

# LINCOLN SQUARE SYNAGOGUE BULLETIN OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

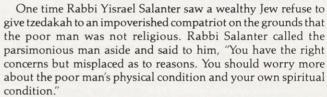
Volume 25, No. 4

LEARNING

Tevet, 5750 - January, 1990



from Rabbi Saul J. Berman



We are on the verge of observing the Fast of the 10th of Tevet, that seemingly most "minor" of the "minor" fasts. We will, on that date, recall to memory the time when Nebuchadnezzer first encircled the walls of Jerusalem in the battle which eventually led to the destruction of the Temple. The threat to the walls to Jews is a priority reason to mourn because those walls were both the physical and spiritual guards of the city of Jerusalem and the people Israel. Their collapse represented the inner and outer collapse of Jewish behavior and spirituality. It was that Jewish collapse which, in the eyes of the Prophets, necessitated the collapse of the walls.

Our fast on that date is a call to the restoration of the walls; to the restoration of our inner spirituality and our outer response for the physical well-being of others. Our shul will provide each one of us with the opportunity to manifest the "Tikun", the repair in which we must all engage.

Firstly, on that date, January 7, 1990 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., we can bring packaged food to be distributed to both Jewish and non-Jewish poor. This shift in the date of one of our annual food drives was intentionally done so as to make it possible for us to perform this great mitzvah on the day of Asarah B'Tevet, thereby demonstrating our assumption of responsibilities for the physical well-being of others.

During this same period of time we are initiating a formal Mishnah study program. The program is designed to encourage small group study by families and or friends who, as groups, will be assigned a particular tractate of Mishnah for study.

This project will culminate with a Siyum on Shavuot 5750. We are reaching out to people in this study around the time of Asarah B Tevet again so as to provide each of us with a special opportunity to commit ourselves to the spiritual repair to which we are called by this fast day.

Let us all join together in adhering to the mandate of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter in striving to better the physical condition of others and our own spiritual identities.





#### LINCOLN SQUARE SYNAGOGUE 200 AMSTERDAM AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10023 TEL: 874-6100

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What follows is the complete text of a letter I received several weeks ago (I've omitted the name) and my response:

Dear Mr. President:

I would first like to commend you and your committee members on a wonderful job and service you provide not only to the immediate community but to all those who come from all over the world.

However, I would like to point out how disappointed and disgusted I am with the shul over an occurrence which happened to me over Simchat Torah.

Admittedly I am not a member though I have been attending your services for about nine months. Having heard the various appeals for people to become members I had full intentions of becoming one. However, after I outline to you what happened you will understand why I now have absolutely no intentions of becoming a member.

Having davened at the 9 AM minyan on Yom Tov, I adjourned to make Kiddush and wait for Musaf to start. However, unfortunately I missed Musaf downstairs in the ballroom and wished to join the main minyan for Musaf. As I approached the door I was told that the minyan was for members only and I could not enter. I was never even asked if I was a member. Having told this gentleman that the minyan downstairs was finished and that I merely wished to stand in the aisle so as to be able to daven with a minyan, admittance was still denied. As I had no other alternative, I asked what he suggest I do. The answer was that there are plenty of other shuls in the area and that I should go there. I said what if they have finished as well. His answer was that there is nothing he can do.

I cannot believe that a shul that prides itself on having outreach programming, turn Friday night into Shabbos and attracting all types of people would in fact suggest that someone go elsewhere in order to daven with a minyan.

Irrespective of whether I had indeed davened in your shul before or was a visitor for the first time, I have never in all my travels around the world heard of a shul refusing to admit anyone who wishes to daven.

I do understand the predicament you are in on Yom Tov with regard to having "open doors". However, I have always been brought up to believe that shul — a house of worship — is open to anyone anytime who wishes to daven with a minyan.

