

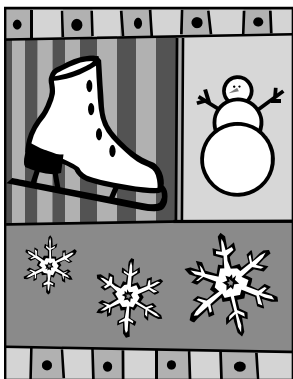


The Shofar

Website:
oraynu.org

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It's Winter!
*Share the warmth
at Oraynu!*

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A very happy and healthy New Year to all! Hope you've spent quality time sharing the sights, sounds and foods (of course!) of the season with family and friends.

To bring light into the start of 2019, we will have two Shabbat celebrations: On January 11th, Rabbi Denise will offer a discussion on "Get Clear on your New Year—Jewish Style." Then, on January 25th, there will be a joint school and congregation potluck dinner event. There will be an optional Shabbat-themed ceramic-making activity following dinner and Rabbi Denise will give a talk on Jewish Art.

The Jewish Indigenous Tu B'Shevat Seder developed by Rabbi Denise for Oraynu four years ago is growing! Each year more groups want to get involved. This year, we are co-sponsoring the event on Jan. 20 with five other groups. It will be held at Holy Blossom Temple, with Rabbi Denise as one of the presenters.

Rabbi Eva Goldfinger continues her excellent adult education series on Jan. 24, Feb. 21 and Mar. 21. Her topic this year is: "MeToo vs. NotMe: Relevance of Jewish Teachings Through the Ages for Jews Today." Her first session in December was well-attended and everyone was really engaged by the subject matter. Join us!

On Thursday Jan. 31st, we will have a members-only meeting to review the three new High Holiday services and make suggestions for their improvement. We welcome your input.

On Sunday, Feb. 3rd all members are invited to join the school's upper grades for a guided tour of the Neuberger Holocaust Centre. Children over 12 are welcome to attend.

Tuesday, Feb. 12 is Darwin Day and we have engaged the perfect speaker for the occasion—Prof. Jeffrey S. Rosenthal, a well-respected statistician and author (who also dabbles in songwriting and improv comedy) who will present a talk on "The Puzzle of Mazel", based on his new book *Knock on Wood: Luck, Chance, and the Meaning of Everything*. It promises to be a fun, light-hearted evening.

Mar. 3 brings two events to Oraynu-niks: The Annual School & Family Purim Party in the morning, and Show Your Heart 2019 in the evening. Both take place at the Borochoy Centre. Hosted by our Tikkun Olam Oraynu (TOO) Committee, SYH will focus on Indigenous issues and ways we can help with reconciliation.

We have a new column called the Book Corner, which will offer suggestions from members on books they have enjoyed.

We have lots of stuff happening at Oraynu to keep you all warm over the winter. Check them out on these pages and then watch for our "Email Blast." We look forward to seeing you all very soon at one or more programs.

Sandi

Sandi Horwitz, Editor

Members and guests are welcome to submit articles and letters and photographs. Please email: horwitz@rogers.com/ or mail to: Sandi Horwitz, 5 Bruce Farm Drive, Toronto ON M2H 1G2. Generally submissions should be no more than 1000 words and should reflect a secular humanistic perspective. Please note that Oraynu reserves the right to decline or edit submissions in order to maintain the mutual respect our members enjoy and our reputation for fairness.

Letters and articles printed in this newsletter reflect the opinions of their writers and are not necessarily those of Oraynu Congregation.

RABBI'S MESSAGE

Rabbi Denise Handlarski



By the time you read this, the days will be getting longer. It doesn't feel like it, does it? All summer we enjoy days full of warmth and sunlight, some July evenings feeling long and luxurious. But, in fact, the days are getting shorter. The inverse is true now: it is dark, cold, grey (oy vey has it been grey!) but the days are lengthening.

I know we just got finished celebrating Hanukkah, but I also try to mark winter solstice (call me the pagan-rabbi if you wish). I think it's worth reminding myself that, even though it doesn't seem to be the case, light is increasing.

This might be an important lesson for our day: even when it seems that there is lots of darkness, suffering, misery, we can imagine that the light is increasing – that things are getting better, that evolution is unfolding as it should and that we are adapting, our world is adapting, and has an amazing capacity for change. We can remind ourselves that for every awful news story, mean-spirited online troll, or person in need, there are many people trying to help. Many good things going on. Let's take the position that even though there is darkness, the light is increasing.

And, as we spoke about at Hanukkah, it is our job to find the light within ourselves, to help light the way for others. This is both a Jewish ethic (to "be a light unto the nations") and also a Humanistic one (if we can't look to supernatural authority or guidance we need to do the fixing of the world ourselves).

