

July /
August 2007

Number 26

NLPJC Newsletter

North London Progressive Jewish Community



See our website at www.nlpjc.org.uk

NLPJC events...

• Picnic in the Park

After the Shabbat Service on 7th July, we will be having a picnic at 1pm in Clissold Park (find us opposite the church). Everyone is welcome – please bring veggie food (and sunshine...) to share.

• Special High Holy Day Workshop

On Sunday 29th July Rabbi Shulamit will be running a prayer workshop at the Montagu Centre, 21 Maple Street, W1 (nearest tube Warren St.) 10.30am – 4pm – see page 2 for more details. Everyone welcome.

• Arab/Jewish School Project Discussion

Following our Pot Luck Supper on Friday 27th July, we will be having a fascinating talk & discussion with a representative from the Centre for Creativity in Education and Cultural Heritage (CCECH) (See Page 4 for details). 7.30pm at the Community Rooms. Cost to non-members £5 / £3 concs. Please bring a veggie dish to share.

A new phase begins

As I write this article I am just back from two weeks in France, thinking about the coming summer and the autumn beyond. As I think back over the past few months I find myself reflecting on a lot of special memories. An early summer evening in Sue Lukes's garden with the Adult Education students. Friday nights in members homes sharing food and laughter. Fascinating conversations at New Members' evenings. Children's Services. Our studies on the evening of Shavuot and the amazing speakers we had then.

Even while I was enjoying my break I was looking forward to coming home and carrying on. I was also conscious that we are at the beginning of a new phase. The work of our community is getting greater, and it is time to share out the tasks. To have a larger group of people who take a small part of the service, teach, or give a *d'var Torah*, a sermon within our services, so that a variety of voices are heard.

We are ready to move on to this new

phase, what part are you going to play?

These thoughts of change often come out of the experience of a break, the chance to think about things anew. The summer, with its promise of time off, is also a time for reflection. Yet even as the light grows brighter, I am often reminded of the High Holidays coming at summer's end. The special one day workshop at the end of July will be a real chance to consider ourselves at prayer, and the kinds of services we want to have. We also need more people to take a role in making these High Holiday services happen.

Finally, this time off for me has also been the end of our wonderful Civil Partnership celebrations. Thank you to everyone for your flowers and good wishes to myself and Rebekka. The special Shabbat morning service has left us both with such happy memories.

Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu

Friday Nights In...

Friday night... the end of an exhausting week. Or the beginning of a restful Shabbat and rewarding weekend? Our Friday Night Services are small but very precious. As you might expect, big numbers of people don't usually come along. But the ones who do, get to experience a quiet and reflective Erev Shabbat service, a good meal and great conversation. It's a way of making space for a more intimate and deeper connection with other members of the community.

The small number of regulars means that using the community rooms at St Mary's is just not a good idea, mainly because of cost. Various members are now hosting this event in their own homes.

The details of venue etc are sent out on email to our members the week before. We are aware that this means that because full details are not in the newsletter, you might need to be a bit more organised to come along. But please make the effort to support these monthly services, we need you, and who knows, you might just discover a whole new way to recharge your batteries.

Friday Nights In. A Service, a meal and good conversation, the second Friday of the month.

Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu

liberal judaism

NLPJC is a constituent congregation of Liberal Judaism

Planning for our Prayers

Why pray? How do we relate to the prayers we find on the pages of the Siddur or the High Holiday Machzor? Do you pray when you are alone or only within the community?

How can our services become more meaningful? What sorts of services should we be having traditional, modern, all-English or even all-Hebrew? How can we keep on creating a genuinely Liberal spiritual expression?

On **Sunday 29th July at 10.30am – 4pm** at the Montagu Centre, we will hold a special all day workshop. This workshop is open to all our members and visitors. The first half of the day will be devoted to an exploration of prayer within the synagogue service. The second half of the day will see us turn towards the forthcoming High Holidays. We ask all wardens and future wardens to be there for the afternoon at least.

This workshop is for you if you have ever wanted to get to grips with Jewish prayer, have your say about how we pray, or want to take on a slice of responsibility for the smooth running of the High Holidays.

Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu

**Venue: The Montagu Centre (Liberal Judaism),
21 Maple Street, W1 (Off Tottenham Court Rd - Nearest tube: Warren Street)**

Treasure Chest

Adult Education

There are still 2 more sessions left of this term – not too late to drop in

Thurs 5th July

7pm Beginner's Hebrew

8pm Jewish Living:

Key Prayers

9pm Intermediate Hebrew:

What time should

we say the Shema?

Thurs 12th July

7pm Beginner's Hebrew

8pm Jewish Living:

From Mourning to

Celebration

9pm Intermediate Hebrew

End of course siyyum

**Tel: 020 7403 3779 for venue
& more details**

TELCO A future relationship with NLPJC

Matthew Bolton gave an inspiring presentation about the work of TELCO (The East London Communities Organisation) at Shavuot. If we at NLPJC are able to join we will be the first synagogue to do so. Our problems at present are two-fold. We need to work out how to raise the necessary membership fee (there is already good progress on this) and we need one or two volunteers who have the time and commitment to take the lead as members of our community, working together with TELCO and its member organisations in Hackney.

This is a real opportunity to make lasting relationships locally and to work together to improve people's lives. If you are interested in participating / taking a lead in this, please email Julia at nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org

Matthew Bolton writes:

TELCO is a campaigning organisation which targets issues of common concern to its members. Our members come from the great faith and civic institutions - Churches, Mosques, schools, trade unions, university departments, student unions and charities. TELCO members care about their future, their neighbours' future, and the public business which affects them. They build relations with borough councils, central government and business in order to have a say on

the issues that affect their daily lives. Along with West and South London Citizens, we form London Citizens, the largest organisation of civic institutions in the country.

TELCO runs four strategic campaigns: for the Living Wage, for Affordable Housing, for an Ethical Olympics and for rights for long-term irregular migrants. The Living Wage is the level of pay and conditions that enables a full-time worker to make ends meet for themselves and their family. Our campaign has lifted thousands of families out of working poverty. Housing is a crucial issue for our members with house prices soaring and on May 4th 2004 at LONDON CITIZENS Mayoral Accountability Assembly, Mayor Livingstone agreed to set up a Community Land Trust of 2,000 homes. After a long wait for feasibility studies, the scheme has the go-ahead and possible sites of land have been selected in East London. After a long campaign to make sure that the Olympics is to benefit the community, Lord Coe, Ken Livingstone and the Chair of the LDA signed a five page statement of economic guarantees at City Hall in front of 40 London Citizens leaders and the national press. Guarantees include payment of the London Living Wage to all workers on Olympic projects, a construction training academy in east London, local labour clauses and allocation

of land for affordable homes and the Community Land Trust. Our most recent campaign, Strangers into Citizens aims to persuade government to introduce an earned amnesty for long-term vulnerable migrants. We held a 20,000 strong rally on May 7th and are continuing to speak up for a humane and sensible approach to the situation where half a million residents in the country are denied basic rights. Aside from the campaigns, Community organising is about developing leadership and capacity in the neighbourhoods where we work. Through hands-on experience of taking action for change, through formal training, and with the support of professional organisers, our members become full and able citizens. The diverse membership of churches, mosques, schools and trade unions makes decisions together democratically, on a regular basis. In bringing together different interest groups to listen to each other and to take action together, we play an active role in developing real social cohesion. At the moment, we have strong representation from most of the different faiths and traditions and are actively seeking to increase Jewish representation.

**For more info see
www.telcocitizens.org.uk**

Keeping Faith in Democracy

An Extract from Maurice Glasman's talk at Shavuot

"On Pesach we remember that we were liberated from exploitation and oppression in Egypt. We were slaves to Pharaoh and were therefore individually exploited for our labour and collectively oppressed, as a people, by the tyranny of Pharaoh. Tonight, on Shavuot, we celebrate receiving the Torah, the laws. What is the connection between these two events, the rejection of slavery and the acceptance of the Torah? I would suggest that it meant that freedom was not based upon one person or individual imposing their will on others but in all people agreeing to obey a common law that meant that none would be subject to the will of a pharaoh. From slavery to freedom meant, at a fundamental level, accepting that others had to be free if we were.

The talk just given by David Rosenberg on the Bund seems to strengthen this point. The Jews of Eastern Europe tried to find a common way of resisting both the exploitation of capitalism and the oppression of the nation states of Eastern Europe that upheld the rights of national ethnic Slavic communities and oppressed Jews. The liberation from this exploitation and oppression when it came, in the form of the Russian Revolution was a false liberation because it created a new pharaoh (Lenin, Stalin) who

acted outside the law and created new forms of exploitation and oppression. The Bundist leaders who escaped Hitler were killed by Stalin.

