



HANUKKAH IN AMERICA BY RABBI LEWIS WARSHAUER

In August, 1790, President George Washington wrote to the Hebrew congregation at Newport, Rhode Island:

It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it were the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights, for, happily, the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support...May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid.

Washington's correct definition of toleration is just as applicable today. Toleration means, I don't like what you're doing, it's wrong, but for practical reasons it's not in my interest to stop you right now. The Jews of the United States, like all religious and ethnic minorities, live here by matter of right, and are not merely tolerated by the majority. Toleration can always be withdrawn, and while Jews have historically enjoyed periods of toleration in various countries that toleration almost always came to an end.

Every year at the White House, the president participates in

the lighting of a Hanukkah. This both brings to mind both the respect accorded to Jews and Judaism – after all, Jews are at most two percent of the population of this country—and also the events that Hanukkah marks. According to the Book of Maccabees, Antiochus IV, the Greek ruler who controlled Judea in the 1st Century BCE, in the face of rebelliousness of pious Jews, reversed a previous policy of tolerating the practice of Judaism. The rebellion intensified, and the Jews under the leadership of the sons of Mattathias, the Maccabees, eventually overthrew the Greek regime and restored an independent Jewish state. It is important to note that the Maccabees were fighting not only the foreign rulers but local Jews who were allied with them. Mattathias sparked the war by killing not only a Greek enforcer but also a Jew who stepped up to perform a pagan sacrifice. The Maccabees were hardly tolerant of Jews who violated Jewish strictures.

Hanukkah as celebrated today in America and elsewhere recalls the miracle of the oil more than it trumpets the military victory. This is probably a good thing. Jews are more secure in places where If-I-win-you-must-lose is not the prevailing attitude. A *Hanukkah* is lit in the White House because of an embrace of pluralism, not just toleration.

Chag urim sameach.

INSTALLATION CEREMONY OF RABBI JOSHUA KATZAN

The Installation Ceremony of Rabbi Joshua Katzan as Rabbi of Congregation Habonim was held on December 3, 2008. By all accounts, it was a very meaningful and spiritual event. It represented new beginnings for the Rabbi and the congregation and united the past and present with our hopes for the future. More than 200 people attended the ceremony with Saul Sanders, Habonim President, presiding.

Rabbi Bruce Dollin of the Hebrew Educational Alliance of Denver, Rabbi Katzan's mentor for five years, presented Rabbi Katzan with the Habonim *yad* to symbolize the trust we place in Rabbi Katzan to point the way of the congregation in the teachings of the Torah. He vividly described the dynamics of the congregational - rabbinic relationship and provided valuable insights to nurture that connection.

In accepting the *yad* and charge presented to him by Rabbi Dollin, Rabbi Katzan spoke of his journey to the Rabbinate. He related his comments to the week's parasha of Abraham leaving his home and his journey to Canaan. Rabbi Katzan spoke of his hopes for members of the congregation to build lives of Jewish meaning and experience. Recognizing the 69th anniversary of

the founding of Habonim, there was a poignant moment when Rabbi Katzan asked the founders and their families to stand so that all present could honor them and their many contributions.

Among a variety of additional greetings and remarks, the program included a moving historical perspective of Habonim given by Board Member Susan Grant; a song of welcome by the children of the Zayin class of the Religious School; a gift made by the children of the Nursery School presented by PTA co-chairs Allison Epstein and Michele Gold; and the singing of *L'chi Lach* by Joanie Halev, accompanied by Mira Rivera. A dessert reception followed the ceremony.

Rabbi Bruce Dollin's comments and Rabbi Katzan's acceptance speech follow on pages 2 – 5 of this Bulletin on pages. They can also be found on our web site at www.habonim.net. If you were unable to attend the Installation, we hope you will read them for their thoughtful and discerning insights. In the next issue we will publish Susan Grant's presentation and the comments made by the PTA co-chairs of the Nursery School.

— Norbert Fruehauf and Elaine Witkoff

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REMARKS BY RABBI BRUCE DOLLIN

ON RABBI KATZAN'S INSTALLATION - NOVEMBER 2, 2008

I can't tell you what a pleasure it is to be here: not just because Rabbi Katzan is my friend and colleague but because how often does a pulpit rabbi have a chance to give a sermon and then high tail it out of town. If I could do that back home, my sermons would be so much more interesting!

Before I tell you a little bit about your new rabbi, I would like to take a few moments to talk about rabbis and congregations. I have been in the pulpit for 22 years now. I started in a little place in New Jersey in 1986 after ordination at JTS. I was at my first synagogue for 8 years and now in Denver, for 14 years. Interestingly enough, I remember best the hardest times. Nothing is easy in the pulpit: you should know that up front. This is a hard job, probably because rabbis lead with everything that they are. An accountant needs mostly to be good with numbers. College professors need to be smart. But the rabbinate is different. You are not a rabbi with your intellect, or your personality, or body, or soul, but with all of the above. Everything about you, with your skills and flaws on public display, makes you who you are as a rabbi and determines your rabbinate.

The rabbi is a religious leader and as such is often subject to, let us call them, "other-worldly" expectations. Since rabbis represent God, in a certain way, some congregants fantasize that they are God.

Most of the difficult issues come forward because of disappointed expectations. You may have heard about the perfect rabbi. Here is what he is like: "The perfect rabbi preaches exactly fifteen minutes. He condemns sins but never upsets anyone. He works from 8:00am until midnight and makes sure the lights are turned out in the building. He makes \$50 a week, wears good clothes, buys good books, and gives about \$50 weekly to the poor. He is 35 years old and has preached 25 years. He has a burning desire to work with teenagers and spends all of his time with senior citizens. The perfect Rabbi smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his work. He makes 15 calls daily to congregation families, shut-ins and the hospitalized, and is always in his office to receive phone calls."

