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Chanukah Fun: the “Best of the Best” Latke Award, Menorah Building, and More...

The coveted crown of “Latke Queen” (or “King”) is up for grabs at Havurat Tikvah’s annual Chanukah party on Saturday, December 4. The festivities begin at 7 PM at our Dilworth home in the Fellowship Hall of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church (2201 Springdale Avenue). We’ll begin with Havdalah and candle lighting. A light latke dinner will then set the stage for a night of music and games that culminates in the announcement of this year’s “best-of-the-best” latke award (won last year by HT member Anna Offerdahl). Feel free to join us for this family-friendly evening...bring your menorah, a plate of latkes, and be part of the fun. To learn more, check out our website, call, or e-mail us (see our contact the information below).

Chanukah fun continues on Sunday, December 5 for the children at Havurat Tikvah’s Religious School. Our second annual “Build Your Own Menorah and Let Your Imagination Soar” event takes place on Sunday, December 5. Last year, a colorful array of fun and fanciful chanukiahs were crafted by our budding Judaica artists. We look forward to seeing this year’s creations.

December’s mitzvah activities continue at the Dilworth Soup Kitchen which provides nourishing meals and a warm welcome to those in need. For more information, visit the soup kitchen’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=77134194660. We’re also delighted to have helping hands at our “Project Linus” group. The group meets once a month to produce hand-made “security blankets” for children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need. For information about the upcoming call or e-mail us.

We send many thanks to Amalia Warshenbrot who offered her insights into the Hebrew language at our November Adult Education



Aaron and Leah Shelton show off their menorah masterpieces.

program. For future Sunday morning Adult Education offerings, check our website at www.havurattikvah.org.

We also encourage you to check the website for future Israeli Film Nights. Our most recent movie, the award-winning “Someone to Run With,” was based on the best-selling novel by David Grossman. As always, lively discussion and sweet treats followed the film.

Havurat Tikvah is an affiliate of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, providing a comfortable, family atmosphere where all Jews can feel welcome. We encourage participation in the community and in our services. Our Sunday School, with its exciting new curriculum and B’nei Mitzvah preparation, is open to Havurat Tikvah member families. Feel free to visit, get to know us, and become part of our growing congregation of nearly 60 households.

For an updated calendar or to find out more about Havurat Tikvah, our worship services, Sunday School program, and community activities - please visit our website at www.havurattikvah.org or contact new member chair, Brian Feinglass, at bcfein1@gmail.com or at 1-877-203-5848. ☆



Anna Lasley, the artist at work.



Eden Pentes is recognized for making the “hippest” menorah.

Jewish Reconstructionist Federation



Chanukah at Or Olam

Temple Or Olam’s Hanukkah celebration will include things we have all come to know and enjoy. We will chow down on latkes, ranging from gluten-free to sweet potato to Sephardic. We will enjoy a talent show complete with magic tricks and jokes about the wise men of Chelm. We will talk about the rededication of the Temple and the shortage of oil, and whether we realize it or not, we will spend a little time considering the possibility of miracles.

But there’s more to Hanukkah than the “usual” things. Hanukkah comes at the darkest time of the year; we light candles to shed more light. What if we could see Hanukkah as an invitation to shed more light internally as well? What if we could turn off our rational minds for the twenty or thirty minutes it takes the candles of the menorah to burn? What if — in that short span of time — we imagined the impossible? During Hanukkah, we talk about the miracle of the oil lasting and we cele-

brate the long shot victory of the Jews who retook the Temple. But surely we’ve also seen “small” miracles in our everyday lives, moments when our hopes have come to fruition or when we’ve participated in making other people’s dreams a reality. We can all attest to the fact that sometimes these “small” miracles aren’t so small at all. There are times when they seem to come at exactly the right moment, just when we think there’s nothing left to grab for and no one left to lean on.

As the evenings of Hanukkah go by, the light grows. We light more candles and we bring more illumination to the darkest nights of the year. What if this year we spent a little time watching the candles burn and contemplating the light they cast? Where have you been this year? What have you tried to do? How have you shed light into the lives of those around you or received light from others? In what areas do you need more light? Take a moment this

Hanukkah to watch the candles burn and to wonder where the light could (or should) land.

This year, may we all find a blessing, a small miracle, and a bit more illumination in the brief and precious lights each night we light them. Temple Or Olam serves University City, Harrisburg, and Cabarrus County, and is an independent congregation where Dr. Barbara Thiede, senior rabbinic student with ALEPH (the Alliance for Jewish Renewal) leads two Shabbat services each month. For information on our services, please visit our website, www.or-olam.org and subscribe to our mailing list. You can also email us at info@or-olam.org, or call 704-720-7577. ☆



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