Where does that leave us? How can we fulfil our ethical inheritance of Pesach and Shavuot in the face of such failure and defeat?

One important way we can do this is by staying true to our most ancient traditions of building up a strong community based around learning and mutual aid. The *Kehilah*, the self-governing Jewish community that governs its own affairs outside of State control and in resistance to market rules is the starting point. The idols of consumerism can only be resisted if we preserve and strengthen our community values of mutual care and protection.

We, as Jews, are no longer poor workers, our class position has changed. A new generation of immigrants has come to Britain. They come from Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. They are poor and often hostile to Jews, who they have often never met. Saul Alinsky, the founder of broad based community organising in Chicago in the 1930's, drew upon Jewish traditions of communal self-help and shared them with poor communities of Poles, Slovaks, Blacks and Hispanics. He set up a

movement that has spread the word of citizenship and faith throughout America and has succeeded in winning many victories for poor people ranging from the living wage to better schools using the idea of the *Kehilah*.

This tradition is strong in London now, through the London Citizens Organisation and the East London Citizens Organisation (TELCO). It is made up of churches, Mosques, Buddhist centres and schools. As yet, no synagogue has joined.

We need to make friends. We are obliged to join with others to defend our common human status. A true appreciation of our freedom and our Torah would be to lead the Jewish community in making common cause with other communities of faith in resisting the modern day pharaohs who seek to pay the minimum wage and deny these workers their citizenship.

Through building a strong democracy we can defend our community and our values through common action on mutual problems.

Having worked with TELCO for many years I strongly recommend that we join with them and remember that our goal is justice, justice, justice above all."

Rabbi Shulamit and Rebekka Wedell Celebrate their Civil Partnership in Islington

Saturday 2nd June, a bright Saturday morning, and we all arrived at the light and airy Harry Rice Hall near Archway for an NLPJC Shabbat service with a difference. Not just a different location (probably the first Shabbat service in Islington for many years, since the last synagogue there closed!), but a different Rabbi, our old friend Aaron Goldstein with his guitar (ably assisted by Josh Lassman-Watts the Youth Officer of Liberal Judaism), while we celebrated Rabbi Shulamit's and her partner Rebekka Wedell's Civil Partnership with a special *aufruf* (calling to the Torah and blessing).

Rabbi "weds" singer said the JC headline, but anyone coming for a bit of retro scandal would have found the entire congregation doing "head and shoulders, knees and toes" with the children as Aaron warmed up the assembly in response to requests, pointing out that *tefillim* traditionally include thanks for our bodies.

After a musical introduction with plenty of singing, Josh, Anna and Liz took the children off to their event, while the rest of us joined in the rest of the service: our portable Ark and Sefer Torah had been brought along for the reading of the Law, and we were soon at home in the new surroundings. The service concluded with a moving *mi sheberach* blessing followed by a special kiddush for all the adults and children, provided by the couple.

Michael Ellman & Sue Lukes

HHD Charity Appeal

This year we have chosen the following 3 charities for our High Holyday Appeal

Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID)

Asylum-seekers and migrants can be detained under Immigration Act powers on the authority of an immigration officer, without recourse to a court. Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID) believes the right to liberty, enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights, should be accorded to all. It provides free legal advice and information to detained asylum-seekers and migrants to enable them to challenge their detention. BID also campaigns against arbitrary detention, seeking to ensure that detention is only used as a last resort, is time-limited, and sanctioned by a court. The organisation receives no government funding and is entirely reliant on charitable donations. We try and help as many people as we can with limited resources. With just 8 mostly part-time staff, and 24 casework volunteers, we manage to support about 1,500 people a year. We run bail workshops in detention centres, provide telephone advice and carry out bail applications. Your donations would make a real difference.

