

Yes, You Heard It Through



THE GRAPEVINE

A Publication of the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah

December 2007

Kislev/Tevet 5768

AA Recon offers program on Rambam, the 2nd Moses

Danny Steinmetz



Photo credit: Jack Love

Jewish Scholar Jack Love will address the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah as part of its Service-and-Discussion night Friday, December 14 at the Jewish Community Center. The Rambam (an acronym for Rabbi Moses Ben Maimon) was referred to by medieval Jews as the *second Moses*. He is commonly known in English as Maimonides. His works spanned philosophy, Jewish law, and medicine. He also served as leader of the Jewish community in what is now Cairo, and as physician to the royal court.

When UNESCO organized a conference for the 850th anniversary of the Rambam's birth in 1985, participants included the expected Jewish scholars as well as Christian and Muslim scholars since his works continue to be studied in both of those traditions. The late Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg

described Iranians who would otherwise not talk to Israelis participating collegially in the event.

The talk will include a brief survey of the life and letters of Maimonides. It will touch on the reasons for the success of the Rambam's views in the modern world despite the rocky reception he received in his own lifetime and for a century thereafter. Active participation and learning will be the hallmark of this evening's program. The evening will open with a brief service at 6:15 pm followed by the presentation and open discussion.

The presenter, Jack Love received a Master's Degree in Near Eastern Languages and Literature from the University of California at Berkeley. From 1978 to 1988 Jack led the Hebrew Language department of Lehrhaus Judaica while also serving as Associate Director of the Berkeley Hillel Foundation. Since moving to Michigan in 1988, Jack has taught numerous courses in Jewish history, language and literature at the Reconstructionist synagogue of Lansing, Kehillat Israel. Jack is the author of *Understanding Classical Hebrew: A Simplified Approach* and is currently working on the second edition.

Free childcare will be available with advance reservations. For more information please call Aura Ahuvia, 975-9045. RSVP for childcare to Allison at alstupka@gmail.com or info@arecon.org.

Havurah, Beit Sefer to Host Chanukah Party

Alicia Kent

One and all are invited to our second annual Chanukah Party on Sunday, December 9, from 4 to 7 pm at the Jewish Community Center.

Festivities include food, songs, and crafts for all ages including a latke-making workshop, cookie decorating, dreidel origami, making Chanukah decorations, and a dreidel-spinning contest.

Students of the Beit Sefer will lead us in a group menorah lighting. Everyone who brings a menorah will have an opportunity to light one. Beit Sefer students will also conduct a short shiur (lesson) on the surprisingly recent tradition of the potato latke.

Jennifer Cohen will teach us how to make latkes and will share her famous latke recipe. You don't want to miss eating these latkes with her homemade applesauce and sour cream.

For those hoping to expand their dreidel repertoire, Beit Sefer students will teach a variety of dreidel games. And for those who think they have the knack, there will be a contest to determine dreidel-spinning expertise, including special competitions for skills such as spinning dreidels upside down.

Kids and adults of all ages are invited to join. Please bring a vegetarian side dish or salad to share. Also, bring a menorah and seven candles to light (six candles for the sixth night and one candle for the shamas) so that you can participate in our multi-person menorah lighting. Questions or suggestions? Contact party organizers Debbie Zivan and Alicia Kent. Debbie can be reached at dzivan@datastat.com. Alicia's contact info is below.

There is no charge for Havurah members. Non-members are asked to make a \$10 donation per household (or \$5 per individuals.)

Please RSVP to Alicia Kent at aakent@umflint.edu or 734-369-2143 with the number of people you plan to bring. Consider inviting friends who are new to the Havurah and Beit Sefer.



*Latke making at last year's Chanukah party!
Photo credit: Stephanie Rowden*

Jubu Next Step

The next Jubu group will meet at the home of Evelyn Neuhaus on Sunday, December 8 from 2-4 pm. Please contact Emily Milner at emilymilner@peoplepc.com if you would like to be added to the Jubu email listserv.

