

Yes, You Heard It Through



THE GRAPEVINE

A Publication of the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah

September 2011

Av/Elul 5771 - 5772



Oy, Happy New Year!!

High Holy Days Begin with the Havurah

Aura Ahuvia, Rabbinical Intern

The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Havurah offers free High Holy Day services to Jews in the local community, as well as to their non-Jewish spouses, partners and friends. Services are highly participatory and interactive, giving ample opportunity to engage actively and vitally with the process of teshuvah, or repentance/return.

No tickets are required to attend services, which are held at the Unitarian Universalist church due to space requirements. Childcare and a communal Break-the-Fast are offered, with advanced reservations, for a fee. The Break-the-Fast is held immediately following the end of the Ne'ilah service, which concludes the prayer services of Yom Kippur. All are welcome to this meal, whether members of the Havurah or not. For

more information, check the website, at www.aaRecon.com, or call (734) 445-1910 (24-hour voice mail).

What's My Legacy? Spiritually Prepare for the High Holy Days

The month of Elul, the Hebrew month preceding Rosh Hashanah, provides time to begin preparing ourselves spiritually for the Days of Awe. This workshop, which is open to all Jews, their non-Jewish partners, and those who are interested, will focus on what kind of name we hope to make for ourselves in the world, and what inner work we need to do, in order to make those contributions. Through personal reading of text, including Zelda's poem, "Each of Us Has a Name," participants will engage in deep self-reflection, sharing and soul-searching. Bringing a diary is recommended. The workshop takes place Sunday, September 4, from 2 – 4 p.m. For more information, including location, contact Aura Ahuvia, (734) 975-9045, or drop an email to Aura613@gmail.com.

Shabbat Shuvah with Havdallah: The Heart's Encounter with the High Holy Days

Aura Ahuvia, Rabbinical Intern

A meditative, musical Shabbat Shuvah program is planned for the Saturday evening between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The evening's songs will concentrate on the themes of teshuvah, return, and the longings of the heart. A story or two may also be told. Havdalah, the ritual signaling the end of Shabbat, will conclude the program. The program is open to both affiliated and non-affiliated Jews, as well as their interested partners. The program takes place Saturday, October 1, at 7 p.m. For more information, including location, contact Aura Ahuvia, (734) 975-9045, or Aura613@gmail.com.

Hav Grillers, Mosquitoes Suck Summer Dry with a Fabulous Barbeque

Jennifer Cohen, Havurah Administrator/Guru



Did these children suspect that school was two weeks away? Photo credit: Emily Eisbruch

A big thank-you to everyone who braved the mosquitoes to turn out for our late-August BBQ at beautiful Bandemer Park. It is the people that make a party-- and before you all got there it was just me and a raccoon that had trapped himself in the garbage can. Interesting, but no real sense of community there. Once everyone arrived and the fires were blazing, marshmallows were roasting and the epic game of capture-the-flag got going, it was a celebration of the Hav in summer. As my son, Avi, said on the ride home, "I had the time of my life."



*Linda
Katzner's
Caramel*

Pecan Noodle Kugel

Alicia Kent, Havurah Member, with a tip of the fork to Elayne Jacobi and kitchendaily.com

Here is a recipe for a sweet noodle kugel with pecans. I have brought it to the Break Fast a couple of times in years past, and people seemed to enjoy it. This recipe was given to me by a friend from Bowling Green, and she in turn got it from a friend of hers. I've included their names in the title of the recipe. Now you can pass it along!

