

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES AND EVENTS

Thursday, May 28 6:30pm Dinner and Hebrew
School graduation

Thursday, May 28 9:00pm Shavuot Storytelling
Program

Saturday, May 30 10:00am Bat Mitzvah of Kayla,
daughter of
Cary and Joel Greenberg
and Shavuot Yiskor
Service

Saturday, June 6 10:00am Bar Mitzvah of Ezra
Greenspoon, son of
Lisa Kent and Danny
Greenspoon

Sunday, June 7 4:30 –
6:30pm Veohavta's Creative
Writing Contest
For the Homeless

Saturday, June 13 10:00am Bar Mitzvah of Jacob
Grammar, son
Of Cheryl and Mark
Grammar

Sunday, June 14 4:00pm Annual General Meeting

Saturday, June 20 10:00am Bat Mitzvah of Samantha
Matti, Daughter of
Georgia Wolfe &
Peter Matti

Friday, June 26 7:00 –
7:45 pm Family Shabbat Service
with Eli

Friday, June 26 8:15pm Congregational Shabbat
Eve Service

SPECIAL SHAVUOT STORYTELLING PROGRAM

Featuring celebrated Canadian author and storyteller
Dan Yashinsky.

He will be joined by Avrum Rosensweig,
Eli Rubenstein and others.

Thursday, May 28th, 9-11pm.

HABONIM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

There are important issues to be decided at this General Meeting, it is therefore very important that all members attend this meeting, since it could very well decide the future form and the very existence of our Congregation.

So please make a note in your calendar and be sure to attend:

Habonim General Meeting -

Sunday, June 14 at 4 pm.

If you require transportation to the meeting contact Erika Erdos 416-787 0527 or email erdos@sympatico.ca

AN EVENING WITH RABBI SCHUDRICH

On May 11th, Congregation Habonim was privileged to host Rabbi Michael Schudrich, the Chief Rabbi of Poland. The event was co-sponsored by March of the Living as well as the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada. The synagogue was completely filled and the capacity audience listened intently to every word of his address. One of the most moving things I heard Rabbi Schudrich say during his visit to Toronto was this:

“We cannot save the over 3 million Polish Jews who were murdered by the German Nazis and their Accomplices, but we can still save those thousands of Jews who remain in Poland and are in the midst of rediscovering their Jewish identities.”

Below are a few pieces written by Congregation members who attended the event, along with a speech given by Eve Hurowitz, a participant in the March of the Living, who also spoke at the event.

“The event at Habonim with the Chief Rabbi of Poland, Rabbi Michael Schudrich, was extraordinary

- an evening not to be missed. How lucky we are to have these great opportunities at Habonim and how sad for those of our members who do not come out to these events.

I'd like to thank Habonim's Spiritual Leaders, Eli and Avrum, for all the things they do to enrich the lives and education of so many people, myself included!”

Helen Kuttner

MARCH OF THE LIVING SPEECH – MAY 2009

By Eve Hurowitz

Six months ago, I was considering the opportunity to go on the March of the Living trip. Having no direct relatives who either perished or survived in the Holocaust, I wondered whether the experience was relevant to me. My Hebrew day school upbringing gave me a third – person impression. Six million was a familiar number. Jews were killed in concentration camps. Ghettos were places where Jews were isolated and starved. Nazis were brutes. Dogs attacked Jews. It was a time of darkness. My reasons to participate included, honestly, the fact that most of my friends were going, that there would not be survivors accompanying trips for much longer, and to take advantage of a once in a lifetime opportunity to learn first hand about my heritage.

My recollection of my trip consists of a collection of images and narratives. I stood in forests, walked along railroad tracks, sat in barracks, and gazed at the same sky that Jews funneled from European countries did more than 60 years ago. Let me share only a few of my memories.

