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Purim in Israel

Imagine the frivolity of Carnival, the youthful exuberance of Halloween, and the bravado of a thousands year old war victory - all rolled into one day. That's how Israelis celebrate Purim, the Jewish holiday commemorating the foiling of a plot to kill the Jews of ancient Persia.



This boisterous holiday falls the middle of on the 14th of the Jewish month of Adar, which usually corresponds to the middle of March. The protagonists of the Purim story are the king of ancient Persia Achashverosh, his new bride, Queen Esther the Jewess, and the King's evil advisor, Haman.

The fixation of Haman's evil ways was his plot to kill the Jews. But Queen Esther - and her uncle Mordechai - stepped in to plead their people's case with the king. They convinced Achashverosh to spare the Jewish people from Haman's evil decree. And then to seal the deal, the king ordered Haman (and his minions) hanged instead.

Despite the macabre overtones of the holiday, Purim today is actually a fun-filled festival, featuring sweet parades of costumed children and the exchange of baskets stuffed with hamantashen and other Purim pastries.

For many, Purim is even a New Year's Eve-like excuse to imbibe. Jewish law actually proscribes that revelers (at least those over the legal drinking age) drink so much that they can no longer distinguish between the names of Purim's hero, Mordechai, and its villain, Haman.

For most American Jews, Purim is commemorated at synagogue or perhaps the Jewish community center. Parties are enjoyable, but usually stop shy of truly boisterous.

In Israel, however, Purim is as intensely ruckus as Carnival in Brazil or Mardi Gras in New Orleans. Every city, large and small, has a

[Continued on page 7.](#)

RABBI

Jane Rachel Litman

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Acting President's Message

Dear Friends,

Our President Pro Tem, **Neal Wasser**, is currently on holiday, and I am replacing him temporarily while he is away. This Spring promises to be a busy time for our

Congregation as you will sense by reading this newsletter and the regular weekly updates so ably prepared by Rennie Parrish. I urge you to support as many of these upcoming events as possible, including our wonderful Spring Dinner and Silent Auction that will occur on Sunday March 27th; our Purim Celebration on the weekend of March 18th; and the visit of our visiting Scholar-In-Residence, Rabbi Shawn Zevit, on the weekend of April 1st. I wish to acknowledge the generous grant provided to Kolot Mayim by the Jewish Federation of Victoria and Vancouver Island in support of Rabbi Zevit's visit, and the kind assistance of Rabbi Jane Litman in securing his services for us.

Recently, at a general meeting of our Congregation, our Board was encouraged to be more transparent in sharing certain administrative decisions with the Temple membership. This advice was well received by our Board, and henceforth, the agenda of each upcoming Board meeting will be circulated to each Temple member by e-mail in advance of our Board meetings. Please know that you are welcome to attend each Board meeting, except for the occasional in camera session. Please feel comfortable in communicating with any Board member if you have questions or concerns.

I am happy to announce the following recent additions to our Board: **Klaus Benker** has assumed the role of Vice President; **Reva Hutkin** has become Board Secretary, and **Caroline Hergt** has become a Member-At-Large, and will assist Don Sher and the Finance Committee in handling certain aspects of the financial operations of our Congregation. I wish to express the sincere appreciation of our members to each of these three individuals for taking on these duties. At the moment we have one Board vacancy, which is the Treasurer's position. I would also like to acknowledge the excellent recent efforts of Neal Wasser on behalf of our Temple, in his role as President Pro Tem.

Our Board has decided to allow our agreement with Rabbi Jane Litman to expire at the end of this Temple year. Rabbi Litman has worked extremely hard on behalf of our Temple over the past three years, and we are extremely grateful for all that she has done for us. She has forged a close bond with **Continued on page 4.**



Purim: The Ultimate Day Off

What's the major difference between Judaism and ancient polytheism?

I'll bet you answered that Judaism has one God while ancient polytheism had many gods. Of course that's true, but it's not the major difference. What is it then? In the ancient polytheistic system, gods were amoral - not necessarily immoral, but just not concerned with morality. Those gods represented the forces of nature: there was the sun god and the rain god and the ocean god etc. The divinity of the gods rested in their power, the strength and might of their impact on the world of mere mortals.