Serves 10 to 12

Ingredients:

1 pound uncooked medium egg noodles (wide or extra wide will also work)
1 cup sour cream
4 eggs, beaten
1 and ¼ cup brown sugar, divided
1 cup cottage cheese, creamed (pureed in blender or food processor)
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 Tablespoon vanilla (may use maple syrup extract if you prefer)
¼ to ½ cup raisins (I used golden but any would work)

(may add crushed pineapple without juice if you prefer)
 ½ stick (4 Tablespoons) butter (or less)
 (I used salted; the recipe called for 1 and ½ sticks, which I greatly reduced)
 8 ounces pecan halves

Directions:

- * Cook noodles in boiling water until tender (a little undercooked works well).
- * Rinse in cold water. Drain well.
- * In separate bowl, combine sour cream, beaten eggs, ¼ cup brown sugar, cottage cheese, cinnamon, and vanilla.
- * Add raisins.
- * Fold mixture with noodles. If you like custardy kugel, don't use the entire amount of noodles.
- * Pour melted butter into 10-cup casserole pan. Make sure the entire pan, including sides, are coated with butter.
- * Sprinkle remaining 1 cup brown sugar over butter, pressing some sugar partially up the sides of the pan.
- * Press pecans into brown sugar mixture in attractive pattern, flat side up. Pecans can be lined partially up the sides as well.
- * Spread noodle mixture evenly over all.
- * Bake in preheated 350 degree oven, 40-50 minutes.
- * Cool on rack 10 minutes
- * Loosen noodles by running knife inside edge.
- * Invert onto serving dish.
- * Keep casserole in place over noodles 10 minutes (or more, until serving).
- * Remove casserole.

If making kugel ahead, invert onto serving dish and put casserole back on top of it to keep warm. Heat in low temperature oven with casserole on top of kugel. (Make sure the serving dish is oven safe.)



Reflections on Elul

Grace Fredkin, Havurah Columnist

Elul, the sixth month of the ecclesiastical year and the twelfth month of the civil year, is the time of Jewish comfort and return, "the month of mercy", "the month of repentance [return]" (Sefer Yetzirah).

"The name of this month, like the names of the rest of the months of the Hebrew calendar, was brought from the Babylonian Exile, and originated from the Akkadian word for 'Harvest'. A similar month name was also used in Akkadian, in the form *elūl*" (Wikipedia). "The name of this month (Alef-Lamed-Vav-Lamed) is said to be an acronym of 'Ani l'dodi v'dodi li,' 'I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine,' from Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs) 6:3, where the Beloved is God and the "I" is the Jewish people. In Aramaic (the vernacular of the Jewish people at the time that the month names were adopted), the word 'Elul' means 'search,' which is appropriate, because this is a time of year when we search our hearts." (Judaism 101)

[I must at least mention that I find troubling and/or problematic certain aspects of "ani l'dodi v'dodi li" as well of "a time of year when we search our hearts". But I digress.]

Elul is also early autumn in the North American diaspora. It's one of the most seductive times in the natural world. Nature is quieting down after the riotous procreative activity of the preceding few months and is getting ever mellower. The crickets continue quietly crooning their nighttime chant, even during daylight hours now; the wild birds are no longer proclaiming whatever is on their little minds, and only the sob of a lone mourning dove floats through the calm sunlit air.

If one is not seduced by the natural beauty of the season, there is much renewed secular activity to distract us at this time: the beginning of a new school year, the beginning of a new business or economic cycle in many organizations, etc. But it would seem that we're not supposed to pay too much attention to--let alone rejoice in--all that.

"This is the month that 'the King is in the field'. All can approach Him, and He shines His countenance to all. Elul is the month of preparation for the high holy days of Tishrei" (Sefer Yetzirah). The "King in the field" is a lovely metaphor but one that nowadays is off-putting, hierarchic, patriarchal, though it can still be appreciated as a lovely poetic conceit.

The work of return is more inner and one's truest truths and most vital reality come from inside, heart or gut or (less likely) mind. For people in modern times God (and Good) dwells within rather than outside us. Arthur Rimbaud (pron. ram-bow, 1854-1891): "La vie est ailleurs" (true life is elsewhere; T. S. Elliot (1888-1965): "Where shall the word be found, where will the word/Resound? Not here, there is not enough silence.../No time to rejoice for those who walk among noise and deny the voice".

Think what you will about Elliot's antisemitic cultural politics, he expressed thoughts beautifully. Lest we go too far, like certain modern-day "prophets" who will remain unnamed here, there is Isaiah's reminder (purportedly speaking for God) that "My ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isiah 55:9). The assertion of a higher or more elevated reality than is experienced in our day-to-day strivings and scrablings is somehow comforting.

