

Chanukah Party!
December 17, 2006

We warmly invite kids and their parents to a festive Chanukah Party, Sunday, December 17 at 5:30pm at the Orensanz Foundation (172 Norfolk Street, south of Houston). We will enjoy music, dancing, candle-making, candle-lighting, face-painting, circus performers, dough-nuts, and of course **Delicious Latkes!**

The Shul of New York
Rabbi Burt Aaron Siegel
445 East 65th Street
New York, NY 10021



Friday Night at *The Shul of New York*

- * **Shabbat Services:** Every first and third Friday of the month at 6:30pm. Currently at: The Religious Society of Friends' Assembly Room, 15 Rutherford Place, between 2nd and 3rd Avenues from East 15th Street to East 17th Street. Please check the web site for directions and the location of future services.
- * **Torah study** is every second Friday of the month at 6:30pm at the Assembly Room at The Religious Society of Friends.
- * **Children's/Family Shabbat Services** are every second Friday of the month starting at 5:30pm (immediately preceding the Torah study) at the Assembly Room at The Religious Society of Friends. All children up to age ten with their adults are welcome! For more information email Dara Kessler at doctordara@yahoo.com.
- * **Shabbat dinners** hosted in someone's home are often on the fourth Friday of the month. Email Nigel at Naustin@proskauer.com or Jan at Bananajana16@aol.com for information about how to participate.
- * **Cultural Fifth Fridays:** Stay tuned and check the web site regularly for the upcoming cultural events on the fifth Friday of the month.

Oneg Shabbat: Each Friday night at the close of Shabbat services, anyone has the opportunity to celebrate a joyful life event with the congregation by sponsoring an Oneg Shabbat. Celebrate your next *simcha* with us. All it takes is some wine, grape juice, challah, and nibbles of your choice. Look for Jen and Stephen Palgon at services or email them at Jennifer.Palgon@pfizer.com.

CLASSES: (Please visit www.theshulofnewyork.org. "Programs" for detailed information.)

- * **Religious School for Children:** We're pleased to announce our new director is Marsha Leo and our teacher is Raphael Schklowsky.
- * **Adult Bat/Bar Mitzvah:** please contact RabbiBurt@aol.com
- * A variety of classes on various Jewish themes will be offered throughout the coming year. Please check the web site often for updated information on these spiritual, intellectual, and consciousness-raising programs.

For payment options email Co-Presidents Vera and Mike Hearn at info@theshulofnewyork.org.

Social Action at *The Shul of New York*:

The Shul of New York, as an all-inclusive haven of spiritual Judaism, is committed to social action. To find out more about how to be involved, check the web site for events or email Dani Durkin at Danilune@earthlink.net.

Gifts from the Heart: Email Sara Lavner at SLavner@aol.com for details on how to donate to *The Shul of New York* in honor of a loved one or to celebrate a life event.

Board of Directors: Rabbi Burt Aaron Siegel; Co-Presidents, Vera and Mike Hearn; Vice President, Dara Kessler; Treasurer, John Balan; Mark Beigelman; Joan Brancaccio; Dani Durkin; Mary Ellis and Kenneth Bookbinder; Sheila Grosfeld; Anne Lewison; Joy Mach; Karen and Doug Seidman; Joe Sussman.

Questions or comments: write to info@theshulofnewyork.org



Editor: Dani Durkin

THE SHUL OF NEW YORK

A Synagogue for Spiritual Judaism

NEWS FROM THE HEART

Chanukah 2006



Designer: Paula Goldfader

A MESSAGE FROM RABBI BURT

After six years of calling the Orensanz Center our spiritual home, we have decided to also create another home at the Friends Meeting House in Gramercy Park. We reluctantly made this decision because of the greatly increased number of events being held at the Orensanz Center that made scheduling difficult.



Rabbi Burt Aaron Siegel Photo by Paula Goldfader

The Orensanz Center continues to be a special home for *The Shul of New York*. We will continue to hold our High Holyday services there, and will gather there for special services and events during the year. We are grateful to Al and Angel Orensanz for so generously inviting us to use the space of the Center.

When we first started using the space six years ago, we were among the pioneers in the revival of Jewish life on the Lower East Side. During the time we were there, our little congregation grew into a well-known synagogue in New York City.

We have found our additional home at the Friends Meeting House to be a wonderfully sacred space for our inspirational Shabbat Celebrations. Our Community has been warmly welcomed by the Quaker Community.

Now we have two spiritual homes, both of them appealing and outstanding.

We have come to realize that our real home does not consist of a physical structure alone. Our real home is the community. Just as a home provides love and acceptance, so too our community offers love and acceptance to everyone. Just as a home supports our maturing, so too our community supports the unique spiritual growing of all who join us. Home is not only mortar and bricks. Home is a value system based upon respect for every person.

As we learn this lesson on even deeper levels, our Shul will more and more genuinely serve our community.

HAPPY CHANUKAH!

www.theshulofnewyork.org

Please check the web site for information regarding events and location of services.