Annual Jewish Xmas Eve Dinner

Allison Stupka

While traditional Jewish fare on Christmas Eve is Chinese, the Hav, this year, (to break with tradition, c'mon we're Reconstructionists!) will be dining on vegetarian Indian food. The annual dinner will be at Shalimar, 307 S. Main Street in downtown Ann Arbor on Monday, December 24 beginning at 5:30 pm. The restaurant is right near the corner of Main and Liberty. The chefs at Shalimar are preparing a vegetarian buffet for us and will feature such specialties as Paneer Tikka, Saag Paneer, Aloo Gobi, Raita and other vegetarian Indian delights. The cost will be 20\$ per person which includes tax and tip and an additional \$1 for coffee and tea. Aaron Ahuvia will be sending out an evite mid-December but you can RSVP now by emailing info@aaarecon.org.



Hav Support Group to Combine Efforts

The group of Havurah members which has been meeting monthly to offer support for those caring for aging parents is going to merge efforts with the JCC and other congregations in the area. Jewish Family Services (JFS) will coordinate this effort which will begin in January of 2008. The following paragraph is supplied by Abbie Lawrence from JFS:

Caregiver Conversations: A Support Group for People Caring for Aging Loved Ones

Jewish Family Services is pleased to launch "Caregiver Conversations," a monthly drop-in educational and support group for adult children in a variety of caregiving roles for their aging parents. Whether your aging parents live independently or need full-time care either in-home or in a residential facility, come find solace and support among peers who are facing similar caregiving issues. Each session will feature a brief educational presentation followed by open discussion around topics ranging from coping with the emotional strain of caregiving, balancing children's needs with parents' needs, dealing with safety issues such as driving or taking medications, handling conflict with one's parent, and more. "Caregiver Conversations" is part of the new JFS Caregiver Concierge program funded by the Jewish Federation. Co-sponsored by the Reconstructionist Havurah, Temple Beth Emeth, Beth Israel Congregation, The Jewish Cultural Society and the JCC.

Please note that the Hav group will meet on **December 16**, 10 am at the JCC. Please contact Idelle Hammond Sass for more information at Hammond_sass@msn.com.



A New Name?

Aaron Ahuvia

For some time now we have been in the process of considering a new name. The process began with a discussion of name options on Reonchat@umich.edu. (That discussion continues even now, so if you would like to participate but are not on the list, please contact Evelyn Neuhaus, eneuhaus@sbcglobal.net.) Having been warmed up a bit by that discussion, all Havurah members were invited to the annual meeting where Leora Druckman led the group in first generating more options and then narrowing the list to finalists for a Hebrew component of the name and an English component of the name. Due to a 3-way tie in the voting for the English component, there are 6 English component choices, 4 Hebrew component choices, and the choice of not having a Hebrew component.

The vote takes place in two parts.

PART ONE: You will rank four Hebrew names and "none" in order of preference. The options are:

- Shir Shalom (which means song of peace)
- Makom Shalom (which means place of peace)
- Etz Chayyim (which means tree of life)
- Etz Shalom (which means tree of peace)
- None (if this is the most preferred option, there will be no Hebrew component to our name)

PART TWO: you will rank six options for the English component of the name. The choices are:

- Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation
- Reconstructionist Congregation
- Reconstructionist Community
- Progressive Reconstructionist Community
- : The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah
- : The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation

The Hebrew and English components of the name will be combined in a mix and match fashion. For example Shir Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation, or for the longer English names,

Shir Shalom: The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah. If the memberships' most preferred option is not to have a Hebrew name, the name will consist only of the English phrase. If this results in our name being something weird like "Reconstructionist Congregation" by itself, the board will propose some solutions to the membership. If you want to vote for us not to change the name, vote for "none" as your most preferred option in part 1, and The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah in part 2.

TO VOTE

Go to

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=F1cQ9YwXgWAm0Q4rpFn0Aw_3d_3d. Or, cut out this article and write rank order the choices in each part, with 1 being your first choice etc. Then mail it to Aaron Ahuvia, 1317 King George Blvd, Ann Arbor, MI 48108.

WHAT IF YOU DON'T LIKE ANY OF THE OPTIONS?

There have been some emails recently from people who were not able to attend the annual meeting saying they don't like the options presented. There has been enough concern voiced about this that the board will certainly discuss what to do. In the mean time, please vote for your preferred choices. Voting now will have no influence over whether we continue the process with more choices after this vote is complete.

Note: You must be a member "in good standing" (dues have been paid and/or a payment plan has been made) in order to vote on the name change. Children who have been b'nai mizvot are eligible to vote as are kids over the age of 13. If you have any questions about this please email Allison, Hav coordinator, at alstupka@gmail.com.



