



Peterborough Havurah Newsletter



Issue No 15
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Newsletter Editor and Web Master: John Halper jhal@jdassoc.com

Web Site: www.peterboroughhavurah.org

Committees:

Steering Committee	John Halper, Allen Hollander, Daniella Yitzchak, Maude Salinger, David Levene
Spiritual:	Allen Hollander, Nancy Harrowitz
Tikkun Olam:	David and Grisel Levene, Liz Halper
Finance:	Liz Halper, Jeffrey Crocker
Seder:	Karen Bell, Nancy Harrowitz, Liz Halper
Havurah Tots	Andrea Manning, Daniella Yitzchak
Shabbat Group Liaison:	Maude Salinger
Tuesday Group Liaison:	James Moon

Recent Events:

• Saturday, April 26, 2008 - Second Annual Havurah Seder

We had our second annual Seder on the last night of Passover this year; April 26th. It was again held at Reynold's Hall in Peterborough and was coordinated by Karen Bell, Liz Halper and Nancy Harrowitz. Great job guys!

The Seder was led by John Halper and Nancy Harrowitz with capable assistance from other Havurah members. We had a new Haggadah this year purchased from Kolbo Gifts in Brookline, MA and one of our members contributed half of the cost of the new Haggadot.

We had a traditional Ashkenazi Seder dinner with both meat and vegetarian dishes being served. The Seder Committee provided chicken soup with matzo balls, gefilte fish from The Butcherie in Brookline, meat entrees, matzo, charoset and all the other Seder plate items.

The Passover story was told in theatrical form with many of the Seder-goers taking various parts. The play was adapted from the book *Sedra Scenes* by Stan J. Beiner. *Sedra Scenes* has a brief skit for every parsha (Torah portion) throughout the year and we combined a few skits to use for Passover. Thanks to Allen Hollander for the idea which we first used last year.

Our Tony-nominated cast included:

Narrator	Judith Klinghoffer
Announcer	Paul Bieber
Hebrew 1	Rob Fox
Hebrew 2	Elaine Bieber
Pharaoh	Michael Bell
Minister	Daniella Yitzchak
Slave	Carole Allen
Princess	Grisel Levene
Moses	Tzofi Klinghoffer
God	Liz Halper and Maude Salinger
Aaron	Sy Lilienfeld

There were many calls for encores, so let's do it again next year!

Photos of the Seder were taken by Carole Allen.





- **Friday, May 9, 2008 - Erev Shabbat the Hollander's**

Allen Hollander led Erev Shabbat services at his home on May 9th and in place of the traditional D'var Torah, Allen presented some facts and asked questions based on issues raised in "*The Jewish Book of Why*". One question he raised was: "what day is considered the most important day in the Jewish calendar? Answer: the Sabbath...even more so than Yom Kippur. The Bible says that the penalty for desecrating the Sabbath is more severe than desecrating Yom Kippur." (Leviticus 23:30; Exodus 31:15). The Talmud states: "...were Israel to observe but two consecutive Sabbaths, the world would be redeemed."

- **Saturday, May 17, 2008 - Havurah gathering at the Moon / Yitzchak's**

The Havurah met at the home of Daniella Yitzchak and James Moon on Saturday, May 17th. We had a pot luck dinner, Havdalah and a special program that Maude Salinger arranged for us:

Don Burness, poet, essayist, and translator read from his collection of poems, "Yahrzeit". Don, who lives in Rindge, Portugal, and France, taught at Franklin Pierce College for many years and has written several volumes of poetry. Don's presentation turned into a lively discussion including politics.



- **Friday, June 13, 2008 - Erev Shabbat the Levene's**

On June 13th we met at the Levene's for an Erev Shabbat led by Nancy Harrowitz.

Here's Nancy's summary of the D'var Torah:

"The Torah portion was on the concept of l'shon hara, literally meaning 'the tongue of evil' or 'evil gossip', which is forbidden in Judaism. I read a commentary about l'shon hara which distinguished between being able to control the impulse to repeat gossip, and not having the desire at all, because you believe only in the good you see in other people. The Talmud teaches that slander is worse than murder, because it kills three: "the teller, the listener and the victim." This started a lively discussion about the differences between thoughts and acting on those thoughts."

