

Dear Shir Chadash Family and Friends,
Welcome to letter #27

Mazel Tov to Mim and Burt Gold on the birth of their grandson,
Oliver Gold!

It's great to be able to share such news.

AND, welcome to our 9th new family of the year: Brian
Hollander !

Brian was just part of the Polar Plunge, raising money for the
Special Olympics, and wearing a Shir Chadash tee shirt in which
to do it. Pictures should be on our website soon.

WHO WILL BE THE 10th? Will it be you? Just send in the
form.

[http://www.shir-chadash.org/pdf/Pledge%20Form
%202008-2009.pdf](http://www.shir-chadash.org/pdf/Pledge%20Form%202008-2009.pdf)

This e-mail is REALLY, REALLY long, but if you have the time,
read to the end. There's a lot happening.

EVENTS and so on:

1. Today, Friday, Feb 27th at 6:00pm...
OUR MONTHLY SHABBAT DINNER. This month we again offer a Boston Market dinner (\$7.50 for adults, \$3.75 for kids). Please call right away if you'd like to join us (223-5925). We have to order the food.
2. Today, Friday, Feb 27th at 7:30pm - Shabbat evening services.
3. Take a break from your stressful world, or from your non-stressful world.
4. Tuesday, March 3rd at 7:30pm... the second session in our Jewish History Series. Nicky Turner will present "The Jewish Art & History of Florence." **See through the eyes of one who grew up in the shadow of the Great Synagogue.**
5. AND the Adult Hebrew Class continues each **Wednesday at 6:30, on through February and March**
6. NEXT Friday, March 6th at 7:30pm, The WORLD PREMIERE of "Jewsie Boys", the story of Esther a la Frankie Valli. Hear "Sherry Baby" and many more and the wit of our lyricist Rabbi Daniel Polish, directed by Mana Watsky and Suzanne Neil, with the ever-enthusiastic Shir Chadash Players. Fun for kids. **FREE HAMANTASHEN!** Don't miss it!

7. Saturday June 13th, OUR SPRING CONCERT this year will feature PETER YARROW (yes, that's Peter of "Peter, Paul & Mary"). VERY COOL, hunh? We don't yet know how much tickets will be, but if you want to reserve a ticket now, reply to this note. I don't know how many seats we will have to sell. The concert will be "Peter Yarrow Sings Songs to Heal the World." WOW!

AND MORE:

➤ Two years ago, we built an entrance ramp for a handicapped lady in Poughkeepsie. It was a project for Mitzvah Day (more below) and was a HUGE project. It took weeks instead of one day. Thanks to Steve Herschbein and Lindsey Turner and many others we made a difference in someone's life. BUT, we committed \$400 to buy lumber and never paid. I am now making a specific appeal to you for that money. It will go to the organization with whom we were working, "Rebuilding Together" <http://www.rebuildingtogether.org> <<http://www.rebuildingtogether.org/>> . Please help!

➤ **Rabbi Polish just published an article "A Little Unbelief... is not always a bad thing", in America: the National Catholic Weekly** http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=11370

➤ This year we are represented on the Mitzvah Day Committee by Lindsey Turner. It's great to be working as part of the entire Jewish community. This year, one of

the Mitzvah Day Teams will be a group of construction-competent individuals "The Fixer-Upper Team". Do you know of a senior or disabled person in need of help with a non-dangerous construction task that could be accomplished in a day (with some prep) by a team of 4-8 people? This should be someone on a fixed income who cannot afford to hire help -- who needs help to build a ramp or fix some stairs, etc. If you know of such a family, please reply to this e-mail and I will forward the name to the Mitzvah Day Committee. Or you may send a note to Dr. Linda Tafapolsky, Jewish Family Services of Dutchess County at jfs@jewishdutchess.org.

➤ Help keep the Hudson Valley Blood Supply At Safe Levels --- American Red Cross Blood Drive will be held at Freedom Plains Church on Tuesday - March 3, 2009 from 12:30-6:30. One donation can save up to three lives! Please make an appointment to donate by calling Jill Underwood at 845-392-3997.

