



NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2008

## Happy New Year!

### A Message from the Board...

As many of you know, our Danforth Jewish Circle is governed by a Board of Directors. We are subject to our By-Laws and Constitution. The job of the Board of Directors of the DJC is to responsibly manage the budget, plan events and ensure that the DJC continues to thrive in meeting the needs of our community. In addition to the two co-chairs, Lynne Raskin and Daphne Woolf, there are 6 other members on the Board. As a group, we meet at least monthly and very often more times than that. We also strike committees and as individuals, are involved in these as well. Starting with this newsletter, we will be providing a high level summary of what is discussed and decided at the most recent Board meeting. We last met on January 7<sup>th</sup> and here's what we discussed and decided:

#### **Rabbi update:**

Our community needs a Rabbi and we continue to discuss and evaluate our needs in this respect.

#### **AGM:**

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) has been confirmed for **Sunday night, February 24<sup>th</sup> at Riverdale Presbyterian Church** (*see details in this news edition*). At this meeting, DJC members will be introduced to the Board members and be able to vote on new candidates. We are currently looking to replace 3 members of the Board and have established a Nominations Committee.

All members will be invited via post and e-mail to attend the February 24<sup>th</sup> AGM. Based on a passing motion at the AGM, next year –invitations will be sent via the internet to all members and a mailing to those without e-mail.

#### **Financials:**

We continue to evaluate our budget and have determined that we have the required funds to cover this year's operating costs. We anticipate that these funds plus monies from our very successful Clinton fundraising campaign will adequately cover this year's commitments and still allow us to consider introducing new programs.

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### **Fundraising:**

We are continuing to look at ways to creatively fund raise – the successful results of which will allow us to keep our annual membership fees low. Amongst other things, we are evaluating an opportunity for a grant through the Heritage Legacy Fund.

### **Website maintenance**

Our website manager has some ideas related to revamping our website and he is willing to donate much of his time to do this. A committee has been struck to undertake this venture.

### **Adult programming:**

By popular demand, we'd like to have another Coffee House evening - it's still in the planning stage, so please look for more information upcoming.

Due to the success of our Book Club, we'd like to start a Movie Club. This will be similar in format to the book club but with movies, rather than books, as the source of discussion.

### **Listening Campaign and House meetings:**

The follow-up from our Listening Campaign is going strong. Go Green! and our DJC Youth Committee (DJCYG) are meeting with excellent involvement from our community. Other groups formed around Diversity and Aging have continued meeting as well.

### **Our School:**

Our DJC School continues to thrive and our newly launched B'nei Mitzvah program is going very well. In our 2007/8 some grades had capacity and we want to ensure maximum enrolment in our 2008/9 year.

### **General Board Business:**

The Board will have an extended meeting over a weekend sometime in April/May to discuss issues related to programming and strategy for the DJC – topics that we can't adequately delve into during our monthly meetings.

***That's this month's update.*** We'll continue to keep you informed. If you have any specific questions of the Board that you'd like to ensure are addressed in an upcoming newsletter please send us an e-mail at [info@djctoronto.com](mailto:info@djctoronto.com).

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**Annual General Meeting** The DJC will be holding its annual meeting on **February 24, 2008**. The most important aspect of the meeting is the election of the Board of Directors. In preparation for the meeting, the board has appointed a five person Nominations Committee which consists of members of the community and the current board. The committee has a challenging task, as it works towards representing our diverse membership with the collected skills required. In order to create stability on the board, terms of office are staggered. This year, five board members will be continuing on, and three positions are open for replacement. The Nominations Committee would like to include the entire community in this process by inviting all members to nominate a member that they feel could contribute positively as a board member. This person should:

- Be a member of the DJC and uphold DJC values;
- Have demonstrated a commitment to the community through other volunteer activities;
- Be available for monthly meetings, chairing a working committee, occasionally attend other DJC meetings and initiatives and;
- Be able to engage in discussions respectfully, honoring differing opinions, and have an ability to work towards consensus in decision-making.