You get the point. Expectations of the rabbi are boundless and no human rabbi can meet them all. This is not to be critical of congregations. There is no way to control people's expectations: every congregant has a picture in his or her mind of what the rabbi should be like. And most of the time, the rabbi who is trying really hard, will meet and exceed those expectations. You will hear about it, however, when he doesn't.

Some say, that the relationship between a rabbi and the congregation is like a marriage. I think it is. I have been married for 20 years and I see the parallels.

First comes the courtship where you put your best foot forward. Skills, opportunities, organization, a great location, New York City, what could be a better place; excited leadership and a great rabbinic candidate decide to get married. They have a wedding where the love is flowing. That is tonight. You even brought in a rabbi from out of town, me, to officiate.

I say a few nice things and then get out of the way and the young couple has a first dance and they are married.

They then go on a honeymoon that lasts about 8 months. On the honeymoon, they begin to see some things about the other that is of concern to each of them: She thinks, "hmm: didn't realize that before; he never showed me that when we were dating." He thinks, "I didn't realize this before; she is a bit judgmental and critical and she wants all the closet space." She thinks, "this guy is a slob; look at those socks he leaves on the floor."

But it is the honeymoon after all. Both will deal with these issues sometime in the future. In the mean time, let's have some fun and be in love.

So the honeymoon lasts a good long time but it is *continued on page 3*

RABBI DOLLIN *continued from page 2*

over eventually. One can't live forever on honeymoon. And then she breaks the news to him, "I don't like your socks on the floor every night; it messes up my sense of order." And he says, "what? I have been leaving these socks here for 8 months, and you never said anything like this before?"

In the marriage between synagogue and rabbi, after the honeymoon period, the issues usually trickle up from various members, issues like a missed hospital visitation (you would be surprised how often congregants complain about missed visitations and admit at the same time, they never called the shul office to let anyone know their loved one was in the hospital). Or you hear about a sermon that offended someone or that the rabbi didn't say hi when they passed on the sidewalk in Times Square, or the rabbi forgot his name. Some will complain that the rabbi spends too little time with the kids and too much time with the Board, or that the rabbi has never had me over for Shabbat dinner and so on. It could be any of these things and the synagogue leadership has to bring this stuff up to the rabbi and the rabbi gets the sense for the first time that their love has conditions. It's a tough moment for everybody.

And as the disappointment is expressed both ways at this difficult time, each party: rabbi and congregation makes a private, nefarious vow: I love this guy: he is perfect for me and as God is my witness, I am going to change him.

Now the trying-to-change-the-other period can last months or years depending on the maturity of each party. More mature, shorter period. Less mature, could go on forever. And it's all out of love. Board members who love the rabbi cannot tolerate the dissonance created by the criticism of the rabbi they hear from congregants. So they go to the rabbi and hope the rabbi can change so the criticism will go away. It is painful to have to listen to bad things about someone you care for so deeply. Everybody just wants the criticism to go away.

The process I have described up until now is the process that all congregations go through in some way or the other with their new rabbi. But the process I am about to describe is reserved, I am sorry

to say, only for healthy congregations with healthy rabbis. Many congregations never get to this point and have serial marriages, so to speak. Rabbi after rabbi, forever. To succeed, however, a congregation must move to the next step.

And here is that step. At some point, the congregation and rabbi say to themselves: "this is our situation. The rabbi is a human being with a skill set. He does some things great and we love him for that and he is lacking, as all human beings are, in other areas." The rabbi comes to the conclusion that the congregation is what it is, is located where it is located, can do certain things for the rabbi and not other things, which is the case with every congregation in this country. Now this doesn't mean that the rabbi and congregation will not grow and change over time. In a healthy situation, they will both grow and great things will happen. But great things don't happen because one party is trying to make a rapid change of the things in the other they do not like right now. Growth happens when both parties let the other see opportunities and seize them on their own with gentle and consistent encouragement. A healthy rabbi/congregation relationship is when both sides enable the other to grow on their own, from their own motivation and for their own reasons. There is no success in this marriage without taking this step.

OK, so with that said, let me tell you a little about your new rabbi. Rabbi Katzan is a mentch. And not a mentch like you might typically meet. He is a real mentch: he cares deeply about people: all people. He is forgiving and understanding and will work very hard to assist, aid, help and encourage the people in his life and you are now the people in his life. His greatest skill is the most important skill in the rabbinate. And I have been at this business for 22 years and if I know anything about the rabbinate it is this: the most important skill for a rabbi is creating and sustaining relationships. You will run into all kinds of rabbis in this town: great scholars, orators, institution builders, writers -- you name it. Without a doubt in my mind, I can say to you that no rabbi, no matter how great, will make it in the pulpit if he can't create and sustain relationships with ordinary people. And that is what Rabbi Katzan is best at.

Rabbi Katzan is also learned, and loves

to learn and teach. Study with him whenever you can and you will discover a different way of learning that brings the text alive and makes it relevant. Give him every opportunity to learn and study on his own. I assure you, the more he learns, the more you will benefit.

Rabbi Katzan is loyal. In our 5 years together in Denver, he stood by me in some difficult times. He never let me down and I believe that he will not let you down either. Rabbi Katzan is also a lot of fun. He loves to laugh and lives his life fully. Hang around him at Kiddush or at a simcha and you will have a good time, I quite assure you.