So, my challenge to you as we round of 2018 and look ahead to 2019 is to find ways to both notice and increase the light that is around us. Chase the sun on the bright winter days – walk, sit on a bench with a snack, look up. Notice kind things people do for you or around you -- say thank you. Find ways to help others; small little mitzvahs that add up to miracles -- buy the next person in the drive thru line their coffee, buying someone a warm meal who needs it, inviting someone struggling at this time of year for tea.

"... it is our job to find the light within ourselves, to help light the way for others."

Don't forget to increase light for yourself too. Take breaks. Take time for yourself. Read something wonderful. Eat a delicious meal and pair it with a delicious wine. Call a friend just to say hello.

The nights are long now but they will get shorter. The sun will come out again. In the meantime, let's brighten the world a little – individually and together.

We invite you to join us for

THE ANNUAL JEWISH INDIGENOUS TU B'SHEVAT SEDER

Sunday, Jan. 20 from 7:30-9pm | Holy Blossom Temple, 1950 Bathurst St.

Facilitated by **Kim Wheatley**, an Anishinaabe Traditional Teacher, **Rabbi Denise Handlarski** and **Rabbi Miriam Margles**, there will also be interactive nature activities led by **Shoresh**.

The Seder, now in its fourth year, is an evening of sharing Jewish and Indigenous nature traditions. We use the Jewish holiday as a platform for sharing cultural traditions through songs, poetry, reflections and traditional food rituals.

Tickets are available for \$10 each. This event has reached capacity in previous years; reserve your ticket early to be guaranteed admission, visit www.seder2019.eventbrite.ca to book your ticket.

This event is sponsored by the Danforth Jewish Circle, Holy Blossom Temple, Miles Nadal JCC, Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, Shoresh and Ve'ahavta.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, Jan. 11
7:30 pm

Borochov Cultural
Centre
272 Codsell Ave.
(Wilson Hts/Sheppard)



SHABBAT & DISCUSSION

Join us for a short Shabbat program with candles, challah, wine and song, followed by a workshop with Rabbi Denise on:

"Get Clear on Your Year - Jewish Style"

Come schmooze about your wishes and worries for 2019 and help Oraynu chart a course for our year in terms of programming, social action, and more.

Non-members welcome: \$15

Thursdays, Jan. 24
and Feb. 21
7:00 pm sharp
(plus Mar. 21)

Borochov Centre
(as above)

WINTER 2019 ADULT EDUCATION SERIES

with Rabbi Eva Goldfinger

"MeToo vs. NotMe: Relevance of Jewish Teachings Through the Ages for Jews Today"



Join Rabbi Eva as we study and examine Jewish texts through the ages that purport to tell us what is and isn't ethical and how we should and should not behave in our everyday lives. Join the discussion on which rules of behaviour are ethical or unethical, and meaningful or irrelevant for us today. Then let's create and share with others our Mini-Humanist-Talmud on what is and isn't ethical 'For Me/For Us' today.

Thursdays, starting at 7:00 pm sharp and ending about 9:30 pm:

Jan. 24: MeToo vs. NotMe: Pros and Cons of Rabbinical Teachings and Laws

Feb. 21: MeToo vs. NotMe: Meaningfulness of Modern Interpretation of Jewish Laws and Customs

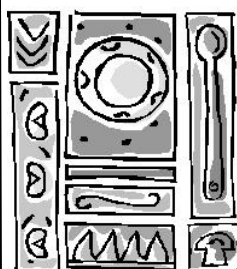
Mar. 21: Contemporary Ethical Revolutions: Which are MeToos and Which are NotMes?

Non-members welcome: \$20 per session

Friday, Jan. 25
7:00 pm

Borochov Centre
(as above)

JOINT SCHOOL/CONGREGATION ONEG SHABBAT & POTLUCK DINNER



Join us for a potluck Shabbat dinner - songs, blessings, fresh baked challah, an optional Shabbat ceramic craft activity and a talk on Jewish Art with Rabbi Denise.

Pre-order your own Shabbat ceramic item to make with our guest artists from ARTISTIC WAY - either a wine cup or a variety of challah platters (price is \$20-30 to purchase the materials). If not interested in making ceramics, then come for the dinner and enjoy Denise's talk.

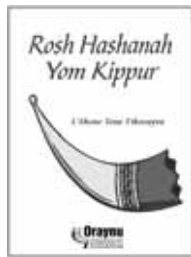
Come find out why adults of all ages love these family Shabbats, especially the potluck dinner ones! They're one of Oraynu's best kept secrets.