If you would like to nominate someone, please first seek their approval and then submit their names to the Nominating Committee by writing to [info@djctoronto.com](mailto:info@djctoronto.com) by January 22nd, 2006 along with a brief descriptive paragraph about the individual. All names submitted will be respectfully considered. The Nominations Committee will then recommend a slate to

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the board, and all members will then receive an annual meeting package by regular mail. So ***please mark your calendars for February 24*** and we look forward to your involvement in this important process.

Sincerely,  
The Nominations Committee.

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**An important message from Senator Barack Hussein Obama:**

**OK**, we'll stop with the jokes. The good news is that **20%** of you responded to our Clinton fundraising letter. Our goal was **\$10,000** and to date we've raised an *oh-so-close* **\$9,724.36!**

So who amongst us is going to send in \$275.64 and put us over the top? Maybe three of you will contribute \$91.88 each. Or five will send in \$55.13. More important, it would be nice to raise that 20% participation rate. We can't tell you how much to send, but we can tell you that sending something will make your day.



*Thank you!*

**Claudia Bali, Jacob Bali, Carla Hathaway, Carl Hathaway, Alan Gotlib, Brenda Somers, Arei Bierstock, Ellen Cowan, Susan Friedman, Paul Axelrod, Sharon Kusiar, Lynne Raskin, Daphne Woolf, Rex Hagon, Avrum Jacobson, Christel Kleitsch, Al Gladstone, Marilyn Wilcoxon, Janice Fricker, David Copelin, Diane Marshall, Cinnie Noble, Diana Chastain, Morgan McKinnon, Laurie Stein, Michael Wright, Susana Bali, Simon Bali, Marlyn Stein, Norman Stein, Ronan McGrath, Stephanie Perry, Michael Kanter, Karen Robbins, Mitch Goldberg, Christine McKeowen, Kathy Glazier, Melissa Heller, Abe & Ruby, Danny Greenspoon, Lisa Kent, Rafael Goldchain, Jean Hynes, Dina Waik, Susie Waldman, Todd Goldsbie, Deborah Stewart Finestone, Peter Finestone, Gloria Morris, Gerald Morris, Elyssa Gallander, Ilana Waldston, Ted Rogovein, Christopher Albertyn, Debra Albertyn, Ian Werker, Janet Saunderson, Eve-Lynn Stein, Allen Flaming, Shana Malinsky, Kathryn Eve, Laura Trachuk, Martin Katz, Franki Gestel, Rosie Beitel, Elisabeth Kessler, Eli Fellman, Elizabeth Scanlon, Mark Zaret, Simmy Zaret, Karen Bernstein, Rick Wilks, Karen Kuzmochka, Warren Morris, Laurie Weinberg, Emil Sher, Kathy Miller...**

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## ***Pesah in January?!***

The holidays are indeed early this year, but no worries! There is still plenty of time to stock up on *matzoh*, clean out the kitchen, change the dishes, and make the brisket.

Although we will have to wait for Spring to open the *haggadah* and fulfill the mitzvah of telling the story of the exodus from Egypt, it happens that over the next few weeks we are reading about our People's mythic emancipation in our weekly Torah cycle.

It seems fitting to me that we ring in 2008 by leaving Egypt. Though perhaps not with the same sense of urgency as during the High Holidays, with the arrival of the new calendar year many of us resolve to begin anew, to become our best selves. Rabbinic commentators throughout Jewish civilization have noted that the word "*Mitzrayim*" (what the Israelites use in Torah to refer to Egypt) and the word "*metzar*" (narrowness or constriction) share the same Hebrew root. With the new year we strive yet again to move from the narrow places in our lives, to liberate ourselves from that which keeps us from reaching our fullest potential as human beings.

This coming Shabbat we read from *parshat-bo* (chapters 10-13 in the book of Exodus), in which the Israelites are liberated. They leave Egypt in haste, crossing the Sea of Reeds. A famous story in the Talmud about this momentous event goes as follows:

Rabbi Judah said: At the sea each tribe said to each other, "You go into the sea first!" As they stood there bickering, Nahson ben Aminadav jumped into the water. Meanwhile Moses was praying. God said to him, "My friend is drowning-and you pray!"