In contrast, the God of Israel is not concerned with mere might and power. In the Jewish sacred narrative, power is the handmaid to morality. Jewish theology introduced a new focus. It directed it's creative (some say near obsessive) energy on the task of understanding the difference between right and wrong. Look at the story of Creation in Genesis, for example. God creates the world and simultaneously evaluates it - "this is good," says God. Human beings become different from animals, become godly themselves, by eating the fruit of knowledge of good and evil. The fruit doesn't just provide information, but rather moral discernment.

The miraculous deliverance of the Jewish people celebrated at Passover is just the opening scene to the climax at Sinai. God's might at the Red Sea is only a prelude to the revelation of Torah. In Judaism, torah study is the center of theology. It is perhaps the most profound road to knowing God. Torah study is a spiritual discipline of moral discernment, the educational process that undergirds the system of *mitzvot* by which Jews live our lives.

With all this emphasis on right and wrong, it is thus odd to find out that the one of the *mitzvot* of Purim (the evening of Saturday, March 19) is to get so tipsy that one cannot distinguish between, "Blessed is Mordechai," and "Cursed is Haman," that is, one cannot discern right from wrong. Why it's like being back in the Garden of Eden for a day! On Purim we dress up and wear masks - we enter a playful make believe world far from the cares of ordinary reality.

Let's face it. We live in very troubled times. The international economy is shaky; the Middle East is in profound political transition. People of good will and caring differ about how to respond to the problems we face. I believe that each of us, day by day, tries to discern the most ethical path toward the future. Judaism supports this kind of moral search, even though it is an anguishing process. Judaism does not shy away from difficult moral challenges. Yet even in the middle of the quest, Judaism also tells us that occasionally it's important to take a day off. Maybe celebrating Purim gives us perspective in the quest for justice; maybe it's just a chance to have fun. I think perhaps the most significant years to honor Purim in all its silliness and amorality is during times like these. It takes a certain kind of faith and courage to still say, "Hag Purim Sameach," and shake one's grogger when in the face of world wide instability. But I hope you will.

Rabbi Jane

Chai חַי

Did you know that we have provided you with an opportunity to commemorate important events in the lives of your family and friends? Our Chai Fund appears in the Newsletter every month and contains the names of the donor and the occasion. These can be "Thank Yous," messages of condolence, good wishes for weddings, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, anniversaries, birthdays, appreciation or anything you find noteworthy. A card will be sent by us on your behalf to the person(s) you wish to honour. Chai Fund donations are a great way to raise much needed funds for our Congregation, and are tax deductible.

All you have to do is send a cheque to the Treasurer, made payable to Kolot Mayim Reform Temple. It may be left in the Kolot Mayim folder at the JCC, or mailed to Kolot Mayim Reform Temple at the JCC of Victoria, 3636 Shelbourne Avenue, Victoria, BC, V8P 4H2.

Donations made during the past month:

In honour of **Reva Hutkin's 75th Birthday:** Joe and Ann Gougeon-Ryant, Libby Weiser, Mr. & Mrs. Nathan Letovsky, Louise Jones, Judith Rayburn, Bill & Eva Katz, Phyllis Serota, Arline Parrish, Leslie Knight, Diana Shnider, Sharon & Jack Shalinsky, Jane O. Hastings, Phyllis Golden & Wanda Brown, Joanne Payment, Lee Porteous, Debbie Yaffe, Lois Moon, Janice Dutton, Joan Garcia, Arline Leshner, and many anonymous.

If you would like to sponsor an issue of **The Voice**, please contact **Julie Elizabeth** at 250-388-4161 or email her at <madrona623@telus.net>.

Sponsorship costs \$100.00, is tax deductible, and covers our printing and mailing costs ONLY.

Acting President's Message, Continued from page 2.

many of our members, and has involved herself in all aspects of our activities. Unfortunately our membership has declined over the past year, and we are unable to afford to continue the current arrangement.

