



Agudas Achim Newsletter

December 2022

E-mail: agudasachim@hvc.rr.com or Telephone (845) 439-3600

Save the date

Friday, December 2nd

7:00 PM Social Time with your beverage of choice

7:30 PM Services

Chanukah begins December 18 and ends December 26

Post services zoom gathering with Levins and congregants attending

Rabbi's Message

Mulligan

I. Golf courses in Western Pennsylvania are known for mountains and high hills often punctuated with waterfalls and lakes along the long lush green fairways. The thick grass on the greens feels as one is walking on velvet. I was a freshman in high school the first time that I played on such a golf course. I carried the four irons, driver, and putter made by JC Higgins (the Sears and Roebuck house brand) in a white cotton collapsible bag to the first tee where one begins the game on the first hole where one finally nudges the ball into the steel cup.

I was overwhelmed by the grandeur of the scenery. My nerves were taunt about hitting the ball (or attempting to do so) while the other three players of my foursome were watching, along with others in the area. As the youngest player, I was offered to go first to begin the game. I demurred and turned down the courtesy. I would watch the experienced players to start ahead of me.

Pudgy Redlich, a championship golfer, went first. I expected him to drive the ball the length of a football field. At the end of a beautiful swing, his club unexpectedly hit the ground before the ball. The ball dribbled down the fairway instead of soared. Too bad for Pudgy. But then I heard Pudgy (now Leonard Redlich Esq. JD) call, "Mulligan!" I thought Irish stew. I had no idea what had happened. Then I saw that Pudgy was starting again. He had a second chance. This time, he sailed the ball down the course.

Mulligan. what a great idea for friendly golf but it occurs to me that for those who needed it, many skews called Mulligan at the high holidays. For those who needed it, we had a chance to start again in personal aspects of our life. Sins, shortcomings, promises unfulfilled, goals unpursued, many of us called, Mulligan to start again to have another chance.

But it's almost Chanukah. Some of us have not taken that second shot that a Mulligan allows. For what are we waiting? Yes, I know about that struggle to take a second shot, to try again. Easier sometimes to let things slip. To allow opportunities to pass. To "play it the same way."

Chanukah's almost here, but it's far from too late. Think about your resolutions in acted upon. Take the second shot! Now! Before it's too late again. You don't have to hit it a hundred yards like Pudgy. Just try.

Chanukah Festival of Lights

II. We will have our annual pre-Chanukah Festival of Lights on Zoom at the December second service. This is what I imagine. Because it's not yet the festival, will fill each Chanukah with eight candles and the shamash. For those families that have collected several Chanukah menorahs, why not fill a few with candles? For those who do not have a Chanukah, or have not yet found it, simply prepare to turn on your I-phone flashlight, or a battery flashlight at the appropriate time, we'll all turn off our room lighting and share the flames or bulb shine coming from each home or dorm

room in our community-stained glass gallery.

To prepare for the festival, the chag, The Levins will again lead us in the pantheon of golden oldy Chanukah songs, and introduce us to some new melodies, or contemporary compositions. Chanukah is a time of joy and individual dedication and rededication.

In our time, Chanukah has become a bastion of intensifying our individual and collective Jewish Identity. Judah Maccabee and his brothers, and the thousands who were in their army and home defense where not only freedom fighters, but they were dedicated Jews fighting to preserve our faith, and to transfer it through the generations to us and to ours. We take courage from them to oppose the antisemitism in our times. We shall not take our Jewish heritage and culture, and the State-of Israel and her People, lightly or for granted. In joy and pride, with gifts for the children and donations to the needy, with Holyday food and games, and in gratitude for our very lives, we will light the Candles of Dedication. Fill your Chanukah lamps, and fill your hearts and Join Us on December second on Zoom!!!

Adult B'nai Mitzvah

III. Finally, my birthday and bar mitzvah portion coincide this year. Since Covid, I have not mentioned the possibility of an adult bar/bat mitzvah class for those who never knew Hebrew, or those whose Hebrew has rusted or faded. If you want to be called to the Torah for a second time, or have never had a b'nai mitzvah, there is a very easy way to learn to read again, or for the first time, and to be called to Torah in a group or individually at Agudas Achim. It works in person or on Zoom.

So, the second is the anniversary of my bar mitzvah. I can't offer you the chopped liver, or herring, or carved turkeys that my mother and the ladies of the synagogue sisterhood made for the community buffet in the social hall. Nor the Mogen David red wine, nor the punch, nor the Canadian Club and Ginger Ale, nor the Shooters of schnapps nor the Millers Light Ale, that were available on the buffet, can I offer you now. But if we have a group adult bar and bat mitzvah, these throwbacks may be available, or the modern definitions there of who is ready to learn a little Torah without onerous effort? Who is ready to be called? And, who will join me on the second for the anniversary. (You supply the herring and kichel.)

