

The Shofar



The United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong GPO Box 6083 Tel. 463-8156 Fax 456-3450 December, 1990

Jews by Choice Group sets first meeting for December 15

Martha Josephson looks at UJC efforts to meet important needs

"Inclusion" has been one of the driving philosophies behind the formation of The UJC. An initiative is now under way to provide a support system for Jews by choice and non-Jewish spouses and friends of UJC members. It's hoped thereby to offer a means to greater understanding both within and among families in the congregation. The program will include both home-study and group discussion.

While the emphasis will be on the needs of those wishing to convert, others will also find this to be an ideal forum for learning about the religion and traditions of a spouse or good friend. The program will include get-togethers for non-Jewish friends and spouses. Several UJC members have offered to act as mentors and discussion leaders.

It's hoped that visiting rabbis will become involved as well by recommending a course of study and meeting with the group. Others interested in participating or making suggestions are urged to contact UJC Committee members.

In view of the high degree of interest that's been shown, a first meeting has been planned for 2 p.m., Saturday, December 15 in the Kam Shan Room, 49th floor of The American Club, Two Exchange Square.

Incorporation Close

Victor Falk, Treasurer, reports that all required paperwork has been filed and that Government approval of The UJC's application for incorporation can be expected within the next two weeks. As the General Committee knows, we all owe Victor a big thanks for the enormous amount of time-consuming, detailed work he put into this project. The UJC will not only enjoy limited liability as a result but members will also benefit from certain tax-deductible provisions entitled for contributions.

Rabbi John Levi joins UJC members for busy Chanukah weekend ***Events scheduled for Thursday through Sunday***

Senior Rabbi John S. Levi of Temple Beth Israel in Melbourne flies in this Thursday for his fifth visit on another bar mitzvah mission which happily coincides with Chanukah. One of the fathers of Reform Judaism in Australia -- he celebrated his 30th year on the pulpit and a major expansion of Temple Beth Israel earlier this year -- Rabbi Levi was also instrumental in the early efforts to establish a Reform congregation in Hong Kong.

Family service, buffet supper, talk on Friday

Rabbi Levi will conduct a family Shabbat Chanukah service in the India Room on the fourth floor of the Hong Kong Hilton Hotel at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, December 14. Following the service, there will be a buffet dinner. The cost is \$190 for adults, \$130 for children. Bookings can be made by calling 463-8156. The subject for the after-dinner talk by Rabbi Levi will be "Talking about God."

Shabbat Bar Mitzvah service Saturday

Jonathan Jacob Green, son of UJC members Bob and Grace Green will be the Bar Mitzvah boy on Saturday in a service starting at 10 a.m. in Tradewinds, 49th floor of The American Club in Exchange Square. All members of the community are invited to attend. A lunch reception for friends of the family in The Empress of China on the 48th floor will follow the kiddush.

Jewish Club To Host Children's Chanukah Parties

The Jewish Club, in concert with The UJC, has planned two Chanukah parties for Jewish children in the community. There will be refreshments, entertainment, games and prizes -- all with a Chanukah theme. The party for three and four-year-olds will be given Thursday, December 13 at 3 p.m. and one for children five to eleven on Sunday, December 16 at 5 p.m.

The festivities take place at The Jewish Club, Melbourne Plaza, 4/f, 33 Queen's Road Central. Admission is \$50 per child. It is not necessary to be a member of The Jewish Club to join in the fun. For further information, please contact Mrs. Nurit Malachi at 572-4683 or Veronica Frankenberg at 813-0173.

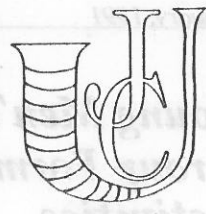
Meet Rabbi Levi

If you'd like to meet Rabbi Levi to discuss any personal matters, please make an appointment by calling The UJC at 463-8156 or contact him directly at The Excelsior Hotel. Rabbi Levi will arrive Thursday night and leave Hong Kong late Sunday evening.