- **Saturday, June 28, 2008 - Havurah gathering at the Crocker's**

We met at the home of Jeff and Martha Crocker on Saturday, June 28th for a potluck dinner, Havdalah and an evening of music...showcasing some of the musical talent in our group.

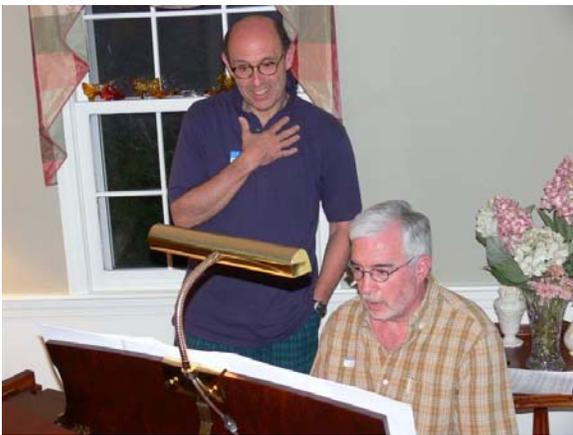
Jeff Crocker led Havdalah and then treated us to a piano rendition of "Shalom" from the Broadway play *Milk and Honey*. He provided song sheets with the words to the song so we could all sing along.

Liz Halper sang "*Part of Your World*" from the movie *The Little Mermaid* while John accompanied her on the piano. Earlier John played *Autumn* while Liz verbally set the stage for her song.

August Watters and Nancy Harrowitz held a musical workshop with all of us trying to provide words to a hypothetical song they proposed. The results were interesting to say the least.

Photos by David Levene and John Halper





- **Friday, July 11, 2008 - Erev Shabbat the Hollander's**

By James Moon

Allen Hollander led services and delivered the D'var Torah at his home. The discussion was about the Canaanite king, Balak, and the prophet, Balaam. King Balak hired Balaam to curse the Israelites, but Balaam warned the king that the prophet's words were not his own but directly given to him by God alone (Numbers 22:38). King Balak ignored the prophet's warnings and ordered the prophet to go to the Israelite camp and curse them anyway.

Balaam mounted his donkey and made his way to the Israelite camp. Enroute to the camp, the donkey came to a standstill and wouldn't budge. The prophet was enraged and struck the donkey's flank. God then gave the donkey the gift of speech, which spoke to the prophet, warning the prophet that an angel with a flaming sword blocked their path. Balaam could not see this angel and moved forward, but not before the donkey spoke again, saying not to bother cursing the Israelites for they were blessed. Upon entering the area where Israel resided, Balaam blesses the Israelites instead of cursing them and Balak furiously sent Balaam to try three times more. On the third time Balaam utters this famous blessing: Ma Tovu and "How good are your tents Israel, how fine your encampments."

Allen gave out write-ups by various Rabbis that attempted to interpret these events and a lively, humorous discussion followed.

Here's some additional feedback from a recent internet Midrash:

Shaiel Yitzchak (Daniella Yitzchak's brother) found the inclusion of Balaam in the Tanach interesting: "Should Aaron not see him as competition, for example? A false prophet, maybe not, because we use his words every day. At the very least, he's a broken prophet. Maybe an example of what can happen when you use good gifts for bad things."

Rabbi Sarah Rubin sees the role of Balaam as an influential non-Jewish character that can be upheld as an example of interfaith dialogue and Jewish acceptance of interfaith families: "The real message here for me, and similar to a message we get from the story of Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, is that important words and important lessons do not always come from inside our own tradition. This is among the reasons enforcing my belief that we must be open to interfaith families and to interfaith dialogue beyond our own community."

To add to this: in Hebrew, most will recognize the words 'Ma Tovu' - the words that are prominent on the front wall of our sanctuary at Ahavas Achim. We recite it first in the service, traditionally for the obvious reason that we are entering the tent and so we recognize its beauty...some say it should be recited as we enter."

- **Saturday, July 26, 2008 - Havurah gathering at the Levene's**

On Saturday, July 26th we met at the home of David and Grisel Levene. We had a pot luck dinner, Havdalah and Carol Kraus led us in a discussion on "landscape and Civilization in Biblical Times".