Rabbi Shefa Gold, and the more enlightened members of our Havurah, can share more inspiring and encouraging thoughts about teshuvah/return/"repentance" than I can. [*The editor disagrees!*] I feel like a grade-school kid who has been called to the principal's office but doesn't know exactly why, leading to feelings of trepidation, "fear and trembling". I didn't need Isiah (1:11-17) to tell me that superfluous motions without right attitude are useless, or that teshuvah consists of "do[ing] good, seek[ing] justice, vindicat[ing] the victim, render[ing] justice to the orphan, tak[ing] up the grievance of the widow" (Isiah 1:17)--each will interpret those quasi infinitely interpretable words as s/he sees fit. The song says, "return to the land of your

soul, return to who you are, return to what you are, return to where you are born and reborn again".

Okay, return to the reality of your highest and best self. What if, due to past or present circumstances, one never had a "home base" in this life return to, "for there is nothing again" (Elliot)? That's a discussion that could take hundreds of pages, or we could all think about these things over the coming weeks. Some hints: "Not in entire forgetfulness,/And not in utter nakedness,/But trailing clouds of glory do we come/From God, who is our home" (William Wordsworth, 1770-1850).

"Elohai neshama shenatata bi, tehorah hi"
"My God, the soul/breath that You gave to/placed in me is pure."

A Third Millennial Approach to T'shuvah!

A holiday gift from Grace Fredkin's customer service files



The Interactive Teshuvah Hotline

- (1) Thank you for calling the Interactive Teshuvah Hotline here in Heaven. Due to the approaching High Holidays, which is our busiest season, all of our telephone lines are temporarily busy. Please wait patiently as your call will be answered in sequence - and remember, patience is a virtue.
- (2) If you have never used the Interactive Teshuva Hotline before, you will need to listen carefully to our simple sequenced instructions. This service is available for touch-tone telephone users as a supplement to your davening at shul over the Ten Days of Awe. It is not a substitute.
- (3) Let us now begin. To access your personalized account of all your known aveiros

(transgressions), including dates and affected parties, please press 1 now. If you have not already apologized to the affected parties, please hang up now and call back when this has been done. For a personalized list of aveiros towards God, please press 2. Please note that in order to provide timely service to all callers, there is now a limit of 20 aveiros per person at one time.

Politicians and Reform Party supporters will require several visits to complete their inventory. Humour columnists who frequently exceed their word counts or use big words should hang up now and try calling later, say, after the Millennium.

(4) Please select the aveiros you have committed this past year. In case you have forgotten, we offer a list of the most popular aveirot. To activate this function, please press the pound (#) key. Once you have chosen the proper aveirah, enter the code and press the pound key to enter it. As you enter your aveirah, our service will prompt you for your Explanation. If you committed the aveirah because he/she did it, press 1. If you did so by accident, but did not mean to, press 2. If you have a good reason, but won't tell anyone what it is, press 3. If you did so knowing you were wrong, but didn't think you would get caught, press 3. If you blame your legal counsel for the aveirah, press 4. If you blame the influence of Freud or television, press 5. If you blame it on Rock n' Roll, Rap and/or drugs, press 6. If you want to blame someone else for the aveirah but can't think of anyone in particular, press 7.

(5) At the conclusion of your aveiros, enter the star (*) key. Please note that the same aveirah committed against two individuals counts as two items.

(6) Now that you have entered your personal aveirot, you may access the Selichot component of our service. As our computer reads out each

aveirah you have indicated, please enter the contrition code. For example, a "1" means you are only mildly sorry for your action, "2" means you are somewhat sorry, but have mitigating circumstances and a good lawyer, "3" means you are very sorry but will likely repeat it and have a great lawyer, "4" means you are very very sorry, and will not repeat it unless there are mitigating circumstances and you have Dershowitz on retainer, and "5" means you are extremely sorry and will not repeat the aveirah under any circumstances, since you have only your second cousin's son-in law who failed the bar twice. Please proceed with your Selichot sequence now....