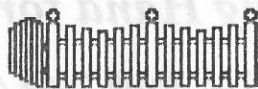
UJC links with Ohel Leah for children's religious school

Children of UJC members have been welcomed to join religious education classes at Ohel Leah's Ezekiel Abraham School in The Jewish Club. Classes are held Tuesday and Thursday evening. For more details, contact Veronica Frankenberg or the school's headmistress Mrs. Nurit Malachi (tel. nos. above). It is not necessary to belong to Ohel Leah or The Jewish Club. After surveying religious education needs for children of members, the General Committee concluded they could best be met at present in cooperation with Ohel Leah.

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Planning Underway for Adult Education Program

Hebrew, History Classes to Begin Soon

The UJC will announce times and places within the next week or two for two courses — *Five Easy Lessons* and *Heritage*. According to Jonathan Kriegel, member of the Adult Education sub-committee, "the greatest demand is for an ongoing program covering cultural, historical, political and economic issues related to Judaism." On his suggestion at the January 10th General Committee meeting, therefore, it was decided to present the much-praised telecourse produced and aired on U.S. television by Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). It has been described as "an exciting overview of the interrelationship of Jewish history and world civilization" that offers "important insights into the development of Jewish culture throughout the ages."

The course consists of three elements -- a nine-part television series (on video), Study Guide, and Source Reader. The nine parts are: *A People is Born*, *The Power of the Word*, *The Shaping of Traditions (First to Ninth Centuries)*, *The Crucible of Europe (Ninth to Fifteenth Centuries)*, *The Search for Deliverance (1492 to 1789)*, *Roads from the Ghetto (1789 to 1914)*, *The Golden Land (1654 to 1932)*, *Out of the Ashes (1914 to 1945)*, and *Into the Future (1945 to 1967)*.

It is hoped that members who can assist in presenting any of these units by acting as the discussion leader will contact The UJC. A teaching background is not required, just the willingness to spend a few minutes with the course materials in advance.

Five Easy Lessons will be precisely that for those wishing to gain a basic ability in Hebrew. Taught by a native Israeli, the course will consist of just five sessions of one-and-a-half hours each. The intent is to enable beginners to follow Hebrew prayers and songs at services and learn some vocabulary. The course should also serve as an excellent starting point for those who wish to carry on with a more ambitious language program. Both classes will be open to the entire Jewish community of Hong Kong. It is hoped to hold them at The Jewish Club in Melbourne Plaza.



Help! Make Seder Bookings Early

To guarantee a seat at the Passover seder on March 29, please call Susanna or Mrs. Anderson at 463-8156 without delay. Organizers need an indication by February 10 to make sure space will be available. Actual costs are being worked out but are expected to be around \$300 for adults, \$200 for children. Your reservation now will not require payment until later nor commit you to the final price. Members will be informed of final booking details and procedures around middle or late February.

Jan. 25 Service Set for South Side Frankenbergs Host UJC Shabbat at Home

The UJC heads south this Friday for Shabbat at the home of founder-members Tomas and Veronica Frankenberg and their four children. Their address is 7 Pacific View, 22 Cape Road, Chung Hom Kok. The service begins at 8:15 p.m. and will be followed by an Oneg Shabbat. Parking is available at their home and along the roadside. To help the Frankenbergs plan for the evening, please give Veronica a call at 813-0173 or fax 813-0829.

For the large number of members who live on the south side of Hong Kong island (Repulse Bay, Chung Hom Kok, Stanley, and Tai Tam), it should be particularly easy to get to services this week. Members who would also like to experience the special joy of sharing their Shabbat with other UJC members at home are encouraged to get in touch with any General Committee member. Meanwhile, keep in mind the following services and events scheduled for the next few weeks:

February 8 Kam Shan Room, 6:30 p.m., American (Town) Club, 49/f., Exchange Square II, Central

March 1 Bay Room and poolside (service + BBQ buffet), 6:30 p.m., American (Country) Club, Tai Tam

March 29 Passover seder, 6 p.m., American (Town) Club or Hilton Hotel (to be decided, see related article, opposite).

April 12 Kam Shan Room, 6:30 p.m., American (Town) Club

May 17 Bay Room and poolside (service + BBQ buffet), 6:30 p.m., American (Country) Club.

When plans become firm, members will be informed of final details.

