

Bulletin



From The Rabbi's Study

The freedom to be oneself is both precious and inalienable.

No one has any right to impose upon me — nor upon anyone else — arbitrary expectations, no matter how well-intentioned such an effort might be. As Resa and I watch our three adult children struggle to clarify just how it is that they see themselves, how they wish to express their talents and interests through mature and enduring relationships, every once in a while we feel the dreaded temptation to step in so that we can point the way for them.

After all, we love our children; we want the very best for them. We have experienced a significant hunk of life, and we have discovered for ourselves both the agonies and the joys of decisions we have made. But it would be a terrible mistake for us to attempt to interfere. Not only would our efforts be misunderstood and not very well received, but even beginning such an undertaking would reflect both a lack of trust and a lack of respect. We trust our children; we respect them deeply. Their freedom to be themselves must not be tampered with, not even as an act of love.

The right to be oneself — to develop one's own views about life and its meaning; to personally address matters of faith and spiritual expression;

to determine aesthetic preferences and even favorite sports teams — that is one of the most precious gifts of humane democracy to our world. The society within which we have chosen to live surely has a right to expect from each of us appropriate respect and concern for the well-being of the whole; but such a society must similarly respect and show concern for the right of individuals and groups to be themselves.

And that struggle for the right to be oneself is what Chanukah is really all about.

The myths of miracles and the stories of dazzling military victories have shielded us from a clear understanding as to what it was that the Maccabees were truly after some 2,100 years ago. The issue wasn't complete political autonomy for a Jewish state. Rather, Mattathias the Hasmonean, together with Judah and his brothers, rose up in revolution against an occupying government which refused to grant the Jewish people the right to live their own religious lives.

Antiochus, who in the fashion of the times viewed himself as a living expression of a god, wanted to control religious observances in the Land of Israel. He wanted ritual circumcision banned as offensive to Hellenistic aesthetics; he wanted the Sabbath set aside as a foolish act of obedience to a nonsensical invisible Deity; he wanted pagan practices added to the worship patterns of the Temple in Jerusalem.

In short, Antiochus wanted to blot out the uniqueness of our people, to pervert our most precious practices, our historical memories, the expressions of our faith. We were simply not going to be allowed to be the kind of people we had chosen

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Calendar of Events

DECEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Sisterhood Sponsored Activities

Bridge

Tuesday & Thursday, 7:30 pm
12/4, 6, 11, 13, 18, 20, 27

Gift Shop

Monday - Friday, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Sunday, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Seniors Club

Tuesday, 12/4, 11, 18, 10:00 am

Retreat

Saturday, 12/8, 1:00 pm

Brotherhood Sponsored Activities

Brotherhood Board Meeting

Thursday, 12/6, 6:00 pm

Breakfast

Monday, 12/10, 7:30 pm

Study

Institute of Jewish Studies:

Talmud

Friday, 11/30, 12/7, 14, 21, 28, 8:00 am

Chevre Torah

Saturday, 12/1, 8, 15, 22, 29, 9:15 am

Choral Society

Monday, 6:00 pm:

See Choral Society schedule for dates

Beginning Hebrew

Wednesday, 12/5, 12, 6:00 pm

Intermediate Hebrew

Wednesday, 12/5, 12, 7:00 pm

Advanced Liturgical Hebrew

Wednesday, 12/5, 12, 6:30 pm

Medical Ethics

Thursday, 12/13, 5:45 pm

Religious School

Monday, 12/3, 10, 17

Wednesday, 12/5, 12

Early Childhood Workshop

Sunday, 12/2, 9:30 am

6th grade Kallah at Camp Eisner:

Friday, 12/7 - Sunday, 12/9

Meetings

Central Women's Focus

Tuesday, 12/11, 8:00 am

Makor

Friday, 12/21, 7:30 pm

Scouts

Girl Scouts

Tuesday, 12/4, 11, 18, 3:30 pm

Boy Scouts

Tuesday, 12/4, 11, 18, 6:30 pm

Cub Scouts

Monday, 12/3, 6:00 pm

Youth Group

Post-Confirmation Class

Monday, 12/10, 6:00 pm

Monthly Meeting

Monday, 12/10, 7:00 pm

Images of the Sexuality of God in Jewish Mysticism

Wednesday, Dec. 5

7:00 - 9:00 pm

Joslin Hall

Lecture by

Rabbi Lawrence Kushner

Reception to Follow

Up Front with Brotherhood

Bob Kandel, President

There are so many who have done so much for Brotherhood, and therefore the congregation, that this article will almost be one long thank-you note.

Martin Hertz, Bob Jayson, and Bernie Silverman represented us at the NFTB convention in Washington, D.C. Martin was also an effective seminar leader. We look forward to Bob's report at our December meeting.

Rabbinic intern **Jill Kreitman's** Makor group made several Soviet emigres feel right at home at a lovely Friday night service and social hour. Brotherhood and Makor enjoy working with the emigres, and perhaps will expand our cooperation to mentoring our own college students as their career plans begin to crystallize.