Non-members welcome with potluck contribution + materials fee, if applicable.

**Unless otherwise indicated, kindly RSVP for ALL EVENTS:
416-385-3910 | roby@oraynu.org | via online event link**

Non-members always welcome for a nominal fee

Thursday, Jan. 31
7:30 pm
Members' home
(Leslie/Cummer
area)



HIGH HOLIDAY SERVICES REVIEW

Now that we have debuted all of our High Holiday services, we are seeking your input! We will be discussing how we do the Scroll of Remembrance (Memorial Names Reading) at the Kol Nidre service and hearing feedback about the Rosh Hashanah and Kol Nidre scripts. Come have your say! Please note: This event is for members only.

Sunday, Feb. 3
10 am-12:15 pm
Lipa Green Bldg.
4th floor
Sherman Campus
4600 Bathurst St.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE VISIT

Every year our grade 6 School kids and their parents visit The Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre for a guided visit which includes viewing exhibits and seeing films. **The event is open to all Oraynu members, including children 12+.**

Join us for a **guided museum tour** led by a museum educator which includes:

- Brief historical overview
- Thematic film with discussion; viewing of two displays
- Meet with a Holocaust survivor, if available; or hear digitally recorded survivor testimony

No charge to attend, but voluntary donations are requested.
RSVP by Jan. 10 to Steve Shabes at: stevenshabes@yahoo.com

Tuesday, Feb. 12
7:30 pm
Borochov Centre
272 Codsell Ave.
(Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

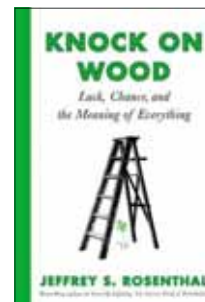
Join us for a Darwin Day program: **THE PUZZLE OF MAZEL**
with Prof. Jeffrey S. Rosenthal speaking on his new book
"Knock on Wood: Luck, Chance, and the Meaning of Everything"

Jeffrey S. Rosenthal, author of the bestseller *Struck by Lightning: The Curious World of Probabilities*, was born on a Friday the thirteenth, a fact that he discovered long after he had become one of the world's pre-eminent statisticians. Had he been living ignorantly and innocently under an unlucky cloud for all those years? Or is thirteen just another number?

In *Knock on Wood*, Rosenthal, with great humour and irreverence, divines the world of luck, fate and chance, including such notions as fate/destiny/karma/superstition and more, putting his considerable scientific acumen to the test in deducing whether luck is real or the mere stuff of superstition.

Copies of the book will be available at \$30.

Non-members welcome: \$15



Sunday, Mar. 3
7:30 pm
Borochov Centre
(as above)

SHOW YOUR HEART 2019 Focus on Indigenous Issues

The Tikkun Olam Oraynu Committee continues to work on Indigenous issues in Canada. This special Show Your Heart event will be an opportunity for learning and action! We will have speaker-led information on four topics related to Indigenous life in Canada: Quality Education, Access to Health care, Disability and Indigeneity; and Water Rights. We will have opportunities for letter writing, advocacy, and future work.

Ride the momentum of our work over the past few years: Indigenous/Jewish Tu B'shevat seders, the Blanket Exercise, supporting Grassy Narrows, donations to Na Ma Res and Native Women's Resource Centre, discussions on cultural appropriation, and our phenomenal speaker Jesse Wenté.

We are doing some great work together, let's keep it up!

Sunday, Mar. 3
10:00 am

Social Hall
Borochov Centre
272 Codsell Ave.

FAMILY PURIM FESTIVAL

Presentations ~ Music with Mendy ~ Purim Shpiel
Hamentaschen ~ Costumes

PURIM CARNIVAL (following the presentations)

Bean Bag Toss ~ Origami ~ Balloon Art ~ Face Painting
Cupcake Decorating & Sale in aid of the Grandmothers for Grandmothers Project

PURIM TZEDAKAH: Collection of Kosher for Passover Food for National
Council of Jewish Women's Passover Food Drive for needy Jewish Families

Matzah • Gefilte Fish • Canned Tuna • Tea • Canned Fruit/Apple Sauce • Grape/Apple Juice
Jam • Matzah Meal • Soup/Side Dishes • Passover Crackers • Macaroons/Cookies

Oraynu grandparents—bring your grandkids to join in the fun!

Guests welcome: Adults \$8, Children \$4, Family max. \$20

This program is part of Oraynu's commitment to Family Education
and is funded in part by your generous donations.