➤ FREE BOOKS FOR KIDS! --- The JCCDC and The Jewish Federation proudly announce that we have become implementing partners for the PJ Library in the Hudson Valley. The PJ Library, created by The Harold Grinspoon Foundation, has been fully funded in the Hudson Valley for three years. If you know a child between the ages of 6 months and 7 years who would enjoy receiving quality Judaic children's literature and music in the mail each month, free of charge, please contact

Melinda Margulies at 845-471-0430 or jebmar400@aol.com.

AND EVENTS ELSEWHERE...

➤ What do President Clinton, Rabbi Michael Lerner, Senator Russ Feingold, Vice President Al Gore, and Elie Wiesel have in common? They have all been speakers at the Consultation on Conscience, Reform Judaism's flagship social justice conference. Join us, Reform Jewish leaders, and public policy decision makers to bring social justice insight to your community!

<http://rac.org/confprog/consult> April 19-21 at L'Enfant Plaza Hotel in Washington DC.

This is an inspiring conference held every 2-years at the start of a new Congress.

I am planning on going. Let me know if you would like to travel together.

➤ The first meeting of the Community Relations Committee. The committee is intended to work on political and social advocacy for issues of concern to the Jewish community, and the goal of this first meeting is to listen to those who are interested in the subject to help define the role and agenda of the committee. WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4 - 7:30 pm AT THE JCC

➤ We have been invited by Vassar Temple's Adult Education Committee to participate in a two-session Tallit Workshop on Saturdays, March 21st and 28th, from 12:00 noon until 1:00

p.m. Under the guidance of Adriaan Finnerman participants will consider the spiritual dimensions of the process of making a tallit as they learn to knot the tzitzis in the ritual manner and each create their own tallit.

There is no charge for the workshop but participants must provide their own materials. Please email the instructor at adriaan@binyan.net to enroll in the course and receive specific information about the materials needed. Register by March 12th to allow time for the delivery of materials which must be ordered.

- Join us to say L'HITRAOT to PAULA SILVER and to recognize her years of dedication and commitment to the Jewish Community of Dutchess County. Tea reception, Wednesday, March 25th, 1:00 TO 2:00 pm, at the JCC, Open to all, PLEASE RSVP BY CALLING LIZ, AT (845) 471-0430
- Mitzvah Day 09 Planning Underway - May 3, 2009 promises to be a day of friendship, caring and hard work as the Jewish community prepares for Mitzvah Day, the annual day of community service organized by Jewish Family Services of Dutchess County. Jewish organizations, synagogues, and other community leaders have participated enthusiastically in the planning process, to make the event bigger and better than ever in 2009. Lindsey Turner, as liaison from Congregation Shir Chadash, is working to set up a "Fixer-Upper" team as one of the many Mitzvah Day projects. Once again, volunteers will

fan out to sites throughout the county, offering "sweat equity" to such organizations as Dutchess Outreach, and Hudson River Housing; taking on environmental clean-up projects; and collecting a truckload of cereal to feed the hungry in conjunction with the Cereal Counts project. Here is an opportunity to work alongside diverse members of the Jewish community and their friends of all faiths, to take on a variety of different "Tikkun Olam" projects.

To volunteer on Mitzvah Day, participants can now sign up online (after March 10) at www.jewishdutchess.org. For questions, please e-mail Jewish Family Services of Dutchess County at jfs@jewishdutchess.org, or call at 845-471-9817. Mitzvah Day is underwritten by a grant from the Bertha Effron Fund of the Community Foundation of Dutchess County.

AND FINALLY...

At Torah Study last week we explored the idea of "an eye for an eye." Was it barbaric or forward-thinking?

When you say "an eye for an eye" you are not saying "a life for an eye." So a sense of proportionality is introduced. You're also not saying "an eye for an eye, except if I'm a prince and you're a slave, in which case it's nothing for your eye and your life for my eye." In any event the rabbis interpreted this as meaning fair value. So if you did harm, the monetary equivalent would be the penalty. But following this discussion (and if you

find this fascinating, you should come to Torah Study next Saturday morning (March 7th) at 9am, the article below appeared from Iran... (caution, it's somewhat graphic). It's a real case of an eye for an eye.