Rabbi Tom Weiner's "Decades" seminar was so stimulating that we are already being asked about topics for next year. Thanks again, Tom, and also thanks for bringing good will and cheer to our college students.

Murray Beckerman is hosting a wonderful gathering to benefit the Jewish Chautauqua Society. Special thanks to **Lewis Eisenberg, Bernie Silverman** and **Barry Kugel** for assuring the continued, positive impact of JCS.

Be sure to attend **Jim Lebenthal's** break-
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What you always wanted to know about Chanukah . . .

Who were the Maccabees?

Why did Chanukah last 8 days?

Chanukah Miracle and Chanukah Myth —

Which is Which?

Join us for a talk by:

Rabbi Philip Hiat

Scholar-in-Residence at Central Synagogue,
and Assistant to the President, Union of American
Hebrew Congregations

**Tuesday, December 4
7:30 pm, Friedman Library**

Sponsored by the Institute of Jewish Studies

A Woman Named J

We are delighted by the ripple of excitement that has moved through our congregation since it was announced that on **Friday evening, December 7th**, during services beginning at **8:15 pm**, our guest speakers will be **Harold Bloom** and **David Rosenberg**, authors of *The Book of J*.

Harold Bloom, a pre-eminent literary critic, has shaped *The Book of J* into a best selling, audacious work of literary restoration. Bloom, whose theories have aroused intense critical reaction, argues that J, the author of one of the major sections of the Torah, was probably a woman approximately forty years of age who was a member of Jerusalem's royal court in the tenth century B.C.E. J's skills rank her, according to Bloom, among literary geniuses such as Homer and Shakespeare.

David Rosenberg, whose stunningly innovative and idiosyncratic translations are featured in *The Book of J*, has spent more than a decade researching the language of the Hebrew Bible. Rosenberg is former editor-in-chief of the Jewish Publication Society.

Please plan to join us for a most interesting and provocative evening.

Please join us at our

First Friday *Shabbat Service*

December 7

8:15 pm

Guest Speakers:

**HAROLD BLOOM &
DAVID ROSENBERG**

Co-authors of *The Book of J*

In the Sanctuary



Display of Central Synagogue Sisterhood panel for AIDS Quilt, in Albany at District 3 Convention, October 20-23. Standing (L to R): Helen Lehrman, Elsie Shapiro, Louise Driben, Judy Klemperer, Jan Stovin. Seated (L to R): Shirley Steinhauser, Judy Hertz, Skit Rabbino, Carolyn Breidenbach, Barbara Jayson.

Notes from Sisterhood

Ruth Oliver

Miss Saigon: Don't Forget to Send in your Reservations

Please be sure to respond as quickly as possible if you wish to obtain tickets for *Miss Saigon*. We have excellent seats but the sooner we receive your check and reservation form, the better we can accommodate you. We appreciate your support and look forward to a gala performance on the evening of **Tuesday, May 7, 1991**.

Central Sisterhood goes to Albany

Our Sisterhood was well represented at the 31st Biennial Convention of NFTS, Women of Reform Judaism, District 3, in Albany on October 20-23. A large and enthusiastic group reported that they were energized, stimulated, and refreshed by the talks, workshops, and worship services, the renewal of connections with members of other Sisterhoods, and the beginning of new relationships.

In her opening talk, **Judith Hertz**, President of NFTS, Women of Reform Judaism, and a member of our Sisterhood, told the assembled delegates: The me generation is turning into the we generation. Women

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Nursery School & Parenting Center News

Central Synagogue's Nursery School children will celebrate their fifth annual Thanksgiving with children of St. Bart's pre-school. Our 4's and 5's will hear a homily in their church, play with the St. Bart's children in their spacious gym, and feast on traditional turkey and trimmings. In turn, we look forward to a return visit of St. Bart's children to our school for a joint Passover Seder.

Chanukah will be celebrated by all of our families in the Parenting Center and Nursery School. Children are busy preparing and making candles for a variety of Chanukah activities, exposing the children to the symbols, scents, tastes, songs, dances and stories about Chanukah. Nursery School parents will join their children for parties in the classrooms and synagogue, while Parenting Center parents will discuss the significance and history of the holiday as they share the sensory experiences of the holiday with their young children.

Please note: Inquiries about Nursery School applications for Fall, 1991, must be made by **December 15th**.

Youth Group

Julie Satow, Secretary

A teenager growing up in New York City is forced to face many problems that might not normally be experienced by others living elsewhere. The youth of this city seem to develop and maintain a certain level of confidence and experience, individuality and knowledge out of a necessity to survive. Many teenagers growing up in a large city such as New York tend to be secure in their beliefs and confident in their ways. Confidence is stressed for the reason that with it one can cope more successfully, and without it one might feel the need to retreat from the pressures of urban life.

To be Jewish and to participate in one's Jewishness is important in finding one's

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A Day in the Country: Moms joined the Nursery School 4's and 5's to pick apples and pumpkins and to go on a hay ride during this excursion to a real farm in New Jersey.



Nursery School children learn about fire prevention and fire safety from Freddy the Robot and his two firefighter friends. The children also enjoyed turning the steering wheel and ringing the bell while they sat in a real fire truck.



