wonderful presentations from two engaging authors. First we heard from Ellen Frankel, author of "Syd Arthur", and then from Pam Sherman, author of "Suburban Outlaw." It was a pleasure to welcome these women from Massachusetts and New York respectively. Watch for the third installment to be presented in the spring.

Plan to join us to celebrate Chanukah together at our annual Chanukah dinner, always a lot of fun! **Be sure to save the date, Friday, December 9.** There are fun games, songs and menorah lighting for all. Details included in this newsletter.

We'll start working on the e-auction just after the first of the year, and we could use volunteers for this. That would entail soliciting for donations and

managing the e-auction with Rabbi Jodi. If there is a chance you are interested in helping with this, please let Rabbi Jodi know at your earliest convenience.

If you would like to volunteer for any of our programs, we always welcome the help. We also want to have your input for our programs. Would you like to have day time programs in addition to evenings? Are there specific topics you would like to have covered? Are there particular social action programs that you think we could help with?

As always, if you have any comments or suggestions for our community, feel free to reach out to me.

*Robin Chessick,*  
President

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*(Rabbi Jodi's column continued from page 1)*

Again, the historical Chanukah is celebrated for eight days because the last holiday that should have involved a pilgrimage to the Temple was Sukkot, an eight-day holiday in Tishri. Chanukah itself is referred to in the Book of Maccabees as "the Sukkot of Kislev".

So the challenge of Chanukah is to celebrate it on its terms but to be aware of the historical foundations. Chanukah indeed sheds light in the world. It is a time of joy and celebration, of being together with family and friends, and of recognizing the long history of Jewish resilience and adaptation to circumstance. That is certainly something to celebrate!

Wishing you a very happy holiday season, from my family to yours,

B'shalom,

*Rabbi Jodi*

### Beth Chaverim Mission Statement

Beth Chaverim is a place for individuals and families to explore their Jewish heritage and traditions, to learn to think critically and independently about religious and theological issues, and to develop meaningful and relevant Jewish identities through education.

## The Humanist Café - Food for the Mind & the Appetite



It's good to be a humanist!

Here are some definitions of Humanist in dictionaries:

*noun* - A classical scholar or student of the liberal arts

*noun* - An advocate of the principles of humanism

*adj* - Of or pertaining to renaissance humanism

*adj* - Of or pertaining to a philosophy asserting human dignity and man's capacity for fulfillment through reason and scientific method and often rejecting religion

*adj* - Pertaining to or concerned with the humanities

*adj* - Marked by humanistic values and devotion to human welfare

*n* - One who studies human nature

- A believer in the principles of humanism.
- One who is concerned with the interests and welfare of human beings.
- A classical scholar.
- A student of the liberal arts.

### Zucchini Bread from Katherine Lato

3 c. grated zucchini  
 1/2 c. oil & 1/2 c. applesauce  
 1 1/4 c. sugar  
 3 eggs  
 1 teas vanilla  
 3 c. flour (1 c. can be wheat)  
 1 1/2 teas. baking powder  
 1 teas. baking soda  
 1 1/2 teas. cinnamon  
 1 teas. salt  
 1/2 teas. ginger  
 1 c. choc. chips

Beat eggs (just a little), add liquids and mix well. Add the dry ingredients and mix thoroughly, then the zucchini and then the chips.

Can add nuts as well if you'd like.

Pour into two loaf pans.

Bake at 350 for 1 hour.

## What's Happening *Mah Nishmah*

### Todah Rabah

*means thank you very much*

#### Rosh Hashanah oneg bakers

**Jodi Hernandez** for helping the students make cards for *Super Sibs*, an organization that supports the siblings of ill children.

**Judith Matz & David Barhydt** for chairing the lox box fundraiser

Lox Box Packers and deliverers:

**Pam Davies, Allan & Eileen Freeman, Carolyn Lewis, Linda Horn, Jodi Hernandez, Joyce Vojcak**

**Phyllis Cheskin** for the flowers on Rosh Hashanah

**Linda & Rich Horn** for the flowers on Yom Kippur

Our parent chaperones for helping deliver food packages for Rosh Hashanah with the organization Maot Chitim and for driving our students:

**Bob Matlin, Jonathan & Tanya Seidman, Hara Ezell, Tami Baba, Amy Latulippe, Dennis Grant, Ruth Hecht, Jodi Hernandez, Robin Chessick**