Young Men's, Women's Group Forms, Plans Activities

Mitchell Presnick, an analyst with American Airlines and relative newcomer to Hong Kong, has organized several activities targeted at the younger, predominantly single members of the Jewish community here. Using The Jewish Club as its base, the group plans to hold luncheons followed by a speaker on the last Friday of each month. Rabbi Lopian spoke at the first of these engagements last week and noted, veteran journalist Claire Hollingsworth has been lined up for one of the coming weeks. Lunch costs \$100 including a glass of wine.

The group has also organized self defence classes taught by a former instructor of martial arts and self-defense in the Israeli Army. The classes meet the second and fourth Thursday of each month at The Jewish Club. The cost per class will be nominal, according to Mitch, probably less than \$20.

"Cheap drinks, good conversation, and general comradery" is the way he describes the attractions of Saturday night happy hours from 8:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. at The Club. A number of people have shown up for these get-togethers in recent weeks, some of which have ended up on Lan Kwai Fong.

"In general, we feel that we can help to bridge the gaps between the different groups of Jews in Hong Kong. We are working to bring everyone together on common ground, in ways that all can live with, as shown in our planned events," Mitch says. "Let me know if you have ideas, concerns, etc. I'd like to do all I can to help."

New Sources for Kosher Food

The newly-opened Seibu department store in the Pacific Place mall is offering a range of kosher food in its basement supermarket at fairly reasonable prices. Available are salami, bologna, liverwurst, frozen meals, matzos, soup mixes, etc. The Jewish Club has also announced that in addition to its comprehensive range of kosher food, a take-out and delivery service is now available from both restaurants. For deliveries to most HK locations, call 801-5437.

BOOKS

Helping Hand for the Jewish Home

Book review: *The Jewish Home Advisor* by Alfred J. Kolatch. Jonathan David Publishers, Inc. 1990. US\$17.95.

It's 9 a.m. in late March and your mother-in-law is arriving by sundown for your family seder. Past years were informal or spent at the home of friends. This year must be just right. What do you do?

Rabbi Kolatch's latest book can come to the rescue. It's designed as a "handbook" both for those experienced in the rituals of Judaism and for those whose familiarity with Jewish religious practice is limited. This helpful book offers practical, step-by-step information on matters ranging from the preparation of the seder meal to the ins and outs of synagogue services and what to expect at a *bris* (circumcision ceremony).

It also includes the Jewish calendar for the next ten years, a number of recipes for traditional Jewish foods, and an objective presentation throughout of variations in beliefs and practices among orthodox and non-orthodox Jews.

Kolatch's strength is definitely in the details... right down to advice on how to remove red wine stains from your white seder tablecloth. Although it falls somewhat short in explaining the "why's" and history behind each ritual, as a general, all-purpose guide to getting it "just right," *The Jewish Home Advisor* is a terrific addition to the home library.

TJHA may be ordered by contacting the publisher (above) at 68-22 Eliot Avenue, Middle Village, New York 11379. ■

— Martha Josephson

Looking for Singers

The search is on for more voices to join in with the choir and other members of the congregation at services. Only a few minutes is needed to meet with other members of the choir before services and go over the songs and chants. The effort is also underway to match the music with the wishes of the congregation, so if you'd like to join in or make some suggestions, please call Janet Golden at 812-1624.

Let us Know...

Special family news? An event or person to commemorate? A message for the congregation? Send material for *The Shofar* in any form (typed, handwritten, or oral) to Martha Josephson, 15 Peak Gardens, 18 Mt. Austin Rd., phone 849-8567, fax 868-5321.

Reform Judaism Magazine

Available to HK Subscribers

Reform Judaism, a well-known U.S. periodical devoted to analyzing world events from a Jewish perspective and providing a forum for recognized Jewish scholars is now available to HK subscribers. One year (US\$16.) and two-year (US\$30.) subscriptions can be ordered from the magazine at 838 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021. Make checks payable to *Reform Judaism*. A subscription includes a back issue catalog of articles and essays on a range of subjects including Jewish history and archaeology, Jewish law and ethics, love/marriage/family and traditional holiday texts. Our contact at the publisher, Esther Kornecki, welcomes inquiries and requests for special materials and assistance on projects from the UJC community.