## THE CAT THAT SAVED CHANUKAH

Bill Greenbaum

Becky was our small, domestic short-hair (tortoiseshell) cat. I acquired her when she was a kitten, and she lived in our household until the ripe old age of 17 years (quite a nice long life for a cat).

When Dassa and I were first married\*, Dassa owned a working, upright player piano. We kept the piano and its rolls of music in the playroom. Over the years, as our family grew to include two young children, we realized that the height and shape of the piano's wooden casing made it a perfect stand for our menorahs. We had one menorah for each member of the family -- Dassa and I had oil-based menorahs, while our children proudly lit their homemade, candle-holding menorahs. Every year, as Chanukah neared, we looked forward to the sights, sounds, and smells of our Chanukah lights all burning brightly together. We eagerly anticipated, the harmonizing of our voices in prayer and song in our home and the warm hugs we shared together. (The gifts we gave each other on one night of Chanukah were icing-on-the-cake; fortunately, they were NOT the cake!!)

One year, during one of the middle nights of Chanukah, we set up our menorahs with fresh oil and fresh wicks or candles, just as we had done on the previous few nights. To protect the piano from oil and wax, we had put a sheet of aluminum foil under all four menorahs. Rather than refreshing this protective sheet of aluminum foil, we kept reusing it each night of Chanukah. Unbeknownst to us, however, some of the oil had leaked through the foil, probably from microscopic tears or small holes in the foil that we hadn't noticed.

That night, after we chanted the Chanukah blessings, lit the wicks, and sang *Maoz Tzur*, we sat down in our dining room to eat a delicious dinner of fresh vegetable soup, latkes, blintzes, some side dishes, and *sufganiot* (doughnuts) for dessert. During dinner all seemed well, until we heard Becky start to meow repeatedly from the playroom. She kept meowing, faster and faster, something very uncharacteristic for her. When we took a look to see what was going on, we saw that the top of the piano casing was on fire!

Somehow, after we had lit the menorahs and left the playroom, a few of the candles had fallen out of the children's menorahs and had ignited the thin mixture of oil and wax on the aluminum foil. The initial small fire had burned right through to the oil and wax that had been seeping into the old wooden piano casing. To make matters worse, on top of the piano, next to

the menorahs, we had a small wicker planter that held a shrub. The wicker had also caught fire, spreading the fire further across the top of the piano casing.

We were fortunate that we had set up a "jerry can" container of water near the menorahs, just in case there was a fire. With that jerry can and some quick thinking, we extinguished the fire. We breathed a great sigh of relief and gave our cat a lot of attention, in gratitude for her alerting us to the danger before it got out of hand. We thanked our children for insisting that we set up that jerry can. And we thanked God that we still had each other and that disaster had been averted.

Pets are a responsibility and are sometimes very inconvenient to have as members of a growing household. However, the unconditional love they give in return, and the potential they have for saving lives cannot be overvalued. We took care of Becky the rest of her life, and we are forever grateful to her for saving us from a fire. It is a Torah mitzvah to treat animals kindly and to relieve them from suffering (*tzar balei chaim*). Now I see that it is not only good for the animals, it may be very good for us, as well.

So, this Chanukah, please do yourselves a few favors: When you light your Chanukah menorah (whether it uses candles or oil), keep an eye on your menorah, unless it's contained in something that is totally fireproof. Be especially mindful of not going out to services or a party if your Chanukah menorah is still lit. Remember, once your menorah has been lit for half an hour, and it's past dark, you have fulfilled the mitzvah, and you may blow them out (except on Shabbat) for the sake of safety if you are not going to be around to keep an eye on them. Also, even if you have the menorah in a fireproof setting, keep a filled container of water or fire extinguisher right near your menorah, in the unlikely event that something unex-

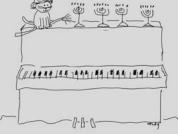
pected happens.

\* (Guess which rabbi presided over our

wedding ceremony!)

Bill is a graduate of the Lincoln Square
Beginners Service. He and his wife, Dassa,
teach the Jewish Living Workshop to

Beginners at Lincoln Square Synagogue.



