

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2007



Spring is coming (believe it or not)!

Rabbi Eli Kukla

Have you ever heard of JST (Jewish Standard Time)? According to popular tradition

Jews are always late for everything. However, when it comes to the changing of the seasons Judaism is one step ahead. Even though here in Toronto the **external** temperatures are still frigid our **internal** spiritual Jewish calendar is beginning to shift towards spring. Last week we marked *Tu B'Shevat*, the Jewish New Year of the trees which celebrates the invisible moment when the sap begins to rise in the trees.

As we move towards spring we are turning our attention towards *chag ha'aviv*, the festival of the springtime which is a biblical name for Passover. Passover is linked to this season as it is a holiday which is all about making room in our lives for expansion and growth. Leaving Egypt, most literally, means creating space in our lives to grow -- it is the exodus that happens in our daily lives when we find the room for our souls to expand. The Jewish mystic Rabbi Nachman of Breslav says: "The Exodus from Egypt occurs in every human being, in every era, in every year and even on every day."

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This year at the DJC we are marking this season in two important ways. On Tuesday April 10 (the last night of Passover) we will be hosting a community Seder. This will be an opportunity for all members of our community to join together and bring their questions and creativity to the Passover celebration.

That weekend, in honour of this season of expansion and diversity, the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto (MCCT) will be partnering with us for a weekend of shared learning. MCCT is a thriving congregation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people and heterosexual allies from all walks of life. On Friday, April 13, members of MCCT will be joining us for our Friday Night Services. Senior pastor Rev. Brent Hawkes will be offering the sermon on the theme of diversity. Rev Hawkes is a renowned, award-winning speaker who has been honoured by the United Nations and the city of Toronto. On Sunday, April 15, members of the DJC are invited to join MCCT for their services. I will be offering a sermon to the community on Jewish liberation theology and offering a workshop after services.

This program will be a great learning experience and I hope that you plan to join us. It is a way for us to begin to get to know some of our neighbors interested in getting involved with social action in this

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evolving community in Riverdale. It is also a way to engage with other spiritual communities working to build diverse open spaces where everyone

can fulfill the potential of the coming season – expansion and growth!

Shabbat Shalom!



What: Our next in-home Shabbat, at the home of Sheri Cohen
Where: **4 Austin Crescent** (*just north of Davenport and east of Bathurst*).

By car: From the corner of Davenport and Bathurst, drive one block north to Austin Terrace, turn east on Austin Terrace and then make an immediate right on Austin Crescent to #4. There is a Buddha outside and a mezuzah on the door.

TTC: Take the Bathurst bus north from the Bathurst station and get off at Davenport.

When: Friday, **February 23, 7:00pm**

RSVP: (416) 516-8330

Finger food contributions are most welcome.

If you would like to volunteer your home for a Friday evening service, please contact Diana Chastain at dianach@allstream.net or (416) 465-0635.

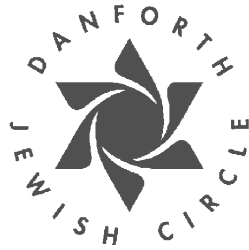


The **2007 DJC Purim Carnival** is being held **Thursday, March 1st** at the site of our DJC school program (Miss Miriam's Play Centre, 583A Danforth Avenue – on the second floor above Sun Valley) from **5:30pm-7:00pm.**

A wonderful "**Purim Shpiel**" will be performed from 5 – 5:30 p.m. Between 5:30 and

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7:00 p.m., it's **Carnival Time!**

Highlights include:

1. A Purim café where you can purchase pizza, cold drinks and Hamantashen
2. Carnival games with prizes and a trade-up table
3. Arts and crafts and face-painting

Please note that all DJC School parents are invited to attend the Carnival starting at 5:30 p.m. Also, we ask that you please arrive as close to 5:30 as possible as it's difficult for the staff to watch all of the kids during the Carnival.