- **Friday, August 8, 2008 - Erev Shabbat the Seidman / Robbin's**

We met on August 8th at the home of Bill Seidman and Harriet Robbins. Bill and Harriet live on Lake Monomonac and the service was held in their yard on the shore of the lake. Daniella Yitzchak led the service and James Moon provided the D'var Torah.

Here's James' summary of the D'var Torah:

“As a prelude to Tisha B'Av, the entire book of Lamentations was read throughout the Erev Shabbat service with dramatic emphasis.

Through our observance of Tisha B'Av, modern Jews avoid 'falling into the similar trap' that befell the ancient Israelites; and through our study of biblical text, contemporary Jews become 'dedicated to righteousness, justice and peace'. The origins of modern Jewish practice can be found in analyzing and rediscovering ancient biblical text. This textual reference outlines the Jewish ethics practiced today through prayer, ritual and act.

Today's acts and deeds are influenced by the decisions of past generations and our decisions today impact the choices our descendents will be forced to make in their time. Therefore, a knowledge and appreciation of history and its role in our lives must be both studied by returning to our biblical values and practiced before we can move forward into the future.”

Upcoming Events:

- **Saturday, August 23, 2008 - Havurah Gathering at Jane Kronheim's**

On Saturday, August 23rd the Havurah will meet at Jane Kronheim's home in Harrisville. We'll have a potluck dinner, Havdalah and Jane will treat us to a tour of her living studio and lead a discussion on folk art.

- **Friday, September 12, 2008 - Erev Shabbat at the Hollander's**

Erev Shabbat services will be held at the Hollander's in Peterborough on September 12th at 7:00 PM.

- **(no Havurah Gathering in September due to the High Holidays)**

- **(no Erev Shabbat service in October due to the High Holidays)**

- **Saturday, October 18, 2008 - Havurah Gathering at the Halper's**

On Saturday, October 18th we'll meet at the home of John and Liz Halper in Greenfield for a potluck dinner, Havdalah and we'll build a succoh and celebrate the holiday of Succot.

Erev Shabbat:

As announced earlier this year, we're now having Erev Shabbat services on the second Friday of each month...a more regular basis, making it easier for members to plan.

Steering Committee

The Havurah's Board of Directors has changed its name to "Steering Committee" to more accurately describe its purpose: "to formulate the long range goals of the Havurah".

Some of the goals suggested by the committee members are:

- Improve our outreach efforts to the Jewish community in the Monadnock Region.
 - We're now listed on the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire's web site and in their newsletter.

- Our monthly Erev Shabbat service is now listed on the Monadnock Ledger-Transcript's Religious Services page.
- Our Havurah gatherings are listed on the Monadnock Ledger-Transcript's Community Calendar page.
- Our activities are listed in Congregation Ahavas Achim's bulletin.
- We will be listed in the Keene Sentinel.
- Provide Jewish education for children and adults.
- Provide ritual support in times of transition (Births, bris, deaths, Yahrzeit, etc.)
- Provide resources on other Jewish issues and needs.
- Get Jewish families with small children involved in the Havurah.
- Havurah trips and/or retreats.

The committee plans to meet at 7:00 PM on the third Monday of each month and any member is invited to attend. Contact John Halper for the location of the next meeting.

Member news

- **Farewell and Good Luck**

It is with sadness that we bid our friends and long-time members Seymour and Raymonde Weiser and Jane Morrissey farewell. The Weiser's have moved to Boston and Jane has moved to Nashua. Good luck in your new homes and endeavors.

We will miss you and hope you'll return to visit us often.

- **Get well soon**

Best wishes to Nancy Harrowitz who is recovering from shoulder surgery. Nancy, we want to see you up and about, throwing your fast ball real soon.

- **Welcome new members**

Welcome to Helen Altman who joined us earlier in the year. Helen moved to our area from White Plains, NY and now lives in Peterborough. We're glad to have you as a member.

Tikkun Olam:

- **Annual Barn Sale in Dublin:**

Despite the weather and the poor public attendance this year, we raised \$208 for our Tikkun Olam fund. This amount includes a donation of \$23 from Matt Levene, which came from a

portion of his own sales. We appreciate your generosity Matt. Thank you to everyone who contributed items to sell at the sale and to those who helped work the booth that day: Grisel and David Levene, Liz Halper, Daniella Yitzchak, James Moon, Harriet Robbins and Bill Seidman. A special thanks to Grisel for organizing the sale and the pick up of the donation items from other members.