Hav Supports AIDS Orphans

Lori Lichtman

Havurah members donated a total \$320 to the God Knows Orphanage, an orphanage that supports AIDS orphans of "child run families" (children caring for their siblings in absence of their parents) in rural Zimbabwe. The money was collected by selling fabrics the children made to make our own tallit. Thanks to Aura for helping organize the tallit makers and helping teach us how to tie tzizit!! Thanks to all the Havurah members who bought fabric to help the AIDS orphans!



NOTES FROM THE BOARD

Alicia Kent, Secretary

Beit Sefer: The Board spent much of the meeting discussing the future of the Beit Sefer and the hiring of a new Beit Sefer director. Benjy Ben-Baruch, the acting interim director, provided an update to the Board about the transition. He has met with the teachers and reported that they have been doing more course preparation outside of the classroom that originally anticipated. On Benjy's recommendation, the Board unanimously approved a pay increase for 4 hours per week (instead of 3) for the 2 newer teachers to cover the increase in course prep.

Benjy has purchased Hebrew primer textbooks (\$200) and anticipates an additional expense for JRF books. He will also need to get some arts and crafts supplies, which the teachers requested. Benjy will put together a strategy with a wish list and list of priorities in the near future.

The Board voiced its appreciation to Benjy for taking on this leadership role in the transition.

Bring a Friend Shabbat: To encourage greater attendance and more time for socializing, clean-up will be provided. Jennifer Cohen will handle food/money logistics.

High Holy Day Location: The service leaders have indicated that they prefer the Unitarian Universalist's larger sanctuary for services. The Board also plans to invite Pardes Hannah to use a smaller room at the UU so that non-worship activities can be shared with the Havurah.

Annual Retreat Timing: Because scheduling is tight in the fall with High Holy Days, the Board decided to move the annual retreat to spring. A Sukkot dinner will be planned for the fall.

The **next meeting** is Tuesday, December 4 at Kevin Norris's home, 7 to 9 pm.



COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

The Real Story of Chanukah

Get the real scoop when Havurah Member Rabbi Nathan Martin gives a talk on Chanukah, **Dec 4th** at 7:00 pm at Hillel.

Hillel presents Dr. Noam Gressel, Exec. Director of the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies will be speaking about business sustainability on **Dec 6th** at 7:00 pm at the Michigan League.

Also **Dec 6th** - Help break the World Record for most Dreidels spun simultaneously!
Register now at UMSpins.com

Dinner, Movie and Discussion

Several Havurah members - Alan Haber, Odile Hugonot Haber, Amy Rosenberg and Allison Stupka - have been engaged in an ad hoc committee of the Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice. They invite you to and ICPJ event on Thursday, **December 13**, 6:30 pm at First Memorial Christian Church, 730 Tappan in Ann Arbor. A Potluck dinner will be followed by the film "Encounter Point" which documents Israeli and Palestinians who, following personal tragedies, strive for reconciliation and coexistence. For more information or to RSVP contact Interfaith Council for Peace and Justice at info@icpj.net or (734) 663-1870. A suggested \$5 donation benefits relief hunger aid in Gaza.

When a Loved One is Hospitalized: Essential Information for Caregivers of Older Adults

Jewish Family Services invites you to attend a workshop on Thursday, **December 13** 6:00 -7:30 pm at the JCC. Learn how to advocate for a loved one's best interests in a large and bureaucratic health care system. Do you know how to handle a disagreement with a doctor's plan for care, or what your rights are in a hospital environment? Do you know what home health care options are available (and covered by Medicare) upon discharge from the hospital? The event is free and includes a pizza dinner. For more information or to register contact Abbie at JFS: 734-769-0209.

Volunteer to Help Area Homeless

Every year at this time, Beth Israel Congregation hosts the overflow rotating shelter for two weeks. These 14 nights require **a lot** of volunteers: 3-4/night staying over, plus drivers to and from the synagogue. This year's dates are Monday, December 24 through Monday, January 7. Volunteers aren't limited to BIC members - Havurah members and others are always appreciated for participating in this mitzvah. So if this is something you can do, please sign up at <http://www.hvcn.org/info/bethisrael/socialaction.php?page=shelter>. For more information, contact Rebecca Kanner, 994-5717, rnmik@yahoo.com.