The Board has created a Rabbi Search Committee to explore various options in securing professional leadership for the year ahead. Rabbis Sarah Newmark and Louis Sutker will be visiting our Congregation to give services, and to meet with Temple members in the near future. Each of these visits, and possibly others, will be advertised to our members in a variety of ways. Please consider attending these events. The Rabbi Search Committee will welcome broad congregational feedback as we plan for the year ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Fagan

**PURIM
SPIEL**

**Saturday
March 19th**

**with a
star-
studded
cast**

7:00 pm

**at the
JCCV**



**Sunday March 27th
beginning at 5:00 p.m.**

Silent Auction!

featuring many goods and services, including
fine English China from a private collection.
Bring your cheque books!

in support of
Kolot Mayim Reform Temple
and



featuring
a home-cooked 3-course meal
(Elk Lake location)

and

a fascinating talk by Dr. Jordan Paper
on the enigma of the Chinese Jews.

Dr. Paper is Professor Emeritus of Religious and East Asian
Studies at York University, Toronto, and a Fellow of the
Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, Adjunct Professor
in Pacific and Asian Studies at the University of Victoria.

Food for the Body, Food for the Mind!

Tickets

\$36.00 Single/\$60.00 Couple
from

Katrina at <klgreenfh@gmail.com>
or 250-382-5694.

Get yours early as seating is limited.

**All are welcome.
BYOB**



Torah Study

Everyone is welcome
to the Shabbat
morning Torah Study
Group at Joe and
Ann Gougeon-Ryant's
home, #110 - 999
Burdett Street (at
Vancouver), at 11 am.

This is a lively
conversation about
how the themes of
Torah relate to our
lives. Rabbi Jane is
preparing weekly
materials, and teaches
the group when
she is in town. On
other weeks, it is a
cooperative learning
session. Please call
Joe or Ann at 250-
384-9351 for more
information.

* Why do people eat poppy seeds on
Purim ?

* From what tribe was Mordecai ?

* How many times is Haman's name
mentioned in the megillah ?

* These are just a few examples of
Purim trivia that you will find in the
Jewish Trivia Database. The facts, the
whole facts, and nothing but the facts!

Scholar-in-Residence April 1st to 3rd, 2011

The Religious Affairs Committee (RAC) is very grateful to the Jewish Federation of Victoria and Vancouver Island for funding to promote the upcoming visit of Rabbi Shawn Zevit. We are also grateful to Rabbi Jane for recommending him for our Scholar-in-Residence programme.

Watch for details of Rabbi Zevit's visit in your weekly updates.



Rabbi Shawn Israel Zevit, (RRC '98), JRF Director of Congregational Services, Tikkun Olam, and Outreach, has worked for the Reconstructionist Movement since 1998, and has over 25 years experience in spiritual and congregational leadership, organizational consulting and training, educational arts, writing, recording, teaching and performing. He has consulted with numerous corporations, government, non-profit institutions and faith

communities across North America. He is a founding member of Shabbat Unplugged, who recorded the JRF Haggadah CD, "Night of Questions", and has five CD's of original music. Rabbi Shawn is also Co-Director with Rabbi Marcia Prager of the Davennan Leader's Training Institute, awarded the 2009 National Mintz Foundation Education Award (www.isabellafreedman.org/dlti), and is a spiritual director and trainer of clergy in spiritual direction. He is author of "Offerings of the Heart: Money and Values in Faith Communities" (Alban, 2005), co-editor with Harry Brod of the just published "Brother Keepers: New Essays in Jewish Masculinities" (Men's Studies Press, 2010, www.mensstudies.com), and numerous publications for JRF and the larger Jewish world. (see www.jrf.org/to and www.jrf.org/PEARL for congregational resources). See www.rabbizevit.com for music links, articles and more information.

The Victoria and Vancouver Island Jewish Burial Society

The Jewish Burial Society of Victoria and Vancouver Island is a service organization founded to assist all Jews with end of life requirements. We administer four totally separate and distinct sections in the Hatley Memorial Gardens and provide space for all persuasions of Jewish life from orthodox to secular, complete with cremation if specified.

The Society works with the Victoria Chevrah Kadisha in preparation of the body for burial, and works with the family in all ways to ensure that the bereaved person feels the embrace and concern of the entire community.