Rabbi Katzan has been with you all for several months so I know what I am saying is nothing you probably haven't discovered already. When we were in the process of hiring Rabbi Katzan out of rabbinical school, I checked one of his references who told me that I have a gem here, a truly kind and loving human being and he said, "you better take care of him."

So I said I would and I hope I did. Now he is here and I give you the same charge. To the Board of Directors of Bonai Shalom: you are charged to protect this rabbi from the inevitable unreasonable expectations that will come to you from the congregation. Listen to your congregants: that is your job, but do not overreact. The rabbi can't work his magic under fire and you are charged with doing what is best for the congregation and what is best for the congregation is to let the rabbi do his work.

Members of the congregation: moderate your expectations and get to know Rabbi Katzan for who he is. He will do a great job for you: let him.

To Rabbi Katzan and HaBonim: be gentle and kind and understanding with each other. Both of you are living organisms that can and will learn to live together in a productive and loving relationship. Begin that relationship with kindness and understanding and do not let that go, ever. You will be amazed how much you will mature and grow and how amazing will be your success.

Thank you all for taking such good care of my friend, Josh Katzan. He will truly be a great rabbi for you. *B'hatzlacha*: only good luck and many blessings in your future together.

Thank you Rabbi Dollin. It is a great honor for me to be installed here at Habonim by my mentor, teacher, and friend. Your wisdom and friendship over the past five years has meant the world to me.

I stand here today humbled by this program, as I undertake to assume the role of Rabbi of this warm and "Heimische" community with an extraordinary and auspicious history.

First, I want to acknowledge and thank Elaine Witkoff and Norbert Freuhauf, and the members of the transition committee who worked to organize this wonderful evening. As well, I want to personally welcome and thank Rabbi Eddie Harwitz, our distinguished colleagues of the Rabbinical Assembly, Rabbi Charles Savenor of United Synagogue, colleague and friend Cantor Bruce Halev, our Synagogue President Saul Sanders, our Executive Director Yolanda Potasinski, Director of Education Rabbi Laurie Phillips, fellow Clergy and colleagues across the denominational spectrum, members of Congregation Habonim, and distinguished guests. I am touched that you are here. Welcome.

I think I might have a sense of what Abraham must have felt during the course of his eventful life. We will be reading this week one of my favorite Parshas, the parsha of Lech-Lecha, where God instructs Abraham to get up and go, to set off on an adventure with only a direction in mind. As is certainly the case for me, Abraham had no idea what the journey was going to look like, let alone where he was meant to end up. His father, Terach, had started the family toward the land of Canaan, and this turns out to be Abraham's objective, but of course, this is revealed to him only after he sets off.

Since most of you never knew me as I was growing up, you may not be able to share my own surprise that I stand here today accepting this Yad, prepared to lead this congregation. I say "surprise" because the last thing I really thought I would ever do would be to grow up to become a Rabbi.

I was always a "spiritual" and inquisitive child. I spent a lot of time thinking about and marveling at the world. Spiritual understandings of the world are what inspired me to explore what purpose there is in existence, and how to live a worthy life. Though my father Stephan Katzan, z"l, was an atheist and rejected spirituality, he was committed to Jewish culture, and worked to live according to Jewish ethics. Like Terach did for Abraham, my own father started me on my spiritual path without knowing it. He sent me to Jewish day schools from nursery school into high school in order to develop my own identity as a Jew, to learn who I was and where I come from. This identity became the cornerstone from which my spirituality grew, sending me on a journey to Israel, to a career in education, and ultimately to the Rabbinat.

What initially drew me to setting off on this journey of Jewish study and eventually to the Rabbinat was, and remains, a spiritual interest in experiencing depth in life. I have come to learn that the depth and wisdom in Judaism is worthy of being studied and shared. The narrative of the Torah, the Mitzvoth, the Talmud, are our sources of wisdom that help us build a life of meaning brick by brick. This is our people's tradition. It is this passion for wisdom that drives me to learn and mar-

vel at our tradition, and is what inspires me to teach it in the role of Rabbi.

And who would have guessed it? Certainly not I. I imagine Abraham was as surprised by how his life unfolded along the journey of his life, but what is most important for all of us to consider is that he went for it. He was willing to take the risk, and respond in a radical way to what would appear to have been a daunting proposition: to leave the familiar in order to make the unknown his home. The Ishbetzer Rebbe teaches that God was calling to everyone in that generation, but it was Abraham who responded. We are all called upon to push the boundaries of the familiar at one time or another, and, as the Keduashat Levi, another Hassidic Master taught, to embark on the journey of "Lech Lecha" is to embark on the journey of self-discovery. To embark on this journey requires courage and a sense of adventure.

And this is what I think about when I contemplate the way in which Congregation Habonim originated. This coming weekend is the 70th anniversary of Kristalnacht, the night of broken glass, where Jewish businesses, homes and synagogues were destroyed by mobs of Nazi anti-semites. This is what history will remember as the official beginning of the Holocaust. The Nazis sought to uproot some of the very foundation stones of their proud society, and cast them into the furnace. This was the beginning of an unwanted journey for the Jews of Europe, as they were cast from their homes and societies, forced onto the road of travail and horror. One year later to the day, Congregation Habonim was

born here in New York, by those who were lucky enough to leave. We are honored with the presence of some of our founders, and their families. If I could invite those of you who are founders or close enough, to please rise and be recognized...

