

## A Newcomers View of Ohr HaTorah

Many people wonder what kind of experience they can expect at Congregation Ohr HaTorah. Common questions that people ask are things like: Will I be able to follow the service? My Hebrew reading isn't the greatest; will I be able to keep up? I'm not that observant; will there be anyone I can relate to?

First and foremost, newcomers are welcomed at Ohr HaTorah in a very friendly manner. The rabbis, rebbetzins, and congregants have made it a priority to greet and receive all who attend Ohr HaTorah services in a gracious and pleasant way.

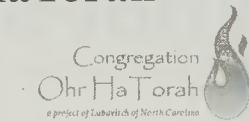
Case in point: Alan and Julia Godel have recently joined the synagogue with their two children. The following are some of the thoughts they shared on why they joined and what it was like for them when they first came:

**Alan:** "At first I was hesitant to even try, after all, I was never Orthodox. My children loved the

Jewish Preschool on Sardis, especially the warmth towards Jewish life that they received. Julia and I were looking for a synagogue that would offer something similar for adults. We have always wanted to learn more about our Judaism, but don't want to be pushed. We wanted a meaningful relationship with a rabbi to offer us wisdom and guidance in our lives as Jews.

"When we first attended Ohr HaTorah, we found them to be the friendliest congregation we have ever encountered. The services were comfortable; the prayer book was easy to follow, with lots of instructions. I was called to the Torah, and I felt like I was part of the family. One of the rabbis gave a short introduction to each section of the Torah that was read. The congregants were people with similar backgrounds to mine, professionals, of various levels of Jewish observance.

"The rabbis are real people; they're so easy to approach. They



seem to know how to help us make sense of current events, always with a sensible and realistic attitude."

**Julia:** "I enjoyed talking with one of the rebbetzins about the order of the prayers. The rabbi's sermon really resonated with me. There is a great Junior Congregation program for our children, where they learn to pray and have some fun and games as well. The best part was after the services; they served a delicious Kiddush lunch, which was complimented by some very meaningful discussions.

"At the Kiddush we were charmed as some of the participants shared their personal ideas on Judaism or the Shabbat. Some comments were humorous, others

spiritual, and all of them inspirational. We felt that we were learning a lot about our Jewish identity, and at the same time we were meeting so many friendly people who shared our values."

**Alan and Julia:** "We encourage anyone who hasn't yet tried Congregation Ohr HaTorah to give it a try; it's the best place in town to connect with Judaism in a most meaningful way." ☆

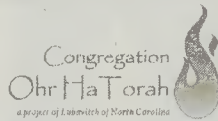
## Monday Night Foosball at Ohr HaTorah

Congregation Ohr HaTorah is now offering a new social program for adults in the Jewish community. While there is always much emphasis at Ohr HaTorah on Torah study, prayer, spirituality, and mitzvot, you might think there is no time for fun, just taking it easy, and letting out a little of that bottled up energy and tension from a hard day's work.

That's exactly the point of this new program. Now that Monday Night Football is over, Congregation Ohr HaTorah announces Monday Night Foosball, for adults. Every Monday, at the Ohr HaTorah Game Room, there will be an assortment of activities for adults, both women and men. Be part of a foosball tournament. Have a game of ping pong. Challenge a friend to chess or backgammon. Enjoy contemporary Jewish music. Have an ice-cold beer, chips, and salsa. Shmooze with some friends, or have a chat or game with one of the rabbis. Yes, you heard it right; Ohr HaTorah rabbis love ping-pong, too. The fun and games begin at 7:30 PM every Monday night, after the evening service.

This will be an ongoing program throughout the year, except during holidays. The Ohr HaTorah game room is located at the Lubavitch Educational Center, at 6619 Sardis Road. Go to the main parking lot, up the steps through the courtyard and enter into the door on the right. The program is free of charge. For more information call Rabbi Shlomo Cohen at 704-366-3984, or email to [rabbic@earthlink.net](mailto:rabbic@earthlink.net).

In addition, Ohr HaTorah is pleased to announce some new Torah classes at our Congregation which are in addition to the ongoing study sessions. Explore the wisdom of Halachah in the well-written text of the Rambam's Mishne Torah. Rabbi Moses Maimonides brilliantly compiled and organized Jewish Law in a comprehensive manner. We will study the Hebrew text and translate it into English, then examine the commentaries that expand on Maimonides and see how this relates to us today. The class will be led by Rabbi Yossi Groner at Ohr HaTorah on Wednesday nights at 7:30 PM following the evening service (7:00).



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## Temple Beth El Comparative Religion Series Schedule

*Tuesdays from 7-9 PM at TBE*

- February 7** Muhammed by Dr. Gregg Starrett
- February 14** Genghis Cohen Film by Dr. Susan Cernyak-Spatz
- February 21** Gandhi by Dr. Daniel White
- March 7** Abraham by Dr. Richard Cohen