# CONGRATULATIONS AND MAZAL TOV

## ENGAGEMENTS

Nomi (Naama) Brand and Yoel Epstein Mazal Tov to parents, Judith Weil and Lloyd Epstein

Samantha Lee and Dr. Mark Tratenberg Melissa Rubin and Samuel Hahn Mazal Tov to mother, Ohra Hahn

## MARRIAGES

Gitty Kalmanowitz and Yonason Moshe Bousbib
Mazal Tov to parents, Yehudah Aryeh and Ilana Bousbib
Maya Shaposhnik and Alejandro (Alexander Moshe) Cadena
Eliora Yocheved (Anita) Jovanovic and Michoel Gutrich
Avia Rachel Kabilow and Joel Eliyahu Aaron Ickovics

Mazal Tov to parents, Karen and Alain Ickovics Hadassah Weiss and Avraham Zvi Thau Mazal Tov to mother, Devorah Altman

### BIRTHS

Nomi and Dor Ariel, on the birth of a son, Nevo Mazal Tov to grandparents, Batya and Eddie Jacobs Mazal Tov to great-grandparents, Vicki and Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Janel and Geoffrey Dryan, on the birth of a son, Yehezkel Mazal Tov to grandmother, Mem Bernstein

Mazal Tov to grandmother, Mem Bernstein

Meira and Yaakov Ribner on the birth of a son, Natan Tzvi

Mazal Tov to grandparents,

Sema and Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Reich

Bar and Daron Spivack, on the birth of a daughter, Ella Chen Mazal Tov to grandparents, Sharona and Steven Spivack

### BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Shoshana Rivka Miller

Mazal Tov to parents, Nancy Miller-Fishman and Alan Miller Nate Schachter

Mazal Tov to parents, Amy and Robert Schachter Maxwell Solomon Wolff

Mazal Tov to parents, Laurie and Richard Wolff

### SPEEDY RECOVERY/REFUAH SH'LAIMA

Chaim Resnick, Chaim Yitzchak ben Gittl Regina Ullendorff, Rachel bat Feige

Raizel bat Basha Baila bat Klarissa

# CONDOLENCES

To the family of Joan Schlissel Hillel
Dr. Golda Hudes, on the loss of her husband, Dana Hudes
Douglas Rose, on loss of his mother, Marilynn Rose
Joshua Shoshan, on the loss of his father, Shmuel Shoshan
Devora Baile Spadore, on the loss of her mother,
Esther Silverstein

### TODAH RABBAH

Tova and Assaf Alster, Miriam and Dr. Marvin Belsky,
Drs. Anat Lebow and Michael Burnett, Robin and Neil
Goldberg, Michelle and Eli Salig, Ilene and Lou Vynerib
and Manny Zareh for making possible the participation of
Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Reich and family in the Lincoln
Square Synagogue High Holiday Beginners Service;
Thanks also to the management of the Beacon Hotel
Kiddush Sponsors on the High Holidays: Elaine Witty and
Larry Komito and Susan Hecht and David Cohen and

parents, Dr. Sandra and Michael Hecht Break-Fast Sponsors following Yom Kippur Services: The Adler-Landau Family, and Ellen and Mordecai Lipkis Tamara Reich and Chaviva Warner for helping with the

Beginners High Holiday set up

The Gibber Family for the High Holidays flowers at the Lincoln Square Synagogue Beginners Service Ilene and Lou Vynerib and Helga Weisburger for donating a new Kiddush cup to the LSS Beginners Service

### CONGRATULATIONS

Nancy Jacobs and Leonard Cohen on their daughter, Ariela joining the IDF, the Israeli army

Dr. Michelle Friedman on the publication of her new book, which she co-authored with Dr. Rachel Yehuda, entitled The Art of Jewish Pastoral Counseling: A Guide for All Faiths

William Kolbrener on the publication of his new book, The Last Rabbi: Joseph Soloveitchik and Talmudic Tradition

### **DANA HUDES**

Dana Hudes was a brilliant and passionate person. He was a master of many fields and an acknowledged expert in computers and technology. He was deeply passionate about his religion and Jewish education. He and his beloved wife, Dr. Golda and children, created a special atmosphere on Shabbat and Jewish holidays, hosting countless guests and strangers who invariably walked away deeply inspired. Dana was a true *Baal Tzedakah*, who participated in many bicycle marathons and raised many thousands of dollars for charity. His untimely accidental death leaves a big hole in our hearts. May his memory be a blessing to all.

# JOAN SCHLISSEL HILLEL

Joan Schlissel Hillel was a beautiful person in every way imaginable. She had a heart of gold and a truly winning personality. She was beloved by all during the time that she spent in the Beginners Service and was extremely committed to Jewish growth, which led her to make Aliyah in the early 1990s. There she met her husband, Meir, who sadly predeceased her. She always kept in touch with the Beginners and continued her support of outreach until her recent passing. Although she left no biological descendants, her generous support of outreach and Jewish education enabled many students to become her spiritual descendants. May her memory be a blessing to all.

# SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

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Fri December 23, 2016 - 23rd of Kislev LEGAL HOLIDAY	Sat January 14, 2017 - 16th of Tevet Vayechee Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM	Sat February 25, 2017 - 29th of Shevat Mishpatim Parashat Shekalim Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM	Tue March 28, 2017 - 1st of Nisan ROSH CHODESH Nisan Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM
Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Candle Lighting 4:16 PM Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 4:20 PM	Beginners Service	Beginners Service 9:15 AM Beginners Mishnayot 3:55 PM	Fri March 31, 2017 - 4th of Nisan Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM
Sat December 24, 2016 - 24th of Kislev Vayeshev Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM	Talmud & Bible Classes	Talmud & Bible Classes 4:25 PM Mincha	Candle Lighting 7:02 PM Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:05 PM
Beginners Service. 9:15 AM Beginners Mishnayot 2:45 PM Talmud & Bible Classes 3:15 PM	Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:40 PM  Mon January 16, 2017 - 18th of Tevet  MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY	Daily Mincha & Maariv24 5:35 PM Sun February 26, 2017 - 30th of Shevat ROSH CHODESH Adar	Sat April 1, 2017 - 5th of Nisan Vayikra  Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  Beginners Service 9:15 AM
Mincha 4:00 PM Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:17 PM	Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM Fri January 20, 2017 - 22nd of Tevet	Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM  Mon February 27, 2017 - 1st of Adar	Beginners Mishnayot 5:20 PM Talmud & Bible Classes 5:50 PM Mincha 6:50 PM
Light Chanukah Candles after 5:17 PM Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:25 PM Sun December 25, 2016 - 25th of Kislev	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Candle Lighting 4:41 PM Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 4:45 PM	ROSH CHODESH ADAR Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM	Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 8:03 PM Daily Mincha & Maariv 7:10 PM
1st Day CHANUKAH LEGAL HOLIDAY  Morning Services 7:10 AM  Mincha/Maariv 4:25 PM	Sat January 21, 2017 - 23rd of Tevet Shemot	Fri March 3, 2017 - 5th of Adar SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Fri April 7, 2017 - 11th of NIsan Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Candle Lighting 7:09 PM
Light two candles after 5:06 PM Mon December 26, 2016- 26th of Kislev	Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Beginners Service 9:15 AM Beginners Mishnayot 3:15 PM	Candle Lighting	Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:15 PM  Sat April 8, 2017 - 12th of Nisan
2nd Day Chanukah  Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM  Mincha/Maariv 4:25 PM	Talmud & Bible Classes         3:45 PM           Mincha         4:30 PM           Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends         5:43 PM	Sat March 4, 2017 - 6th of Adar Terumah	SHABBAT HAGADOL <i>Tzav</i> Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Beginners Service 9:15 AM
Light three candles after 5:07 PM <b>Tue December 27, 2016- 27th of Kislev</b>	Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:50 PM Fri January 27, 2017- 29th of Tevet	Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Beginners Service 9:15 AM Beginners Mishnayot 3:50 PM	Mincha
3rd Day Chanukah  Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM  Mincha/Maariv 4:25 PM	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Candle Lighting 4:50 PM Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 4:55 PM	Talmud & Bible Classes	Daily Mincha & Maariv 7:20 PM Sun April 9, 2017 - 13th of Nisan
Light four candles after 5:08 PM Wed December 28, 2016- 28th of Kislev	Va'eira ROSH CHODESH	Daily Mincha & Maariv 5:40 PM  Thu March 9, 2017 - 11th of Adar	Morning Services 7:00 & 7:50 AM Bedikat Chametz after 8:02 PM
4th Day Chanukah  Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM  Mincha/Maariv 4:25 PM	Morning Services 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Beginners Service 9:15 AM Beginners Mishnayot 3:25 PM	TA'ANIT ESTHER Fast Begins	Mon April 10, 2017 - 14th of Nisan EREV PESACH - <i>Taanit Bechorot</i> Morning Services with Siyum
Light five candles after 5:08 PM Thu December 29, 2016- 29th of Kislev 5th Day Chanukah	Talmud & Bible Classes       3:55 PM         Mincha       4:35 PM         Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends       5:51 PM	Mincha/Ma'ariv	
Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM Mincha/Maariv 4:25 PM		Fri March 10, 2017 - 12th of Adar Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Candle Lighting 5:39 PM	Candle Lighting 7:12 PM Mincha/Maariv
