

THE CLANTON PARK HERALD

A monthly newsletter, intended to provide timely and pertinent information to *shul* members

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From the Rabbi...

NOW THAT YOU'VE CLEANED THE WATCHAMACALLIT

Pesach is almost upon us and I am therefore not quite sure if anyone will have the time to read this before collapsing at the *seder*. After all, all energies are now diverted toward cleaning all of those (time saving!) whatchamacallits (cleaning one is almost as difficult as learning how to use one) and all the other aspects of the Pesach cleaning crusade. The endless energy expended in this never-ending, nerve-frazzling crusade does, of course, succeed. Even the wildest *chametz* demon will implode in a sea of ammonia.

Now this crusade, which, of course, defines the weeks before Pesach, needs analysis. *Chametz* is made from the most kosher of ingredients: flour and water. *Chametz* also has *yichus*; it is first cousins with the eminently respectable *matzah*, which is made out of the same flour and water combination. The flour and water combination has such an impeccable pedigree, it has such wonderful potential, why then does the process of *chametzization*, turn it so demonic? How can something so good become so bad?

Allow me to offer a perspective. Perhaps this *chametz* demonization occurs not despite, but, rather, because of, *chametz's* potential. Items like *chametz* that are blessed with great potential lend themselves to extremes. Items like this flour and water mixture, if guarded, can evolve into greatness. But if unguarded, if unprotected, that same flour and water combination, will leaven into an airy *chametz*, all bloated with hot air. Yes, it's as simple as that. Let your guard down for just a few moments and the bloated pomposity, the empty vapidness, will enter your arena and will recreate your reality. Sure, you'll eventually cut the bloated bread open; sure, you'll eventually realize the inconsequentiality of its girth, but, by then it is too late: the bloating has already occurred. Bloated bread and dense, substantial *matzah* have the same ingredients but the bread let its guard down and a vapid monstrosity is all that remains.

It isn't only or even primarily the story of *chametz*, is it? It is our story, the story of the human condition. The story of a humanity that, *ven es shteigt, shteigt es biz der shtern*, "when he

reaches, he reaches up to the heavens". And the story of a humanity that, when swollen by the hot air of its own inconsequentialities, will, *ven es falt, falt es biz der erd*, "when he falls, he falls down to the Earth". You don't plan for it, you don't want it, but let go of your psyche for just a moment, let yourself get carried away with your physical urges, with your perceived needs, with your partisan point of view and it happens. Your arena has been entered and your psyche has been recreated.

The Torah urges us to make a concerted effort, at least once a year, to confront these toxic growths within ourselves. Search and search again for the pockets of "hot air" in your personality and destroy them before they destroy you. When you expend endless amounts of effort searching for the *chametz* underneath the linoleum, please don't forget the point of it all: turning the inspection upon our characters as well.

On behalf of my family and myself, I would like to wish the entire kehilla a kashere, zisse Pesach.

Rabbi Yehoshua Weber

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The President, together with the Executive Board of Clanton Park Synagogue, invites the General Membership to its ANNUAL MEETING on Sunday, May 15, 2005 at 8:00 PM to:

- (a) Review the Synagogue Financial Statement for year-end 2004**
- (b) Elect officers and directors**
- (c) Answer any questions from synagogue members.**

Meeting to be held in the Meyer Pik Social Hall.

Mazel Tovs

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Mr. & Mrs. Robbie Karoly on the marriage of their son, Aron, to Danielle Weiss of Detroit.

Mr. Motty Kopstick and Mrs. Nili Abrahams, on the marriage of their daughter Sara to Avraham Gal. Mazel tov, as well, to the grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Menashe Laiman, and Mr. and Mrs. Percy Kopstick.

Dr. Eli and Judy Magder, on the marriage of their daughter, Chana, to Mark Ross of Toronto

Gershon and Faige Kaplan, on the engagement of their son, Yitzchak, to Chani Cymbalista of Thornhill.

Mish and Betty Klein, on the engagement of their son, Yossi.