While we are a non profit Society, regretfully, end of life does not respect one's pocketbook, and costs are dear. There is a small membership charge that must be paid to become a member of our Society, and arrangements for this, and for burial requirements may be made at any time. We recommend dealing with one's self and saving the pain and expense of the survivors at a very stressful time.

For additional information on a highly confidential basis, call Joel Fagan (250 477-2006), Jack Shalinsky (250 477-1012), or Michael Goldberg (250 598-9094).

Aubergine

Specialty Foods

Vancouver Island's source for kosher foods.

We stock a complete range of meats, cheeses, pastries and a complete grocery selection for all your kosher needs.

Aubergine carries the largest Passover grocery selection on the Island. Over 200 items to choose from.

Located at 1308 Gladstone Avenue
(next to the Fernwood Pub)

250-590-1031

Leon Zetler

Store hours:

Monday-Saturday: 9:30AM - 6PM

Sunday: 10AM - 5:30PM



Purim in Israel, cont'd. parade. The one in Tel Aviv is so over-the-top that cross-dressing drag queens can usually be seen mingling amongst the clown-clad kiddies.

School children often have multiple costumes. After all, why pick just one superhero or princess when your teacher lets you come in costume the whole week! In the days leading up to Purim, even teachers and administrators come to school in costume.

For weeks, every grocery store and baker is hawking the Purim pastry of Hamantashen. By the time the holiday finally rolls around, everyone has more than had their fill of these poppy-seed and prune-filled delights, so prices are slashed to a dime a dozen.

The actual day of Purim is a holiday from school, so that is when kids attend their neighborhood Purim party, sponsored by the local community centers. These affairs are loud and rocking, with blaring DJs, smoke machines and copious amounts of junk food.

Teenagers get in on the action at night, when there parties feature perhaps mellower music, but a near hyper-like consumption of alcohol.

While there is no trick-or-treating on Purim, the holiday still has that Halloween-like quality that most likely comes from ingesting way too many sugared treats. Religious and secular alike in Israel can be seen on Purim morning delivering baskets of food - usually sweet pastries and candy toffees - to their friends and family members. From < <http://www.holidays.net/purim/israel.htm> >



Brundibár: A Children's Opera in One Act

An uplifting story of good triumphing over evil, Brundibár (Czech slang for bumblebee) is an opera within a play. Based on Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*, Brundibár was first composed in 1938 by Hans Krása and Adolf Hoffmeister for a competition being run by the Czechoslovakian Ministry of Education. The results of the competition were never announced as Germany occupied the country, and Krása was interned in the Terezin Nazi holding camp (Theresienstadt in German), about 40 miles north of Prague. Brundibár was first performed by the children of the Terezin Jewish ghetto. Despite the horror and hardship, the arts flourished within the camp and allowed the children and adults to transcend the misery of their everyday life. As one of the most popular pieces, Brundibár was performed 55 times.

Synopsis

This beautiful anti-war fable tells the tale of a brother and sister who urgently need milk for their sick mother. To make money the children sing in the marketplace, much to the annoyance of the organ grinder Brundibár. As they struggle to overcome Brundibár and his cruel antics they are joined by an array of other children and some talking animals. [Write-up and image from http://www.euanmorton.com/musicals/brundibarachildrensopera.htm](http://www.euanmorton.com/musicals/brundibarachildrensopera.htm)

**Saturday
May 7th**

at

Alix Goolden Hall

**Kolot
Mayim**

will present

Brundibar,

performed by the

**Victoria
Children's Choir.**

Programme begins at 7 p.m.

Watch your weekly newsletter
for details of where to
purchase tickets.

This is a fundraiser for
our congregation and the
I-Witness Programme at UVic.
Please tell your friends and
families. Plan to come for a
wonderful musical evening,
and support your Temple, the
Victoria Children's Choir, and
the I-Witness Programme.

Tzedakah: A way of life.

Kolot Mayim Supports Food Bank

March 2011
Adar I-II 5771

THE VOICE

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Please bring food donations for the James Bay Community Project Food Bank to the JCC on Friday nights. We have a beautiful box for your contributions, which are deeply appreciated. Packaged goods as well as produce are welcomed.

Donations of cans of beans and soup are especially needed.