Consecration of our new Religious School students was held in the sanctuary on Simchat Torah, October 10th. The Central Synagogue clergy all participated in this moving ceremony at which Torah scrolls were presented to the children.

About Our Religious School

Jack L. Sparks, Ed.D., RJE
Director of Education

Festival of Lights — Chanukah — is a time of celebration for our children and a time of remembrance for adults. When asked to recall their earliest Jewish memory, most adults recall some holiday celebrated with relatives and friends. During Chanukah we have the opportunity to create powerful Jewish experiences for our children that will become their "memories of tomorrow". The time of Chanukah can transform your home into a place where your children and their friends bake latkes, hand dip Chanukah candles, construct and decorate tin Chanukah menorot. If you have family Chanukah traditions from your own childhood, now is the time to pass them down to your children.

Chanukah need not be limited to a holiday where "gift getting" is the sole celebration. It can be an opportunity to give as well as receive. This year, as in former years, we will be gathering new (unused) toys to be given to children with long-term illnesses at Bellevue Hospital. A representative of the hospital will join our Religious School children on Wednesday, December 12, to accept our gifts on behalf of the hospitalized children. If you would like to join us in this Mitzvah, please drop off a new toy at the Religious School office before December 12. Make sure it is wrapped and has a note indicating what age and gender the toy is geared for. I can tell you from past experience with this program that the sick children truly rejoice from our gifts.

Join us on **Friday evening, December 14**, at **5:30 pm**, for the Shabbat Chanukah service. **Joanne Loewy**, the Junior Choir director under the loving guidance of **Cantor Botton**, will be leading sixty children's voices as they help our prayers rise.

This is the season to enhance our experiences and have them become wonderful memories for tomorrow; don't miss the opportunity.



As Death Draws Near

Our Medical Ethics Study Group is proud to announce that a member of our congregation and a most distinguished physician, **Dr. Howard Scher**, will be our guest speaker on **Thursday, December 13th**, at **5:45 pm**. Dr. Scher will share with us experiences and perspectives drawn from his daily contact with patients at Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital who must confront the reality of life-threatening disease. The Medical Ethics Study Group warmly invites all members of our congregation to join us on December 13th.

Lunch-with-the-Rabbi

Our next Lunch-with-the-Rabbi will be held on **Wednesday, December 12**, from **12:30 to 1:45 pm**, in Joslin Hall. This long-running and very popular series offers participants an opportunity to study texts from 1800-year-old Midrashim in an English translation prepared by Rabbi Davids, and to see how those texts address contemporary concerns. A sandwich lunch will be provided at \$6 per person. New participants are always welcome. Please call Rabbi Davids' office today to make your reservations.

The Sexuality of God

One of our generation's most gifted and creative scholars of Jewish mysticism, **Rabbi Lawrence Kushner**, will guide us through an exploration of the sexuality of God on **Wednesday, December 5**, from **7:00 to 9:00 pm**, in Joslin Hall, in a program sponsored by the synagogue's Worship Committee.

As we know, the masters of the Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism) sometimes referred to God as if the Eternal were male, and at other times referred to God as female. Seemingly, God contains all opposites, all contradictions within the Divine being. Rabbi Kushner, who serves a Reform congregation in Sudbury, MA, and who is the author of books for adults as well as for children in the area of mysticism and spirituality, will help us discover our own pathways toward a contemporary understanding of God. Please plan to join us.

ADULT RETREAT

Join fellow congregants for a wonderful Shabbat of worship, music & study.

Fabulous food and great company

Guest Rabbi:
Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor

**DELLWOOD
COUNTRY CLUB
January 25-27**

See enclosed flier for registration information

CHANUKAH

Ceremonies, Symbols, Customs

The modern home celebration of Chanukah centers around the lighting of holiday candles in the Chanukiah, unique foods, as well as special games and songs.

What is the meaning of Chanukiah?

Chanukiah is a Hebrew word meaning Chanukah candelabrum. It refers to the nine-branched ceremonial lamp in which the Chanukah candles are placed and then blessed. The term "Menorah" is applied to any other candelabrum except for the one special for Chanukah.

Is a candelabrum unique to Chanukah?

No. The menorah originated as a religious symbol in biblical times. The Torah records (Exodus 25:31; 37:17-23) how the great artist Bezalel fashioned a seven-branched

menorah for the desert tabernacle in fulfillment of a divine commandment. Such a seven-branched menorah adorned the Temple in Jerusalem and was carried away by the Roman legions at the time of its destruction in 70 C.E. While the Roman Empire has long since vanished, a seven-branched menorah stands before the Knesset building in Israel, yet another tangible reminder of the indestructibility of the Jewish people.

How did the Chanukiah originate?

The nine-branched Chanukah menorah was a modification of the biblical model and seems to have originated in the first century C.E. It had eight branches, one for each day of the holiday, and a ninth branch for the shamash or "servant" light. In ancient times, oil was used in the Chanukiah. Over time, candles were substituted for the oil. Interestingly, some scholars believe that the use of small candles for the Chanukiah was a deliberate choice, designed to distinguish Chanukah lights from Christian votive

candles. Except in times of religious persecution, the Chanukiah was placed outside the front door or, as is the custom today, displayed in the window of every Jewish home.