Unless otherwise indicated, kindly RSVP for ALL EVENTS:

416-385-3910 | robby@oraynu.org | via online event link

Non-members always welcome for a nominal fee



SAVE THE DATE!! ORAYNU'S 50th ANNIVERSARY

Saturday, November 2nd at Havergal College

Plan to join us to renew friendships, share memories and
accomplishments (and delicious food, of course!) as we mark
this incredible milestone in the life of our congregation.

NOTE: If anyone has any SJA or Oraynu photographs for potential display at the event,
please contact Jim Sadler at jim.sadler@rogers.com

BOOK CORNER - a new column

Book Corner is a place to suggest books Oraynuniks may enjoy. Send them to
Rabbi Denise for inclusion in the next Shofar: rabbidenise@oraynu.org



This first suggestion comes from Joe Goldfinger:

University of Toronto professor David A. Goldstein's "**Alley-Oop to Aliyah: African Hoopsters in the Holy Land**" is the true story of four decades of African American hoopsters (basketball players) travelling to Israel to play professional basketball. In that time, many have fallen in love with Israel and chosen to return year after year. Some have become Israeli citizens, married Israeli women and have made Israel their home.

Apropos this new column, here is a quote from Carl Sagan on books:

"What an astonishing thing a book is. It's a flat object made from a tree with flexible parts on which are imprinted lots of funny dark squiggles. But one glance at it and you're inside the mind of another person, maybe somebody dead for thousands of years. Across the millennia, an author is speaking clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people who never knew each other, citizens of distant epochs. Books break the shackles of time. A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic." From *Cosmos, Part 11: "The Persistence of Memory"* (1960)

A NOTE OF THANKS TO THE MCLEODS

On behalf of the entire Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, we extend a sincere thank you to Sue and Rod McLeod for their generous donation in support of the Jesse Wenthe speaking event, held on Friday Nov. 30th. His topic was "Indigenous Peoples, Minorities and Multiculturalism," and his talk riveted the more than 80 people in attendance, many of whom were non-members. Rabbi Denise introduced Wenthe and provided a brief account of the origins of Chanukah, drawing parallels to the history and plight of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Member Ruth Grant shared this note with the event organizers: "Just want to thank everyone who was responsible for tonight especially for choosing Jesse Wenthe as guest speaker. What an amazing human being!!! My head is still ringing with some of his words and thoughts. With gratitude, Ruth."

Sue and Rod have supported our community in so many ways, and we honour and thank them for their contribution in providing this wonderful opportunity for members and the public to learn more about this crucial and timely issue.

FYI — For those members unable to attend, a video was made of Wenthe's talk. If you are interested to view it, contact Robert Horwitz at: rhorwitz@rogers.com



MEMBER SURVEY COMING SOON

We want to hear from you! Oraynu strives to provide the very best in programming, community connections, and other services to its members. We will be sending a survey early in 2019 to hear your thoughts. Our goal is to serve you and meet your needs. Please let us know what you think!

You can also reach out anytime to Roby or Rabbi Denise if there's something we can do for you.
(Contact info on back inside cover.)

CJN ARTICLE RESPONSE FROM RABBI DENISE

This was the Rabbi's Message in the Dec. 18th Email Blast. It was subsequently published as the lead Letter to the Editor in the Dec. 27, 2018 issue of the Canadian Jewish News:

'Tikun olam Jews' respond

Ron Csillag's article ("Have we reached peak tikun olam?" Dec. 6) asks the right questions, but comes up with the wrong answers. The article is getting at a divide that is growing in Jewish communities and bnJewish life, a divide that raises questions about the what and why of Judaism.

In my congregation, we centre our services, programming and activities around tikun olam. We are, in our identities and practices, the types of people the article is calling out: we have no interest in mitzvah as commandment, but are very motivated by and concerned with mitzvah as good deed.

For us, Jewish ethics, learning, text and practice are all in the service of creating goodness in our lives and in the world. Yes, this perspective represents a shift in Judaism. Many Jews in the non-Orthodox world need a reason other than "because Judaism says so" to engage and practise. The choice we face is that we either find this reason – for many of us it is, indeed, tikun olam – or we accept that these Jews will leave Judaism behind. I prefer the former, not only because it keeps Jews Jewish, but more importantly, because of the collective impact we can have when we let our Judaism inspire us to tikun olam.

Judaism has survived because it has evolved. Our task is to find the Torah that is right for our day. That's what the "tikun olam Jews" are doing. We are not at peak tikun olam. In fact, we are just getting started.