For more information, please contact Reva Hutkin, 388-4161, or Ann Gougeon-Ryant, 384-9351.

Get down and party, with God and Esther

by Anita Diamant

Purim is almost here. Have you got your costume yet? Your mask? Your atomic noisemaker?

Yeah, I'm talking to you: Mom, Dad, Gramps, Bubbe.

I understand your confusion. Purim is the premiere pediatric ewish observance in America. The tots are adorable as Esther and the King, parading around at the synagogue Purim carnival, lining up for their tickets, ring toss, and trinkets. Cute, cute, cute. Also wrong, wrong, wrong.

Call me the Purim Scrooge, but I gotta say it: Purim is wasted on the young.

For one thing, they just don't need it as much as we do. Toddlers laugh 5,276 times a day; grown-ups fewer than six times a day. I'm sure you've seen this statistic before. The science behind the numbers may be of dubious origin, but the message rings true. Purim is Judaism's attempt to correct this miserable imbalance - at least for one day.

Besides, Purim did not start out as a kiddie holiday. Take a look at the Book of Esther, for crying out loud. A bawdy burlesque that deserves an R-rating for its depiction of drunkenness, harem sexuality, and violence.

And then there's the fact that we're supposed to get falling-down, drooling stupid drunk on Purim - so drunk we can't tell the difference between Henry Hyde and Barney Frank. Purim means it's okay to gamble, too. The word purim comes from pur, which means "lot," as in, "What the heck. Let's bet the whole lot on red."

Purim has room for cute kids, but it also requires the grown ups to cavort and giggle, to sing "Adon Olam" to the tune of "I've been Working on the Railroad," to read Mad Magazine from the bimah (platform), and to look up the jokes in the Talmud (Bava Batra 23b and Berachot 8b). I kid you not.



PESACH MARKET

A Congregation Emanu-El
Hebrew School Fundraiser
at the Fisher Education Centre on
Blanshard at Pandora

Opening Dates
April 8 – 12, 2011

- * Kosher for Passover drygoods and frozen foods
- * The Simcha Gift Shop will be open.
- * Tea and coffee available

Mark the dates to shop for your Passover needs and support Hebrew Education in Victoria.

Opening Hours
April 8, 10 am – noon*
***(Seniors Shopping only)**
April 10th, 1 – 4pm
April 11th, 6 – 8 pm
April 12th, 6 – 8 pm

Continued on page 10

[Get down and party, Cont'd. from p. 9.](#) Once a year, Purim comes along to remind us to stop posing as a nation of priests, to wipe the smirk off our collective face, and to replace it with an idiotic grin. Get down and boogie with You-Know-Who, who certainly digs Purim. How else do you explain the belief that Purim will be the only Jewish holiday still celebrated after the messiah arrives and redeems the world? Not Yom Kippur. Not even Passover.

God must know we need to keep laughing at ourselves, no matter what. And if Purim is a keeper in this world, maybe the world to come will turn out to be a friendly asylum, staffed by the Marx brothers, assisted by the likes of Molly Picon, Henny Youngman, and Lenny Bruce - whose collective memory is a riot.

This is serious nonsense! If your rabbi doesn't do a disreputable funky chicken on Purim, your rabbi ought to get the hook.

Slip that seltzer bottle up your sleeve. Take my tsuris, please.

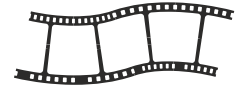
[Anita Diamant, a writer who lives in the Boston area, is a regular columnist for JewishFamily.com.](#)

Those We Remember ...