**The Eisendrath Family** for delivering the food collected at Yom Kippur to the Deerfield Township Food Pantry

**The Rusnak Family** for hosting our Sukkot celebration in their sukkah

**N. David Kornfeld** for photocopying & donation of copy paper

**Dick Strauss** for the flip chart board & stands for school

**Pam Davies** for preparing the student packets for the Adler Planetarium field trip

**Emma Kornfeld** for substitute teaching in 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade class

**The Barhydt Family** for providing the refreshments for the Literature, Laughter and Legacy event

**Dennis Grant, Pam Davies, Hara Ezell and Tami Baba** for their help with the Simchat Torah event

**Elyse Magill** for taking the items collected at the Literature, Laughter & Legacy event to the women's shelter

### Donations

#### Michael Marcus

**Shalom Memorial Park** for our participation in the 2011 art calendar contest

**Pam Sherman** in Honor of Robin Chessick

**Phyllis & Ben Kaplan**

#### Yom Kippur Memorial Donations

**Anne & Barry Chessick**

**Phyllis Hecker**

**Rich & Linda Horn**

**Debbie Shore**

**Bobbi & Jim Taormina**

**Michele Wartell**

**Alan & Rhonda Solid**

**Allen & Eileen Freeman**

### WELCOME

Jan & Dennis Grant  
Lindsey

Stacey & Michael Max  
Emily and Rachel

Tami & Michael Baba  
Gordy and Lauren

Vivian & Loren Kramer

### Beth Chaverim Steering Committee Members

President : Robin Chessick

Treasurer: Sue Pinkus

Secretary: Linda Horn

Past President:

Members At Large:

Elyse Magill

Alan Solid Jodi Hernandez,

Deb Rusnak, Steve Rusnak

## At Beth Chaverim

Thank You to the Lox Box Donors

**AlphaGraphics**  
**Bank Financial**  
**CAY Center**  
**Chicago Jewish News**  
**Law Offices of N. David Kornfeld**  
**Mariano's (Vernon Hills)**  
**Piser Funeral Homes**  
**Restaurant.com**  
**Sunset Foods (Lake Forest)**  
**Trader Joe's (Northbrook)**  
**Upper Crust Bagels**



### Look What the Mail Brought

As part of the Yeladim l'yeladim program, where our children help other children, all our students made "Smilecards" for an organization called "Super Sibs!". This organization helps the siblings of children diagnosed with cancer and let's them know that they are important and undergoing a difficult time in their family. We received the following thank you note from the Executive Director:

*"Dear Rabbi Kornfeld and Students,*

*Thank you so much, Beth Chaverim, for your in-kind gift of Smilecards. We are very thankful for your continued partnership and support." The letter then includes the following handwritten note: "Thank you so much for this generous contribution! You will be bringing smiles to so many children!"*

All our students should be very proud of themselves. A special thanks to **Jodi Hernandez** for helping with this project, and to **Deb Rusnak** for bringing this organization to our attention.

\*\*\*\*\*

The following is a thank you letter for the items donated in connection with our Literature, Laughter and Legacy event:

*"On behalf of Ms. Patricia Jones, Waukegan Township Supervisor, the Board of trustees, the Staben House Staff, and the Women and Children of Staben House, thank you for your donation to the women and children residing at Staben House and community families. . . . When caring organizations such as yours become interested and involved in issues affecting the homeless, you contribute to the crucial link of community participation. Homelessness and its wide-reaching consequences are issues that affect our entire community daily. Your support and advocacy gives the women and children hope for a brighter future."*

**"We are here today because our ancestors did not lose hope."**

*Rabbi Sherwin T. Wine*



Over the past few years, we have had several families within our community that have had a temporary set back, ie: a surgery, loss of a job, family crises, etc.

"Helping Hands" is available to help with the needs of these families, either through delivering a meal, or driving to a doctor's appointment or any other minor needs a family could use. Over the past several months, assistance has been provided to several members.

If you would like to be added to the list of members who will assist when needed, please email us and Laurie Matlin and Debbie Ellis will contact you when the need arises. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered already; it is greatly appreciated. Any family needing assistance can seek it by contacting Rabbi Jodi.



## ???? Membership Questions ????

Do you have questions about membership? Then contact our membership liaison Carolyn Lewis at [cjlewis0719@att.net](mailto:cjlewis0719@att.net)

### Can You Help?

We are always looking for some assistance large and small for our events. Please let us know if you are interested to help with any of the following events this year or next.

- Helping Hands Committee
- E-Auction Fundraiser

#### Are you familiar with Wordpress?

We are looking for help with updating our website.