Light six candles after 5:09 PM Fri December 30, 2016- 1st of Tevet 6th Day Chanukah ROSH CHODESH	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Candle Lighting 4:58 PM Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 5:00 PM	Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 5:45 PM  Sat March 11, 2017 - 13th of Adar  Totalish Parachat Zachas EREV PURIM	Tue April 11, 2017 - 15th of Nisan PESACH Morning Services 8:00 & 9:00 AM
Morning Services 7:00 & 7:40 AM Light seven candles before Shabbat candles	Sat February 4, 2017 - 8th of Shevat Bo Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Beginners Service 9:15 AM	Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Beginners Service 9:15 AM	Mincha 7:20 PM Candle Lighting 8:13 PM Start Seder after 8:14 PM
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 4:25 PM Sat December 31, 2016 - 2nd of Tevet	Beginners Mishnayot 3:30 PM Talmud & Bible Classes 4:00 PM Mincha 4:45 PM	Beginners Mishnayot 3:55 PM Talmud & Bible Classes 4:40 PM Mincha	
7th Day Chanukah <i>Mikeitz</i> Morning Services 7:40, 9:00 & 9:45 AM  Beginners Service 9:15 AM	Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 6:00 PM Daily Mincha & Maariv 5:10 PM	Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 6:40 PM Daily Mincha & Maariv 6:50 PM Megilla Reading 7:50 & 9:15 PM	SAVE THE DATES Beginners Shabbaton
Beginners Mishnayot 2:55 PM Talmud & Bible Classes 3:25 PM Mincha 4:05 PM	Fri February 10, 2017 - 14th of Shevat Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM		<b>\$50, Lunch only: \$25</b> Dec 23-24, March 31 - April 1
Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends Light eight candles after 5:22 PM Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:30 PM	Candle Lighting 5:07 PM Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 5:10 PM Sat February 11, 2017 - 15th of Shevat	Morning Services 6:45 & 8:30 AM Women's Megilla Reading	Beginners Chanukah Party \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door Wed, Dec 28, 7:00 PM
Sun January 1, 2017 - 3rd of Tevet 8th Day Chanukah NEW YEAR'S DAY	TU B'SHEVAT Beshalach Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Beginners Service 9:15 AM	Megilla Reading	Beginners Shabbat Luncheons - \$25
Morning Services 7:00 & 8:30 AM Mincha/Maariv 4:30 PM	Beginners Mishnayot 3:40 PM Talmud & Bible Classes 4:10 PM	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Candle Lighting 6:47 PM Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 6:50 PM	Saturdays, 12:30 PM Jan 7, Feb 4, March 4 <b>SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA</b>
Fri January 6, 2017 - 8th of Tevet  Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM  Candle Lighting 4:26 PM	Mincha	Sat March 18, 2017 - 20th of Adar Ki Tisa - Parashat Parah	Fri, March 3 Purim Party
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 4:30 PM Sat January 7, 2017 - 9th of Tevet Vayigash	Fri February 17, 2017 - 21st of Shevat Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Beginners Service 9:15 AM Beginners Mishnayot 5:05 PM	\$25 in advance, \$30 at the door Sat, March 11, 7:20 PM
Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Beginners Service 9:15 AM Beginners Mishnayot 3:00 PM	Candle Lighting 5:15 PM Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 5:20 PM Sat February 18, 2017 - 22nd of Shevat	Talmud & Bible Classes . 5:35 PM Mincha 6:35 PM Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 7:49 PM	Beginners Shmooze - Free Mon, March 6, 8:15 PM Model Seder
Talmud & Bible Classes 3:30 PM Mincha 4:15 PM	Vitro Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Beginners Service 9:15 AM	Daily Mincha & Maariv 6:55 PM	\$15 in advance, \$20 at the door Thu, March 30, 7:00 PM
Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 5:27 PM Daily Mincha & Maariv 4:35 PM Sun January 8, 2017 - 10th of Tevet	Beginners Mishnayot 3:45 PM Talmud & Bible Classes 4:15 PM Mincha 5:00 PM	Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Candle Lighting 6:54 PM Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 7:00 PM	
ASARAH B'TEVET Fast begins at 6:08 AM Morning Services	Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends 6:17 PM Daily Mincha & Maariv 5:25 PM	Sat March 25, 2017 - 27th of Adar Vayakhel-Pekudei Parashat Hachodesh	
Mincha/Maariv		Morning Services 7:45, 9:00 & 9:45 AM Beginners Service 9:15 AM Beginners Mishnayot 5:10 PM	
Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM Candle Lighting 4:33 PM	Fri February 24, 2017 - 28th of Shevat Morning Services 7:10 & 7:50 AM	Talmud & Bible Classes         5:40 PM           Mincha         6:40 PM           Ma'ariv/Shabbat ends         7:56 PM	
Mincha/Kabbalat Shabbat 4:35 PM	Candle Lighting	Daily Mincha & Maariv 7:05 PM	