FROM THE JRF

Reconstructionists Named to the "Forward 50"

Each year the staff of The Forward, (a weekly Jewish American magazine,) chooses 50 individuals who are “making a difference in the way American Jews view the world and themselves” and embody “the spirit of Jewish action as it is emerging in America.” The list for 2007 includes four Reconstructionists who are making their mark in the areas of community, spiritual leadership, and ideas and activism:

Rabbi Steve Gutow, Executive Director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs

Ruth Messinger; Executive Director of the American Jewish World Service

Rabbi Toba Spitzer, president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association and rabbi at JRF affiliate Dorshei Tzedek in Newton, Massachusetts

June Walker, chairwoman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations

Kol Hakavod!

Read their profiles from The Forward at www4.jrf.org/Recon_forward_50.

A JRF North American Leadership Workshop - Save the Date!

“Congregational Growth: The Dynamics of Membership, Outreach and Financial Resources” Sunday, March 2, 2008, 9 am- 4 pm, at Ezra Habonim, the Niles Township JCC, Skokie, IL.

Come learn how to use a congregational systems approach to understand the dynamics of congregational growth. Gain important skills and ideas about how to effectively reach out to attract new members, reach in to strengthen already-existing members and volunteers, and how to creatively grow the congregation's financial resources.

All JRF affiliates are invited to send representatives to this special one-day workshop!

For information contact Julie Braman at jrfadmin@jrf.org or 215-885-5601.

The Midwest JRF retreat will be held April 11-13. More details forthcoming.



SEEDLINGS AND THANKS

Thanks to **Benjy Ben Baruch** for volunteering to be the interim director of the Beit Sefer.

Thanks to **Jen Cohen** for organizing the potluck for services in November.

Thanks to **Leora Druckman** for facilitating the name changing exercise for the Havurah at its annual meeting.



SIMCHAS AND SORROWS

Condolences to Yuval Warshai and his family. Yuval's mother died last week.

Mazel Tov to the Stupka Fried family who has a new nephew, Lachlan Mackinac Burks.

December 2007*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Beit Sefer 9:30-11:30 am	3	4 Chanukah first night	5 Chanukah	6 Chanukah	7 Chanukah	8 Jubu Spirituality Meeting Home of Evelyn Neuhaus Topic: TBA <i>Chanukah</i>
9 Beit Sefer 9:30-11:30 am Chanukah Party 4-7 pm <i>Rosh Chodesh Tevet</i>	10 Chanukah	11 Chanukah last night	12 Chanukah last day	13 <i>Deadline for January Grapevine</i>	14 Shabbat Services 6:15-7:45 pm <i>Jewish scholar, Jack Love, presents and discusses Maimonides</i>	15
16 Beit Sefer 9:30-11:30 am Aging Parents Support Group 10:00 am JCC	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 No Beit Sefer <i>(winter break)</i>	24 Annual Jewish Xmas eve dinner 5:30 pm Shalimar	25	26	27	28 Shabbat Services and Veggie potluck 6:15 pm	29

January 2008*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6 No Beit Sefer <i>(winter break)</i>	7	8	9	10	11 Shabbat Services 6:15-7:45 pm Discussion Topic: TBA	12 Jubu Spirituality Meeting Location and Topic: TBA
13 Beit Sefer 9:30-11:30 am Bev's class also meets today.	14	15 <i>Deadline for February Grapevine</i>	16	17 Aging Parent Support Group Topic: <i>When do you step you're your parent's life?</i> 6:30-8:00 pm	18	19
20 Beit Sefer 9:30-11:30 am	21	22	23	24	25 Shabbat Services and Veggie potluck 6:15 pm	26
27 Beit Sefer 9:30-11:30 am	28	29	30	31		

***ALL EVENTS TAKE PLACE AT THE JCC UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**



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Progressive Jewish Giving Fund Donation Form

Here is my donation of \$ _____ to the
Progressive Jewish Giving Fund of the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah.

Name: _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Please:

- write your check out to the **Jewish Community Foundation,**
- in the "memo" line, write: **"Progressive Jewish Giving Fund"**
- include this coupon with your check
- Send your check to the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah, PO Box 7451, Ann Arbor, MI 48107.

We will log it in and send it on to the Jewish Community Foundation.

Your contribution is tax-deductible and you will receive a receipt from the Jewish Community Foundation. Thank you very much for your contribution!