

Lubavitch of North Carolina

B"H

Ice Menorah Brings Joy to Hundreds at Phillips Place

It was the first night of Chanukah 2001 as hundreds braved the evening chill in Charlotte to watch the large ice menorah being sculpted right in front of their eyes. This was the big event that would officially usher in the eight-day festival of lights.

Phillips Place was lit up with the lights of the season; however, the music and atmosphere was Chanukah all right. The doughnuts were authentic New York, and the hot apple cider warmed the hearts of the many who pressed together to get a better view of the ice menorah taking shape.

A huge cheer went up from 300-plus young and old as the menorah was completed and placed on its icy perch. The carefully crafted menorah glistened in the light and sparkled like a bright jewel on this cold December night. Yet the best was yet to come.

Rabbi Yossi Groner asked the enthusiastic crowd to take a moment and reflect on the events of the past few months that have so affected us since the terrorist atrocities of September 11, and the more recent terrorist actions in

Israel. "Chanukah commemorates the courage of the Maccabees who fought valiantly to drive evil out of Israel. Today we reflect on the victims of terror, and our prayers



Rabbi Binyomin Weiss recites the blessings as he kindles the first light of Chanukah.

are with our brothers and sisters in Israel who are on the front line each and every day."

Rabbi Binyomin Weiss led the crowd in reciting the blessings and lit the ice menorah, to the delightful cheers of the crowd. The ceremony continued with the singing of *Ma'oz Tzur*, *Oseh Shalom*, and *Heenei Ma Tov*.

While the TV and news photographers were angling to get a better shot of the menorah, the children were venturing to touch the menorah as if it was some out-of-planet magical mystery. Indeed, it



The crowd looks on in awe as the Ice Menorah is sculpted before their eyes.

was a magical Chanukah for adults and children. Many in the crowd formed large circles and danced to the lively Chanukah music.

The event was organized by Lubavitch of North Carolina for the purpose of giving Jews in Charlotte a chance to publicly celebrate Chanukah and to give Jewish children in Charlotte the opportunity to feel the pride of being Jewish at this special time of the year. Rabbi Shlomo Cohen, who coordinated the event, was very pleased with the large turnout and especially with the good holiday feeling that permeated the crowd. ☆

New Torah to be Written at Lubavitch in Charlotte

A Sefer Torah for a Safer World

As we are all reeling from recent events in Israel coming in the aftermath of the worst terrorist attack in America's history, we feel that we need to do something special and unique to bring God's blessings of security and peace to our community and to our world.

One of the ideas brought forth in Tanach (Bible) is the writing of a Sefer Torah for the sake of the entire Jewish community. The verse in Daniel (12:1), "There shall be a time of trouble ... your people shall be delivered, every one who shall be found written in the book," refers to having a letter in a Sefer Torah.

The world seems to be shaking and unstable, but every positive deed we do helps bring stability and peace to our universe. The writing of a new Torah scroll has been a long-held tradition in Jewish communities as an extra meritorious deed to bring forth God's blessings to the community. One can participate by acquiring a book or portion or even a letter in a Sefer Torah.

Lubavitch of North Carolina has undertaken the project with the intent of involving as many people as possible in the Charlotte Jewish community. The motto of the campaign is A Sefer Torah for a Safer World.

Maimonides counts the writing of the Torah as the 613th commandment. According to Maimonides, every Jewish person should write a Torah. Since it is not within reach of most people to



write their own Torah, joining together with communal participation can fulfill the mitzvah. This project can also involve children who are looking for a meaningful project that will help bring back a sense of security and hope to their world.

It will take up to one year to complete the Torah. It is hoped and expected that the final writing will take place in Charlotte during February 2003. Upon completion, the Torah will be housed at the Lubavitch Educational Center and used by Congregation Ohr HaTorah and the Jewish Preschool on Sardis.

The good news is that several generous people in our community have already committed to sponsor some of the books and portions in the Torah. Their generosity allows Lubavitch to go ahead and start with the actual writing of the Torah. A well-known scribe from New York has been commissioned to begin writing the Torah.

A launching ceremony for the new Torah will take place in Charlotte during the month of February. We encourage your participation. For more information, please contact the Lubavitch office at 704-366-3984. ☆

Art History for Four-Year-Olds at The Jewish Preschool on Sardis

By Melinda Farbman

Dr. Siulolovao Lipton, professor of Art History at the University of South Carolina, is more commonly known at the Jewish Preschool on Sardis as Pierre and Adelina's mommy. But her lectures are not too lofty for the four-year-olds there. For several years, she has enchanted children with stories about the lives and works of famous artists. She has engaged the children with large laminated images of their typical pieces and led them through the sounds of new vocabulary words like "collage," "Matisse,"

"Monet," and "oils." She may ask questions like "What is an artist?" or "What do you see and hear in this piece?"

This November, Dr. Lipton visited to talk about Marc Chagall. She guided the children in a huge scale art project expressing the

children's take on his style. Together, they created a three-paneled "stained glass" window with tissue paper and marker. The col-



The four-year-olds' "Chagall" windows.

orful cut shapes overlaid with stars of David, menorahs, fish, and birds, all drawn in the happy, wobbly lines of children, do indeed carry the essence of Chagall.

That Chagall was Jewish made the project especially relevant to their curriculum. Dr. Lipton intro-

duced the fact that the artist used not only images from nature, but also Judaic symbols. One child asked, "Mrs. Lipton, where can we see the art?" And the answer, of course, was "Jerusalem."

Teachers were thrilled with the project. Because their guest "spoke" to the children on their level, they "understood everything." The teachers knew their students were captivated when one said, "Mrs. Lipton, how do you know all this stuff?" They were truly engrossed in the lesson. In fact, the following day, the children remembered

the name of the artist and many details about him. Come look at the way light travels through the "stained glass" in the hallway at the Jewish Preschool on Sardis. It brightens the winter months just as Chanukah did. ☆

Family Shabbaton January 25 at Ohr HaTorah

The old saying, "If something is good, just keep going at it," applies very well to the Ohr HaTorah family Shabbatons. Since the inception of these events, many families and singles in Charlotte have flocked to Ohr HaTorah to partake in these wonderful uplifting experiences.

The family Shabbaton on November 16 attracted more than 200 people, as it was also part of the Jewish Cultural Arts Festival. Rabbi Hesh Epstein of Chabad in Columbia spoke of the magnificence of the Shabbat day as a unique island in time, a time when the busy world comes to halt and one can concentrate on the mystical part of the world.

Shabbat is God's insignia on creation, and it allows us to elevate ourselves from the mundane and enter into a spiritual domain where there is peace and inner tranquility.

The upcoming family Shabbaton will be held on Friday, January 25 and will be especially exciting, as it coincides with Shabbat Shira, the Shabbat of song. On this Shabbat the portion of Moses' song after crossing the Sea of Reeds will be read.

"On this Shabbat we will learn about the importance of song and music in Jewish life," said Rabbi Yossi Groner of Ohr HaTorah. There will also be special programming for the children.

The program begins at 5:30 PM with the lighting of the Shabbat candles, followed by services and an interesting study session. A full Shabbat dinner will be served following the reciting of Kiddush at 7:00 PM. A nominal fee of \$36.00 per family will help defray the costs of the Shabbaton. For more information about Shabbaton registration, please call Ohr HaTorah at 704-366-3984. ☆



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