Habonim began as a haven for those who were rejected from Germany and Austria, and survivors from other countries, and evolved into a home filled with the familiar, holy, joy and warmth. What you created has become the cornerstone for the continued building of Jewish identity, learning, and transformation with its many programs and services. We have become a warm and "heimische" environment in an otherwise intense and hectic city, an island of elevation surrounded literally by soap-operas! For this, Habonim stands as a concrete praise of God, a living "Hallel."

In the Hallel service, the service sung on high holidays where we praise God for having uplifted us from the depths of misery unto the heights of exalted joy, we read a line from Psalm 118: "Even Masu Habonim, Hayitah L'rosh Pinah. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone."

I would like to read "Even Masu, the stones that the builders rejected," meaning the Jewish community of Germany, who contributed so many building blocks to what was otherwise known at the time as the most elevated and advanced society of Western Civilization, where rejected and cast aside. But, "Habonim became the cornerstone, Habonim Hiyta L'rosh Pinah." They, the stones cast away have

RABBI KATZAN continued from page 4
become the cornerstone for the rebuilding of all that is valuable and precious, all that would have meaning from our Tradition for us, and for our coming generations.

Congregation Habonim has laid a new cornerstone here in New York City, and they have, over the past 69 years and counting, built a Bayit Ne'eman B'yisrael, a faithful house in Israel. It is now home to a thriving Nursery School,

an active and growing Religious School, various Adult education programs, and inspired prayer led by our Cantor Bruce Halev who celebrates this year 25 years with the congregation.

I am humbled to have this opportunity take over from the successful, able, and caring hands of Rabbi Joanna Samuels, and to continue the work of helping the Habonim community to build lives of meaning with experiences that would inspire taking further steps

on the journey of life. It is my commitment bring leadership, love, and vision to helping bring our community along the road of its journey for as long as God keeps saying, "a little further..."

Take my hand, and together we'll get closer and closer, step by step.

As Psalm 118 concludes: *Hodu Ladonai ki tov, ki L'olam Chasdo*, Praised is God for God is good, His Love is eternal. Thank you again so much.

BELONGING TO HABONIM

What does it mean to *belong* to Habonim when there are so many networks we are part of already? What does it mean to be a *member* of our synagogue when, in this non-stop city and century, we sometimes would prefer not to bother? As a co-chair of the Membership Committee I think it is necessary to grapple with these questions, especially when we seek to make membership attractive to others.

For me personally, Habonim has meant many things. It began quite literally as a nurturing nest for my family, one we came by first through Barbara Katz z"l. Then the Director of the Nursery School, Barbara guided our whole family through the transformative period of nursery school, gave my husband and me confidence in ourselves as parents, shared so generously her knowledge and love, and enjoined us to a vibrant parent community. From nest to desk (or bimah), Habonim led us to Rabbi Joanna Samuels and the chance to examine our engagement with Judaism in community. Slowly we became more involved and more educated and had the expert hand of professionals partnering with us along the way. I expect this path resonates with many of our members who came in the same way, although I know that each entrée to Habonim is unique.

Today, as a board member and co-chair of the Membership Committee, I see my task as making the atmosphere and mission of Habonim accessible to others no matter the portal they enter. Singles, couples, young and old make our diverse community come alive on Shabbat, the chagim, at dinners or Batei Midrash, or when visiting the sick, paying a shiva call or attending a brit or bat mitzvah. Belonging to Habonim means being in a sacred

community that re-dedicates itself in every act of loving kindness and every opportunity to learn.

Membership is the lifeblood of Habonim; without membership growth there is little future for our community. The Membership Committee of Habonim focuses on activities that help recruit and integrate new members, as well as retain current members. We want to make sure that the new members that join us by way of the nursery school, for example, stay with us when nursery school is over. We must do what we can to make sure that once bar/bat mitzvah is attained, teens and their families stay with Habonim. We want to reach those who have moved into our neighborhood and are inclined to come to a synagogue and welcome them to our community. There is a place for everyone and opportunity, no matter what the interest or amount of free time, to be active.

The Committee hosts welcome and orientation events for new members in the fall so they can learn about what is going on and where they can get involved. We also reach out to High Holiday ticket buyers to inquire about their experience and invite them to get to know us better. There are many constituencies we seek to reach and our Committee is composed of individuals with ties to different groups and with diverse professional backgrounds that contribute to our planning. I appeal to other Habonim members with interest in applying their marketing or public relations experience, or other skills and interests to join us in our endeavors. Please feel free to contact me with your thoughts at laurameislin@yahoo.com.

— Laura Meislin

SISTERHOOD BOOK DISCUSSION

Do you love to read? Sisterhood is starting a new book discussion group, concentrating on books of Jewish interest, fiction or non-, as per members' interests. For our first meeting, *People of the Book*, by Geraldine Brooks, will be our subject.

A complex historical fiction, tracing the making and the journeys of a real Sephardic Haggadah, it covers centuries of Jewish history – the Inquisition, the Holocaust; et al - and several (fictional) personal stories in the process. The blurbs

found online were too lengthy to include in this article. Suffice to say, it was amazon.com's January 2008 book of the month.

We hope you'll join this new group and participate in its development. We'll start with a meeting in Manhattan, but we hope that there will be enough interest to run a parallel group in Queens soon. The first meeting is planned for Wednesday evening, January 7th. Please contact Amy Kargauer at (212)787-1516 or karwalkers@gmail.com for more information.

— Marianne Falkenstein

SAVE THE DATE - CASINO NIGHT - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2009

Enjoy a lucky night out with D'oeuvres, Drinks & Dice and benefit the Nursery School at Habonim!
For additional information please visit www.habonim.net or call the synagogue office.

DECEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
November 30 Kislev 3	December 1 Kislev 4 7:00 Me'ah	December 2 Kislev 5 9:00 Or haBoker / Rabbi Warshauer 10:30 Adult Institute / Rabbi Laurie Phillips 7:30pm Sisterhood Board Meeting	December 3 Kislev 6 11:30 Talmud Study with Rabbi Warshauer
December 7 Kislev 10 9:30am Minyan 2:00pm Cantor Halev 25th Anniversary Celebration afternoon concert	December 8 Kislev 11 7:00 Me'ah	December 9 Kislev 12 9:00 Or haBoker 9:00 NS Admissions tour 10:30 Adult Institute /Cantor Halev 7:30 Sisterhood Board Meeting (offsite)	December 10 Kislev 13
December 14 Kislev 17	December 15 Kislev 18 7:00 Me'ah 7:30 NS: Committee Meeting	December 16 Kislev 19 9:00 Or haBoker 10:30 Adult Institute / Cantor Halev 6:00 Executive Committee Meeting 7:00 RS: Open School Night	December 17 Kislev 20 11:30 Talmud Study / Rabbi Warshauer 6:30 Board Meeting
December 21 Kislev 24 Chanukah: 1 Candle	December 22 Kislev 25 Chanukah: 2 Candles NS Closed (Winter Break) RS Closed (Winter Break) 7:00 Me'ah (make-up session if needed)	December 23 Kislev 26 Chanukah: 3 Candles NS Closed (Winter Break) RS Closed (Winter Break)	December 24 Kislev 27 Chanukah: 4 Candles NS Closed (Winter Break) RS Closed (Winter Break)
December 28 Tevet 1 Chanukah: 8 Candles Rosh Chodesh Tevet	December 29 Tevet 2 Chanukah: 8th Day NS Closed (Winter Break) RS Closed (Winter Break) 7:00 NO Me'ah	December 30 Tevet 3 NS Closed (Winter Break) RS Closed (Winter Break)	December 31 Tevet 4 NS Closed (Winter Break) RS Closed (Winter Break)
January 4 Tevet 8 9:30 Minyan	January 5 Tevet 9 RS classes resume	January 6 Tevet 10 Asara B'Tevet 6:00 Executive Committee Meeting 7:30 Sisterhood Board Meeting	January 7 Tevet 11 12:30 Talmud Study with Rabbi Warshauer

MAZEL TOV

Emily and Michael Gutter on the arrival of Sophie Ella on October 31st
Deborah and Stephen Goldberg on the arrival of their son on November 21.
Robert Greenberg, Robert Goldy and Taylor and Eric Greenberg-Goldy on Eric becoming Bar Mitzvah.

CONDOLENCES

Congregation Habonim extends profound condolences to Amy Foster, Stephen and Zoe Berman on the death of Amy's beloved father, Paul Shalita.

Congregation Habonim extends profound condolences to our congregant Elfi Eichholz on the death of her beloved husband, Gunther Eichholz.

JANUARY 2008

Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
December 4 9:00 Imahot Group 12:30 Thursday Club 7:00 Me'ah	Kislev 7	December 5 4:10 Candle lighting 5:00 Tot Shabbat Kabbalat Shabbat Service @ 6:30pm / Lay-Led by Rachel Hilker and Tony Robins	Kislev 8	December 6 Parashat Vayetzei Shabbat Services @ 9:30am B/M of Eric Greenberg Goldy 10:45 TT/MM/JC* 12:30 NO BEIT MIDRASH SCHEDULED 5:18pm Shabbat ends 8:00 Cantor Halev 25th Celebration	Kislev 9
December 11 9:00 Imahot Group 12:30pm Thursday Club 6:00pm Executive Committee Meeting 7:00pm Me'ah (make-up class, if needed)	Kislev 14	December 12 4:11 Candle lighting Shabbat Services @ 6:30pm 8:30 Shabbat Service in Queens	Kislev 15	December 13 Parashat Vayishlach Shabbat Services @ 9:30am 10:45 TT/MM RS: Midreshet Habonim 12:30 Beit Midrash: Rabbi Laurie Phillips, speaker 5:19 pm Shabbat ends	Kislev 16
December 18 9:00 Imahot Group 12:30 Thursday Club	Kislev 21	December 19 4:13 Candle lighting Kabbalat Shabbat Services @ 6:30pm with Oneg	Kislev 22	December 20 Parashat Vayeshev Shabbat Services @ 9:30am B/M of Daniel Donenfeld 10:45 TT/MM/JC 12:30 Beit Midrash: Rabbi Joshua Katzan, speaker 5:21 pm Shabbat ends	Kislev 23
December 25 Chanukah: 5 Candles NO Me'ah NS Closed (Winter Break) OFFICE CLOSED - HOLIDAY RS Closed (Winter Break) 9:00 Cancelled: Imahot Group 12:30 Cancelled: Thursday Club	Kislev 28	December 26 Chanukah: 6 Candles NS Closed (Winter Break) 4:17 Candle lighting Shabbat Services @ 6:30pm	Kislev 29	December 27 Chanukah: 7 Candles Parashat Miketz Rosh Chodesh Tevet Shabbat Services @ 9:30am 10:45 TT/MM 12:30 NO BEIT MIDRASH SCHEDULED 5:25 Shabbat Ends	Kislev 30
January 1 NO Me'ah NS Closed (Winter Break) Nursery School closed OFFICE CLOSED - NEW YEAR'S DAY 9:00 Cancelled: Imahot Group 12:30 Cancelled: Thursday Club	Tevet 5	January 2 NS Closed (Winter Break) 4:21 Candle lighting Shabbat Services @ 6:30pm	Tevet 6	January 3 Parashat Vayigash Shabbat Services @ 9:30am 9:30 B/M of Rina Pesner 10:45 TT/MM 12:30 NO BEIT MIDRASH SCHEDULED 5:30 pm Shabbat ends	Tevet 7
January 8 9:00 Imahot Group 12:30 Thursday Club 1:00 RS: committee meeting	Tevet 12	January 9 4:28 Candle lighting 5:00 Tot Shabbat Kabbalat Shabbat Service @ 6:30pm lay-led Service 8:30 Shabbat Service in Queens	Tevet 13	January 10 Parashat Vayechi RS: Midreshet Habonim Shabbat Services @ 9:30am B/M of David Millstein 10:45 TT/MM/JC 5:00 Sisterhood Havdalah Service 5:37 Shabbat ends	Tevet 14