(7) Our computer has now processed your request for Kaparah (atonement). Before we reveal the decision results, you may increase your score by pledging additional tzedakah to your favourite charity. All major credit cards are accepted. Please enter your pledge amount (in US dollars), followed by your credit card number and expiry date. Thank you. Based on your Aveirah Score, Selichot Score and Tzedakah Score, you have been granted conditional atonement. This offer expires within one calendar year.

(8) Thank you for visiting the Teshuva Hotline today, and remember, we know everything.

Greg Saltzberg savors kabbalat Shabbat with his eldest son Daniel, an Army medic serving in Afghanistan. Photo: Emily Eisbruch



For those who travel nearby, and those who travel at home: Tefilat Haderech

*Marcy Epstein, Grapevine Editor, with a tip of
the type to hillel.org*

In honor and protection of those who leave us at
this season, and those whose inner travels merit:

*May it be Your will, Eternal One, our God and the God of
our ancestors,
that You lead us toward peace, emplace our footsteps
towards peace,
guide us toward peace, and make us reach our desired
destination for life, gladness, and peace.
May You rescue us from the hand of every foe, ambush,
bandits and wild animals along the way,
and from all manner of punishments that assemble to
come to Earth. May You send blessing in our every
handiwork, and grant us peace, kindness, and mercy in
your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us.
May You hear the sound of our supplication, because You
are the God who hears
prayer and supplications. Blessed are You, Eternal One,
who hears prayer.*

A Season of Choices, Jewish Ways to Learn



Aura Ahuvia, Rabbinical Intern

Reconstructionist Beit Sefer Sunday School and Parent Workshop

The Beit Sefer opens September 11, with three
classrooms for the student body and a workshop
on “Raising Jewish Children” for parents, to run
concurrently. Immediately prior to the workshop,

there will be a brief parent orientation with bagels
and coffee, covering how current parents’ own
experiences of Jewish education in their
childhoods informed the shape of the school as it
exists today. How Reconstructionism fits within
this vision will also be addressed.

Orientation and workshop begin at 9:30 a.m. at
the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw
County. Questions may be directed to the Beit
Sefer’s head teacher, Brian Duchemin, (616) 283-
9433, or to school director Aura Ahuvia, (734)
975-9045, or Aura613@gmail.com. You may
also check the website, at www.aaRecon.com.

Learner’s Services

The year-long Learner’s Service, a popular
monthly Shabbat morning series, begins
Saturday, September 10, at 10 a.m. at the Jewish
Community Center of Washtenaw County. These
services are geared for Jewish adults who seek to
engage on a more serious spiritual level with
Jewish prayer. Through active learning, sharing,
singing and discussion, the nature of the Shabbat
morning service, its shape and contents, history
and contributing characters are all explored.
Services are open to all, and no RSVP is
necessary. Topics include the history and
meaning of prayers like the Shema, the Amidah
and the Torah services, as well as more general
topics like the people, prophets and historical
events that helped shape the service. For more
information, check the website, at
www.aaRecon.com, or contact Aura Ahuvia,
(734) 975-9045, or Aura613@gmail.com.

New Teen Program Builds Continuity through Leadership Training

There is a new group forming for young teens.
Hineini, which means “here I am,” is a new
monthly group providing leadership training, fun
social activities, and a way to explore Jewish
identity in a meaningful way. The Ann Arbor
Reconstructionist Havurah, a creative,
progressive Jewish congregation, and Habonim-
Dror, a long-time youth group and national
Jewish youth movement are administering the
program jointly.

“Hineini is about Jewish youth looking critically at their Jewish identity, and taking responsibility for it,” Hineini Director Matan Naamani said. “It’s about understanding their own unique role in the Jewish community, and from that base, shaping themselves and their communities.”

Hineini is for Jewish youth, ages 13 – 15, or eighth grade through high school Sophomore. Education focuses on community building, Jewish ethical values, Jewish tradition and youth leadership/empowerment. Its teachers, themselves products of the Jewish camping movement, employ active, experiential, informal learning techniques to involve the students.

“Ultimately, the skills they develop can be translated into strengthening the community,” said Naamani. “We want these teens to have the drive and know-how to be an active force of good in the world.”