HOMeward BOUND

by Dani Durkin

This edition of "News From the Heart" is dedicated to the idea of Home. It occurred to me that this was an important theme not only for this congregation, but also for Jews as a People. We Jews (and friends of Jews) who know even a little bit about our history, are aware of the challenges we've faced looking for a Home, and maintaining a Homeland. And those among us who have been part of *The Shul of New York* since its fantastic, loving, and humble beginnings, certainly know what being flexible means in terms of what this Shul calls its home. The Shul started off meeting in a little basement room and has since traveled to Friends House for Shabbat services. The most wonderful attitude pervades, however, each time we find ourselves in a new location: amusement triumphs over irritation, ultimately, and contented resignation finally finds most of us. Perhaps this is because Rabbi Burt Siegel is so good at reminding us about one of the principles we hold so dear, both in our day-to-day bread-and-butter lives and on a different, more spiritual realm. We as individuals, and we as a congregation, are continuously in flux, changing, traveling, diversifying, evolving. This pertains to where *The Shul of New York* joyously celebrates Shabbat with the sublime Shul Band leading us in sparkling song, as well as where each of us is spiritually and in our hearts. The material world is relevant to our lives - we want our services in a beautiful place with beautiful people around us! But it cannot, in the end, dictate everything that is truly important. In essence, I think our Home should help us be more, and better versions, of ourselves, no matter where it is. And that's something I get from being with all of you, for which I am most thankful.



Dani Durkin, Doug Seidman, Mary Ellis Bookbinder



**ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES
at *The Shul of New York***

1. Celebrating Chanukah

A workshop offering ideas about joyous Chanukah celebration for the family. December 12, 7:30pm, Abrons Art Center, 466 Grand Street. No fee.

2. Living a Spiritual Life

An exploration of the meaning of a Jewish spiritual life and how to live spiritually. December 21, 7:30pm, Rabbi Burt's apartment, 445 E. 65 Street, \$15.

3. The Philosophy of *The Shul of New York*

What are the principles and ideas that guide our Shul? This first session will examine the tenets of Reform Judaism in general. January 11, 7:30pm. Registrants will be notified of location. No fee.

4. Judaism for Beginners

A continuation of the series in which we learn the basics about Jewish religion and culture. January 25, 7:30pm, Rabbi Burt's apartment, 445 E. 65 Street, \$15.

Please email or call Rabbi Burt to register:
RabbiBurt@aol.com., 212-570-9047

MEMBERSHIP

One of our community's miracles is that we have no membership dues or minimum entry fees. Our doors are open to all persons who wish to enter—regardless of financial means. We accept and welcome all individuals who choose to become part of our community. Therefore, we are an all-inclusive community of singles, families, seniors; straight and gay, individuals and couples; in-married and intermarried; converts, marginal and previously unaffiliated Jews; erudite and novice. Our membership includes many who have found something lacking in their previous institutionalized religious experience, yet have been hungry for a meaningful spiritual experience. They, along with many others, have found exactly what they have been looking for at *The Shul of New York*, A Synagogue for Spiritual Judaism.

Like all organizations we have expenses. Without the support of our congregation, our community cannot hope to sustain itself. Please mail your contributions to: Mr. John Balan, Treasurer, The Shul of New York, 50 King Street, #6D, New York, NY 10014, or you can now donate securely online at www.theshulofnewyork.org.

**METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ARTS TOUR:
Third Tour Added!!!**

We had to add yet another tour, because the first two sold out! So on the evening of January 12, take a guided tour of the critically acclaimed exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, "Brush and Ink: The Chinese Art of Writing." The tour will be led by Mike Hearn, Douglas Dillon Curator of Chinese Art and co-president of *The Shul of New York*. The tour is \$50. and will benefit the Shul. Please contact Karen at Seidman4@aol.com to reserve a space.

Take *The Shul Band* home with you!

Visit www.theshulband.com to learn more about our fantastic musicians, purchase a CD "Alive at *The Shul of New York*," or listen to some tunes on line! For bookings, call Adam Feder: 917-449-1690.

Volunteering at Friends House

Because *The Shul of New York* will now be sharing space with Friends House, we'd like to share with our congregation a wonderful opportunity to give back to the community by participating in the Neighborhood Coalition for Homeless People:

All of our homeless guests are referred to us by the Neighborhood Coalition of Homeless People, a drop-in center on the Upper East Side. The Neighborhood Coalition provides many services including screening our guests for drugs, alcohol and tuberculosis. Two of our volunteers arrive at 8:00pm to set up the cots and a refreshment table. Our guests arrive by bus from the drop-in center around 8:30pm. Lights are out at 10pm. Wake up time is at 6, when we set out a light breakfast. The bus comes to pick up our guests at a little before 7, giving us time to store the cots, tidy up and leave in time to go to work or to whatever we do in our daily lives.

All of our volunteers participate in a simple training that lasts about 90 minutes. The on-site training is not an education in social work, but a hands-on tour of the facilities: e.g. Where is the peanut butter? We set out the beds and food, talk about the nightly routine, mention briefly the Quaker philosophy of the equality and dignity of all people, and greet the guests when the bus arrives. We encourage our new trainees to sign up for their first night at the shelter, which is always with an experienced volunteer.