*TT=Torah for Tots
MM=Mini Minyan
JC=Junior Congregation

QUEENS COMMUNITY 2008-09

Shabbat Services

December 12
January 9
February 6
March 6
April 3
May 1
June 5

Adult Learning

January 21
February 18
March 18
May 13
June 10

Talmud Study with Rabbi Lewis Warshauer (Wednesday, December 17 at 11:30am)

We will continue our study of the first chapter of Tractate Berachot, using both the original Aramaic / Hebrew text and the English translation. All levels of learning are welcome!

Wednesday Morning Hebrew

Cantor Halev will be starting Beginner Hebrew at 9:00am on Wednesdays.

Please contact him in the office at 212-787-5347, x17 or by email at cantorhalev@habonim.net

LAY-LED SHABBAT SERVICES

On Friday night, December 5th, following the 5:00pm Tot Shabbat, was the first of what will be a monthly 6:30pm lay-led service.

The 5:00pm Tot Shabbat service will be led by Rabbi Katzan and Cantor Halev with Rachel Hilker, Tony Robins and other congregants leading the 6:30 Kabbalat Shabbat service.

Next lay-led service: January 9

CANTOR BRUCE HALEV

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS AT HABONIM

DEAR FRIENDS,

It is hard to believe that a quarter century has passed since I became your cantor at Habonim. When I think back to the beginning, the images and memories are so clear. Our synagogue's membership was larger, and so many things were done differently in those days -- things were simpler. There were no copy machines in the office, and our music was all written out by hand. It was also a different Jewish world in so many ways.

This whole journey began for me one morning in Spring, 1983 as I sat on the couch in Rabbi Bernhard Cohn's apartment. After 43 years, Cantor Erwin Hirsch was to retire. This was a huge moment for the congregation as the musical memories of the founding members and their children had always rested on his shoulders. Memories of their once vibrant life in Germany, as well as the searing departure from home, were connected to the Cantor's presence among them.

Rabbi Cohn was a warm, interesting man who was born in Berlin and whose father had been a playwright as well as one of the first orthodox Zionist rabbis in Germany. He was the person who decided to introduce me to the congregation. An audition followed, with a large group of anxious but very polite members from the ritual committee present. I met with Martha Hirsch who had played the organ at Habonim for her husband since 1940; the audition began. I felt the import of that day -- the fact of its being a pivotal point in the congregation's history. I was told they would call and, early the next day, I was told that I had the job. The work was just about to begin.

This past September at a choir rehearsal for the High Holy Days, we began to sing one of my favorite liturgical compositions, *Torat Adonai* (The Torah of Adonai is perfect; it revives the spirit). Reflecting on the words and beautiful music by Lewandowsky, my memory

went back 25 years to preparations for my first Habonim High Holy Day services which were to take place at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center. There was an expectant and somewhat anxious congregation waiting to see if the new cantor could do justice to the great tradition that I was to inherit from 19th Century Germany, and which had been brought here by Cantor Hirsch. During the chanting of the *B'Rosh Hashanah* prayer, I suddenly realized that I was singing it alone, and realized, too, that the whole congregation was paying full attention to its meaningful words reflecting about life and death. Then I realized that they were actually singing along with me. Those holidays were nerve-wracking and challenging, but ultimately exhilarating...Then, suddenly, the last *t'kiyah g'dolah* was heard and it was soon Sukkot and Simchat Torah -- with entirely new liturgies to learn! It was certainly an exciting and emotionally draining period of my life. I felt I had climbed a tall mountain and could see the "Promised Land"...but that maybe, unlike Moses, I would be able to join the people and enter it with them. And so I did!

In the intervening years the Congregation was pleased when I wished to continue with graduate studies in Jewish History as well as with a social work degree at Yeshiva University. The late 80's was also a time of interest in Jewish mysticism, and I went on numerous retreats and brought back some of these teachings. I still remember leading a class on Jewish Meditation with a large group of members of all ages -- some rather skeptical but good humored enough to indulge me! Your support in allowing me to pursue these and other interests has made my life and work all the more interesting and fulfilling.

But for me personally, the most meaningful part of my association with Habonim has always been my relationship with you, its members. At my first Friday night service -- July, 1983, in the days when we had at least a hundred

members attending -- an elderly couple approached to say hello to Joanie and me. It went like this: "My name is Ilse Winkler and this is my husband, Harry. I am the mother of The Fonze". Harry said: "And I am the producer!" I had no idea who they were talking about as I had grown up in South Africa where there was no television. Happily, I was able to cover my tracks with Joanie's help!