We visited a park where families were enjoying their picnic and walking their dogs. At first look, it appears to be a recreation park, no different than one in Toronto. However, this “park” was actually the location of Plashov, a working camp during the

Holocaust. Ernie Bloch, a survivor of Plashov shared his experiences from this camp. He explained that during his time there, he received bread rations. One time, he kept his piece over night so that he could enjoy his piece in the morning, before the long day of work. He placed it under his pillow, to prevent it from being stolen. When he woke up, his bread was gone. He also told us about a hanging of his friend. The Nazis forced the Jews to watch it but Ernie could not bear to see his friend being murdered in front of his eyes. He put his head down, but immediately, a Nazi officer whipped him and told him to watch, unless he also wanted to be up there.

Unlike at Plashov, one does not have to imagine a concentration camp at Birkenau. At this death camp, most of the original buildings still stand. We saw the barracks where Jews slept, the bathrooms where tens of people would go at a time, the crematoria, and the gas chambers. In the gas chambers, it was frightful when a chaperone pointed out to me the scratch marks on the walls, made by desperate fingernails, digging into the cement. The walls were tinged with a blue stain of the gas used to exterminate the Jews.

One day, we visited a village where there was once a sizable Jewish community. We saw the town square and the synagogue. After our visit to this cheerful town, we were told to board the bus and be silent for the 15 minute ride. This ride was the same path that the Jews who lived in the village were taken on when they were sent away from their homes to a mystery destination. We arrived at a forest where all of the Jews from the village were liquidated.

We were privileged to have a survivor of the Holocaust on each bus. They helped us to have a first hand glimpse into our history and at the same time it was impossible not to feel that they were not my own bubby or zaidy. At one hotel, Mr. Glied was speaking with the concierge who asked him about his role on the trip. He said that he was here with his grandchildren. The concierge asked him how many. He looked around the lobby and said more than two hundred, and motioned to a few of us to come over explaining that we were amongst them. Beyond their inestimable value in sharing their personal and sometimes painful experiences, they

were carefully checking and making sure that we had enough to eat.

All the participants took part in two separate marches, one in Poland and one in Israel. These two marches were practically polar opposites of each other and the contrast between them had a great impact on me. The International March of the Living which took place in Poland was a 3 km march from Auschwitz to Birkenau. During this march of approximately 9000 people, everyone was silent. This march was filled with mixed emotions. The fact that we were marching in memory of the Jews who were cruelly forced on this same march to meet their deaths brought tears to my eyes. I could not help but contrast the Polish policemen standing alongside the march, there to protect us and ensure our safety and security, with the Nazi guards who would have stood in the same place sixty years ago, but whose role was brutally different. On the other hand, the sight of thousands of Jewish people marching in unison, all dressed in blue jackets, many wrapped in Israeli flags, was an incredibly inspirational sight. We were marching as a symbol of thriving Jewish life and survival.

Our second march was more of a parade. It took place in Jerusalem on Yom Ha'zmaut. After some extreme dancing and singing in the square of Jerusalem City Hall, all the March participants paraded around the old city, cheering and singing Hebrew songs to celebrate Israel's birthday. This parade helped me strengthen my connection with Israel because it made me realize how fortunate I am, and we all are, that we can come to Israel any time and feel not only welcome, but right at home. Even though the March of the Living consisted of Jews from all over the world, we are all united by our pride of being Jewish.

I had asked myself before the trip if it was relevant to me. The answer is a resounding yes. Historical narrative could never replace the personal experiences that now shape my understanding of this most important event in modern Jewish history.

THE CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST REVISITED

By Eve Hurowitz

Ve'ahavta is very excited to once again be partnering with Congregation Habonim our Creative Writing Contest for the Homeless (CWC).

The CWC is a beautiful program that has been running for over nine years. It was born out of the belief that Judaism encourages the development of the soul, and could help those living on or near the street to face their many challenges. We thought that if we asked people without homes to write something, anything, they might recognize a personal and creative bend which they could pursue, and/or understand themselves better through their own words and the process of writing.

The idea of self-expression and creative pursuits leading to an enhanced life can be seen through the Biblical character, Abraham. The Father of Judaism had it made. He lived in Ur of Chaldees, a wealthy environment, and had a steady job with his father selling idols. The first patriarch realized however, that peddling idols was not spiritually fulfilling and didn't give him a sense of meaning and purpose.