Celia Clarke

Street Child Africa

Street Child Africa recognises the need for fresh approaches to working for the street children of Africa. Many Africans are condemned at birth to a future of poverty, disease and premature death. It is not surprising then, with communities and families under stresses such as these that street children emerge. 'Street' children have been given this anonymous label because the 'street' is where they live their lives out: hustling, sleeping, working, eating. The street is their home and this is where their daily struggle is endured. Despite many being ill, stigmatised, uneducated, abused and anonymous, they are also ambitious, tough and resilient, with the same dreams and aspirations as people like us. Currently in Africa there are a few national governments addressing the very real needs of these marginalized citizens; there simply is not enough money to go round. It is up to grass root organisations to reach out to these children. This is where Street Child Africa listens and helps.

www.streetchildafrica.org.uk

Centre for Creativity in Education and Cultural Heritage (CCECH)

Folklorist Dr. Simon Lichman, of the Israeli Centre for Creativity in Education and Cultural Heritage in Jerusalem, has built a school project whose aim is to promote cross-cultural, multi-generational coexistence. Lichman's project uses the folklore and traditions of Jewish and Arab families to bind together two groups who are sometimes fearful and often ignorant of the "other". The children's parents and grandparents are their offspring's homework – traditional food, games and toys passed down generations, family stories and traditional songs. Over the course of the two to three years children and their families spend in the programme, barriers come down and trust grows. Lichman is frustrated that the project, which is largely funded by private foundations, does not have the capacity to do more work in more schools.

Clive Richards from CCECH will be giving a talk after our supper on 27th July at the Community Rooms. 7.30pm. £5 / £3 concs to non-members.

A Bike Ride to Paris

One of our members, James Hobbs, is doing a sponsored bike ride from London to Paris from 7-10 September this year in aid of Marie Curie Cancer Care.

James told us "I'm getting rather brazen in my attempts to raise money for what is a more than worthwhile cause. I had a brother, David, who died of cancer a few years back at the age of 41, so that spurs me on."

The ride is 175 miles in total, leaving Crystal Palace and arriving at the Eiffel Tower (via the ferry to Dieppe) - then home by Eurostar.

Anyone who would like to sponsor James can do so either online at

www.justgiving.com/jameshobbs or you can email James at james.hobbs@ukonline.co.uk to sponsor him in the old fashioned way.

If you do it online, there's an extra 28% of gift aid that can also be added. James is aiming to raise £2,000, and will be cycling with his younger brother Simon and brother-in-law Ron Finlay.

Hackney Limmud Is Coming...

Are you a good organiser? Can you manage a database, or stuff envelopes? Are you interested in catering, logistics, finance? Have you got something to say about Jewish learning, but with a special interest, in the arts, music, Yiddish, literature, history....can you put together part of a large learning programme? Do you want to meet new people, from diverse Jewish backgrounds living or working in Hackney?

Limmud is well known for the annual conference every winter, attended by up to 3,000 people. But those of us who find this huge event overwhelming have much more to enjoy in the shape of the one day Limmud conferences that take place throughout the year. Well now it's time for Hackney to take its place as a centre of Jewish learning, with our very own one day Limmud in September 2008. All kinds of help is needed.

Contact us at nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org or Rabbi Shulamit on 0207 403 3779 to volunteer.

Cheder Corner

Our last session is 7th July, and we will have a "wrap up" of what we have learned this year, including the main holidays and what we can do for "mitzvot" and, more importantly, why we should do them.

From next year, the Cheder will be changing a little. We will have Children's Hebrew as part of the Cheder, with me working with the beginners and a Hebrew teacher for the more advanced. (I know who it is, and s/he knows who, but it's not certain yet so we'll keep it our secret for the time being.) We're also hoping for our first pre-Bar Mitzvah group, as Rabbi Shulamit is busy getting our young adults together, and over the summer we are putting together two brand new curricula. Of course, the Children's Service will also continue. It's going to be a busy year!

Our 2007/08 calendar will be out shortly, and we hope our parents will use the summer for their own "mitzvah" – to plan on having their children attend cheder on a regular basis next year.

Oh yes – the church has given me a brand new cupboard! I finally have somewhere to put all these new books I've been promised...

I look forward to seeing you on 7th July at the picnic, and in any case have a lovely and restful summer.

Laura Miller
Head Teacher

NLPJC Members News

A warm welcome to our new members:

- ❖ Sylvia & Frank Levene
- ❖ Victoria Simons & Dougal McLean

Mazel Tov

To our new members Victoria Simons and Dougal McLean, who celebrated their partnership with a mixed faith blessing on 21st June...

...and to our own Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu and Rebekka Wedell, who celebrated their Civil Partnership with a special Kiddush with the community on 2nd June.