There have been so many remarkable people I have known and from whom I have learned so much....so many stories of courage and of people adapting to life in a new country. These stories have enriched my life; conversation on art, opera, and theater to current events -- all in the most interesting city in the world. And the conversations continue.

We shared some difficult times in the Congregation's history, too, but we are now in such a good place with a strong coming together or age groups. On a regular weekday you might see a 90 year old woman reading to the very youngest children. Or during lunch on Shabbat, a younger member will come up to me and say how amazing our older members are. I have always said that they are our secret weapons, as a conversation with them is often the first step to a new membership.

Then, of course, there are our satellite services in Queens. For those of you who have visited our services there, you know what a warm welcome you receive, and you will certainly get the best cookies and cakes (some home-made!) that you can imagine, as well as time to relax with good conversation and community.

It has been 25 years of meeting and getting to know so many of you; there are also memories I hold dear of many of our members with whom I became close and who are no longer with us. I will always remember the trust you have had in me, and the simple dignity of many who have passed on who allowed me the privilege of spending intimate final moments with them as they neared the end of their lives. Sharing these moments with their loved ones is one of the aspects of my

work which continues to humble me, and reward me.

I must say that I still find my job very fulfilling, and the high-point of the week is the Shabbat morning service and then sitting and chatting with you afterwards, discussing your and my families' lives. I have also loved creating partnerships with our 13 year olds as they prepare for their B'nei Mitzvah, and seeing the pride and love on the faces of their parents as they take their first steps towards Jewish adulthood; or standing next to a 90 year old who has just taken the journey to chant from the Torah for the first time as the congregation looks on with admiration. These special moments make my job a true joy.

Along this journey I have had the profound and constant support of my family. It took a lot of persuasion for Joanie to convince me that I might like to be a father. Well, she has always been wise in this area. Rebecca came and brought me sunshine. She now pursues my first passion and interest, painting and drawing, at university – but her finest talent is with people -- they are drawn to her like bees to honey. And then the second amazing blessing of Talia came to enrich our family, with her mischievous smile and the passion for music that we both share. Talia is all goodness, warmth and healing – she brings her sensitive and lovely presence wherever she goes.

Both girls were named and had their *B'not Mitzvah* at Habonim. You all smiled when, as little girls, they would run up to me on the bimah. In those days it was a rare occurrence to see a young child at our services; now we end each Shabbat with many kids mulling around. So, thank you for allowing the girls to be themselves – and to grow up gracefully before your loving eyes.

And to Joanie, who is my best friend, fellow traveler, theater

buff, and best critic – thank you. We are raising our daughters together. We have trudged together across Europe, South America, India and Israel. You have taught me to be more social, and I have tried to emulate your gift of relating to people. You have also made a beautiful home for me and the girls, and are the bedrock that holds us together. On a lighter note, you may not know this, but Joanie and I have little signals that we share when she is sitting in the congregation, especially during High Holiday services. I touch my right ear, and then she gives me either a private thumbs up or a weak smile -- letting me know how I am singing!

As this year began, I was thinking about what lies ahead and what is really interesting me most these days, and I must admit that it is the very youngest children in our congregation. Every Friday morning the Rabbi – who plays a mean guitar – and I – on a South African Zulu drum – get together with the children of our nursery school. We start with soft melodies for Shabbat and gradually build the energy, and we all get up and move and sing to the haunting melodies of Shlomo Carlebach. It really transforms one to watch their little bodies move and to realize that music revives the spirit and brings us together as one. I can't remember how I felt about music at their age, but I do know that music has changed and sustained my life and for that I am forever and always grateful.

It is my sincere hope to be making music with you all, and sharing our lives, for many years to come.

**WITH WARM RESPECT AND APPRECIATION,
CANTOR BRUCE**

NURSERY SCHOOL: DRUM TALES

The Hearty Story of Chanukah
(Thursday, December 18 at 2:30pm)

We have a really exciting opportunity to let you all know about! On Thursday, December 18 at 2:30pm, The Nursery School at Habonim will be hosting a private performance of "The Hearty Story of Chanukah" by DRUM TALES — a percussive, interactive, musical, and amazing event.

The performance will be held in the Sanctuary and run for about an hour. Tickets are \$20 per drummer (aka per child, age 1 - 6).

Because space is limited due to numbers of drums, we hope you'll respond as quickly as possible to Allison Epstein at operalli@aol.com letting her know how many tickets you'd like. We will be taking reservations on a first-come first-serve basis.

Looking forward to seeing you there -- this should be a spectacular event!

The PTA of the Nursery School at Habonim
Michele Gold and Allison Epstein, Co-chairs

JANUARY BEIT MIDRASH

JANUARY 3- NOT SCHEDULED

JANUARY 10- DR. DAVID RICHTER
"Two Deaths, an Ending and a Beginning"

JANUARY 17-NEIL GOLDSTEIN
"Honoring Your Father and Your Mother"

JANUARY 24-LARRY JACOBSBERG
"The Wisdom of the Founders: Rabbi Hugo Hahn finds 'Satan Among Us' "

JANUARY 31-ROBERT GOLDMANN
TOPIC: "Jews in Germany: Missing An Opportunity".

