

# Havurah Happenings



From the Chico Havurah: A Radically-Inclusive, Progressive, and Joyful Jewish Community

JUNE, 2009

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## OUR VISION: MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our visioning brunch last weekend was very successful! Thank you to Silona & Tony for hosting, and to all who participated. As a starting point, we began with a list of what we particularly enjoyed about Yiskah's services: they were creative, not straight out of the book, had a strong spiritual element, taught us new things, were experiential, incorporated Kabbalah, were thought-provoking and encouraged self-reflection, were relevant, engaged the heart & mind, included meditation and/or privacy & quiet time, incorporated a variety of ways of learning, used props well, and had a focus on both the individual and the community. We used this as a springboard to think about what we wanted services to be like this coming year. As we brainstormed and responded to a variety of suggestions, two themes arose. First, we wanted services to be easier, that is, many of us enjoy the services once we go, but have a hard time getting ourselves there on a Friday night after a long week of work. Second, we wanted variety, so that it's not the same service week after week, and so that different services might incorporate different characteristics that we like (above). This guided us to envision some new things:

- ❖ Dinner + services! Our Shabbats will begin with an optional dinner at 6:00, followed by services promptly at 7:00. This is not a potluck—dinner will be provided at a minimal cost (TBA), so all you have to do is show up. No cooking, no long downtime after work that makes it hard to get out of the house again...What could be easier?!
- ❖ Not all of our Shabbat services will be "services" in the traditional sense. We want some variety! Our "services" will actually include a wide range of experiences: we'll try to mix it up between services, Jewish

meditation, group study, and other forms of learning and spiritual expression.

- ❖ For lay-led services and other Shabbat experiences, group co-leading will be encouraged. We suggest that groups of 2-4 co-leaders commit to getting together 2 or 3 times during a one-month period to learn about an aspect of Judaism/spirituality, and then co-lead a service (or study session, or whatever) based on what they've learned. A list of topics will be brainstormed, but groups are always welcome to come up with their own topics as well. We encourage everyone who participates in Friday nights to join in! It's a great way to learn new things, get involved, and give back to the Havurah community all at the same time. This summer we will work on getting a calendar of co-leaders and Shabbat evenings planned for the year.
- ❖ We will give a workshop for those who think they might be willing to co-lead a service to make it easier and less intimidating. A typical structure for services will be discussed as a starting point, but also some of the many alternatives that can be incorporated to make the services interesting, exciting, heart-felt and thought-provoking. The workshop will also introduce participants to a variety of useful web resources.
- ❖ While we can't currently afford an ongoing contract with one rabbi, a few times during the year (as our budget allows) we will bring in Visiting Scholars from Sacramento and the Bay Area to lead services. This will bring us some new and interesting services, and introduce us to a variety of rabbinical styles.

We think these changes are exciting, and everyone left the brunch feeling motivated, positive, and eager for the coming year. These changes hold much promise, but how successful they are depends largely upon how much each of us gets involved. Each and every one of us is an integral part of the health and success of this community. We are not some big megatemple or bureaucratic organization—we're just friends, family and neighbors who want to share meaningful experiences in a Jewish context. We don't need to be educated in Jewish texts or tradition (or have a command of Hebrew) in order to be active in co-creating satisfying Havurah experiences for each other. We all have strengths and gifts to share with this community, and this year will provide many exciting opportunities for us to share these gifts with one another.

B'shalom,

Liahna

## **NEW VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR**

We'd like to give a hearty thank you to Kathleen Moran, who was so inspired by our visioning brunch, she volunteered to be our Volunteer Coordinator! This is not a role we have had before, but it is one in which we are in desperate need, so thank you Kathleen! With Kathleen's experience and skills at coordinating volunteers, we hope to reduce the frustration that some have experienced when volunteering through increased organization. We also hope to spread the work around, so that those generous and hearty people who regularly volunteer don't get burned out or taken for granted.

## **SUMMER POTLUCK**

**Friday, July 18, 6:00pm, at Liahna & Pennie's house, 1478 Hawthorne Ave.**

Join us for a casual summer vegetarian potluck in a shady backyard hosted by Liahna & Pennie at 1478 Hawthorne Ave. Call 566-0448 for directions.

## **6<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY PARTY**

**Save the Date: Saturday, August 1**

The Chico Havurah is celebrating 6 years! This is the kick-off event for our celebration of our Torah's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, a celebration which will continue throughout the year. More details, including time and location, will be announced in the next newsletter.