## Humanistic Judaism 101

- Defines Judaism as the collective historic experience of the Jewish people and promotes a community of shared Jewish values.
- Promotes the development of a strong Jewish identity, especially for those Jews who cannot intellectually or emotionally embrace a supernatural being, or who are unsure about the existence of such a being and want to express their Judaism in an honest and meaningful way.
- Emphasizes the capacity in all human beings to improve themselves and the world through learning and the performance of good deeds.
- Teaches that ethical behavior is conduct which enhances the dignity of every individual.
- Understands that ritual without meaning is simply empty ritual and that liberal Judaism is authentic Judaism, without apologies to the present or nostalgic bows to the past.

Beth Chaverim is affiliated with the Society for Humanistic Judaism.

### We celebrated the High Holidays together!



Yom Kippur Food Collection

### We celebrated Sukkot and Simchat Torah



## In Our School

The fifth/sixth grade class wrote speeches to the United Nations General Assembly as if they were the leaders of a country they created. **Sara Glawe** wrote the following essay. It contains much wisdom that the leaders of actual countries could take to heart.

Mr. President, World Leaders, distinguished leaders of the General Assembly, I am Sara Glawe, from the land of Sara Springs, and I come here today to present to you the Sara Springs National Mission of achieving friendship, peace, and a healthy environment for all people to live in. To start, I will make sure Sara Springs is a good trading facility for the rest of the world. We specialize in making high tech gadgets and wigs. This trading will ensure friendship among countries with Sara Springs because your country will be happier to have these rare goods. To create a peaceful living environment, I will prevent wars by settling disagreements between countries. If one country claims that part of another country's land is theirs, but the other country doesn't think so, I will settle that argument by looking at maps from years ago to see whose land it really is. Lastly, I will create a healthy environment for all by taking away all non-recyclable items and replacing them with all recyclable items. I will also turn all electric power into solar power. By completing these tasks, the world will be a better place for not only my country but for everyone else, too.

Thank you!

### “Why a llama?”

Each student was given a plush llama on the opening day of school. Why a llama? That's exactly the right question! Llama means why in Hebrew. The llamas are intended to be a reminder that our school, and indeed our congregation, is the place to ask questions!



**Our School Classes  
K - 8**



## Adult Education - Genesis "Where The Story All Started"



Adult Education this year will be a study of the **Book of Genesis**.

Led by Rabbi Jodi, we will study the Bible text in English. Come learn and explore the actual text that is the basis of our heritage. Discover the lessons and stories contained in it.

**Classes Meet on the following Mondays**

**December 5 Genesis 24 - 27**

**January 9 Genesis 29-32**

**February 6 Genesis 33**

at

**Barnes & Noble in Lincolnshire**

**@ 7:15 pm**

A copy of the Tanach (the Hebrew Bible) by Jewish Publication Society is all you will need.

There is no cost to members for the classes.

The book can be found on Amazon.com.

## Literature, Laughter and Legacy



We welcomed  
Ellen Frankel,  
Author of Syd Arthur

We welcomed Pam  
Sherman, Author of  
The Suburban Outlaw.



## Did You Know?



**Rabbi Jodi Kornfeld** is available to conduct **life cycle ceremonies** including **weddings, civil unions, baby namings** and **funerals** for members and non-members.

Contact Rabbi Jodi for further information,

847-945-6512

RABBIJODI@GMAIL.COM

## Society for Humanistic Judaism - SHJ

The SHJ Board of Directors has approved its Communications Committee selection of Ernestine Rose as the Humanistic Jewish Role Model of the upcoming year.

Ernestine Rose was an activist, abolitionist, and can be considered the first Jewish feminist. She was born into an Orthodox family in Poland in 1810; moved to the United States where she was active in the National Women's Suffrage Association; and ultimately died in England in 1892. In campaigning for the right to vote for women, she said "Carry out the republican principle of universal suffrage, or strike it from your banners and substitute 'Freedom and Power to one half of society, and Submission and Slavery to the other.'"



# COLLOQUIUM 2012

*How will 'half-Jewish' change Judaism?*

*Can you be 'Jewish and' rather than 'Jewish or'?*

*Can the world handle 'half-Jewish'?*

*Is 'half-Jewish' no big deal anymore?*

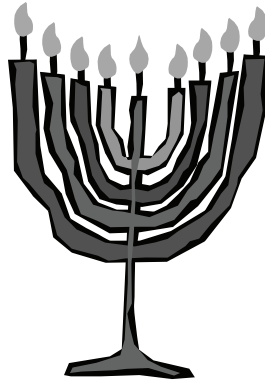
**“HALF JEWISH?”**  
THE HEIRS OF INTERMARRIAGE

**April 20-22, 2012**

Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois  
*in cooperation with Newberger Hillel at the University of Chicago  
and Fiedler Hillel at Northwestern University*

*For more information, contact IISHJ at [info@iishj.org](mailto:info@iishj.org),  
[www.iishj.org](http://www.iishj.org), 847-777-6907 or find the Institute on Facebook.*

## Chanukah Candle Lighting



Baruch ha-or ba-olam  
Baruch ha-or ba-adam

*Blessed is the light in the world  
Blessed is the light in each person*

Baruch ha-or ba-Chanukah

*Blessed is the light of Chanukah*

ברוך האור בעולם  
ברוך האור באדם  
ברוך האור בחנכה

### Optional Blessings For The First Night

Baruch ha-or ba-adam  
sheh-asa nee-seem  
l'avoteynoo ba-ya-meem  
ha-em baz-man hazeh.