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In my experience, I tend to begin the year with great expectations and a lot of energy. I jump right in to my resolutions- to be more present, to worry less, to be more patient, to give more, to exercise more, to decrease my carbon footprint upon the earth...But as the new year loses its newness, I am once again reminded that transformation does not come easily. What *is* easy is to revert back to familiar and comfortable patterns and behaviors.

The story above emphasizes the bravery of Nahson ben Aminadav who jumped right in. Surely it took nerve to enter the sea. But let's also consider the courage it must have taken to then continue into the wilderness. We will read in the Torah over the next few weeks about the experiences of the Israelites in the wilderness- of the perseverance required and the challenges faced. In the coming chapters they will get angry and frustrated, they will complain, they will grumble, they will become disheartened and will want to turn back.

For Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., whose birth and life we celebrate this month, the Hebrew Exodus served repeatedly as an important root metaphor. In a speech he made in April of 1957 titled *Birth of a New Nation*, he said, "This is something of the story of every people struggling for freedom...Like any breaking loose from Egypt, there is a wilderness ahead. ...There is always this wilderness standing before you."

Such is our challenge today. We are each wandering in the wilderness, and every day we have the choice to move forward, or to turn back. I want to suggest that the Exodus, the powerful and foundational narrative of our collective Jewish identity is a timely reprise that can not only help to reinforce our commitment to personal renewal here at the new year, but also on each and every ordinary day of our lives. For we recall the Exodus not only in our Torah reading, but also in the liturgy of the *daily* service.

The very last line of the *Ge'ulah* (redemption) blessing, which immediately follows the *Shema* in the *ma'ariv* (evening) service, is "I am Adonai you God who led you out of Egypt." Even if our personal theologies don't allow us to accept the

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literal story of the exodus, there is the potential for empowerment as we connect to this mythic narrative-and daily it can serve to provide inspiration to keep us moving forward.

I end by way of extending an invitation to our next Shabbat text study/discussion to be held on January 19<sup>th</sup>- at which time we will take a closer look at the Exodus narrative in Torah as well as in liturgy and talk more about how it shapes our identities. Please join us!

As we enter this new year, I am ever grateful to be a part of the extraordinary community that is the DJC and look forward to continued connection as we traverse the wilderness together. May we find encouragement and support not just in our texts and traditions, but in one another.

With blessings for a liberating 2008,  
Melissa

### January Shabbat services (Rabbi and in home) and Torah Study



- **Friday, January 18 - Shabbat Service** (Melissa Heller leading) - Eastminster (310 Danforth Avenue) Auditorium at **7:00 PM**. Child care is available, followed by a dessert Kiddush. ***Please enter via the Hurndale Entrance as the "Out of the Cold" is using the Jackman entrance.***
- **Saturday, January 19 - Torah Study** - Eastminster- Room C 17 at **10:30 AM**. ***Room directions will be posted at the Jackman entrance.***
- **Friday, January 25 - In home Shabbat - 7:00 PM** at the home of (DJC Co-Chair) Daphne Woolf & Rex Hagon - **19 Playter Boulevard- at the corner of Playter Crescent off Jackman Avenue.**

***Interested in hosting a Shabbat?*** Please contact Diana Chastain [dianach@allstream.net](mailto:dianach@allstream.net) for more information.

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**LEARN TO READ HEBREW IN 6 HOURS!!!**  
**DJC Jewish Studies program**

As part of the curriculum for the grade 5, 6, and 7 classes this year we are offering a 6-hour 'Hebrew Marathon' taught by Nirit Gruber. This is a great opportunity for you to learn to read Hebrew and to launch any further Hebrew study you may be doing in preparation for bar/bat mitzvah – or just for the pleasure of learning the language.

The program works especially well when kids and parents attend together – and so we encourage students to attend with their parents.



**WHEN:** **Saturday, February 2**  
**Saturday, February 9**

**TIME:** **10:00 AM to 1:00 PM (both days)**

**COST:** **FREE**

**LOCATION:** **Ms Miriam's Stay & Play**  
**- 583 A Danforth Avenue**

**REGISTRATION:** To register and confirm space in the workshop, please contact Nadya Burton at [nburton@ryerson.ca](mailto:nburton@ryerson.ca) by **January 15, 2008**. For any further information, please contact Nadya Burton at [nburton@ryerson.ca](mailto:nburton@ryerson.ca) or at **416 538-9949**.