Condolences

Our thoughts are with the family and friends of our member, Kenneth Hammond, who passed away on 18th June aged 78.

In the event of the death of an NLPJC member, please contact the Funeral Directors Martin Broad & Son 020 8441 6047 and Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu 020 7403 3779.

THE SOLOMON SISTERS YIDDISH CABARET & KLEZMER

15th JULY 7.30PM
ETCETERA THEATRE
265 CAMDEN HIGH STREET
LONDON NW1 7BU

0207 482 4857
www.etceteratheatre.com

SPECIAL GUEST: BENNETT AARON

A WARM UP FOR EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE
At the PLEASANCE DOME (Acedome) 8.20PM
1st – 27th AUG 2007
(NOT 14th & 21st)

www.solomonsisters.com
www.myspace.com/solomonsisters

EXPERIENCE THE DISTINCTIVE BLEND OF THESE TWO POWERFUL VOICES AS THEY FUSE TOGETHER MELODIES AND HARMONIES FROM THE GOLDEN AGE OF NEW YORK'S YIDDUSH THEATRE

Daniel Zylbersztajn's Challah Recipe

vegan - wholemeal - cruelty free – organic



- | | |
|--|--|
| ½ cup warm water | Dry yeast. (recommended amount per manufacturer) |
| 1 tblspn fair trade brown sugar for yeast | 7 full tsp + 7 tsp water ENERG Egg replacer |
| 1 cup of fair trade brown sugar | 3 tspns sea salt |
| ¾ -1 cup organic vegetable oil | 4 cups boiling water |
| 3 lbs organic whole wheat flour + 2 lbs organic regular flour (or 5 lbs gluten-free flour) | |
| (Makes 2 large challahs, or 1 challah plus frozen dough for the next week) | |

1. Bowl 1: Yeast + Warm water + 1 tblspn sugar; wait until yeast sets
2. Bowl 2: Egg Replacement + sugar + oil + salt + hot water - MIX
3. When yeast is ready combine Bowl 1 and Bowl 2
4. Combine the different flours in a separate container & mix them, then add the flour bit by bit to the combined contents of bowl 1 & 2, kneading well for up 15 min – you may not need all the flour. Dough should be consistent, not too wet or dry.
5. After kneading cover the top with some flour and then cover with wet cloth
6. Leave dough to rise for at least 2 hours
7. Pre heat oven to 220-230°C
8. Re-knead, possibly adding a little flour
9. You can make a prayer / or meditation (*hafrashat halla*) here; it is then traditional to cut a small bit off and put it on the side of the tray to be burned (this would have been for the *Kohanim* who served the temple).
- 10 a) Put 3 challah length pieces of dough on a slightly oiled tray
b) Twisting with a knife, make 3 sectioning cuts into the upper parts of the dough at equal length (producing 3 equally big sections) – don't slice too deeply, all parts must stay connected. Then turn the thirds on the left and right, twisting them upside down, therefore leaving only the middle third in its original position. This will give the challah it's plaited appearance.
11. Put the tray in the pre-heated oven on a low shelf (to allow room for rising) and bake for 25-30 minutes (Check after 20 minutes).

NLPJC 'Who's Who'

All officers and chair can be contacted at nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org or by post to PO Box 42702 London N19 5WR

Rabbi : Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu
Co-ordinator : Jackie Richards
Hon. Secretary : Claire Helman
Treasurer : Hannah Forbes
Prayers & Spirituality Chair : Joanna Ryam
Education Chair : Sue Lukes
Cheder Teacher : Laura Miller
Children's & Adult's Hebrew Teacher : Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu
Volunteer Creche Worker : Anna Sklair
Membership Secretary : Daniel Casson
Administrator : Julia Chalfen
Social Action Co-ordinator : Daniel Casson
Marketing & Promotion : Claire Helman
Fundraising : Joanna Ryam

Vacant Posts:

Befriending Co-ordinator
Family Representative
Youth

Senior Warden

Intergenerational

Social Events Co-ordinator

If you are a member of NLPJC and are interested in joining one of the groups, or would like to fill one of the vacant roles, we would be delighted to hear from you.

NLPJC Newsletter is edited by Julia Chalfen. The deadline for the September/October issue is 19th Sept. Please send articles for publication to: nlpjc@liberaljudaism.org