Love

Rabbi Fred Pomerantz

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Where are we going? It's an interesting time in the world, in Livingston Manor and at Agudas Achim. There is a lot of change and growth and uncertainty. For Agudas Achim, the difference has been good! Livingston Manor has become one of the 'it places' to visit in the Hudson Valley. (It's true! Who would have expected that?) And, as I've said before, instead of fading out like so many other synagogues, Agudas Achim is actually growing with renewed energy. (It's true! Who would have expected that?!!)

We are working to stay true to our history, maintain and improve the experience for our current members and we are working on reaching the new members of our community on their terms. That's a different challenge but honestly, it's exciting. It's about growth and opportunities and it's about the future. I'm looking forward to that future. How is that happening? Stay tuned. Want to be involved? Drop me a line. There are a few new things on the horizon and we're always looking to involve more people.

As always, thanks for being a supportive part of what we do. Even just reading this newsletter is meaningful. Many of us spend a lot of heart and a lot of time working to bring it to you and we're grateful that you care enough to take the time to read what we have to say. From all of us we hope you have a very happy holiday season. I am looking forward to where we grow in 2023 and to where this path takes us.

L' Shalom,

Judy Siegel, President
Jsiegel523@gmail.com
845-798-0783

Jewish Education News

Havdalah

I love Shabbat. We end each week with the celebration of Shabbat. It is our weekly holiday. We begin by Shabbat by blessing the children in our household, saying blessings over the candles, wine (kiddush) and Challah (hamotzi). Shabbat is a day of rest; it is separated from the other days of the week. Or shall I say, the rest of the week is separated from Shabbat. So, on Saturday evening, after Shabbat ends, we hold a brief ceremony, which also includes a candle, wine, and sweet-smelling spices, called Havdalah (which means separation). The beautiful Havdalah ceremony lifts up my soul. We are saddened that Shabbat is over, but like a warm hug, Havdalah, with its music and blessings, carries us into the beginning of the week with warmth, light, beauty, and joy.

Once a month I will be leading musical Havdalah, from my home, via zoom. These will be held in the middle of the month, since we have our Congregational Shabbat service the 1st Friday night of each month. Join me, my family, friends and congregants for Havdalah. This month it will be December 17th at 7 pm. I look forward to seeing you there, this month and every month.

Chanukah

Lighting candles is the major ritual of Chanukah. The menorah is lit each night of Chanukah after sundown, adding one light each night until we light eight candles on the last night of Chanukah. There is a discussion in the Talmud between Shammai and Hillel. The School of Shammai maintains that on the first night, eight candles should be lit and each night after, the number should be reduced, focusing as a countdown to the days which are yet to be celebrated. The School of Hillel maintains that on the first night one candle should be lit, and each night after, the number of candles should be increased by one. This is because "one should always ascend with regard to holy matters and not descend." The School of Hillel won, and we light the candles, increasing each night.

In addition, it is allowed to use Shabbat candles for light and for reading; whereas, the Rabbis teach us that we are not to derive any benefit from the Chanukah lights. It is for this reason that we have a shamash, a helper candle which we use to light all the other lights on the hanukkiyah (menorah).

Originally, the hanukkiyah was lit outside near the doorstep so that all passersby could see it. It is still customary for those passing by to see the lights, so we place the menorah in the window. Please, be careful of open flames and window curtains. Some people will put an electric menorah in their windows and keep the one with lit candles on a table away from curtains.

We look forward to this eight-day celebration in our homes and in our school. The students will learn about and celebrate Chanukah with their teacher, Morah Mindy.

Post High School Chanukah

Like we did last year, this year we will again be sending Chanukah packages to our recent High School graduates. These young adults are very important to us. We want them to know that although they are out in the world studying in college/ trade school, working, or enlisted in the military, Congregation Agudas Achim will always be their home. Parents you will receive an email requesting information. If you have a child who graduated from High School in 2019 or later, make sure you respond, so we can ensure your child is included in our Chanukah distribution.

May all of you have a Chag Sameach, a joyous Chanukah.

Shalom u'Verachah ~ Peace and Blessing,

Tobi Innerfield

Director of Education

UPCOMING SERVICES

Services will be virtual until spring of 2023. Email virtualshabbat@gmail.com for the link

Friday, December 2nd

7:00 PM Social Time with your beverage of choice

7:30 PM Services

Channukah begins December 18 and ends December 26

Post services zoom gathering with Levins and congregants attending

Friday, January 6th

7:00 PM Social Time with your beverage of choice

7:30 PM Services

Post services zoom gathering with Levins and congregants attending

Friday, February 3rd

7:00 PM Social Time with your beverage of choice

7:30 PM Services

Post services zoom gathering with Levins and congregants attending

DONATIONS....please consider.