Stewart and Carol Lesser, on the bar mitzvah of their son, Aaron, in Israel.

Moshe and Susan Greenwald and Rabbi Joel and Shifra Klein, on the birth of a grandson.

Mordechai and Lindy Mandelbaum, on the birth of a grandson. Mazel tov, as well, to the great-grandparents, Sandy and Aranka Hofstedter.

Dr. and Mrs. David Rosenthal, on the birth of a grandson. Mazel tov, as well, to the great-grandparents, Moshe and Bessie Marmer.

Max and Ruth Neuberger, on the engagement of their granddaughter.

Mr. and Mrs. Szpigel, on the bar mitzvah of their grandson.

Condolences

Irwin Diamond, on the loss of his father, Mrs. Rose Diamond on the loss of her husband, Mrs. A. Bauer on the loss of her brother, Morris Diamond.

Mrs. J. Schwebel on the loss of her son-in-law, Mr. Shmuel Reichman. Condolences, as well, to his wife, Mrs. Hyla Reichman

Mr and Mrs. Shaya Braun on the untimely passing of their nephew, Rabbi Shmuel Bleier.

Refuah Shleima and Bikur Cholim

Bikur cholim is a huge *mitzvah*, and the *shul* has a large number of seniors who are in need of a *refuah shleima*. Organized visiting can be arranged through Irwin Diamond, Sara Plonka or Naomi Levi. Teens and college students are urged to participate.

Shul News and Rules

The Purim Party and Purim Spiel ... were a resounding success! There were laughs aplenty, as the now famous Downsview Shtick Players put on their play, "*Here's Looking at You, Esther*". A special *yasher koach* goes to Chaim Oliver for organizing the event.

Kiddush every Shabbos ... The Executive recently voted to institute a regular *kiddush* every *Shabbos* in the Meyer Pik Social Hall. Please come join us for cake, kugel and an opportunity to socialize. (There will be a break in the regular *kiddush* schedule over *Pesach*.)

Maos Chittin ... It is an important *mitzvah* to give to needy families before *Pesach*. The Clanton Park Gemilas Chesed committee distributes funds to local families who are in need. Please make your cheque payable to: "Gemilas Chesed of Clanton Park"

Youth News

Pesach Food Drive ... Girls in Grade 6 and up are invited to volunteer on April 17th from 10:30 AM to 12 noon at the National Council for Jewish Women on 4700 Bathurst Street. Help is urgently needed in the preparation of food packages for the *Pesach* Food Drive. For more information, call Rebecca Kurtz at (416) 633-3649, or email cpgirlsyouth@yahoo.ca.

Clanton Park Baseball Fever! ...

Who? All boys, from SK to grade 7 (members and non-members)
When? May and June, with each team playing at least once a week. Games take place between 5:30 and 7:30 PM.
Where? Clanton Park, Faywood Field, and Dublin Heights.
What does it include? Team t-shirt, baseball hat, League BBQ and trophy at end of season.
How do I sign up? Registration forms are available in the flyer boxes at *shul*, or go to the *shul's* website.

Cost? Very low! See the registration form.
Contact: Yitzchak Kaplan (416) 738-8032
Deadline for registration: April 21st.

Clanton Park Yeshiva Bein Hazmanin ... From Sunday, April 17th through Friday, April 29th at 8:30 AM: *minyan* and breakfast, followed by *shiurim* to be delivered by some of Toronto's most esteemed *Rabbonim* and *Roshai yeshiva*

Weekly Shabbos Morning Youth Programs ...
Junior Minyan for Boys Grades 3 to 5, from 10 AM to 11 AM.

Junior Minyan for Grades 1 to 3, in the library, from 10 AM to 11 AM.

Nursery (ages 3 to 6), from 10 AM till the end of davening.

(Parents: please pick up your children at the end of the programs.)