Rabbi Denise Handlarski

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism, Toronto

ORAYNU CHILDREN'S SCHOOL REPORT

Principal
Steve Shabes

Chanukah Festival

At the school's recent Chanukah Festival, I was reminded that the flickering Chanukah lights represent more than the warmth and joy of the holiday. Chanukah commemorates the Maccabean Revolt in the second century B.C.E., where the Jews rose up against their Syrian-Greek oppressors, took back the Second Temple in Jerusalem and rededicated it. As Humanistic Jewish educators, how do we link the events of the distant past to the present? And perhaps, more importantly, how do we ensure that our school graduates are prepared to take up the struggle against oppression, to resist tyranny in all its forms in the future? Our task is to make the events of the Judaic past relevant to today's learners so that they can continue "the good fight" against oppression and for the preservation of human rights everywhere. I believe the history learned at the school forms a basis for our understanding of the importance of social action in aid of social justice causes in the present. Clearly, the events that took place in Jerusalem over 2,000 years ago remind us of the need to resist religious, cultural and racial intolerance and persecution in our time. It is possible to learn the lessons of the past so that our children can become *tikkun olam* problem solvers today.

Tikkun Olam in Action at the School

While the expression *tikkun olam* has its origins in classical rabbinic literature, my definition of repairing/improving the world encompasses any act of kindness. In a Humanistic Jewish sense, the term has come to connote individual or communal social action in the pursuit of human justice. Because the impact of the resistance to threats against human rights and dignity is a complex idea for young minds to connect with our history and to absorb as an ongoing necessity in the present, Oraynu provides tzedakah projects at all of our festivals. These tzedakah projects, where children and parents can work together to put Humanistic Jewish values into action—particularly our desire to integrate the value of acting against oppression into the social action component of our learning—provide a living link to the human rights violations we (Jews and any group that has ever been marginalized) have endured in the past. Thus, for us, "doing good" often takes the form of a school wide/congregational tzedakah project at the *chagim* (holidays) that supports the reinforcement of human rights and dignity for all. A wonderful example of this, the school wide support of *Heart to Heart* through our Grade 5/6 cookie sale and our Grade 3/4 Market, took place at the Chanukah Festival. Before raising \$500 for *Heart to Heart* which supports young Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel in building a shared society by bringing them to Canada to live together in a camp experience at Camp Shomria, our students learned about the cause they were supporting. The funds they raised will be used to provide three full days at camp for one 2019 *Heart to Heart* participant. *H to H's* co-founder and director is our Grade 6 teacher Jenny Isaacs. In addition to responding to the structural inequity and racism in Israeli society through *H to H*, our school and congregation-wide toiletries project aimed to alleviate human struggles closer to home. Over 150 gift bags containing items donated by many school families and members were packed by our Grade 7s and delivered to Nellie's, a place providing shelter, education and advocacy for all women and children. (See p. 9 for "thank you" letters from *Heart to Heart* and Nellie's.)

School Fundraising Campaign - Appreciation for/from Members and Alumni

Anne Frank said: "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." Her voice and those of others like her call us to action and inspire us to make humanistic values a fundamental part of our daily lives. And this year, as we embarked on our Fall School Fundraising Campaign, were reminded how hugely giving to support our own strengths is a part of the lives of our community of members, volunteers, school families and friends. Since September, our current school and alumni families have donated generously to keep our school program strong. All of our donors set a fine example of *tikkun olam* in action. **One of our kindhearted donors has set the bar high for all of us, anonymously pledging up to \$10,000 to provide an opportunity for other**



donors to match this amount! Through this donor's valuable encouragement of others to give, the Fundraising Committee (Mark Brender, Robert Horwitz, Penny Parnes and yours truly) are pleased to report that we have matched our generous anonymous donor's \$10,000 and that the School Fund now stands at **just over \$20,000!** So many of our donors have shared words of gratitude with me and co-fundraisers Rabbi Eva Goldfinger and Rabbi Karen Levy about how the school and its staff are near to their hearts and have enriching their lives. **We humbly thank all our school donors for recognizing Oraynu as a place that teaches and lives by compassionate, socially conscious Humanistic Jewish values and principles—and for keeping us strong!**

CandleLighting for Chanukah

Chanukah is a Hebrew word meaning "dedication", as in to set something apart and consecrate it. To make the temple holy again, the Jews went through a process of "re-dedication" once they had freed themselves from an oppressor. For us, as Humanistic Jews, these acts have become symbolic of our constant process of dedication and rededication to the preservation of our humanistic Jewish values. Each year when our teen volunteers and alumni come up to the stage to the light the candles, they understand the need to take action. They are old enough to know that oppression often names a social reality that is intertwined with violence. To celebrate our independence—our freedom—from this oppressor and others, we light a nine-branched Chanukah menorah, or *Chanukiah*, to remind us that it takes courage to remain kind and thus resist. When they lit the fifth candle at the Chanukah festival this year, they not only emphasized the importance of *tikkun olam* in their lives, they voiced our need to remember and pay tribute to those who lost their lives this fall in Pittsburgh:

This candle is in memory of those lost at *Tree of Life*
May we see better days when violence is no longer rife.
This candle can light the way to see inside the soul.
To find compassion there for all that will be our goal.
Tikkun Olam is incomplete unless we do what's right.
We pledge to help each other as candle five we light.