2010 Obs'd Date	Civil Date of Death	Hebrew Date of Death	Name	Relationship	Mourner
Mar. 1	Mar. 1, 2004	8 Adar 5764	Cari Hoover	Father	Karl Preuss
Mar. 2	March 2nd	Unknown	Maryann Fox	Mother	Barbara Fox-Juchau
Mar. 6	Mar. 6, 2004	13 Adar 5764	Sylvia Smith	Friend	Jacqueline Seigel
Mar. 7	Mar. 7, 2010	21 Adar 5770	Jon Carr	Husband	Rose Carr
Mar. 8	Mar. 8, 2000	1 Adar II 5760	Sonia Rawicki Agulnik	Mother	Dorothy Torontow
Mar. 9	Mar. 9, 1955	15 Adar 5715	Henrietta Jaffe	Mother	Len Jaffe
Mar. 9	Mar. 9, 2001	14 Adar 5761	Harry Agulnik	Father	Dorothy Torontow
Mar. 10	Mar. 10, 1994	27 Adar 5754	Gertrude Miller-Kantoff	Aunt	Don Sher
Mar. 10	Mar. 10, 2008	3 Adar II 5786	Betty Ann Cohen	Member	Congregation
Mar. 11	Mar. 11, 1980	23 Adar 5740	Annie Marks	Mother	Gerry Marks
Mar. 13	Mar. 13, 1995	11 Adar II, 5755	Wayne Sullivan	Husband	Doreen Sullivan
Mar. 14	Mar. 14, 1997	5 Adar II 5757	Frank Taylor	Father	Doreen Sullivan
Mar. 16	Mar 16, 2006	16 Adar 5766	Colin Laing	Father	Jenny Laing
Mar. 17	Mar. 17, 1994	24 Adar 5754	Clara Chuly	Mother	Phyllis Chuly
Mar. 17	Mar. 17, 2005	6 Adar II 5765	Saul Holiff	Friend	David Torontow
Mar. 23	Mar. 23, 1980	6 Nissan 5740	Nathan Landau	Father	Susan Kendal



JCCV JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL



Leon The Pig Farmer

An irreverent comedy about Leon Geller, a Jewish estate agent from London who, during a routine check-up at an infertility clinic, discovers he has something in common with Captain Blighe of the Bounty. Yes, they were both victims of mixed up se(a)men. It turns out that his biological father is not quite as Jewish as he'd hoped and is, in fact, a Yorkshire pig farmer. Despite their differences, Leon is welcomed into the family, but loyalties are torn when he accidentally breeds the first Kosher pig!

Saturday, March 26th, 7:30 pm

Jewish Community Centre, 3636 Shelbourne St.

Admission : \$5.00 (includes, popcorn, tea/coffee and dessert)

Twenty-one people came to our first film, *A Price Above Rubies*, which was excellent. Unfortunately, there was a problem with the sound, but organizers assure us that the problem has been rectified and future showings should go off without a hitch – sound and all!

March 2011

Adar I-II 5771

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 27	2 28	3 29	4 30 NO Kabbalat shabbat Service	Rosh Chodesh 5 1 Adar II Pekudei Torah Service Rabbi Newmark Kiddush Lunch
10:00 Rel.Sch. 6 2	7 3	8 4	9 5	10 6	7:30 Kabbalat Shabbat Service 11 7	Vayilra 12 8 11:00 Torah Study
10:00 Rel. Sch. 13 9	14 10	15 11	16 12	17 13	7:30 Kabbalat Shabbat Service 18 14	Tzav 19 15 PURIM 11-Torah Study
10:00 Community Purim Party 20 16	21 17	22 18	23 19	24 20	7:30 Kabbalat Shabbat Service 25 21	Shemini 26 22 11:00 Torah Study
10:00 Rel. Sch. 27 23	28 24					

White squares represent dates that Rabbi Jane will be with us.

Parshas are in red type.



UVic Holocaust Speakers Series: Generations of Voices



Tuesday, March 8, 2011 (4:30 – 6:00 pm, Clearihue A212)

Julius Maslovat

Wednesday, March 9, 2011 (7:30 – 9:00 pm, Clearihue A212)

Bob Boekbinder

Tuesday, March 15, 2011 (4:30 – 6:00 pm, Clearihue A212)

Peter Gary

Wednesday, March 16, 2011 (7:30 – 9:00 pm, Clearihue A212)

George Pal

Friday, March 18, 2011 (12:30 – 2:00 pm, David Strong. C116)

UVic Students and Faculty



The UVic Holocaust Speakers Series is a fundraising event for the *I-Witness Holocaust Field School Project*. **Admission is by donation** to support student scholarships to the program. 24 UVic students will be traveling to Central Europe to explore the ways in which the Holocaust has become memorialized and to build an understanding of how the lessons of the Holocaust are relevant in today's world.