As usual, we really need volunteers to make this Carnival happen so please consider volunteering 45 minutes of your time. *As a special thank-you, our volunteers will receive free tickets for drinks and pizza.*

Please contact Jackie Goldman (416-861-8055 or jackie.goldman@cibc.com) if you're able to help or for more information.

Mark your calendars now...

DJC Community Seder Tuesday, April 10

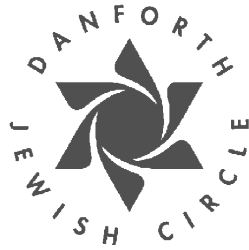


Plans for our community Seder are in full gear! We're planning a potluck Seder with the DJC providing all the specific food for the Seder plate.
(More details to follow in our next newsletter).

Location: Riverdale Presbyterian Church, 662 Pape Avenue; just south of the Danforth, 6:00pm.
Free childcare provided.

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DJC member Joanne Hunter and a few hearty souls are continuing to work on an alternative Haggadah and would welcome a helping hand! The plan is put together a supplement to go with the regular Haggadah. Anyone interested can join the group and bring any materials they wish to incorporate. Please contact Joanne Hunter @ midlearth@sympatico.ca.



The Passover Table: Touch, Paint, Enjoy! Tapping into the Judaica artist within. A DJC First!

Have you always wanted to set the Passover Seder table with your own creations? Use a Seder plate that you hand-crafted? Place an Elijah's cup that you made yourself?

Here's an opportunity for us as a downtown Jewish community, to connect and get creative! We'll be making ceramic creations for the Passover table in our own neighbourhood. Come join us and let your artistic side soar with the spirit of Pesach and all it signifies!

Date & time: Sunday March 25th, 4:00pm-7:00pm

Who: Adults, children welcome!

Place: The Clay Room, 279 Danforth Avenue

Cost: Depending on the item(s) you are painting, \$12 - \$23 per piece, tax included. (That's up to 35% off the regular in-store price!!) Available pieces include: Seder and/or matzoh plates, Kiddush cups; mezzuzot, and menorahs. Instruction is included.

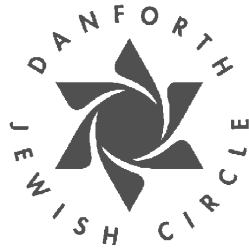
Registration is required no later than February 23, 2007(firm).

Register your interest with Karen Bernstein at kjbern@sympatico.ca with the text DJC CERAMIC PASSOVER in the subject heading and you will receive further details.

Come join us!

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And keep in mind...

What: Sermon exchange with the Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto

When: Sunday **April 15, 11:00 a.m.**

Where: Metropolitan Community Church, 115 Simpson Avenue -- at the corner of Logan Avenue and Simpson, one block east of Broadview.

DJC Member Survey: Our Community Speaks

The best way to make decisions in a community like the DJC is with lots of help and input from everyone. Thankfully, you the members feel the same way. In June, over 70 people participated in a creative visioning session that identified key interests that we have been following up on ever since. And in December, 120 people responded to an online member survey to let us know what's working and where there's room for improvement.

Here is a summary of responses from the survey. We asked for feedback on three topics: High Holiday Services, ongoing programs, and our new rabbi, Eli Kukla. As you will see, the overall results are very positive and encouraging. This does not mean that every single respondent was delighted with everything. We have never set out to be all things to all people. Rather, we hope what we do offer reflects our collective needs.

Questions were rated using a five point satisfaction scale where:

- 5 = Totally Satisfied
- 4 = Mostly Satisfied
- 3 = Somewhat Satisfied
- 2 = Mostly Dissatisfied
- 1 = Totally Dissatisfied

Here are the average responses to the survey questions:

Question #1:

How satisfied do you feel with this year's High Holiday services? 3.81/5.00

Question #2:

How satisfied do you feel with the way Rabbi Eli Kukla led the services?

3.68/5.00

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Question #3:

How satisfied are you with the following events and activities?