## BOOK CLUB

### Tuesday, July 7 at Tony & Silona's, 1023 Sir William Court

The book club meets to discuss *Born to Kvetch* by Michael Wex. From the book's description: "Michael Wex—professor, scholar, translator, novelist, and performer—takes a serious yet unceasingly fun and funny look at this remarkable kvetch-full tongue [Yiddish] that has both shaped and has been shaped by those who speak it. Featuring chapters on curse words, food, sex, and even death, he allows his lively wit and scholarship to roam freely from Shalom Aleichem to Chaucer to Elvis." As always reading the book is not mandatory to participate in the discussion. Contact [antoneval@sunet.net](mailto:antoneval@sunet.net) for questions or directions.

## LOOKING AHEAD: HIGH HOLIDAYS

More dates to save. This year's services will be led by Liz & Liahna. Childcare will be provided at all services.

**Erev Rosh Hashanah** : Friday, Sept. 18, 7pm.

**Rosh Hashannah**: Saturday, Sept. 19, 10am-12:30pm.

**Kol Nidre**: Sunday, September 27, 7pm.

**Yom Kippur**: Monday, September 28 10am-12:30pm.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you're willing to volunteer for any of the following, or want more information about volunteering, please contact our new Volunteer Coordinator, Kathleen Moran at 899-8179 or via email at [margot\\_jennings@hotmail.com](mailto:margot_jennings@hotmail.com).

### **For Hosting the Garage Sale:**

We are still in need of someone to host our annual Havurah benefit yard sale. Date is host's choice. Ideally, we are looking for someone whose home is easy to find, and who can store items for a few days prior to the sale when donations are dropped off. We will provide help with set-up, sales, clean-up and hauling away of unsold items.

### **For High Holiday Planning and Set-Up:**

We need volunteers to form a High Holiday Committee that will meet over the summer. Liz & Liahna have volunteered to lead services this year, but we need an organizing committee to coordinate logistics, decorate the sanctuary, etc.

### **For High Holiday Torah Reading:**

In celebration of our Torah's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, we would like to get as many people involved in reading Torah at the High Holidays this year as possible. You can read as much (a few sentences) or as little (a few words) as you would like. You *don't* have to be able to read trope (or even Hebrew) in order to do this! We have a website that includes audio files of the Torah portion, so all you have to do is listen and repeat. Rabbi Litman can also provide some assistance, and we will get together prior to the Holidays to practice and support one another. We can all do this, even those of us who have never read Torah before!!! Please contact Kathleen if you are even considering giving this a try.

### **For Simchat Torah:**

This year Simchat Torah will be a big celebration for us in honor of our 100 year-old Torah. We are planning lots of fun, including a klezmer band. We need people willing to help plan and publicize the festivities.

## UPCOMING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

### **Anniversary Party Planning Party, June 4, 7pm at Liz's house**

Liz is hosting a party to plan the anniversary party. The address is 269 Idyllwild Circle. Please RSVP to Liz if you are planning to attend so she knows how much food to put out. Email [lizmich@digitalpath.net](mailto:lizmich@digitalpath.net) or call 894-5314.

## SHALOM FREE CLINIC

### **Benefit Yard Sale, June 6, 8am-1pm at the Congregational Church**

The goal is to raise \$2000 - the entire amount will go toward supplies for this medical/mental health clinic co-sponsored by the Congregational Church of Chico and Chico Havurah. Live music, bake sale, raffle/drawing and lots of merchandise. Visit and shop Saturday, June 6 on the front lawn of the clinic and church at 1190 E. First Avenue. For more information contact Nancy at [cammorgans@aol.com](mailto:cammorgans@aol.com).

## COMMUNITY EVENTS OF INTEREST

### **Interfaith Picnic, Sunday June 14, 1-4pm on the lawn at the Congregational Church**

Come for games, music, food and fellowship. Vegetarian potluck, drinks provided. "Our goal is to put human faces on faith and get to know our neighbors who belong to other faith communities." Sponsored by Celebration of Abraham.

### **Chico Theater Company, June 5-27, Thu-Sat each week at 7:30pm and matinee June 21 at 2:00pm**

CTC presents *The Cemetery Club*. Jewish widows meet once a month to visit their husband's graves. Sweet tempered Ida is ready to begin a new life. Feisty Lucille just wants to have fun and Doris is uptight and judgmental, particularly when Sam the butcher enters the scene. A laugh out loud comedy that will tug at your heart strings!

## NEXT BOARD MEETING

### **Tuesday, June 29, 7pm at Tony & Silona's, 1023 Sir William Court**

Everyone is welcome. Call 345-2184 for more info or directions. If you would like to become a member of the Board for next year, please contact Liahna at 566-0448 or email [legordon@csuchico.edu](mailto:legordon@csuchico.edu).

## CONTACT US

Services held 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays at 7pm (September-May) at the Congregational Church, 1190 E. 1<sup>st</sup> Ave., Chico  
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