*Radiant is the light in people  
That wrought great works for our  
ancestors in those days at this  
season.*

Baruch ha-or ba-adam  
shehekheyanoo,  
v'keemanoo, v'higgyanoo  
lazman hazeh.

*Radiant is the light in humanity,  
which has kept us in life, sustained  
us, and enabled us to reach this  
happy season.*




## “Eye Witness The Holocaust” Program

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I took the Holocaust class taught by Dick Strauss, an intelligent, passionate, and inspiring teacher. I am back this year as an assistant to Mr. Strauss because of what he gave to me: knowledge, curiosity, and a more expansive view of prejudice in the world. Reflecting on my experience in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, I realize that one of the most important and integral components of the class was the supplement to the knowledge we learned: firsthand experiences. Holocaust speakers not only tell their captivating stories, but also provide the emotional aspect of the Holocaust that is so necessary in understanding its horror.

On Sunday, October 30, Barbara Steiner came to Beth Chaverim to share her own experiences as a survivor of the Holocaust. While it was painful for her to tell her story, Barbara explained that it was essential in making our generation practice tolerance for everyone, no matter culture, race, or religious beliefs. As I was listening to Barbara Steiner speak, it was truly hard to believe how cruel some humans could be. Barbara had to suffer through experiences that no person, especially a teenager, should have to withstand. She was forced out of her home, imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto, and saw her parents die of starvation before her eyes. She fought in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, a true testament to her bravery, and eventually was liberated after being sent to both a death camp and concentration camp. It is truly inspiring to know that after all that she went through, she is still able to consider herself “lucky” because she survived. I know how much all of the students and parents who attended appreciated Barbara’s generosity in sharing her time and story with us.



By: **Jordan Barhydt**



**Society for Humanistic Judaism  
presents:  
Our biggest youth program  
of the year!**



**March 2-4, 2012  
Washington, D.C.**

**HuJews Conclave:**

A weekend program for  
Teens & College Students

HuJews from across the US and Canada  
will join with friends new and old  
for a weekend of fun and friendship .

For Information, contact the  
Society for Humanistic Judaism  
248-478-7610  
or email [info@hujews.org](mailto:info@hujews.org)

**Memorial Plaque Order Form**  
**Beth Chaverim Memorial Plaque**  
**Order Form**  
*(One Name per plaque)*

Name of Loved One: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

Plaque Donor: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Loved One: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Death: \_\_\_\_\_

Plaque Donor: \_\_\_\_\_

Line 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Line 2: \_\_\_\_\_

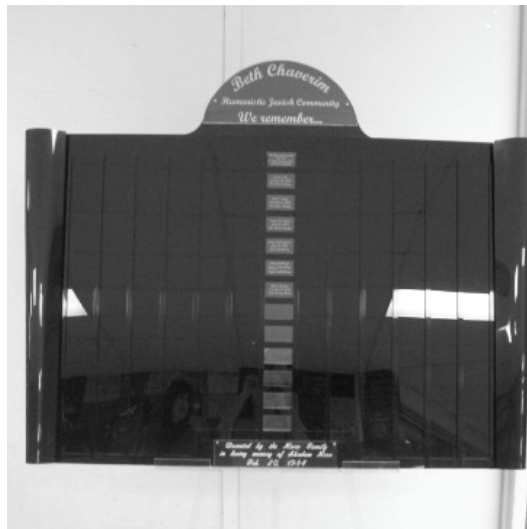
Plaque Donor: \_\_\_\_\_

\$136/plaque X \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to our office.

Checks payable to Beth Chaverim Humanistic Jewish Community  
 1457 Wilmot Road  
 Deerfield, IL 60015





## Beth Chaverim

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[www.BethChaverim.net](http://www.BethChaverim.net)

Rabbi Jodi Kornfeld

Administrator Linda Horn

Affiliated With



**Save The Date**  
**The E-Auction is coming!**  
**March 18 - 25, 2012**



Find us on  
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Visit our website to learn more about us - [www.BethChaverim.net](http://www.BethChaverim.net)