Opening day for Hineini is Sunday, September 25, from 2 – 4 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center of Washtenaw County. All Jewish teens ages 13 – 15 are welcome to try it; RSVP is requested by September 18, for planning purposes. Deadline to register for the semester (September through December) is the end of September, with October registrations accepted for an additional fee. To register or to find out more, contact Matan Naamani, director, at 904-6578, matan@umich.edu, or, Aura Ahuvia, Havurah Rabbinic Intern, at 846-2826, Aura613@gmail.com.



Just in Case: Here’s the Low- Down on the High Holidays

Jennifer Cohen, Havurah Administrator/Guru

High Holidays 5772

All services are at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 4001 Ann Arbor-Saline Road, unless otherwise indicated.

Wed, Sept 28 **Erev Rosh Hashanah** 7:30 – 9 pm

Thurs, Sept 29 **Rosh Hashanah First Day Services** 9 am – 1 pm

Children’s Services 11 am– noon: K thru 2nd grade 11 am – noon: 3rd thru 5th grade Led by Beit Sefer teachers

Apples & Honey Oneg 1 – 1:30 pm (following services)

Tashlich 4:-00 – 5:00 pm Island Park, 1450 Island Drive (off Maiden Lane) There will be a guided meditation option.

Fri, Sept 30 Rosh Hashanah Second Day 10 am - 1 pm St. Aidan's Episcopal/Northside Community Church, 1679 Broadway Meditation Service with Pardes Hannah

Sat, Oct 1 **Se’udah Shlisheet** 8 - 9:30 pm The Ahuvia Home, 1317 King George Blvd. Bring Shabbat to conclusion with music, stories, study and Havdallah.

Fri, Oct 7 **Kol Nidre Services** 7:00 – 9:00 pm

Sat, Oct 8 **Yom Kippur Services** 10:00 am – 2:45 pm

Children’s Services 11:00 am - noon: K thru 2nd grade 11:00 am– noon: 3rd thru 5th grade Led by Beit Sefer teachers

Afternoon Sessions 3:00 – 4:00 pm 4:15 – 5:15 pm We will offer several small group sessions, designed to intensify the experience of your day. Topics and more details to be announced.

Yizkor 5:30 – 6:45 pm Our Yizkor is a nontraditional service offering mourners the opportunity to share some words about the person

they lost. Please plan on spending no more than 5 minutes, so that everyone may participate.

Ne'ilah 7:00 – 8:00 pm

Shofar blowing Break-the-Fast 8:15 pm or when 3 stars appear All are invited, but advanced reservations are required for the break-fast.

Mitzvah Corp Offers Friendship, Support for Fair or Foul Weather



Mike Ehmann, Board Liaison

The Havurah Mitzvah Corp arranges help for families and individuals experiencing life cycle and emergency needs.

Please remember that many of our community sincerely enjoying the act of mitzvot. Helping each other is a fundamental communal value that strengthens all involved in the act. This help can be meals as part of a caravan, visiting, conversation, rides to services, baby-sitting, assistance arranging shiva, burial services or other needs. The Mitzvah Corp also helps with positive life events, such as support for commitment or conversion ceremonies.

Please contact a Mitzvah Corp member if you or a family that you know can use the support. See our contact information below and join us!

Mitzvah Corp Committee Members:

Mike Ehmann (mtehmann@comcast.net, 734-913-0630)

Nancy Meadow (nancymeadow@gmail.com, 734-663-2037)

Paul Resnick (resnick.paul@gmail.com, 734 644-4037) and

Karen Cooper (kcooper02@comcast.net 734 761-1895).