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Bryan Schwartz	Marga Walter
Arlene Simon	Stephen Kramer
Jonathan Sternchos	Frances Schorr
Meryl Collyns	Norbert Fruehauf
Laurence Bromberg	Stephen Lewin
Stuart Bruck	Renee Rachelle
Margot Keller	Lloyd Ratner
Peter E. Mayer	Frank Shewer
Katherine Soll	Hilary Unger
Rina Cohen Schwarz	Ceri Hadda
Ilse Strauss Russell	Ruth Levine
Michael Rosen	Deborah Damesek
Ilana Reich	Glenna Lee
Amy Foster	Rachel Meer
Linda Adler	Beth Lawrence
Kenneth Diamond	Ellen Plancher
Michelle Sternchos	Scot Raff
Ellen Shapiro	Bruce Simon
Guy Conston	Robin Singer
Saul Sanders	Michael Bernstein
Judy Sykes	Larry Moss
Daniel Tauber	Peter Epstein
Mort Schuster	Ruth K. Heiman
Janet Schwartz	

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Mort & Julie Schuster
Lori & Robert Rubin
Lisa & Steven Kaplan
Maureen & Stewart Lande
Philip & Candi Stamm
Peter & Ruth Norden
Ariane Gold & Bryan Schwartz
Joel & Lenore Raphael
Maurice & Elisabeth De Picciotto
Eva & Frederick Bergmann
Jenna & Paul Segal

HOLIDAY CHILDREN'S BOOK DRIVE

Benefiting the Children at
Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center

(OUR NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNER)

Now until December 27th

Here's how to participate:

Go to Barnes & Noble at 66th Street / between Broadway and Columbus

Select a Gift Tag from the display by the Information Desk in front of the store.

Each tag describes a specific child.

Choose a book from the display or from the Children's Section on the second floor, that you think the child will enjoy.

Tell the cashier that you are donating the book. The cashier will give you a bookplate to sign.

Barnes & Noble will deliver your gift to the child.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

HABONIM PRESIDENT DANCES WITH CHASIDIM DURING SISTERHOOD LOWER EAST SIDE VISIT!

With nostalgic visions of bustling crowds, shops, push-carts and all things Jewish lining famed Orchard and Delancey Streets, on a recent perfect Autumn day, Sisterhood led a group of Habonimers on a visit to the Lower East Side and the landmark, Eldridge Street Synagogue.

Respected by the mostly Asian population and surrounded by Asian shops, the Synagogue – at first hard to spot – gleamed proudly from within this somewhat diverse setting.

Greeted by our friendly and knowledgeable docent, our group heard a fascinating story of Jewish-American history, architecture and renewal. We learned that after years of neglect, a dedicated team raised \$20 million in donations, enabling skilled craftsmanship to redeem this historic icon – the first great synagogue built by former-Eastern European Jews in 1887 and now a National Historic Landmark. One of the most remarkable features is the brilliance of light, from the clusters of glass bulbs, to the shafts penetrating the stained glass windows. After exploring the shul and climbing many, many stairs to view both the men's and women's sections, the group had worked up a hearty appetite.

Two by two, we took a lovely walk through some of the area's streets heading to Noah's Ark, a popular local deli. A "chatan" and "kallah" were being celebrated as we entered, with much praying, singing and toasting. Our President, Saul Sanders, was quickly brought into the lively group of dancers, and our delicious meal was accented with these joyous sounds. Despite our initial disappointment about the changing Lower East Side, this spontaneous and joyful event made us see that "Yiddishkeit" still has its place here. The culminating moment was the spotting of famed Kossars Bialys – which allowed some of us to take home not only nostalgic memories, but also delicious goodies !

— Vivien Newman

NEW WEBSITE FOR TIKVOT, OUR CHARITY IN ISRAEL

Tikvot has launched a new website. Please check it out and learn more about where your generous funds go. You'll see photos and stories of Asael Shabo, who visited Habonim this year. The website is at www.tikvot.org.za

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Hi everyone! Now that the holiday season is upon us, it is time to start giving!!!

Please consider giving to Habonim's annual
Inwood House Drive

Inwood House is a leader and innovator in teen pregnancy prevention, Inwood House is dedicated to helping young people become self reliant, healthy adults. We help teens take charge of their lives by:

- 1) Facilitating the development of the knowledge, skills, and self-esteem needed to set life goals, make responsible decisions, and avoid teenage pregnancy
- 2) Providing a continuum of care for pregnant and parenting teens in foster care that builds on their strengths and moves them toward self-sufficiency
- 3) Being a source of hope, guidance and opportunity

The Inwood House Drive will take place at Habonim from January 12th - January 15th, 2009 in the upstairs lobby.

Please drop off no later than 4pm on Thursday January 15th

Inwood House will accept the following items:

Baby monitors, baby carriers, bassinets, car seats, strollers, bouncers, cribs, high chairs, exersaucers, playpens, gates, safety items, all clothing (including maternity clothes), educational toys (must have all parts). **NO STUFFED ANIMALS PLEASE.**

Please contact Heidi Denker at
hmdenker@yahoo.com
with any questions you may have.

LEO BAECK INSTITUTE

PRESENTS PROGRAM FOR A SUNDAY AFTERNOON

SUNDAY DECEMBER 14, 2008 AT 12:30PM

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends,

Please join us for a light lunch and a most interesting and pertinent program.

Carol Kahn Strauss, a past-President of Habonim, and **Frank Mecklenburg** of the Leo Baeck Institute will discuss, "The Future of German Jewry after us here and in Europe".

Due to the importance of this current topic, we welcome all your friends.

Coffee, tea and cake will be served after the presentation.

So that we may properly prepare food and drink, please RSVP to Erna Florsheim via mail or phone:

185 West End Avenue, 5A, New York, 10023 or
(212) 724-0264