Personally I believe you should reconsider your position and policies with regard to excluding people from attending your service on Yom Tov. I am not saying that everyone should be allowed in, but if an individual asks to enter so as to be able to daven with a minyan he should be allowed.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (continued from page two)

Dear Mr.\_\_\_\_

You have experienced the one instance, at least in my memory (I have been a member for 16 years), that a Jew was turned away from services at our main sanctuary and not provided an alternative minyan at LSS. In fact the situation is so rare that it was the first topic of conversation between Rabbi Berman and me at our regular weekly meeting right after Simchat Torah. The Rabbi was made aware of the problem after the Yom Tov and was deeply concerned about the exclusion of several people from Musaf services. We reviewed the policy and agreed that in the future an alternative Simchat Torah Musaf minyan will be provided for non-members.

You wrote with a sense of anger, which I understand. Given a shul the size of LSS and the atmosphere of a Yom Tov like Simchat Torah, mistakes will be made. I often marvel at how well all of us lay leaders and professionals keep the institution running smoothly. Certainly there is and always will be room for improvement, and constructive criticism is appreciated.

While I am sorry that we closed the door on you, I am equally troubled at how easily you closed the door on us. You decided to attend services at LSS for nine months without becoming a member. Finally, you succumbed to our appeals and decided to join the shul. Without awaiting a reply from me, however, you decided that your negative Simchat Torah experience now changes everything — "I now have absolutely no intentions of becoming a member".

The spirit of openness that pervades this wonderful institution 365 days a year is not embodied in the brick and mortar of 200 Amsterdam Avenue — it is a spirit that springs from the hearts of our Rabbis, leaders and *members*. Please think about that.

Sincerely, Perry Davis

### VILNA

It is said that the thin thread which joins us to our past binds us to the future. In this special issue of Echad dedicated to Jewish learning we remember Vilna, the seat of Jewish learning in Eastern Europe from the 17th to the 20th century.

A Jewish settlement existed in the 14th century. At the end of the 16th century, the Jewish community numbered 15,000. During the 17th century the Chmelnickies cossaks subjected Vilna to oppression and maltreatment, leading to torture and destruction of property. In 1708 Vilna was occupied by Sweden and more than 29,000 died from famine and pestilence.

Vilna contained a Jewish Teachers Institute plus 4 elementary schools for young children. A Hebrew printing press was established by the Rom family in 1799, which produced exquisite Talmud folios until 1939. As a result, Vilna had already become preeminent in Talmudic and Rabbinical studies.

From the second half of the 18th century, Rabbi Elijah Ben Zalman, known as the Gaon of Vilna, had a lasting impact on Vilna Jewry. The Gaon's Circle became the most stimulating spiritual Center which had a profound effect on both halacha and kabbalah.

In the 18th century under the influence of the Gaon of Vilna, the newly formed sect of Hasidim were put under "cherem". However, when the Haskala movement appeared to spread to Vilna, the Misnagdim realized that the hasidic movement was not endangering orthodoxy; the danger to authentic Judaism stemmed from the Maskilim.

Under the influence of the Vilna Gaon an extended group of immigrants migrated to the Holyland. Many leading personalities of present Israel stem from the Gaon's emigration group.

From 1922 to 1939 was the most fruitful time of social and cultural activities in Vilna.

With the outbreak of World War II the Soviets invaded Vilna. Many of the refugees from the divided Poland were exiled to Siberia. The Soviet authorities closed all Hebrew, Yiddish institutions and replaced them with Communist propaganda and party organs.

In June, 1941 the Germans entered Vilna and persecution.

By 1944 a total of 100,000 Jews were executed from Vilna and vicinity. The ghetto was sealed and the remaining Jews were transferred to be annihilated in a ghetto of Estonia. Thus the end of a historic city known all over the world as the Jerusalem of Lithuainia—Vilna.



# LINCOLN SQUARE SYNAGOGUE A Multi-faceted Jewish Education Program

by Debbie Rosenfeld

Reprinted with permission from the Fall 1985 issue of Jewish Action, the quarterly magazine of the Orthodox Union.

Any overview of Jewish education facilities which would attempt to include all the synagogue affiliated programs in America would be difficult to compile accurately since every Rabbi, on whatever level, runs a certain amount of classes for his congregants. Many rabbis double as Talmud Torah teachers, providing after school and Sunday instruction. Some rabbis might expound and give lectures only as part of the Shabbat services, while others attempt to draw their congregants into the synagogue at least once a month or every few weeks for classes on specific themes and topics.

