

# פרץ פאפירן Peretz Papers

Newsletter of the Peretz Centre for Secular Jewish Culture

September - October 2011



I.L. Peretz

**Gut yontif to you and your family – may you have a sweet and healthy year!**

## Cultural Judaism for Adults

The Peretz Centre is pleased to offer a new program: Jewish Culture for Adults. The course is intended for anyone who would like to know more about the essential elements of Judaism and about universal values as they are seen from a Jewish perspective.

*Instructor:* Miriam Zachs

*Starting:* This fall (Date/time to be determined by participants)

*Length:* Six sessions of two hours each, twice a month

*Fee:* \$120 per person / \$200 per couple

*Course description:* This course will provide you a wider and/or deeper knowledge of Jewish culture as it manifests itself explicitly or implicitly in everyday life, in traditions, in the celebration of holidays, as well as in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), Jewish history books, and in the writings of selected Jewish writers and thinkers.

*How do I know if it's for me?*

- You are a parent interested in figuring out how to bring some elements of Judaism into the home without necessarily becoming religious.
- You are a non-Jewish spouse in an intermarried family wishing to learn more about your partner's culture and traditions.
- You are an adult who identifies as a cultural, secular or non-religious Jew and would like to know more about what that means, and also to meet like-minded people.
- You are none of the above but you would like to explore this range of topics.

*How will I learn?* Workshops, class discussions, coffee/tea and mingling

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## Community Sunday Adult Discussion Group

Last year, we started a program of once-a-month Community Sundays, partly aimed at providing parents of Sunday School and B'nai Mitzvah students a forum for meeting with other adults and discussing topics of interest to secular Jews while their children were in class. These Sundays were originally organized so that children would join the adults after class for a shared potluck lunch, and we made provision for younger children who weren't enrolled in Sunday School to join the Sunday School class for the day.

Apparently this program didn't appeal to our young families, but it did appeal to other adults who enjoy discussion. The group grew over the course of the year, averaging about 12–15 participants.

The program is now entering its second season, once again organized by Peretz Vice President Bernice Kastner. The first meeting will be on Sunday, October 30, 10:30 AM, and meet on the last Sunday of each month, except for December. Based on participant feedback, the time could be changed, but if it remains at 10:30, parents are still invited to participate and bring their children to Sunday School, with advance notice.

According to Bernice:

*The format we used last season seems to have worked quite well, and I propose that we begin under the assumption that we can continue in this manner, in which one person will accept the responsibility to provide the others with some background information for the chosen topic and then lead a discussion in which we all participate.*

*We still have some topics remaining from the list we compiled at the beginning of last season:*

*continued on p. 4*

**B'nai Mitzvah Grads  
Stay Connected Youth Group  
is starting up again.  
See page 4 for details**



**Peretz Centre Secular Humanist Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur  
Observance: Sunday, October 2, 2:30 PM. See page 3 for details.**

**It's September ...  
time to renew or take out your  
Peretz Centre membership**

You are invited to join the  
**Vancouver Jewish Folk Choir**

Searle Friedman, founder

Sing in Yiddish, Hebrew, Ladino and English  
every Tuesday evening, 7:30-9:45 PM

For information,  
phone Donna, 604-325-1812

*couldn't hoit!*



## Fraytik tsu Nakht

**W**e invite you to participate in our popular monthly secular Shabbes observance: candle lighting, wine, challah, potluck supper, and a talk by a guest speaker.

To attend, you may bring a dish (couples please bring two dishes or a double-sized dish) or pay \$12/person. **Please RSVP to Gallia, 604-322-6077.**

Friday, Sep. 23, 6:00: Sheila Delany, *Jews and the French Revolution*. Oct. 28, 6:00: Neil Ritchie, *Irving Berlin*. Nov: Richard Berwick, date and topic TBA.

Please note arrival time change to 6:00, so that we can begin promptly at 6:30.

### Register Now

for the Peretz Centre's classes in Jewish tradition and culture from a non-religious perspective

Sunday School  
Bar/Bas Mitzvah Program

### Yiddish Classes with Haya Newman

Reading, conversation practice with guest native speakers, songs and FUN for all levels and all ages

**CLASSES STARTING WEDNESDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 14.**

**Int/Adv: 4:30-6:30; Beg. 7:00-9:00 PM**

Please call the office for information or to register

### Peretz Centre

**Annual General Meeting:  
Sunday, November 6, 11:00 AM**

### Nokhmitogdiker yiddisher leyn krayz

(Afternoon Yiddish Reading Circle)

at the Peretz Centre

3:00 to 4:30 PM, the first and third  
Wednesdays of each month.