How do we light the Chanukah candles?

The teachers Hillel and Shammai argued whether we should begin by lighting eight candles on the first night, gradually decreasing to one (Shammai) or begin with one candle and add an additional one each night (Hillel). In the spirit of compromise, both views were incorporated. Thus, candles are put in from right to left (increasing each night), but are kindled left to right.

How did the game of dreidel come to be associated with Chanukah?

Dreidel is a derivative of a German word meaning top, and the game is an adaptation of an old German gambling game.

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The Chanukah Candle Blessings

There are two berachot which are chanted or recited on every night of Chanukah. The first is a blessing over the candles themselves:

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו
במצותיו, וצונו להדליק נר של חנוכה.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, melech haolom, asher kiddeshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel Chanukah

Blessed are You, O Eternal our God, Ruler of the world, who has sanctified us through Your mitzvot and commanded us to kindle the Chanukah lights.

The second berachah expresses thanks for the "miracle" of deliverance:

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, שעשאה נסים לאבותינו
במים ההם בזמן הזה.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, melech haolom, she'asah nissim laavotenu bayamim hahem bazeman hazeh.

Blessed are You, O Eternal our God, Ruler of the world, who did wondrous things for our ancestors in former times at this season.

There is a third berachah which is chanted or recited only on the first night. This is the "Shehecheyanu" prayer, pronounced by Jews on all happy occasions:

ברוך אתה, יי אלהינו, מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו
לזמן הזה.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, melech haolom, shehecheyanu vekייyemanu vehiggiyanu lazman hazeh.

Blessed are You, O Eternal our God, Ruler of the world, who has kept us in life, sustained us, and brought us to this happy time.

Any member or members of the family may chant or recite the blessings. One person lights and holds the shamash, the berachot are pronounced, and the candles are then lit. On Shabbat, the Chanukah candles are lit before the Shabbat candles. The new Reform home prayer book, *Gates of the House*, contains an appropriate service for the home.

Brotherhood Gift to Caring Committee

Dr. Nathan Shapiro, on behalf of the Caring Committee, acknowledges with thanks the substantial gift the Brotherhood made to the Caring Committee, and especially notes with gratitude the efforts of Brotherhood President **Robert Kandel** and Treasurer **William Freedman** to arrange the gift. He hopes this will be the beginning of further contributions to help underwrite one of the most worthy programs the congregation has undertaken.

Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger

Since ancient times Jewish people have shared what they possessed with others less fortunate. It has become traditional in Jewish communities for families to contribute to the needy at times of their own joy and celebration. A recovery from an illness, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah of a son or daughter, a marriage or an anniversary, or perhaps just gratitude for one's blessings is often commemorated by making a donation to a worthy cause. A contribution to Mazon is a meaningful way to help those who are the most deprived people—those who are hungry. A suggested guideline is 3% of the cost of your celebration or whatever amount you deem appropriate. Your dollars help Mazon fund a broad spectrum of nonprofit organizations working to lift the burden of hunger here in our own city and throughout the country.

In our area, grants have been given to Project Ezra, which provides food for elderly Jews of the Lower East Side, the Coalition for the Homeless feeding program, and Dorot, which supplies food to needy older people on the Upper West Side. These groups are supported entirely by private donations.

If you are interested in making a contribution to Mazon, please contact Hazel Beckerman, Mazon Chair, at 988-7155.

Focus Breakfast:

Carole Hyatt to Discuss Shifting Gears

How do you change life — or at least careers — in midstream? Carole Hyatt, author of *Shifting Gears*, a book based on studies of major changes people have made in their lives, will discuss some answers to that question at the Central Women's Focus breakfast on **Tuesday, December 11 at 8:00 am.**

As co-founder and president of Hyatt/Esserman Research Associations, Ms. Hyatt helped pioneer innovative research methodologies and worked with Fortune 500 companies, government agencies, and philanthropic organizations. She is now a consultant for many of these organizations.

Focus members and their friends will remember her lively previous appearance with her co-author after writing *When Smart People Fail*. Ms. Hyatt has appeared on many television talk shows, and her earlier books have been translated into many other languages.

Central Women's Focus, a professional women's network sponsored by the synagogue, invites both women and men to join



Carole Hyatt, Focus Breakfast Speaker

us for the breakfast. Reservations (\$9 for members, \$12 for nonmembers — checks payable to Central Women's Focus) should be sent by December 4th to Focus, 123 East 55 Street, New York 10022, or call Judi Cohen at 212-838-5122 for reservations.

SAVE THE DATE!



**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7
6:30 PM**

Cocktails, Fabulous Food & Fun

**at the annual
*Nursery School Auction***

All proceeds go to the Nursery School Scholarship Fund

Sisterhood (continued from page 3)

of all ages and lifestyles are seeking meaningful activity. It should be a given that Sisterhood is the place to find programs, studies, and projects, that will fulfill their need, as well as offering a welcoming environment.