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

Mark Schneyer, Board Secretary

Here are notes from the July and August meetings of the Havurah Board:

1. **Retreat**--Planning has been underway over the summer for the fall retreat Oct. 21-23, which once again will be at the Emrich Center. Mike Ehmann is now seeking volunteers to organize activities over that weekend. Interested members should contact Mike.
2. **Teen group**--The Havurah will be sponsoring a new group for Jewish youth aged 13-15, called Hineini, that will be run by Habonim Dror, working with Aura and the Havurah. The Board met with Aura to discuss arrangements over the summer and the group will start meeting monthly in late September. Information will be shared via the *Grapevine* and email, with outreach to the wider community via *Washtenaw Jewish News*.
3. **Membership renewal**--This year our renewal forms were sent electronically first, and almost half our 65 member households had returned pledges or indicated they would be doing so, saving the Havurah postage and printing costs. The form is also available for download on our website--see the Now Online section on the homepage. Thank you from the Board to all members who have renewed or will be renewing for another year.
4. **Volunteer survey**--A two-minute survey for members to express interest in a volunteer activity they'd be interested in doing in the upcoming year is now online. The link is in the Now Online section of our website homepage.

5. **New Board Members**--Shari Fox and Mark Schneyer will be leaving the Board at the end of the year after serving three-year terms. The Board is seeking two new members for terms starting in January, 2012. Any interested member should contact Board Chair Debbie Zivan.

6. **Kudos:**

- a. to *Leora Druckman*, whose contribution to the Havurah after her Bat Mitzvah, which she specified for the purchase of new sound equipment, has now been used to buy a new speaker and speaker stands that will see their first use at the High Holy Days.
- b. to *Benji Ben-Baruch* for stepping in to lead wonderful Fourth Friday services earlier this year
- c. also to Benji for all of his many contributions to the life and work of the Havurah for many years, as he prepares for his move and new job in Oregon



After their children were properly disposed into late summer songs, games, and energetic company, three Havurah moms (left to right: Debbie, Karen, and Debbie) decide to cling to each other in desperate search for bug-netting and wayward squares of S'more chocolate. Or they were having a good time. Let the Readers decide. Photo credit: Emily Eisbruch

Board Liaisons:

Debbie Zivan--Chair/Programming
Mark Schneyer--Secretary/Beit Sefer
Jeff Basch--Treasurer/Finances
Sarai Brachman Shoup--Membership/Outreach
Josh Samuel--Communication/Website/Inreach
Pam Shore--Ritual
Mike Ehmann --Mitzvah Corps/Social Action
Shari Fox—TBD

Simchas & Sorrows

Welcome to new members Rachel and Michael Goldberg and their family!

A big mazel tov to Eli, Stephanie Rowden, and Andy Kirschner on the occasion of Eli's bar mitzvah on September 3rd !

Wishes for a wonderful new journey to Benji Ben-Baruch as he makes a new home in the Northwest. There'll always be a pinch of challah for you here with us!

Congratulations to Aaron and Aura Ahuvia on the occasion of celebrating their 20th wedding anniversary in France jolie this past month!

Yishar Koach to Dale Hammond and Idelle Hammond Sass for sailing their new wooden boat—that Dale built!—up north for the first time—it floated!



P.O. BOX 7451
ANN ARBOR, MI 48107
(734) 445-1910 (24-hour voicemail)

Website: WWW.AARECON.ORG

Email: INFO@AARECON.ORG

Grapevine Editor: Marcy Epstein, dr_marcy@hotmail.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair/Programming

Debbie Zivan
(734) 649-2255
djzivan@yahoo.com

Treasurer/Finance

Jeffrey Basch
(734) 975-5540
jdbasch@yahoo.com

Secretary/Education

Mark Schneyer
(734) 332-3487
mark4810@yahoo.com

Shari Fox

(734) 369-6092
sharifox06@comcast.net

Sarai Brachman Shoup

(734) 769-1105
Membership/Outreach
sbshoup@gmail.com

Josh Samuel

Communications/Inreach
(734) 761-5897
joshsamu100@gmail.com

Mike Ehmman

Mitzvot/Social Action
(734) 913-0630
mtehmman@comcast.net

Pam Shore

Rituals
(734) 741-8430
shore@3annarbordoctors.com



Progressive Jewish Giving Fund Donation Form

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

Name: _____

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City, State, Zip Code: _____

Please:

- Write your check out to the **Jewish Federation** with a note for it to be designated to the Progressive Jewish Giving Fund.
- 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!