The Friends Shelter is located at 15 Rutherford Place in New York City. Rutherford Place, between Second and Third Avenue is a short two-block street that runs from 15th Street and 17th Street. To get there, take a subway to Union Square and walk three blocks east to Rutherford Place.

For more information or to become a volunteer, please call or email: Sylvia Friedman, 212-673-8316, SMFon15th@aol.com.



Arthur Marks, Sheila and Monte Grosfeld photo by Dani Durkin

ARTHUR MARKS WALKING TOUR

On a bright and sunny fall day, the infamous singing tour guide, Arthur Marks, took a group of about 50 brave souls around the Village to share his humor and wisdom about Jewish history in the 19th century, we got juicy gossip about the Whitney sisters inside the original Whitney studios, and later rested in an historic pub McSorley's Alehouse in the East Village. The day started off with a bagel brunch chez Karen and Doug Seidman, and ended at the bottom of St. Marks Place (no relation to the saintly tour guide, who kept us laughing and made us feel smarter by the end of a long and worthwhile jaunt uncovering colorful New York City secrets.

VERY VILLA-LOBOS at MERKIN HALL

November 12, 2006
by Dani Durkin



Ernesto Villa-Lobos, Luis Villa-Lobos, Abuelita, Alberto Villa-Lobos

It was a rainy but warm November night as we made our way to Merkin concert Hall in midtown. Awaiting the throngs of concertgoers was Doug Seidman, otherwise known at *The Shul of New York* as "House," for you'll see him during every service sitting in the back, making sure everything is running smoothly. November 12th was no exception, as I high-fived the elegantly dressed Shul members I knew, including my Aunt Diane, Sheila Hixon, Andy Stromberg, and others! and fought my way through the crowd to give Doug a hard time—I mean, a hand, or, at least a wave hello. Turning to my left, I spotted one of the stars of the evening, the lovely woman who made this gala evening possible, Karen Seidman, dressed in her formal black attire, cool, calm, and collected. She tossed me an empty clipboard, which made me feel needed, and then proceeded to make things happen with her capable team. Mrs. Weill and Co-Presidents Mike and Vera Hearn greeted everyone from one corner, while Shul favorites Lea and Reynie danced like the musical sprites we've all come to love, weaving their way through the crowd.

As my partner Gecko and I made our way to the top balcony, we spotted Rabbi Burt down on orchestra level, rubbing his palms together in eager anticipation of the musical treat to come: Ernesto, Alberto, and Luis Villa-Lobos tantalizingly playing piano, violin, an accordion, and guitar. They opened up with some treats they had specially prepared for the Latin Grammys, with our much appreciated Shul Band bass player Dave, gifted jazz clarinetist Matt looking like a Chagall, and our favorite violinist Ernesto on piano. At one point he called out, "When do I get to play violin?" to which some heckler retorted, "Friday night!" The talented drummer Dave Gomez beat a mean rhythm all night and a lovely flute complemented Luis and Alberto on their signature fiddles. Ranging from Reggaton to Irish folk tunes, the Villa-Lobos ensemble rocked the house and seduced us all with their energy and astounding talent. Abuelita joined the brothers on stage to share her beautiful voice and shake those hips, and our own musical director Adam Feder completed the night with the entire band for some creatively Irish influenced jams.

Later, for the lucky crowd who attended the Gala Reception, autographs were signed, and a one-of-a-kind teeshirt designed by Mary Ellis and signed by the Villa-Lobos brothers was given away in a raffle.

All proceeds from the concert benefit *Th Shul of New York*. Thank you to everyone who made it possible! For information on more events to come, visit www.theshulofnewyork.org and click on "Events."

NOH! (Yes, It Is)

A Naturally Occurring Haiku
by Lou Blumengarten

You may have heard the term "NORC" (naturally occurring retirement community). New York is full of such places, my apartment building included. Let me coin a neologism: "NOH". Noh most often refers to Japanese dance drama replete with highly stylized action, costuming, masks, and scenery. What I mean by those initials, however, is "a naturally occurring haiku." This longtime composer of haiku can't take credit for this NOH, but I will share it: Judaism's supreme prayer, the Sh'ma, is a NOH:

Shma Yisrael
Adonai elohaynoo
Adonai Echad

***The Shul of New York* Silent Auction**

The Silent Auction was a resounding success last spring! Although a separate letter and/or email will be sent urging you to donate for the spring 1007 auction, donations are gladly (and eagerly!) accepted throughout the year. The "Letter of Introduction" and forms can be found on our web site at www.theshulofnewyork.org. In addition, feel free to email Joy Mach at JMach@nyc.rr.com for more information.



Lea



Adam Feder, Matt Snyder, and Ernesto Villa-Lobos



Anne Lewison building a Sukkah



Jen and Steven Palgon



The Balcony, High Holy Day Services 2006