"It is important that we don't stereotype women," she urged. "Older women today are energetic and resourceful and ready to offer valuable life and job experience to the Sisterhood. And young women, whether at home or in a job, as well as women whose children are growing up and not needing as much time as they did earlier, are searching for worthwhile involvement in their community. If they don't find it in the synagogue they will go elsewhere. Helping them find it is our challenge and our opportunity," she said.

Special events of the convention included the installation of new officers who included **Helen Lehrman**, a newly elected Vice President of District 3 and **Jan Stovin**, member at large of the District Board. **Audrey Edelstein** is on the national board of NFTS and in that capacity sits on the District Board. **Emita Levy**, a past president of District 3, participated in the installation ceremony.

Other highlights included several workshops, one of which was led by **Judy Klemperer** and **Janis Firstenberg**, who have been instrumental in the development of our highly esteemed Sisterhood Sabbath Services. In addition, a workshop on the environment was co-chaired by **Elsie Shapiro**, chair of Sisterhood's Critical Issues Committee. After the dinner on Saturday evening, board member **Louise Driben**, who is also on the National Board of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, represented that Board in a talk on WUPJ and the ways in which Sisterhoods support its work.

The Names Project

Central's AIDS panel is off to Israel to take part in World AIDS Day on December 1st. Since March, a group of dedicated Sisterhood members have been meeting every Tuesday morning to create a Memorial Quilt in the name of Central Synagogue. The 3 foot by 6 foot panel is a memorial to congregants who have suffered personal losses because of AIDS. The panel, along with others from Jewish organizations and synagogues, will be part of the Israel Tour,

scheduled by the Names Project, from December 1-18. **Sara Gorfinkle** coordinated this lovingly created project.

Light The Way for the Blind

Help to enrich the lives of sightless men and women by volunteering to record for our synagogue's Talking Books program. Contribute your voice, hands, and eyes one to two hours a week, and share in the wonderfully meaningful work that produces quality audio-cassettes of Jewish-related literature (both popular and scholarly) for those who cannot read the printed page. Help us continue the long record of dedication and excellence through which we help the visually impaired to enjoy the benefits of Jewish life represented in the written word. Your hours will be scheduled to fit your available time. This is a true Mitzvah. Please call **Sylvia Sorin** (228-6538) or **Sylvia Kaplan** (369-4143).

Seniors Club

The Seniors Club is off and running again, full speed ahead. A new president, Doris Edelson, and excellent committees are cooperating to make the Club's meetings meaningful and interesting to all. During the holidays, members arranged the tables with beautiful flowers and special treats. The Club's caring committee prepared food for the synagogue's breakfast program. Under Sisterhood sponsorship, dancing and art classes and other recreational and cultural programs have met with outstanding success. **Pearl Fortgang** writes that "all seniors are warmly invited to join with the group each Tuesday and become enriched by the experience. Bring your sandwich. Beverages are provided by the Sisterhood. The camaraderie and warm feelings are unsurpassed."

Holiday Cards Wanted for Hospital Patients

Many thanks to our congregants who thoughtfully donated used holiday cards last year. We collect the cards and donate them to the very appreciative social service department of the Hospital for Joint Diseases. Please keep this Mitzvah in mind and save your holiday cards again this year. Just leave them at the front desk of the synagogue Community House at 123 East 55 Street, to the attention of Connie Littwitz.

Happy Chanukah



SISTERHOOD Gift Shop

COME IN FOR YOUR CHANUKAH AND HOLIDAY NEEDS:

JEWELRY, WATCHES, HOUSEHOLD GIFTS,
GLOVES & OTHER WARM THINGS
AND SO MUCH MORE!

HOURS: MONDAY TO FRIDAY FROM 10 - 4
SUNDAYS FROM 10 - 2

An Eye on the Why

Join Sisterhood at a brown bag lunch **Monday, January 14 at 12 noon**, when internationally acclaimed Israeli-born filmmaker **Ayelet Kedel** shares two of her short documentaries with us: "That's not me" and "Sumod." See the reservation form enclosed with this *Bulletin*.

Chanukah (continued from page 6)

Chanukah was one of the few times of the year when the rabbis of old permitted games of chance. The dreidel, therefore, was a natural candidate for Chanukah entertainment.

The four sides of the top bear four Hebrew letters: Nun, Gimmel, Hei, and Shin. Players would begin by "anteing" a certain number of coins, nuts, or other objects. Each one in turn would then spin the dreidel and proceed as follows: nun ("nichts") — take nothing; gimmel ("ganz") — take everything; hei ("halb") — take half; shin ("shtell") — put in.

The winner would often receive money (Chanukah gelt). Over time, the gambling terms were reinterpreted to stand for the Hebrew phrase Nes Gadol Hayah Sham, "a great miracle happened there." Thus, even an ordinary game of chance was

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Brotherhood College Visitation Program- On November 3rd, the Brotherhood sent Rabbi Weiner up to Boston to visit with our college students. After dinner some of the students posed for the above photo. From left to right, Mike Wogotsky, Geoff Kalish, Jessica Roth, Rabbi Weiner, and Stephanie Roth.

invested with Jewish values and served to remind Jews of the important message of Chanukah. Today Jewish children throughout the world continue to enjoy the game of dreidel. In Israel, one letter on the dreidel has been changed. The shin has been replaced with a pei, transforming the Hebrew phrase into Nes Gadol Hayah Po, "a great miracle happened here."