For further information,

call Shanie Levin at (604) 873-4947

or Al Stein at (604) 731-1193.

The **SHOLEM ALEICHEM SENIORS** welcome you to their opening brunch on Friday, September 16, 11:00 a.m. Al Stein will discuss and read from Sholem Aleichem, in English. RSVP Claire, 604-325-9905.

Our beautiful building is available for rental for your meeting or simcha. We'd love to help you work out the logistics of your life-cycle event (baby naming, bar/bas mitzvah, wedding, memorial service). Phone our Rentals Manager, Sylvia Friedman, 604-325-1810.

**High Holidays  
Community Sunday,  
October 2, 2:30**

On Sunday, October 2, 2:30 PM, the Peretz Centre will hold our annual High Holidays Observance. Our community celebrates Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur with meaningful readings, a sing-along and a *yisker* service, after which we will serve you apples, honey, coffee and pastry. Childcare is available upon advance request.

One of the basic concepts of the high holidays is *tsedoke* (a.k.a. *tzedakah*), or charity. So please bring a contribution for the Jewish Food Bank.

**Project Isaiah: the  
Jewish Food Bank**

Rosh Hashanah is the time of year when the Jewish Family Service Agency, along with Jewish Women International-BC, launches the annual Project Isaiah appeal for donations of non-perishable foods for the Jewish Food Bank. This gives you an opportunity to perform *tsedoke* during the High Holiday season.

JFSA suggests you contribute from among the following high nutrition-density items. Note: please check "best before date" on products. Expired products cannot be accepted:

- ◆ Canned fish (tuna, salmon, sardines)
- ◆ Peanut or nut butter (plastic bottles only)
- ◆ Canned fruit or vegetables
- ◆ Cooking oil (plastic bottles only)
- ◆ Whole grain pasta, rice, cereals
- ◆ Legumes (canned or dried)
- ◆ Dried fruit (prunes, apricots, etc.)
- ◆ Toiletries



**ZUMBA "the fitness class that's taking the world by storm"**

at the Peretz Centre starting Tuesday, September 27, 5:30-6:30; free trial class September 20.  
Exercise to salsa, merengue, cha-cha, cumbia, swing, reggaeton, funk, Bollywood African...  
For information: [www.zumbavancouver.ca](http://www.zumbavancouver.ca)

## Time to reserve a space for your child in B'nai Mitzvah 2013

Our B'nai Mitzvah program helps your child develop his/her Jewish identity through exploration of topics ranging from the Ten Commandments to Jewish humour, from *tsedoke* to the Holocaust and Ghetto uprisings, from Jewish literature, music and art to Israeli history and current events. The two-year program culminates in a secular bar/bat mitzvah ceremony.

All children with any Jewish family ties are welcome. **First class: Sunday, September 18, 10:30 AM.** Teacher: Bob Heyman.

For more information, please contact the office: 604-325-1812, [info@peretz-centre.org](mailto:info@peretz-centre.org).

## B'nai Mitzvah Grads Stay Connected Group starting up again

**Does this sound like your family?** Your children spent two years in our b'nai mitzvah program, learning a lot, connecting to their Jewish heritage and developing their Jewish identity, and most important, making friends. Then they had their ceremony and the kids all promised to stay in touch, but what with school and other activities, this didn't happen.

Last year we started a program of monthly activities to keep our b'nai mitzvah grads connected with one another and with the Peretz Centre. Now we've ironed out some of the bugs in that pilot project and are offering it again. This time, the program is being organized and led by Sula Boxall, one of the co-organizers of last year's program.

Here is Sula's invitation:

**Youth Group Meeting Sunday, October 16th, 6-9 PM**

Open to: post b'nai mitzvah teens and friends.

Meets: once a month.

Cost: this semester, the cost will be the cost of each event (e.g. admissions, bus fare) plus a membership in the Peretz Centre.