Our in-person contact (and thus our fundraising efforts) is limited. Our philosophy has always been to maintain low dues and keep an open-door policy so that anyone can join us in person when available or now virtually. But that philosophy depends on generous donations from people like you. Please consider donating to Congregation Agudas Achim ... no amount is too large or too small! You can donate and designate it to one of the following:

Security
Building fund
Cemetery fund
Endowment fund
Mailing costs
Mitzvah fund
Tzedakah fund

or consider making a donation in honor or memory of a friend, a loved one or someone you care about with a lasting memorial donation by purchasing an honorary:

Chair \$36
Rosh Hashanah Prayer Book \$36
Yom Kippur Prayer Book \$36

BEST WAY TO DONATE:

By Check: mail to PO Box 714, Livingston Manor, NY 12758

By Credit Card website (congregationagudasachim.org) and click donate now

Message from the Levins:

“The Levins are very much looking forward to celebrating the miracles and warmth of Chanukah together this month! Our December service will not only be filled with joyful prayers but we’ll be singing of the Maccabees, latkes, and lighting the flames of freedom during this season of light!

Blessings and good health to all! Julia and Ira

WANT TO BE INVOLVED?

Are you interested in becoming involved in the direction of Agudas Achim? We really don’t ask too much of your time but anything you want to give will be appreciated. Just let us know! Send me an email or text or write to virtualshabbat@gmail.com We would love to hear from you.

BIRTHDAY PLANNING

Our building turns 100 years old next year. Want to help plan for the party? Have some ideas? Drop a note to virtualshabbat@gmail.com and be a part of the story

HELP US PRESERVE OUR HISTORY!!!!

Do you have a story to share now? Some knowledge or memories of these and other Livingston Manor families? Please send me an email and share your piece(s) of history. Send the request on to family and friends. Be a part of preserving our history for the future.

Havdalah Service

Although Havdalah is weekly, Tobi Innerfield will be sharing, via Zoom, a Havdalah service once a month.

Save the dates!

Saturday, Dec. 17th @ 7 pm

Saturday, Jan. 21st @ 7 pm

(Watch for an updated flyer with the Spring dates and times.)

Use this Zoom Link to come into the Havdalah.

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71950737639?pwd=yDFMo4a1KYbcnHNgZSr1BUQRmrU621.1>

(Note: This is a unique Zoom link, and is NOT the link that we use for Shabbat services.)

To heighten your personal Havdalah experience, it is suggested that you have some sweet spices with you...cinnamon, cloves or allspice. Some people will take an orange and stick whole cloves into it.

We look forward to your joining us on Zoom!

RSVP not required!

Happy Anniversary

Alan & Linda Rajlevsky 12/16

Dr. Paul & Greta Salzberg 12/28

Happy Birthday

Taylor Jaffe 12/4

Bea Brown 12/11

Susan Elinoff 12/11

Bruce Ellsweig 12/14

Karen Ellsweig 12/15

Lea Schwartz 12/16

Ryan Weiner 12/16

Dimona A. Galli 12/21

Belle Shaff 12/23

Linda Rajlevsky 12/31

Joe Watson 12/31

OUR VERY OWN DON RECEIVES SYDA AWARD

Don Simkin received the prestigious SYDA Foundation* community service award this year to recognize his exceptional service to benefit others. The award is given annually to a resident of Sullivan County by the foundation which is located in South Fallsburg NY. (Members Gary Siegel and Dan Berkowicz are previous recipients)

The list of ways that Don has given is long and includes but is not limited to the creation of the Dr. Don Games for children in Livingston Manor, the development of the Livingston Manor Community Foundation, his service on the Kaplan Foundation Board of Directors, his work with the Dental Volunteers for Israel, the USA Luge team, Livingston Manor Rotary, disaster relief in Puerto Rico and Haiti and much more. We are fortunate, grateful, and blessed that quite a bit of the attention he has to spare belongs to Agudas Achim.

Don and his wife Ellen were part of the team that revitalized the waning orthodox schul in 1986 with Ellen as a powerful strength propelling us forward and guiding our path. After Ellen passed in 2013 Don committed personally and financially to the future of CAA. With him as part of an incredible team of support we are continuing to grow larger, stronger and better. There are so many quiet forces that work to make CAA a success but Don is, by far, one of the strongest among us. In my role as President and as someone that is invested in our future, I will always be grateful for his time that he dedicates, his advice, guidance, generosity and support. To us and to others he gives what he can of himself and his finances to help make the world a better place. He is kind. He says what he will do, not what he will not and he does that with a generous spirit.

Thank you, Don Simkin, for all you are, all you do and all you give. We will be grateful for generations.

*The SYDA foundation is based in Sullivan County and they are a not-for-profit organization dedicated to protecting and preserving and facilitating the dissemination of Siddah Yoga teachings

Thank you for your donation

Annual Appeal:

Curt & Marilyn Auerbach
Dr. Stan & Renee Babit
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Mitchell & Barbara Blank
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Sharon & Jay Bobbins
Michael Cerulla – for mailing costs
Linda Corshen & Ronnie Morgenstein
Bruce & Karen Ellsweig
Bob & Lynne Freedman
Jerry & Monica Frey
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Endowment fund

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Judy Levine

Thank you for your donation

Yizkor

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Judy Levine

Cemetery fund

Dennis & Johanna Clarke

Donation for Daffodil Project

Marlene Wertheim

Prayer book donation

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Tzedakah fund

Judy Levine