Why do we eat latkes on Chanukah?

A common but rather far-fetched explanation is that we eat latkes (potato pancakes) because they are cooked in oil and thus remind us of the miracle of the single cruse of oil. In Israel, sufganiyot, donuts, are the special holiday treat. Rabbi Solomon Freehof, a great contemporary Jewish scholar, hypothesized that the eating of latkes may have grown out of an old custom of eating milchig (dairy) foods on Chanukah. Milchig foods evolved into milchig pancakes and then into latkes, possible because the main potato crop became available about the time of Chanukah. No one knows for certain how the association began, but for anyone who feasts on latkes at Chanukah time, a historical rationale is unnecessary.

Why do we give gifts on Chanukah?

Again, no one knows for sure. Many scholars postulate that the practice is a carry-over from the biblically-based custom of sending gifts (mishloach manot) to one's friends on Purim. It is clear, however, that presents were never a major element in Chanukah which emphasizes enduring religious and ethical values.

Who wrote "Rock of Ages"?

Ma'oz Tzur, or Rock of Ages, was composed in Europe in the twelfth or thirteenth century by a man known as Mordecai. His words were set to different melodies over the centuries.

When all is said and done, perhaps the most important message of Chanukah may be found in the name of the holiday itself — Dedication. When Jews have dedicated themselves, through faith and action, to the pursuit of high religious and human ideals, Judaism has been strong. That imperative, to strengthen our religion and our people, remains an important challenge at this season — in every generation.

(Adapted from Reform Judaism, December 1976)

Youth Group (continued from page 4)

own identity and in nurturing this sense of confidence. For me, belonging to the Youth Group has been key to finding refuge from the strange harshness of the city. My friends assume I have strong religious beliefs because I am active in the Youth Group. They cannot understand that Judaism is not solely a religion. Youth Group seems to symbolize something more than "religious studies," or "Hebrew School." It symbolizes friendships, understanding, support. To me, there is a common tie to culture, upbringing, and intellectual interests between those in my Youth Group and myself. I believe that within the city teenagers need a peaceful environment to which to retreat, as well as one that provides a source of support and energy to face the struggles and pressures of teenage city life.

I have recently completed a summer program in Europe that involved both Irish and United States youth. Although differences between the two cultures are to be expected, I felt that the dissimilarities that were most prevalent between us were those that seemed the least obvious. Throughout all the discussions between these two groups, the Americans did most of the talking and participating. I felt that the Irish teenagers were more hesitant to express their thoughts, and seemed to have much less confidence in themselves. This is not to say that there weren't those Americans who were shy or those Irish who were openly enthusiastic. It just appeared that the Americans were more confident and secure in their actions. The sense that we had more opportunities, expressed our individuality and were more open, were all factors that contributed to these subtle differences.

While living in New York can often be frustrating and stressful, perhaps its pressures do add character to those of us who live here. And how much more meaningful are Youth Group bonds when placed in the perspective of its role to a New York teenager who has experienced another culture.



From the Rabbi's Study (continued from page 1)

to be.

And that was what was intolerable to the Maccabees. They were willing to fight, even to die, for the right to be themselves. Each candle we light, every blessing we sing, is a celebration and a sanctification of our people's unwillingness to allow itself to be swept away by the practices and the values of the majority culture.

The issues confronting us today as Jews in the United States are not all that different. It is certainly true that no external force is seeking to compel us to abandon our faith and our practices. Rather, the damaging pressures are rising up from within. It is temptingly easy today to abandon our differences, to foresake 3,500 years of precious heritage. Why bother being "ourselves", if being ourselves means that we have to live by our own calendar, study our own language, immerse ourselves in our own texts, promote our own ethics and values?

Why bother being "ourselves", if being ourselves imposes limitations on whom we marry? Why bother being "ourselves", if by being ourselves we become obligated financially to vast charitable enterprises? And why bother being "ourselves", if by being ourselves we must assume responsibilities for our people all across the world, and most especially in the State of Israel?

The miracle of Chanukah is to be found in the absolute determination of our brothers and sisters many centuries ago that it is worth any price to defend our right to be the people we choose to be. The challenge of Chanukah today is to be found in the effort required of us to preserve the very integrity of our Jewish identities.

If we stop caring about being ourselves, then that vast spiritual enterprise which is Judaism cannot possibly survive. If we stop being ourselves, then the Maccabees' victory will crumble into ashes.

May the brilliance of Chanukah's lights rekindle within us an unyielding commitment to our God, to our people, to our future. May we celebrate together our choice as individuals and as a people to maintain with faith and with deed our Jewish identities. And may such decisions bring blessings to all humankind.