The Youth Group will run October to May. To kick off the year we will start with a pizza, games, movie, and planning evening. Youth are encouraged to share their ideas for future meetings. Friends are welcome. Looking forward to seeing you there!

RSVP to [sulaboxall@gmail.com](mailto:sulaboxall@gmail.com)



### **B'nai Mitzvah class of 2011;**

(Front row, l-r): Jonathan Granirer: *Israeli sports*; Julian Levy: *Holocaust denial: what it is and why does it happen*; Noah Berson: *Bagels and the Bagel Bakers Union*. (Back row, l-r): Joshua Mathewson: *The differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jewry*; teacher Richard Rosenberg; Sheldon Jackson: *Who is a Jew? With focus on William Shatner, Jack Black, Albert Einstein, Adam Sandler and himself*; Saydie Bubniw: *Jewish holidays, customs and food*. (Inset): Matreya Scarrwener: *Alice Herz-Sommer*; (Absent): Sam Lando: *The Jewish holidays from my family's perspective*.

*continued from p. 1, Jewish Culture for Adults*

*What are my responsibilities?* You will need to devote up to three hours between classes to reading, writing, researching, or preparing something simple for a holiday.

*For information or to reserve a space:* please call Miriam Zachs (604-568-1523), or the office (604-325-1812).

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- ◆ *Memes vs genes*
- ◆ *Can people really be truly moral and ethical without a belief in God?*
- ◆ *The role of religion and mythology in education*
- ◆ *Arguments or perceptions for the existence (or non-existence) of God*
- ◆ *Why are some Jews turned on by Judaism and others turned off?*

*At the October 30 meeting, we can decide whether we want to change the operational format and we can also discuss adding and deleting topics from the list."*

*We hope you will join this stimulating group.*



## A Sheynem Dank!

Dear Members and Friends, our new program season is about to begin. We look forward to your participation in some—or many—of our cultural and educational programs, secular holiday and shabbos observances, and special events. And please consider supporting us by taking out or renewing your membership with the enclosed registration form.

I would like to remind you that various payment plans are available for membership and program fees, from post-dated cheques to full or partial bursaries for Sunday school and B'nai Mitzvah.

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On Labour Day weekend, I, along with seven other Peretzniks, attended the third annual J-West conference for West Coast secular, humanistic and cultural Jews, this year held in Seattle. It was a fabulous experience, with sing-alongs, Israeli folk dance, “stretch and kvetch,” a rousing “Jewpardy” game (won hands down by Sylvia Friedman and Carl Rosenberg’s team) and stimulating workshops with titles such as Reclaiming Jewish Rituals and Sacred Language/Secular Language, about the renaissance of Hebrew. I hope that next year, some of you will join us at the fourth annual conference!

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And now I’ll go back in time to acknowledge the people who helped out at our last big event (the Vancouver Jewish Folk Choir’s spring concert in June). But first of all, a sheynem dank to Louise Miller for filling in for me during my much needed and totally enjoyed holidays.

So, the concert. Thank you to:

- o Concert Coordinators: Sylvia Friedman, Shanie Levin, Louise Miller, Victor Neuman, Rivka Stein
- o Lighting and choir photo: Adriana Byrne; sound: Victor Neuman
- o Flower/Wine Presenters: Carl Rosenberg, Delta Vázquez. Reception: Arlene Jackson, Karen Kaplan, Tammy Neuman, Jackie Weiler
- o Program Notes: Sylvia Friedman, Shanie Levin, David Millard. Continuity: Victor Neuman

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On behalf of the Executive, let me welcome all of you back to the Peretz Centre. The summer is almost over and I hope you and your families have had an interesting and enjoyable time. You will see in the Newsletter that there are many exciting and interesting events coming up. As usual, I urge you to be involved in any way you can.



Let me once again suggest some possibilities. Please renew your membership as soon as possible and commit yourself and your family to attending as many of the events as you can. When they are announced, please volunteer. Help with set-ups and clean-ups, lend your special talents to appropriate events, and inform your friends and associates about those in which they might be interested. Invite them to accompany you to the Centre for particular ones of interest. Enroll your children in our programs. These possibilities and others offer opportunities for your help. Don't wait to be asked. We need you! We need your friends. Actually, we certainly could use younger people in leadership roles.