TEHRAN, Iran (CNN) -- Ameneh Bahrami is certain that one day she'll meet someone, fall in love and get married. But when her wedding day comes, her husband won't see her eyes, and she won't see her husband. Bahrami is blind, the victim of an acid attack by a spurned suitor. Ameneh Bahrami said her attacker pestered her with marriage demands. If she gets her way, her attacker will suffer the same fate. The 31-year-old Iranian is demanding the ancient punishment of "an eye for an eye," and, in accordance with Islamic law, she wants to blind Majid Movahedi, the man who blinded her. "I don't want to blind him for revenge," Bahrami said in her parents' Tehran apartment. "I'm doing this to prevent it from happening to someone else." Bahrami says she first crossed paths with Movahedi in 2002, when they attended the same university. She was a 24-year-old electronics student. He was 19. She never noticed him until they shared a class. He sat next to her one day and brushed up against her. Bahrami says she knew it wasn't an accident. "I moved away from him," she said, "but he brushed up against me again."

When Bahrami stood up in class and screamed for him to stop, Movahedi just looked at her in stunned silence. He wouldn't stay silent for long. Bahrami said that over the next two years, Movahedi kept

harassing her and making threats, even as he asked her to marry him. "He told me he would kill me. He said, 'You have to say yes.' " On a November afternoon in 2004, Movahedi's threats turned to violence.

That day at 4:30 p.m., Bahrami left the medical engineering company where she worked. As she walked to the bus stop, she remembers sensing someone behind her. She turned around and was startled to see Movahedi. A moment later came the agonizing pain. Movahedi had thrown something over her. What felt like fire on her face was acid searing through her skin.

"I was just yelling, 'I'm burning! I'm burning! For God's sake, somebody help me!' "

The acid seeped into Bahrami's eyes and streamed down her face and into her mouth. When she covered her face with her hands, streaks of acid ran down her fingers and onto her forearms. Watch how the still-pungent acid destroyed Bahrami's clothes »

Two weeks after the attack, Movahedi turned himself in to police and confessed in court. He was convicted in 2005 and has been behind bars all along.

Bahrami's lawyer, Ali Sarrafi, said Movahedi had never shown any remorse. "He says he did it because he loved her," Sarrafi said.

Attack victims in Iran usually accept "blood money": a fine in lieu of harsh punishment. With no insurance and mounting medical bills, Bahrami could've used the cash, but she said no.

"I told the judge I want an eye for an eye," Bahrami said. "People like him should be made to feel my suffering."

Bahrami's demand has outraged some human rights activists. Criticizing acid-attack victims is almost unheard of, but some Internet bloggers have condemned Bahrami's decision.

"We cannot condone such cruel punishment," wrote one blogger. "To willingly inflict the same treatment on a person under court order is a violation of human rights."

Late last year, an Iranian court gave Bahrami what she asked for. It sentenced Movahedi to be blinded with drops of acid in each eye. This month, the courts rejected Movahedi's appeal.

Bahrami's lawyer, Sarrafi, said the sentencing might be carried out in a matter of weeks. He said he doesn't think Bahrami will change her mind. Neither does Bahrami.

"If I don't do this and there is another acid attack, I will never forgive myself for as long as I live," she said.

Bahrami is largely self-sufficient despite not being able to see. She can make a salad, prepare tea and walk up the five flights of stairs that lead to her parents' apartment.

She has undergone more than a dozen surgeries on her badly scarred face, but she says there are many more to come. She can't afford to

pay for her medical care, so she's using the Internet to raise money.

She's lost her big brown eyes, but she likes to smile, especially when she imagines her wedding day.

"I always see myself as someone who can see and sometimes see myself in a beautiful wedding gown, and why not?"

Shabbat Shalom,
Michael