1. Friday Night Services	4.07/5.00
2. Childrens' School	4.04/5.00
3. Book Club	4.32/5.00
4. Listening Campaign	4.00/5.00
5. Torah Study	4.21/5.00
6. Childrens' B'nai Mitzvah	3.92/5.00
7. The Retreat	4.36/5.00
8. Adult B'nai Mitzvah	3.38/5.00

Question #3b:

How satisfied are you with Rabbi Eli Kukla's role in leading the events you attended? 3.89/5.00

What meaning do we take from this? We are encouraged and feel very positive about the results. There is room for improvement in certain areas and that's where we will focus our energies. The enthusiastic response to the range of new and ongoing activities is very gratifying, and continues to spawn new initiatives. The combination of a young, committed and energetic rabbi with a highly engaged membership is reaping great rewards. Friday night Shabbat services are attracting record numbers, and proactive community-building efforts like the Listening Campaign are creating more ways for members to get to know each other and to have a stake in our community.

The DJC Board thanks you for being so open and willing to share your reactions and ideas with us. We are deeply committed to listening, and leading in a shared direction. Please feel free to bring your suggestions forward to help us to grow and strengthen our circle.



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DJC BOOK CLUB: Intellectual stimulation, discussion and a great nosh!



Tuesday, March 6, 2007

**“THE WHITE ROSE” BY INGE SCHOLL & DOROTHEE SOELLE
FACILITATOR: RABBI MICHAEL STROH**

The White Rose tells the story of Hans Scholl and Sophie Scholl, who in 1942 led a small underground organization of German students and professors to oppose the atrocities committed by Hitler and the Nazi Party. They named their group the White Rose, and they distributed leaflets denouncing the Nazi regime. Sophie, Hans and a third student were caught and executed. Written by Inge Scholl (Hans and Sophie's sister), "The White Rose" features letters, diary excerpts, photographs of Hans and Sophie, transcriptions of leaflets, and accounts of the trial and execution. While previously not well known, this gripping story of courage and morality was recently made into a feature film.

Rabbi Michael S. Stroh is Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Har Zion in North York. He teaches regularly at Kolel - the Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning; as well, he is chair of the Reform Round Table, a group of rabbis who discuss the content and direction of Reform Judaism.

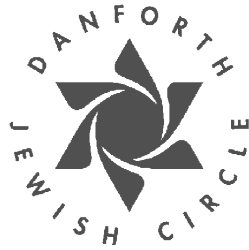
...and a glowing note about our last meet, (January30):

The well attended DJC book group was treated to a stimulating talk by Derek Penslar, Director of Jewish Studies at University of Toronto, who explored the political and psychological themes in Philip Roth's *Operation Shylock*. With just the right blend of informative lecture and thought provoking questions, he facilitated a lively discussion of ideas re: identity, Israel, diasporism, literary styles, and Philip Roth himself.

Many thanks to hosts Susan and Stephen Ginsberg for their hospitality and delicious desserts!

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DJC EVENTS: FEBRUARY AND MARCH AT A GLANCE...

February / March Calendar

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Friday, **February 23** - In-home Shabbat, **7:00pm**, 4 Austin Crescent (see *location details in notice*).

Tuesday, **March 6** - Book Club meeting, **7:30pm**, to discuss *The White Rose* by Inge Scholl & Dorothe Soelle; Facilitator-Rabbi Michael Stroh.
(*Location details by rsvp: info@djctoronto.com*).

Friday, **March 9** - Shabbat service, **6:30pm** at Eastminster Church, 310 Danforth Avenue- **Location:** Eastminster Sanctuary, *please use the Danforth entrance*. Rabbi Eli Kukla leading. We are honoured to bless Adam Sadowski's and Meredith Low's baby, Lily Miriam Low Sadowski.
[Free childcare provided.](#)

Saturday, **March 10** - Torah Study with Rabbi Eli Kukla, **10:30am**, at Riverdale Presbyterian, 662 Pape Avenue (side door, follow steps down to the basement).

Sunday, **March 25** - "*Judaica Artist within*", The Clay Room, 279 Danforth Avenue, 4:00-7:00pm. Please register with Karen Bernstein (by February 23):
kjbern@sympatico.ca.

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