For us as Humanistic Jews, Chanukah teaches the values of tolerance and pluralism as required conditions for peaceful human coexistence. Tzedakah projects at Oraynu Children's School give our children a chance to express this ideal in action.

Thank you to all for assisting in our tzedakah projects this year and for your generous support of our school which makes it all happen. A happy holiday and a joyful New Year!

Steve

Upcoming Events

- Sunday, January 13: *The Children of Lodz*, A Holocaust Education Interpretive Art Program. Grade 7 Family Education. 10:45 am-12:15 pm. Room 103
- Sunday, January 13: *B'nai Mitzvah Luncheon*. 12:15 pm – 1:30 pm. Staff Room.
- Sunday, January 20: *Humanistic Jewish Self Defence Workshop* with Rabbi Denise Handlarski. For Grade 5, 6 and 7 students only. 10:00 am-12:00 noon
- Friday, January 25: *Ceramic Art Oneg Shabbat*. Guest artists from *Artistic Way*. A potluck dinner event. School, congregation and guests. Borochov Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. 7:00-10:00 pm.
- Sunday, January 27: *Grade 1-2 Tu B'shevat Trip to Kensington Place Retirement Residence*. 10:30 am -12:15 pm
- Sunday, February 3: *Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre*. Gr. 6 and Oraynu Member trip. Lipa Green Bldg. 10:00 am-12:15 pm
- Tuesday, February 12: *Out of the Cold*, for Gr. 7 students. Beth Sholom Synagogue. 7-9 pm.
- March 1-3: *Teen and Young Adult Conclave*. Theme this year is "Growth". Boston, MA.
- Sunday, March 3: *Oraynu Purim Festival*. 10:00 am – 12:30 pm. Borochov Centre, Social Hall.

THANK YOU LETTER FROM HEART TO HEART

December 3, 2018

Dear Oraynu Congregation for Secular Humanistic Judaism and Oraynu Children's School,

On behalf of our participants, their peers, families and communities, as well as our staff and volunteers I would like to express our sincere Thank you! Todah! Shukran! for your generous support. Heart to Heart works every day to build a more shared society in Israel by empowering young Jewish and Palestinian citizens to be leaders with the passion, skills, and relationships needed to make it a reality. With your support we are able to provide the highest quality experiential educational programming and continue to create the judgement-free, safe spaces needed for authentic dialogue and relationship building.

Thank you in particular for the donation of \$500.00 raised at the Oraynu Children School's Chanukah Festival cookie sale and Chanukah market. This gift will be used to support **3 full days at camp** for one of our 2019 participants.

At Heart to Heart we connect people to build a more connected and inclusive Israel and a better world. Thank you for being our partner in this important work.



Jenny Isaacs

Director of Heart to Heart on behalf of the Heart to Heart Team

THANK YOU FROM NELLIE'S FOR ORAYNU'S TOILETRY DRIVE

Dear Oraynu Staff and Families,

Please convey my sincere thanks on behalf of Nellie's, to the grade 7 students in your class for supporting the women who use our shelter and community programs.

Forty-five years ago, Nellie's opened its doors as one of the first women's shelters in Toronto. As the city has changed, so has Nellie's. What was a shelter of 16 beds for young homeless women has become a safe space of 40 beds for women and their children fleeing domestic violence, poverty, mental health barriers to accessing housing or other systemic oppressions. As our shelter's occupancy rate has increased to its present day capacity, so have our challenges — and round the holidays those challenges are even greater. The women and children who stay with us would rather be someplace else for the holidays. Some place without fear, uncertainty, and pain. With community support we do our best to make Nellie's as warm and inviting during the holiday season (and year-round.)

Each holiday season Nellie's has a Sponsor program for women and children in shelter and the community in need of support. Single women are often not sponsored. We are extremely appreciative to the Oraynu Children's School for providing a gift to all marginalized women who come to us this season.

Wishing you, your family and students a Happy Holidays!