Abraham was looking for more - he was searching for 'why'. ('He who has a why to live can bear with almost any how.' - Nietzsche) He therefore set out on the road to discover God, found the Jewish people and to uncover the layers of stuff that lied within him and around him. Ultimately, he found his 'truth' in the desert when God spoke to him and later upon entering Israel. Abraham was the spiritual Jack Karuac of his day.

Once again, when Ve'ahavta launched the CWC it was a way for us to encourage the homeless to investigate themselves through writing. I believe we have been somewhat successful. The contest had grown over the years so that we now receive many more submissions. In the beginning it was exciting

to have received twenty or so articles, poems and short stories, but this year we had over one hundred mailed or dropped off at our Eglinton offices.

This year we decided to expand our reach so that more individuals living on or near the street could hear our message of tikun olam, about the contest, and would ultimately enter it. Our volunteers therefore conducted workshops on techniques for writing in preparation for the event at twenty shelters and drop-in-centers including the Fred Victor Centre and Na Me Res (Native Men's Residence). I myself conducted one at the Scott Mission (which I learned was started by a man who has been an Orthodox Jew at some point).

The submissions we have received are magnificent examples of the multi-dimensional characters living 'out there' and the vast amount of creativity that one can find in the street. The following is an excerpt from a piece of prose entitled 'A Thousand Answers':

These are the hands that stole the drugs and anything else I needed to feed my addictions. These were the hands behind the wheel when I was too intoxicated to drive. Ten years ago, but the shame still remains.

These are the hands that assaulted the security guards who tried to remove this drunken woman from a shopping mall; the hands that were handcuffed until they threw me in a cell. There are a thousand reasons to be ashamed of these hands. As I gaze at them in self-disgust I can hear the voices of my addiction counselors. "Look for the positive. There is always a positive." These are the hands that could not wait to lovingly hold my babies, touch their sweet faces, bathe them and cuddle them, to reach out and catch them when they would otherwise fall.

These words are hard reading and remind us that survivors come in all forms and the word survivor is an appropriate representation of those who make

their home in a cardboard box or on a park bench.

Last year one of our judges was world renowned writer, Michael Ondaatje. This year we are very excited about having secured Tony Blair, the past Prime Minister of England, and Belinda Stronach. I was able to include Tony and Belinda as judges because I sit on a multi-faith committee created by The Tony Blair Foundation and The Belinda Stronach Foundation. We are fighting malaria in Africa.

Please join us on Sunday, June 7th at 4:30 pm in the synagogue hall when we hold the award presentation for the 2009 Creative Writing Contest for the Homeless. It would be lovely to congratulate the winners together with you. The top prize is still \$1000, sponsored by Kernel's Popcorn and we are once again giving away a free course at Ryerson Polytechnic University. Habonim sponsored a prize for \$150.

Let us hope that through our shared effort one more person will get off the streets and find a home in a sweet smelling, warm and creative environment - just like we are so fortunate to have surrounding us.

This is the face. That projects the mask That hides the shame. That incites the pain. That begs for the relief. That only a drink can bring.

- CWC Submission Excerpt

PERSONALIA

Our Esther and the Firestone family have suffered another grievous loss last month. The death of her husband Paul, within two weeks of having lost her daughter Hillary, is a sorrow none of us should have to endure. Our love and heartfelt sympathy go out to you, Esther.

Our heartfelt condolences go out to Larry Clements, our faithful organist, on the loss of his mother

Beatrice Waters, who passed away recently at 95 years of age.

DONATIONS

In Memoriam:

Our deepest sympathy to Esther Ghan Firestone and family on their recent sad loss of Paul Firestone - Vivian and Gina Rakoff

Our deepest sympathy to the Vogel family on their recent sad loss of Ladislaus Vogel - Vivian and Gina Rakoff

The Morton and Small families are remembering with love and sadness our dear mother and wife, Judy Morton.