Although this program falls outside of the hours of the regular Thursday afternoon DJC Jewish School classes, this Hebrew program is being offered as part of the regular curriculum, and we strongly encourage participation from students in the final three years of the DJC School.

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**DEAR SHVESTERS:**

**Greetings and best wishes to all of you for 2008!**

**Since our 2007 meeting to organize a chapter within the Danforth Jewish Circle for the Stephen Lewis's Grandmother to Grandmother Campaign, life seems to have gotten in the way of a follow-up. The intention, however, has not fallen by the wayside, so here we are again.....**

**Many of you attended our first meeting , hosted by Anne Amitay, where we watched Liz Marshall's evocative videos on the profiles of orphans and grandmothers in various countries in Africa and heard from Mary Ana Beer about the invaluable work that the Stephen Lewis Foundation is supporting in Africa as a result of this campaign.**

**As a follow up, we want to bring you out again along with *THE REAL BUBBIES* to promote leadership in this initiative! (I, as many, am *merely* a mother). I know the DJC doesn't have the largest representation of that particular generation but let's make an effort to bring the "mature" wise elders (grandfathers welcome too!) aboard.**

**Anne Amitay has once again graciously offered her home to host this event.**

**When** Sunday, February 3  
**Where:** 42 Thorncliffe Avenue (at Broadview & Danforth)  
**What:** Discussion/ Film (see Agenda below)  
**Time:** 1:00 PM  
**RSVP:** [info@djctoronto.com](mailto:info@djctoronto.com)

**Our agenda will include the following:**

**#1** Watching Liz Marshall's newest video on the female face of AIDS in Africa (25 minutes).

**#2** Participating in a workshop facilitated by Emma Firsten-Kaufman that was developed for high school students and entails each participant taking on a particular profile in an African community (approx. 1 hour).

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**#3 Discussing how to move this initiative forward within the DJC. We could order these agenda items so that only those who want to do the workshop and/or watch the film stay, perhaps sandwiching the organizing discussion in the middle.**

**We encourage you to bring along high school offspring, mothers and/or grandparents. We also request that you RSVP. If the number gets very high, we may need to relocate at the church.**

**Hope to see many of you on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and thanks for your interest in this initiative.**

**Sincerely,**

**Temi Firsten**

**\***



**It was a dark and stormy night** on November 26<sup>th</sup>, but still 10 Jewish green facilitators from congregations across the GTA left their warm lit homes and came together for their very first house meeting. Initiated by the DJC's Go Green! group, shuls such as the First Narayever, Holy Blossom, Darkei Noam and Temple Emanu-El gathered to talk about what each of our respective communities had done to green our impact on the Earth.

The possibilities for common work were so strong, that the group has decided to meet quarterly. Its newfound purpose is to:

- share resources
- develop camaraderie and collegueship across communities
- brainstorm around events, campaigns, Jewish Holidays
- conduct joint events
- receive mentorship and general support from the group
- be a common front where numbers count
- create buying power with greater numbers

***Yeshar koach DJC!*** You are now giving new meaning to 'congregational organizing' – across congregations!

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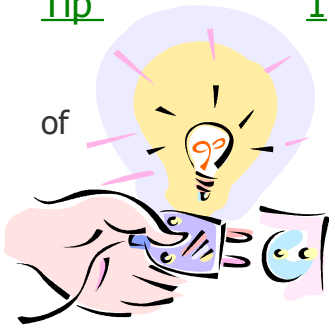
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## Green Bayit/House Tips And Tools

**Every month, we will share a tip or tool in the newsletter that helps reduce energy in the home, the focus of the DJC's Green House/Bayit Campaign for the Jewish Year 5768. This month, we look to saving energy consumption and costs from electronic devices.**

### Tip



of

**1:** Ever heard of an "energy vampire" or "phantom load"? When electronics like TVs, DVD players and cell phone chargers are plugged in but not on, they still draw power, resulting in about 8% of our annual electric bills.

