

# What's Happening at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool

The cold weather doesn't slow us down at The Charlotte Jewish Preschool. We have been busy from Chanukah to New Year's to Open House.

CJP staff, students, and parents enjoyed special Chanukah celebrations with their classes. Our students feasted on Chanukah treats, made dreidels and menorahs, and performed Chanukah plays, songs, and dances.

CJP was open to all students during our winter break for a fun-filled winter session. In addition to classroom activities, students enjoyed enrichment classes, such as, a lively music class, a hands-on science experiment, and an active



A joint venture of Temple Beth El and Temple Israel

gym class. CJP students, and staff also spent the week preparing for an exciting New Year's celebration. At exactly twelve (noon) on December 31, we brought in the New Year with student-made decorations and noisemakers, pizza and ice cream, and a special countdown.

Our annual Open House was on January 18. If you, or someone you know, are interested in visiting CJP, please call 704-944-6776 to schedule a tour. We are currently enrolling for the 2002-2003 school year and spaces are going fast. ☆



Matthew Danze digs into a Chanukah cupcake.



Dreidel, dreidel, dreidel, I made it out of...Liana Gainsboro!



Ms. Cheri stars in a class performance of "Kippot for Sale."



Noah Tobias and Mom, Andrea, enjoy a Chanukah feast.

## Having fun at CJP all winter long!

Charlotte Jewish Preschool

**Annual Silent Auction**

Save the Date!

February 23rd, 2002 (7:30pm) at Temple Beth El

Call the Preschool office for information on tickets and/or donations. (704) 944-6776

## Royal Shakespeare Company to Perform "Merchant of Venice" at Davidson College

Davidson College is proud to host the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), the world's foremost production company of the works of William Shakespeare, in a twelve-day residency that will help celebrate the opening of the college's new Duke Family Performance Hall. This twelve-day event will involve more than 50 members of the RSC in educational outreach and performances of "The Merchant of Venice."

### Merchant of Venice --- Cruel and Thought-Provoking

The eleven performances of "The Merchant of Venice" in the college's new Duke Family Performance Hall will take place from February 22 through March 2. Shakespeare's disparaging treatment of Jews, customary 400

years ago, will be uncomfortable to the modern audience, and raise questions about current debates on religion, justice, tolerance, and mercy.

### Shakespeare -- Learning Through Total Immersion

The residency presents unparalleled educational opportunities for teachers, students, actors, and the general public. Members of the troupe and associated Shakespeare scholars will present more than 50 workshops during the residency. Among those open to the public are:

### February 26, 5:00 PM

Lecture by David Scott Kasten of Columbia University on "Semitism in The Merchant of Venice."

Alvarez College Union, Smith 900 Room, Davidson College Campus.

### February 27, 5:00 PM

Panel discussion on Semitism with David Scott Kasten, Royal Shakespeare Company actors, and Davidson Faculty.

Alvarez College Union, Smith 900 Room, Davidson College Campus.

Performances are scheduled for 7:30 PM the evenings of February 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, and March 1 and 2. Matinee shows will be offered at 2:00 PM on February 23, 24 and March 2. Tickets are \$60 each, and can be purchased by calling 704-894-2135. ☆

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## Diamant's Mikvah

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prospective converts to the mikvah.

Her first encounter with a mikvah was almost 20 years ago, when her future husband, Jim Ball, converted.

While her husband's immersion experience was powerful and "life transforming," Diamant has often found the mikvah lacking, particularly as a way of welcoming someone into a new Jewish life.

"There's nowhere to celebrate, nowhere for family members to stand," she says. "I didn't want to give anyone else flowers in the parking lot — I felt we should be able to do better."

Most mikva'ot have limited hours available for conversions and alternative rituals. Since they usually are run by the Orthodox community, they sometimes can feel intimidating to liberal Jews, Diamant says.

Diamant hopes Boston's new mikvah inspires new rituals and uses.

"We won't know how it will get used until we build it and people feel ownership," she says. "There will be new music composed, new brachot, new art, new liturgy and new rituals."

Diamant is president of *Mayyim Hayyim*, which has the support of Boston's Combined Jewish Philanthropies, the Synagogue Council of Massachusetts — an interdenominational umbrella group — and several local Jewish agencies.

So far, approximately \$100,000 has been raised.

Diamant did not grow up with a formal Jewish education, and has done most of her Jewish learning as an adult.

She and her husband belonged to a Jewish book club for years and are active in their Reform temple, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury River Valley in Sudbury, MA.

Their teen-age daughter, Emilia, is a leader in the Reform movement's North American Federation of Temple Youth.

Diamant also participated in *Me'ah*, an intensive, two-year adult education course in Boston.

An adult Bat Mitzvah is "on my list," she says, but she's been putting it off because "I have a hard time with Hebrew. I think I'm a little dyslexic."

Diamant is also making time for writing, though not — as some "Red Tent" fans might hope — more biblical epics.

She recently published a novel about two middle-aged women in a Massachusetts seaside town, and now is working on a novel set in 19th-century America.

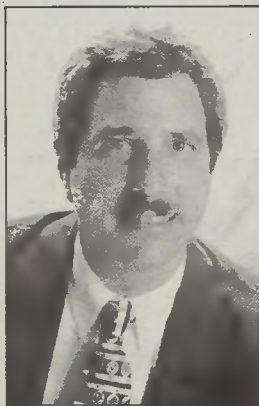
Eventually Diamant plans to return to nonfiction, possibly a book about the mikvah.

Has the popularity of "The Red Tent" changed her life?

"It's every writer's fantasy, so there's that kind of dream come true, Cinderella, I can't believe it quality," she says. In addition, she notes, "People call you back."

"I might have poured as much energy into" *Mayyim Hayyim* "before, but in terms of raising money and capability it's easier now because of 'The Red Tent,'" she says.

Nonetheless, she notes wryly, "It hasn't changed my daily life all that much. I still have to walk the dog." ☆



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