Greetings:

Belated heartiest congratulations to Erika Erdos on your special birthday - Gladys Buckler

OUR WEBSITE:

www.congregationhabonim.org

OUR E-MAIL ADDRESS:

office@congregationhabonim.org

To **SPONSOR AN ONEG SHABBAT** call Sandra Levy at (905) 780-9425

To **SEND GREETING CARDS and DONATIONS**

call Rhoda Sion at (416) 782-9663 or write to 716 - 660 Eglinton Ave. W., Toronto M5N 1C3

Are you **MOVING, CHANGING** your **ADDRESS OR PHONE NUMBER?**

Call Dianne Erdos-Rush at (416) 630-7921 or e-mail to: dijer@sympatico.ca

TO BUY A LEAF FOR EITZ CHAIM for any occasion call Miriam Ostrow at (416) 661-0949
Leaf \$175

QUESTIONS OR NOTICES RE JAHRZEITEN?

Call Linda Brager at (416) 488-0282

JAHRZEITEN

To be read at the June 2009 services:

Zelda Stein	Sivan 9	June 1
Abraham Schalmann	Sivan 9	June 1
Margit Weinberg	Sivan 10	June 2
Tina Patton	Sivan 11	June 3
Harry Chas. Gottlieb	Sivan 12	June 4
Kay Fink	Sivan 12	June 4
Sima Muskat	Sivan 13	June 5
Adolph Weiss	Sivan 13	June 5
Alice Engel	Sivan 14	June 6
Gary Rosen	Sivan 14	June 6
Bella Isaak	Sivan 14	June 6
Irene and Leopold Stamberger	Sivan 14	June 6
George Spitz	Sivan 15	June 7
Emerich Sperlinger	Sivan 15	June 7
Lola Fleischer	Sivan 15	June 7
Matthew Emas	Sivan 17	June 9
Moses Goldberg	Sivan 17	June 9
George Lednar	Sivan 18	June 10
John Goldsten	Sivan 18	June 10
Rebecca Persiko	Sivan 19	June 11

Eric Parieser	Sivan 19	June 11
Anne Levy	Sivan 19	June 11
Irving J. Halperin	Sivan 20	June 12
Yolande Jakabb	Sivan 21	June 13
Fancia Gottlieb	Sivan 21	June 13
Ludwig Neubieser	Sivan 22	June 14
David Jakabb	Sivan 23	June 15
Richard Moldauer	Sivan 24	June 16
Isaac Isaacson	Sivan 26	June 18
Samuel Lewkowicz	Sivan 26	June 18
Otto Fleischer	Sivan 28	June 20
Sally Egnal	Sivan 28	June 20
Nigel Walsh	Sivan 28	June 20
Sen. David Croll	Sivan 29	June 21
Saul A. Junger	Tammuz 1	June 23
Nellie Sperlinger	Tammuz 1	June 23
Jack Jacobson	Tammuz 2	June 24
Dorothy Pecaut	Tammuz 2	June 24
Celia Kofman	Tammuz 2	June 24
Michael Szende	Tammuz 2	June 24
Marie Schwartz	Tammuz 3	June 25
John Pachner	Tammuz 5	June 27
Stuart Allan Roebuck	Tammuz 7	June 29
Ben Levy	Tammuz 7	June 29
Miriam Burrows	Tammuz 8	June 30

In mourning:

Sam Cukier, Rae Steuermann, Joyce Kuttner, Peter Barsony, Ben Mandell, Sylvia Van Der Hout, Bella Tiefenbach, Celia Fischer, Eve Baxter, Arnold Jussem, Kaethe Ritter, Aron Kravchik, Kate Freeman, Dr. Ladislaus Vogel, Hillary Firestone, Lorretta Grammer, Edgar Wittekind, Paul Firestone

Information and contributions to THE BULLETIN?
call Erika Erdos at 416-787-0527
e-mail eerdos@sympatico.ca

Deadline for contributions to the next Bulletin:
Friday, June 12, 2009

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