The congregation's size, congregants' interests, and the rabbi's own approach vary, accounting for the vast diversity among the provisions different shuls make to meet adult education needs. Each with its own flavor, the Beth Jacob Adult Education Series in Atlanta, Ga., the Beth Jacob Adult Education Institute in Beverly Hills, Ca., and both the Allen M. Wasserman Academy of Judaic Studies at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale and the Adult Institute of Continuing Education at Kehilat Jeshurun in Manhattan, are among the more successful programs from coast to coast.

One leading synagogue adult education program, the **Joseph Shapiro Institute** (**JSI**), at Manhattan's Lincoln Square Synagogue (LSS) under the directorship of Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald, is surely worthy of consideration by other growing education programs across the country.

In an article in **Jewish Action** about two years ago, Rabbi Buchwald explained the motivating factors behind the establishment of this novel program in 1968 and of other LSS outreach programs: "There is a place in the synagogue for everyone—from the founding members to the least affiliated Jew. Most people are just waiting to be touched—waiting for someone to tap them on the shoulder and say, Welcome to our congregation. Working with the premise that every adult Jew is entitled to basic Jewish knowledge, Lincoln Square Synagogue has developed a basic outreach and education program for adults. We try to get people to experience being Jewish in as many different ways as we can."

More recently, Rabbi Buchwald explained that LSS has changed its focus in the area of education. "We are now concentrating more on internal matters. Our primary goal is to get our own membership more involved in the education program, as opposed to trying to be everything to everyone."

Apparently, this new outlook has been quite successful. More and more LSS members, including famous television personalities, comedians, writers, and magazine editors, are attending classes and becoming involved in Torah study.

The Lehrhaus Program

Many LSS members are old hands at Judaic Studies and were reluctant to join classes geared for beginners. To meet their education needs, Rabbi Saul Berman, who in 1984 succeeded Rabbi Shlomo Riskin as Rabbi of LSS, recently instituted the Lehrhaus program, named after the school of the famous philosopher Franz Rosenzweig. This program gives people with rich Jewish educational backgrounds the opportunity to pursue further Torah learning with some of the outstanding teacher-scholars in the United States.

The **Lehrhaus** program offers a series of lectures in the major areas of Jewish intellectual inquiry. Jewish history, Jewish law, Jewish philosophy, and *Talmud*, specifically geared to people who

(continued on page five)

had exposure to these areas and who have the intellectual skills to engage in study based on primary sources, though all classes are taught in English. Tuition for two classes at the **Lehrhaus** for synagogue members is as follows: Individual, and couple per person, \$35; parents (per family), \$25; single parents, \$10. (The reduction in the latter two groupings is to help defray the cost of babysitting services.) For non-members the cost is \$75 for two classes.

Lehrhaus is however, only a part of the over 50 courses offered at JSI. Rabbi Joseph Adler, instructor and director of the Institute's summer program describes JSI as the "largest and most innovative adult Jewish education network in the New York metropolitan area, if not in the United States." A 1984 New York Times article described the Institute as "a nationally known and widely imitated adult Jewish Studies Program." With its expansive curriculum, JSI is surely worthy of this acclaim.

Rabbi Adler describes 90% of the people who avail themselves of the JSI learning experience as being from either a collegiate or professional background. He says that although the program offers classes on the advanced, intermediate, and beginners levels, for the most part JSI is still composed of beginners with no background, who "drift in from off the streets." There is also an equal number of people with minimal backgrounds who are interested in further learning in a formal setting. Those on the advanced level generally have a yeshiva background and "can handle a Gemora," according to Rabbi Adler.

The JSI schedule of courses includes classes in Hebrew language, Bible, Jewish law, Jewish thought, rabbinic literature, Jewish history, as well as special workshops. There is also a Lincoln Square Yeshiva, in which intensive *Talmud* is taught. Most classes at LSS cost between \$35-\$80, but scholarships are readily available, and no student is turned away for lack of funds. The LSS also offers a series of daily classes including *Daf Yomi, Mishna Yomit*, and *Halacha Yomit*.