So, although it is somewhat early, let me wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year for your families and loved ones and indeed for all of us here and abroad. See the Newsletter for the dates of opening events. For example, Sunday, October 2nd at 2:30 is our Rosh Hashona, Yom Kippur observance. Please make a commitment this year. Our community must grow and it depends on all of us.

— Richard Rosenberg

President's Corner

# Peretz Centre Schedule, September – October

\* no classes October 9 (Thanksgiving)

## Youth

- ⊗ B'nai Mitsvah '13: **First class: Sunday, Sep. 18**
- ⊗ Sunday School: every Sunday except as noted above, 10:30–12:30. **First class: Sep. 18, 10:30** For 6-9 year olds. Younger children are invited to join the class while their parents attend Community Sunday, with advance notice (see below)

## Adults and Seniors

- ⊗ Vancouver Jewish Folk Choir rehearsal: Tuesdays, 7:30–9:30 PM. **First rehearsal: September 13.**
- ⊗ Yiddish Class: Wednesdays, 4:00–6:00 (Advanced) and 7:00–9:00 PM (Beginners). **First classes: September 14.**
- ⊗ Fraytik tsu Nakht (Friday night Secular-Humanist Shabbes celebration): **First FTN, Sep. 23, 6:00 PM:** Sheila Delany, *Jews and the French Revolution*. Oct. 28, 6:00: Neil Ritchie, *Irving Berlin*. Nov. 18, 6:00: Richard Berwick: *Miscommunicating interculturally and a few historical humdingers*.
- ⊗ Sholem Aleichem Seniors: Fridays, 10:30 AM. **First meeting: September 16.** Opening brunch. Al Stein will discuss and read from Sholem Aleichem, in English.
- ⊗ Community Sunday Adult Discussion Group. The last Sunday of each month, explore a wide range of philosophical, ethical, historical and sociological topics pertaining to secular Jewish life and thought. **First meeting: Sunday, Oct. 30, 10:30 AM.**

## Special Events & Holiday Observances

- Sep. 23, 6:00 PM Fraytik tsu Nakht
- Oct. 2, 2:30 PM High Holidays observance and Community Sunday
- Oct. 28, 6:00 PM Fraytik tsu Nakht
- Oct. 30, 10:30 AM Community Sunday
- Nov. 6, 11:00 AM Annual General Meeting
- Nov. 18, 6:00 PM Fraytik tsu Nakht
- Nov. 27, 10:30 AM Community Sunday
- Dec. 4, 1:30 PM Latke-making bee
- Dec. 11, 6:00 PM Annual Banquet
- Dec. 16, 6:00 PM Fraytik tsu Nakht
- Jan. 20 6:00 PM Fraytik tsu Nakht
- Jan. 29, 10:30 AM Community Sunday
- Feb. 5, 11:00 AM Tu b'Shvat Seder
- Feb. 17, 6:00 PM Fraytik tsu Nakht
- Feb. 19\* Homentashn bake
- Feb. 26, 10:30 AM Community Sunday
- Mar. 16, 6:00 PM Fraytik tsu Nakht
- Mar. 4, 11:30 AM Purim Party
- Mar. 25, 10:30 AM Community Sunday
- Apr. 5:30 PM\* Third Seder
- Apr. 20, 6:00 PM Fraytik tsu Nakht
- Apr. 29, 10:30 AM Community Sunday
- May, 18, 6:00 PM Fraytik tsu Nakht
- May 27, 10:30 AM Community Sunday
- Jun.\* B'nai Mitsvah dress rehearsal
- Jun.\* Choir spring concert
- Jun. 24, 10:30 AM Community Sunday

\* Date and/or time to be confirmed

*continued from p. 5 Sheynem Dank*

- ⊗ Raffle Coordinators: Victor Neuman, Gita Silver, Rivka Stein
- ⊗ Door: Bluma Field, Bernice Kastner, Al Stein. Ticket Sales: Alan Le Fevre
- ⊗ Set up, Janitorial: Iosif Gershsteyn.
- ⊗ Guest artists Julie and Dave Ivaz and friends

- ⊗ And of course, major thanks to conductor David Millard and accompanist Elliott Dainow for all their hard work over the season, and to our regular and guest soloists: Andi Alexander, Diana Díaz, Peter Kendall, Tristan Pearson and Cynthia Ramsay.

— Donna Becker, Program Coordinator