FEATURE ARTICLE: 50th ANNIVERSARY OF CLANTON PARK SHUL – THE INTERVIEWS – Bill and Judith Rubinstein

Bill and Judith were born in Hungary. Bill's family owned a large flourmill. Judith's father was a religious teacher. Both families, before the war, enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle, and were free to follow their religious observances within a large, vibrant Jewish community. The war, of course, changed everything. Both Bill and Judith lost most of their families in the war. Bill was sent to a forced labour camp. His first wife and children were murdered in Auschwitz.

Judith was sent to Auschwitz in 1944. She was an eyewitness to the historic uprising at the crematorium. It was the second day of Sukkos 1944. A few brave girls had smuggled gunpowder into the crematorium, bit by bit, over the course of several weeks. The girls were later hanged – they had sacrificed their own lives to save so many others -- but they had managed to smuggle in enough gunpowder for the men to blow up the largest crematorium. The gassing was put to a halt, and, according to Judith, this was the beginning of the downfall of the Nazis.

To this day, Judith wonders how she survived the concentration camp, but she attributes it to her strong *bitachon*, which she had learned from her father. "I never lost my faith. I tried to keep the Jewish holidays, as much as I could. I remembered my father's teachings; what was good for him was good me."

After the war, with the communist takeover, Hungary had become "an alien place". Judith decided to immigrate to Israel. She was sent to a D.P. camp in Italy, with more than a thousand youngsters, whose aim was to get to *Eretz Yisrael*. She spent three years in the DP Camp. It was there that she married Bill. They never got to *Eretz Yisrael*, though. They came instead to Canada, in 1948. They left Italy with very little possessions, and arrived in a strange country "not knowing a soul".

They settled in downtown Toronto. Bill learned to work in the furrier trade, but he got fired because he left early on Fridays and refused to work on *Shabbos*. Judith worked as a dress-maker (she had gone to dress-making school in Hungary). They did not have much money, but they were thrilled to be part of a growing Jewish community, and joined the *Torah v'Avoda minyan*.

With a second baby on the way, their downtown apartment was beginning to get cramped; they needed more space. So, in 1952, they made the move to north of Wilson.

One of the earliest *Shabbos minyanim* in the area was held in a room in the back of a kosher butcher shop on Bathurst Street. One had to walk through the butcher shop, with its sawdust covered floor and its distinct smell of meat, in order to get to the back room, where the *davening* took place. Just as the *minyan* in Sam Kideckel's basement formed the basis of what would later become the Clanton Park *minyan*, so the *minyan* in the butcher shop was the origin of the *Sharei Tefillah* congregation. Some, however, like Mr. Rubinstein, "defected" to Clanton Park, which had more *shomrei Shabbos* members right from the beginning, and evolved into a more seriously Orthodox *minyan* over time.

Originally, the members *davened* at the far end of what would later become the social hall (which to this day has a lower ceiling than the rest of the social hall). The furnace was in the middle of the room, and one of the walls was just a wooden plank. The first *Simchas Torah*, Judith remembers watching the men dance around the furnace.

Both Bill and Judith were active in the *shul* from the beginning. Judith served as vice-president of the sisterhood. She remembers baking cakes and pastries in the downstairs kitchen downstairs to raise money for the *shul*.

"We created a new family, a Clanton Park family, which is now in its third generation. It was our own; we created it from nothing. The *shul* became our second home, and we still *shep nachas* every time we go to *shul*. We are very grateful to be part of this community. We shared whatever we could, and we were always loyal to our values. We always believed that *Shabbos* is *Shabbos*."

Their son, Eli, who is a current member of the *shul*, has the distinction of being the second bar mitzvah boy to celebrate his bar mitzvah in the completed sanctuary. Eli, who I also interviewed for this article, recalls that the strongest youth group in the early days of the *shul* was neither *Pirchei* nor *Bnei Akiva* nor NCSY; it was the Wolf Cub Pack (for boys) and the Brownies (for girls)!

Eventually, Bill, his brother, Danny, and Sandy Hofstetter, who had been partners in the furrier business, formed a new business, in construction. The company they formed, H&R Developments, went on to become one of the most successful companies in Canada.

The Rubinsteins have seven grandchildren.