People

Janet Dash, metalsmith, will be exhibiting her creations in two major museum shows devoted to Judaica. Her works will be shown this fall at the Flagler Museum in Palm Beach and at the American Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia.

Nancy T. Polevoy recently traveled to Germany to trace her ancestors who emigrated in 1844 to the United States. According to an article that appeared in a German newspaper this summer, as part of her research Ms. Polevoy visited the graves of her ancestors in Jewish cemeteries in Sulzdorf and Kleinbardorf and traced her history with the help of a local archivist and a minister. Her family lived and prospered in the Sulzdorf area from the beginning of the 18th century.

Minyanaires Wanted!

Central Synagogue needs volunteers for the weekday morning service. We ask congregants — men, women and teenagers — to give twenty minutes, one morning every three weeks, for this Mitzvah taking place at 8 am Monday through Thursday and 7:45 am on Fridays. Please write your name, address, day and evening phone, and your preferred days on a piece of paper and send it to Brotherhood, Att: Bud Lustbader, Central Synagogue, 123 East 55 Street, New York 10022. Thank you.

Brotherhood (continued from page 2)

fast lecture on **December 10**. **Herb Rein's** forum will probably focus on education. Watch for invitations to our functions with Temple Emanu-el, the Retreat, Cantor Botton's concert, and our gala. And please volunteer to help at our Ezra program and Luncheon for the Blind program.

We are honored that **Rabbi Emeritus David Seligson** has agreed to be Brotherhood Chaplain. Please visit us often; we look forward to a D'var Torah at the opening of our meetings.

A final personal word: I would like to thank **Rabbi Stanley Davids** and the clergy, Barry Kugel and his staff, and the Brotherhood officers and board for all their help and counsel. Brotherhood, and the synagogue, will have a great 1991 because all of you help and care. My best for a joyous Holiday season!

Central Synagogue Gift Funds

Caring Committee: Breakfast for the Hungry

Jack Lipman
Alan Schlechter
Lucille Sunshine

In honor of:
Rabbi Davids on occasion of the High Holidays
Judith & Charles Barr & Family

Special birthday of George Zarkow
Judith & Charles Barr

Birth of Jacob Andrew March Friedman, grandson of Belle & David March
Diana Weller

In memory of:
Florence Rosenberg in October
Dr. Frederick Rosenberg

Harry M. Weinberger
Elsie & Nat Shapiro

General Fund

Marvin Mitchelson
Mr. & Mrs. Jules Roistacher

In appreciation of:
High Holiday Services
Steve Danz & Francine Winkler

The courtesy extended during the High Holidays
Ralph Levine

Sy Presten - Our Friendship
Fran Spandorfer

In honor of:
Saul Linzer's 70th birthday
Mr. & Mrs. Jerome Dansher

Gerry Rose on his 70th Birthday
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Davidoff

Frances Kramer, to commemorate their aunt's birthday
Mr. & Mrs. Martin Finkelstein

Marriage of our daughter Allison Greenhut to Jay Godman
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald & Barbara Greenhut

Yom Kippur Service
David Klepper

Irving Bernstein's 80th Birthday
Rosalind Miller

Michael Weinberger
Rose Marie Lewent

In memory of:
George Sparke
Rosemary Taubert
Mrs. Edward Jacobs

Harry M. Weinberger, late father of our esteemed President
Mr. & Mrs. Arnold L. Sabin

Judaica Fund

In honor of:
The clergy & members of the congregation at the Saturday morning Yom Kippur service
Simon Offit

In memory of:
Harry M. Weinberger
Mr. & Mrs. William Jay Freedman
Audrey Klein, beloved sister of
Mrs. Clifford Feder
Mr. & Mrs. William Jay Freedman

Mazon Fund

In honor of:
Bethany's Bat Mitzvah
Drs. Ellen & Gary Slater
Daniel Rosenbloom's Bar
Mitzvah
Wendy & Allan Rosenbloom

Prayer Book Fund

Lynne Charnay
In memory of:
Josephine Kaplan, whose
heart was filled with love for
her friends
Teresa Biriotti
Elliott Koreman
Charles H. Tally, Gertrude
Gang, Joseph Tally, William
Gang
Nancy Polevoy
Monroe Bachenheimer
Simon Bachenheimer
Mr. & Mrs. Aaron Rosenthal
In appreciation for sitting on
the Bimah on Yom Kippur
Nancy Polevoy

Rabbis' Discretionary Fund

Rabbi Davids:
In honor of:
Frances Kramer's significant
birthday
Alice Alekman
Bar Mitzvah of Geoffrey
Sanders
Mr. & Mrs. Steven Sanders
In appreciation of:
Rabbi Davids
Lawrence Gordon
Lauria Lieberman
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Steinhardt
In memory of:
Muriel Bernstein
Irving Bernstein
Gertrude Spar
Harry Spar

Rabbi Weiner:
In honor of:
Grandson Doug & daughter
Linda's participation on Yom
Kippur
Ethel Freeman
Barbara's G'ililah on Rosh
Hashanah
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Jayson
Ruth's Aliyah on Yom Kippur
Abraham & Ruth Kahn
Evan's Bar Mitzvah
Drs. Sherman & Susan Pazner