- **Food Bank:**

Here's the latest list of items from Grisel Levene that have been requested by the Peterborough Food Bank. Please remember to bring items from the list to our Havurah gatherings for donation to the food bank in the Havurah's name. You can also get in touch with Grisel at grisel@worldpath.net.

- Peanut Butter
- Jam / Jelly
- Kidney Beans
- Cream of Chicken Soup
- Cream of Mushroom Soup
- Tomato Soup
- Jello Gelatin
- Bath Soap

- **Tzedakah Box**

We have a Tzedakah box at our Havurah gatherings. Be sure to put a donation in it if you can. The Tikkun Olam committee will give us some additional suggestions as to possible recipient organizations for our donations.

National Havurah Committee

The National Havurah Committee requested that each Havurah across the country participate in T-shirt sponsorship for the annual National Havurah gathering. Our Steering Committee approved a \$36 expenditure for the sponsorship and the name "Peterborough Havurah" (along with many other Havurot) will appear on the T-shirts worn by attendees at the national gathering.

Jewish Federation's Annual Calendar Scheduling Meeting

I attended the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire's annual calendar scheduling meeting on July 15th in Manchester as the Peterborough Havurah's representative. Fifteen people

attended including a number of New Hampshire Rabbi's and a few representatives of other Jewish organizations in New Hampshire. Ours was the only Havurah represented.

The meeting was held with an air of cooperation as all the attendees worked to resolve scheduling conflicts for the coming year. Federation requested that all member organizations keep them updated as to their calendar of events.

I had an opportunity to speak to the group and tell them a bit about our Havurah and our activities. Jeff Flayden, Federation's new Director, offered to do an oneg for us following one of our Erev Shabbat services.

Treasurer's Report

Here is the current financial report for 2008 from Liz Halper, our treasurer:

Receipts

Beginning Balance (Tikkun Olam)	\$ 278.00
Dues Collected	\$ 650.00
Interest Received	\$ 1.99
Seder Receipts	\$ 355.00
Barn Sale Receipts (Tikkun Olam)	\$ 208.00

Total Receipts	\$1,492.99

Expenses

Bank Fees (one time, now waived)	\$ 15.00
National Havurah T-shirt sponsorship	\$ 36.00
Seder Expenses (food and hall)	\$ 354.00
Seder Expenses (1/2 of Haggadot cost)	\$ 49.60
Internet Expenses (domain name, Email, Web site hosting)	\$ 128.50

Total Expenses	\$ 583.10
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Bank Balance as of 8/18/08	\$ 909.89
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Cash Account - Analysis

General Havurah Funds	\$ 423.21
Tikkun Olam Funds	\$ 486.00

Bank Balance as of 8/18/08	\$ 909.89
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Upcoming Jewish Holidays and Celebrations

The following holidays begin at sundown on the day before the day shown.

- Rosh Hashonah Tuesday, September 30, 2008
- Yom Kippur Thursday, October 9, 2008
- Sukkot Tuesday, October 14, 2008

Membership List

If you have not sent in your membership form or if you have changes to make, please complete the form on the last page of this newsletter and Email it back to me or snail-mail it to me at:

John Halper
35 Old Bennington Rd.
Greenfield, NH 03047

Our Web Site

The address of our web site is www.peterboroughhavurah.org and the User Name is "havurah" (lower-case letters). The site is password-protected; please Email me at jhal@jdassoc.com for the password.

To keep the web site interesting, we'll need articles and other tidbits of information from you! Please get in touch with me at jhal@jdassoc.com if you'd like to contribute something to the web site.

Shalom,

John

Please complete this page **ONLY** if you have not sent it in to me before
or if you have changes to make.

Peterborough Havurah - Member Information

>> Please Print <<

Today's Date	
First <u>and</u> Last Name(s) of Adults	
First <u>and</u> Last Names <u>and</u> Birthdates of Children	
Street Address	
City	
State	
Zip Code	
Home Phone (include area code)	
Cell Phone (include area code)	
Email Address(es) (very important)	