Ingrid Graham, Nellie's Director of Development

FAMILY CHANUKAH FESTIVAL PHOTOS



*(Thanks to
Shawn Bertin
for these
great photos)*

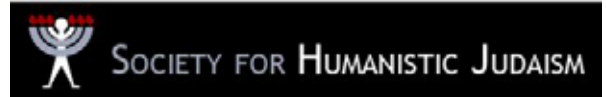


Packing toiletries for Nellie's



SHJ to mark 50th Anniversary in April

By Richard Logan, President



Next April 25-28 in Farmington Hills, Michigan, the Society for Humanistic Judaism will have a large event celebrating fifty years of serving secular and cultural Jews and those close to them. This will be an opportunity for all of us to honour the continuing legacy of Rabbi Sherwin Wine that SHJ and our communities represent, and to celebrate all that Humanistic Judaism has accomplished and all that it means to us.

It will also be the occasion for us to rededicate ourselves to fifty more years of working together to keep Jewish culture alive and vital in the lives of secular Jews, Jewish youth and intercultural families, and to be an ever stronger presence in the Jewish community, and beyond. What we stand for and what we offer have never been more important for an increasingly secular Jewish world, and for our country. We are a strong organization with a lot to celebrate after fifty years, not the least of which is a greater potential to become more significant than ever before.

The weekend will feature major speakers and a number of workshops and sessions on timely topics. You will all be hearing more about the plans for a very exciting weekend in the near future.

It has been my pleasure to sit in on some of teleconferences of the task force planning this big weekend for SHJ. Much of the hard work of this task force is by very capable SHJ members from across the country. The time, energy, dedication, creative thought and plain hard work this talented group has put in is impressive, and their energy and enthusiasm for this event is infectious. I assure you that you will feel the same enthusiasm when you see the final plans for the celebration, including the nationally-known speakers and many very worthwhile sessions.

I hope that you will all put “Brand New at Fifty” — the most important event for SHJ and our movement — on your calendars and plan to attend the largest celebration of the Humanistic Judaism community that has ever been held. Blocks of hotel rooms are being reserved and other logistics are being finalized. Stay tuned!



2019 HuJews Conclave: March 1-3 in Boston MA

The **HuJews Conclave** is an annual North American teen and college fromconference sponsored by the Society for Humanistic Judaism. Conclave brings together teens in grades 8-12 and college students across the United States and Canada for a weekend of fun, service, insight, and discovery. Conclave empowers young Humanistic Jews to connect with their peers and engage in thought-provoking discussions, fun-filled workshops, rewarding community service activity, and much more. For more info, contact Anna Goldberg, HuJews Co-ordinator, at: anna.hujews@gmail.com

To register, go to: <http://www.shj.org/youth-programs/youth-conference/>

Tu B'shevat from a Humanistic Perspective

From shj.org



Tu B'Shevat (literally the 15th day of the Jewish month of Shevat, this year it's on Jan. 21st) has a long history. Some scholars believe that in its most ancient form, the holiday celebrated the Near Eastern goddess Asherah (or Astarte or Ishtar), whose symbol was a tree, was a popular fertility deity and consort of the Canaanite God El. During the Temple period (until 70 CE), farmers of fruit were taxed in the form of tithes. Tu B'Shevat was likely a tax collection day for fruit, when the tax year would begin and end. Tu B'Shevat became the "new year for trees." After the destruction of the Temple (70 CE), when tithing was no longer possible, little is known of how the day was recognized.

During the era of Jewish mysticism (16th C.), Tu B'Shevat re-emerged as a more popular and meaningful festival, first among Sephardi Jews. Mystical significance was attributed to the rebirth of the natural world in spring, and the Tu B'Shevat seder, ingesting symbolic foods around a festive meal, was created. The festival gained popularity and spread throughout the Sephardi world and eventually became part of Ashkenazi custom as well.

Since the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, Tu B'Shevat also has come to be associated with planting trees in Israel. Most recently, as awareness of the environment has become a more pressing concern for many people, Tu B'Shevat has become a day on which we recognize our ethical obligations to care for the planet and its inhabitants. The idea of a new year for trees and recognizing our connection to the earth is a popular Tu B'Shevat theme today.

(See p. 2 for info on how Oraynu celebrates with our Jewish Indigenous Tu B'Shevat Seder.)

ORAYNU CONGREGATION FOR HUMANISTIC JUDAISM

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WHAT WE BELIEVE ...

- ◆ A Jew is someone who identifies with the history, culture, and fate of the Jewish people.
- ◆ Judaism encompasses the civilization created by the Jewish people. It includes art and music, folk culture, and the treasured masterpieces of our great writers and thinkers, from the Bible to the present.
- ◆ We have the power and responsibility to shape our own lives independent of supernatural authority.
- ◆ Our ethics and morality serve human needs. We participate in *tikkun olam* (building a better world) for all people.
- ◆ We strive to express our Jewishness in a manner consistent with our beliefs.
- ◆ We stand in solidarity with the State of Israel and with Jewish communities in Toronto and around the world.
- ◆ The freedom and dignity of the Jewish people must go hand in hand with the freedom and dignity of all people.
- ◆ We warmly welcome into our community all those who share our values and who are connected to the Jewish people, whether by birth, adopted identity or by family relationship.

