

Jewish Holidays Come Alive at CJP

"Yom Huledet Sameach" rang through the halls as the children at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool sang to the trees for Tu B'Shevat. The birthday of the trees was celebrated in a new and exciting way this year at the Preschool. Each class created a large, free-standing fruit or nut tree.

As the children entered our Tu B'Shevat forest, they were amazed at its beauty! They soon learned that on Tu B'Shevat, the best present is to plant a new baby tree. And as they recited the "borei pri ha'etz," each student learned that instead of birthday cake, one eats food that is grown on the trees for Tu B'Shevat.

Our celebration ended as the children went from tree to tree tasting all the delicious fruits and nuts. From the making of the trees, to the eating of the fruit, students were able to experience the joy of Tu B'Shevat. The joy on their faces showed that this was a party to be remembered!

As Purim quickly approaches, the children at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool look forward to a "freylach" celebration. It is a tradition at Purim to send gifts of food to friends. Each student at CJP will make a Schaloch Manot basket filled with good things to eat and then exchange it with a child in another class.

The halls will be bustling with activity, as children dressed as King Achashverosh and Queen Esther march around with gifts to exchange. Our Purim celebration will be topped off with carnival games and a Purim Shpiel. Chag Sameach everyone!



Lindsey Newman concentrates intensely as she creates a tree for CJP Tu B'Shevat celebration

A Holy Day For Kids... and Herb

By Ted Roberts

On a cloudless, heavenly morning, well before the Almighty turned the dust of the earth into Man, he announced the Holy Days to the assembled Heavenly Hosts.

The angels listened solemnly and then they talked excitedly about the Holy Days. There was Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur for the pious and meditative; Tu B'Shevat for nature lovers; Simchas Torah for the joyous; Hanuka for the chauvinists; and Passover for the lovers of freedom.

After a few moments of meditation they burst into a perfectly sublime harmonious Hallelujah. The Holy Days were fashioned - a string of pearls to decorate creation.

But one of the younger angels - his wings still fluffy with down - spoke up. "What about the children?" he blurted out. "What about a holiday for the children, a happy day of games and noise?"

The Holy One listened. He pronounced: "Yes, I shall invent a Holy Day just for the children. I shall create a historical situation that seems destined for tragedy, but at the last minute dissolves into deliverance."

My friend, Herb, a childlike celebrant who would swap two Passovers and a Hanukah for one Purim, says that if Purim occurred daily, he'd attend shul as faithfully as the Near Tamid - the eternal light that shines on the bima. Purim's got it all, says Herb.

"A love story like Ruth, but spiced with suspense. And all the joy of Simchas Torah, with a plot line." Herb may be right. Esther is one of the great triumvirate of Jewish heroines. Her two sister heroines are - who else? - the militant Yael and Judith.

Once Cousin Mordechai alerts Esther to the peril facing her people, she swings into action.

My good friend, Herb, loves to hear this megilla. As I say, he's a Purim regular. There he is every year with his own grager - just like the Minyan Club members have their own tallit and tefillin.



Photo: Vera Etzion

Ethiopian women train to be nurses in an American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) supported program at the Zvi Hospital Zefat.



One of the six members of a delegation from Shanghai visits a facility for children with mental disabilities in Israel. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) invited the group to study the facilities as well as community centers and the activities they provide for different population groups. The delegation will decide which models suit their needs in Shanghai and will implement them with help from JDC.

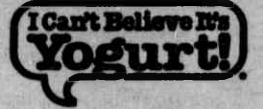
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