In appreciation of:
Rabbi Weiner's efforts on the
occasion of Bethany's Bat
Mitzvah
Drs. Gary & Ellen Wolf Slater

Wilhelm Music Fund

In appreciation of:
Cantor Richard Botton
Marion L. Graham
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth A. Plevan

Yahrzeit Fund

Mrs. Joseph Wexler
Mildred Kosiner
In memory of:
Jonathan P. Abramson
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Mr. & Mrs. David F. Adler
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Casper Lowenstein
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Max Garbin
Mr. & Mrs. Leonard B. Garbin
Diana Jaffe
Samuel S. Jaffe
Rona Jaffe
Belle and Anne Halperin -
Sisters
Isaac and Sadie Halperin -
Parents
Irene Halperin
Ann H. Hartman
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Janet Berley Laupot
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David Levitan
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Joan Matt
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Renee G. Rubin-Fishzohn
Betty Schwartz
Helen Schwarz
Milton & Mabel Barkin
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Sloan
Sarah Szep
Susan Leigh Feldstein
Norma Szep
Harry L. Toplitt
Mrs. Gerry Toplitt
Mabel S. Weinberg
Mrs. Lester C. Weinberg
Anna Yudoff
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Wiener
Robert Yager
Mrs. Harry Yager
Rachel Berg
Samuel Yerman
Mr. & Mrs. Elliot Yerman

Sisterhood Gift Funds

Flower Fund

In honor of:
Jeffrey's Bar Mitzvah
Bettina & Kenneth Plevan

Bethany's Bat Mitzvah
Drs. Ellen Wolf Slater & Gary I. Slater

General Fund

Edith Lissauer
Evelyn Trynin

Kiddush

In honor of:
Jeffrey's Bar Mitzvah
Bettina & Kenneth Plevan
Bethany's Bat Mitzvah
Drs. Ellen Wolf Slater & Gary I. Slater

Saidee Klein Children's Bookshelf Fund

In memory of:
Daniel Horowitz
Janet & Joseph Dash

Senior Citizen's Fund

In honor of:
Her birthday
Rose Buchalter
Joan & Michael Spero
Bryan L. Knapp
For the quick, complete
recovery of Susan Bayer
Helen & Harold Lehrman

Jean Wise May Youth Leadership Fund

Elsie May Herzog

Linden Hill Cemetery is an integral part of Central Synagogue's services to its members. For information regarding plots and graves, contact Barry Kugel (838-5122) or Anthony Jones, Cemetery Superintendent (718-821-2279), 5222 Metropolitan Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385.

**REMEMBER CENTRAL
SYNAGOGUE IN YOUR
WILL**

COMING EVENTS

Tuesday, December 4, 7:30 pm

IJS Lecture: Chanukah Miracles & Myths
Rabbi Philip Hiat

Wednesday, December 5, 7:00 pm

Worship Committee Lecture
Rabbi Lawrence Kushner

Friday, December 7, 8:15 pm

First Friday Shabbat Service; Guest Speakers:
Book of J co-authors: Harold Bloom & David Rosenberg

Monday, December 10, 7:30 am

Brotherhood Breakfast
Guest Speaker: James A. Lebenthal

Tuesday, December 11, 8:00 am

Focus Breakfast
Carole Hyatt

Friday, December 14, 5:30 pm

Shabbat Chanukah Service
Junior Choir

Worship Services in the Sanctuary

Friday, November 30
5:30 pm Shabbat Eve Service

Saturday, December 1
10:30 am Shabbat Service
B'not Mitzvah: Lindsey Glass
Carolyn Nurnberg

Friday, December 7
8:15 pm Shabbat Eve Service
Guest Speakers: Harold Bloom
David Rosenberg

Saturday, December 8
10:30 am Shabbat Service
Bat Mitzvah: Suzanne Bellet

Friday, December 14
5:30 pm Chanukah Music Service

Saturday, December 15
10:30 am Shabbat Service
Bar Mitzvah: Daniel Rosenbloom

Friday, December 21
5:30 pm Shabbat Eve Service

Saturday, December 22
10:30 am Shabbat Service

Friday, December 28
5:30 pm Shabbat Eve Service

Saturday, December 29
10:30 am Shabbat Service

Daily Services:
Mon.-Thurs., 8:00 am, Blitzer Chapel
Friday, 7:45 am, followed by Talmud Class

Rare Medieval Bronze Hanukkah Lamp dating from the fifteenth century. Look for it in the Hanukkah exhibit in the Community House lobby. A gift from Dorothy & Philip Silber to the Judaica Collection, it is an example of the mixture of Islamic-style Spanish synagogue arches and French Gothic cathedral spires.



CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE

Rabbi	Stanley M. Davids, D.D.
Associate Rabbi	Thomas K. Weiner
Rabbi Emeritus	Dr. David J. Seligson
Cantor	Richard Botton
Scholar-in-Residence	Rabbi Philip Hiat
Educational Director	Dr. Jack L. Sparks
Nursery School Director	Mary Solow
Rabbinic Interns	Alice Goldfinger
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