ORAYNU TRIBUTE DONATIONS/CARDS

Members and friends can choose to honour a person or an event (memorial, birth, birthday, bar/bat mitzvah, marriage, anniversary, achievement, etc.) by making a tax-receiptable donation of \$18 or more to Oraynu. An **Oraynu Tribute Card** will be sent to the person or family of the honouree and the donation will be also recognized in *The Shofar*.

To arrange this, please contact Roby at:

416-385-3910 | roby@oraynu.org

PASTORAL AND EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Jewish Guidance is a service that many of our members expect from their congregational leaders. Oraynu provides part-time services of:

- Steve Shabes for guidance about Jewish education for children and youth
- Rabbi Eva Goldfinger, for guidance regarding life cycle transitions and conversion
- Rabbi Karen Levy, Rabbi Eva Goldfinger and Rabbi Denise Handlarski for pastoral guidance regarding intermarriage, Jewish practices, adult education and ethics

Guidance is offered, but not counseling or tutoring, which can be provided on a fee-for-service basis. **For referral to the appropriate person, contact Roby at: 416-385-3910 or roby@oraynu.org/**

GET INVOLVED!

- Chesed Circle (Sunshine Committee) - Roby Sadler: roby@oraynu.org
- Fund Raising Oraynu (FRO) - Contact either Mark Brender: mbrender11@gmail.com OR Steve Shabes: stevenshabes@yahoo.ca
- Tikkun Olam Oraynu - Rabbi Denise: rabbidenise@oraynu.org
- New Member Welcome – Rabbi Denise: as above
- School Committee - Chair, Erin Winocur: ewinocur@rogers.com

**THE SHOFAR is a bi-monthly publication of
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EDITOR: SANDI HORWITZ

Oraynu Congregation is part of a worldwide movement, affiliated with Society for Humanistic Judaism and the International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism.

Oraynu Children's School gratefully acknowledges funding support from:



Check website
for updates:
oraynu.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, Jan. 11 at 7:30 pm **SHABBAT CELEBRATION AND DISCUSSION** (More info: p. 3)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

Thursday, Jan. 24 at 7:00 pm **ADULT EDUCATION with Rabbi Eva Goldfinger** (p. 3)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

Sunday, Jan. 20 at 7:30 pm **JEWISH-INDIGENOUS TU B'SHVAT SEDER** (p. 4)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

Friday, Jan. 25 at 7:00 pm **SCHOOL/CONGREGATION SHABBAT POTLUCK DINNER** (p. 3)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

Thursday, Jan. 31 at 7:30 pm **HIGH HOLIDAY REVIEW MEETING (Members only)** (p. 4)
Location: Members' home, Leslie/Cummer area

Sunday, Feb. 3 at 10:00 am **HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE VISIT** (p. 4)
Location: Lipa Green Building, 4th Floor, 4600 Bathurst St. (Sherman Campus)

Tuesday, Feb. 12 at 7:30 pm **DARWIN DAY EVENT—THE PUZZLE OF MAZEL** (p. 4)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

Thursday, Feb. 21 at 7:00 pm **ADULT EDUCATION with Rabbi Eva Goldfinger** (p. 3)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

Sunday, Mar. 3 at 10:00 am **FAMILY PURIM FESTIVAL** (p. 5)
Location: Oraynu Children's School, 131 Fenn Avenue (Bayview/York Mills)

Sunday, Mar. 3 at 7:30 pm **SHOW YOUR HEART 2019** (p. 4)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

Thursday, Mar. 21 at 7:00 pm **ADULT EDUCATION with Rabbi Eva Goldfinger** (p. 3)
Location: Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell (Wilson Hts/Sheppard)

For all events,
kindly RSVP
to Roby:
416-385-3910 or
robby@oraynu.org



For more Oraynu news and conversation,
log onto our Facebook page.
It's a great place to connect with
fellow members, share ideas,
and stay up-to-date on events.

LAST WORD: Topics for Dinner Table or Car Talks

Inject a little more Judaism into the life of your family. Here's a suggestion from Rabbi Denise for a topic of conversation for your next dinner party, around your family table, or in the car on the way to Sunday school.



This time, we invite you to discuss this quote from Pirkei Avot:

"Get yourself a teacher; acquire yourself a friend; and judge every person on the positive side"