It's simple to stop the drain by unplugging any unused devices you find! To make it even easier, plug your electronics into a power bar, and switch that off when you are finished channel surfing or charging up. It will keep the energy vampires at bay.

**Tip 2:** *A Wonderful Read* - For a complete look at good environmental practices, get a copy of the wonderful book by Adria Vasil.

"Your Guide to the Most Environmentally Friendly Information, Products and Services in Canada ECOHOLIC (when you're addicted to the planet)"

\*

**On November 28**, the DJC book club was treated to the noted University of Toronto scholar, professor, writer, and Director of Jewish studies - Derek Penslar, who gave a very stimulating presentation of Israeli literature in general and in particular, Etgar Keret's [The Nimrod Flipout](#).

The book of short stories provoked impassioned and differing thoughts and feelings from the audience. Thanks also to our gracious hosts for the evening, Christa Kuentzel Marvy and Len Marvy. Join us again on January 15 for Cynthia Good's discussion\* of [The History of Love](#) by Nicole Krauss. Judy Siegel (DJC Book Club committee member)

**\* (Presently, this meeting is at capacity. - Ed.)**

***Our next Book Club meeting (April 3) will be posted in our February newsletter.***

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## COMMUNITY EVENTS

CANADIAN FRIENDS OF PEACE NOW PRESENTS FILM EVENT  
Canadian Friends of Peace Now, a support group for the Israeli grassroots peace movement, is pleased to present the Israeli/Palestinian/Canadian film group, Voices Forward, and the Israeli Film, Mashallah, by noted Israeli cinematographer Eytan Harris.

**What: Mashallah**  
**When: January 27**  
**Time: 4:00PM**  
**Where: Royal Theatre - 680 College Street.**  
**Admission: \$5.00 or pay-what-you-can**

**Mashallah** runs 74 minutes and is in Hebrew and Arabic with English subtitles. Here is what the Israeli paper, Ma'ariv, had to say about it: "A refined masterpiece of a documentary... unravels a complex story on the subject of murder driven by nationalism, and does this in a witty way, almost allowing it to be defined a fascinating fictional feature... This is the directorial debut of experienced cinematographer Eytan Harris, unfolding a double story- about the driver, and the anonymous poet- and in doing so outlines a surprising path of humanity and kindness among the violent outbursts in the Middle East."

**Voices Forward** is dedicated to showing cinema that crosses boundaries and shifts perspectives. In the past two years, Voices Forward has presented a program of 30 films about people from Israel and Palestine, selected by four Toronto-based programmers from Palestinian, Israeli and Canadian backgrounds. "We love cinema, and believe in its power

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to communicate, touching the heart, mind and soul”, says Amit Breuer, a Voices Forward -co-founding member.

***Our meeting place after the film is nearby Bar Italia. Do join us there.***

Jacqueline Swartz (DJC member), [jacswa@interlog.com](mailto:jacswa@interlog.com)

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**DJC's Ilana Waldston's upcoming performances:**

**STATLERS LOUNGE PRESENTS:**

**Ilana Waldston**

***An Evening of JAZZ & LAUGHS- Saturday, January 12***

**487 Church Street      10:00 PM- 1:00 AM**

\*

**Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup>**

**BRENDA CAROL RENAISSANCE JAZZ FAIR (various musicians)**

**Renaissance Café - 1938 Danforth Avenue**

- Nathan Hiltz on guitar and Ross MacIntyre on bass.

Tickets: \$12 in advance or \$15 at the door.

Weekend passes also available Contact me ([jazznlaughs@yahoo.ca](mailto:jazznlaughs@yahoo.ca)) for tickets or visit <http://www.brendacarol.com/bcrjf.html>

\*

**ALMOST EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT:**

**GIRLS NIGHT OUT VOCAL FRIENDLY JAZZ JAM**

**Chalkers Pub**

**247 Marlee Avenue** (W. of Allen expressway, north of Eglinton).

I'm there almost every week along with a terrific trio and a pot-pouri of singers.

- *Send me an e-mail to let me know you're planning attend and I'll ensure that I get up to sing while you're there (the singers take turns!).*

**Ilana Waldston:** [jazznlaughs@yahoo.ca](mailto:jazznlaughs@yahoo.ca)