The services of specially selected tutors, to study with individuals or small groups of students, are also available. The tutorial program is available during the day or evenings, in all subjects. Sessions are conducted at the synagogue or in central business locations, for those interested in forming study groups at their places of business. The fee is \$10 per hour, with special rates for groups.

#### The "Beginners Minyan"

The learning experience at JSI is not restricted to the work week. There are also a series of Shabbat classes. *Shacharit* and *Mincha minyanim* on Shabbat are either preceded or followed by sessions in such subjects as *Chumash*, *Talmud*, the laws of Shabbat, and *parashat hashavua*.

Of all its educational programs, LSS is probably best known for its Shabbat **Beginners Service**, which Rabbi Buchwald began in 1975 and which he continues to lead every Shabbat morning from 9:15 a.m.-12 noon. This program offers a special Shabbat service for those with little or no background, who seek to understand and participate in the standard Hebrew Shabbat service.

The **Beginners Service** is in Hebrew and English, and anyone can interrupt the rabbi to ask questions at any time. It includes a discussion on the meaning, philosophy, and structure of the prayer service, and a review of the weekly portion. Traditional prayer rituals and melodies are taught. The **Beginners Minyan** trend is really catching on. Today, there are over 100 such services across the U.S.

In a past issue of **Jewish Action**, Rabbi Buchwald explained (continued on page six)





that, "the Beginners Minyan began with four regular members and within six months outgrew its original small room. Participation is now limited to 50 people each week in order to facilitate learning and personal contact. A free crash course in reading Hebrew is offered to all, and graduates join any one of Lincoln Square's regular minyanim. Graduates of the Beginners Minyan are now among the most active Lincoln Square members, contributing out of proportion to their numbers."

The Adult Education Certification Program

In addition to such unique programs as Lehrhaus and the Beginners Service, LSS is also affiliated with the Orthodox Union's **Adult Education Certification Program**, which offers national recognition to people who seriously participate in their synagogue's adult education program. This program is open to all members of LSS, as well as to members of other OU member synagogues.

At the end of each term, the office of the Joseph Shapiro Institute forwards to the OU the names of LSS members who attended classes. One credit is awarded for each 12 hours that a class meets, and a certificate is awarded each time 5 credits are earned. Members can also earn credits toward a Hebrew teachers certificate.

The Jewish Learning Lab — Lectures on Tape

Program creativity is never-ending at LSS, which also sponsors a **Tape Center**. Through the Center, tapes of current lectures are available one week after the lecture. Tapes cost \$5, or \$45 for a set of 10, plus postage and handling.

Also, the **Ora V'simcha Shabbat Learning System** provides a set of four audio cassettes, a book and sheet music based on Peter Abelow's Jewish Learning Lab, a popular JSI course. The system also features Rabbis Riskin and Buchwald, and Cantors Goffin and Sherman, and allows listeners to follow the Shabbat through song and explanation, from candle lighting through *Havdalah*. The cost of a complete set is \$20 plus postage and handling.

The Summer Program

While education often takes the back seat during the summer months, students of all levels at the JSI Summer Program may be in for the most intensive learning experience of their entire lives. For six weeks, they attend classes in a wide range of Judaic studies from Monday through Thursday, 7:45 a.m.-5 p.m. Personal counseling and a student's shabbaton are also offered. Summer Program tuition is \$300, excluding books and meals. For those who are unable to make the full daytime commitment, evening classes are offered for eight weeks during the summer.

This year, the **Summer Program** had about 20 adult students, either full or part-time, including three people who are presently undergoing conversion to Judaism.

When asked about her perceptions of the Summer Program, one student, Ireta Zaretsky, who has a master's degree in social work and had left her job in Boston to study for the summer at JSI, says, "What is most unique about this program is the sensitivity to individual needs. Here, you will find a yeshiva bachur with someone who is studying the aleph-bet. The intermediates and beginners often study together, but because everyone is so anxious to learn, no one feels the gap. The sensitivity and charisma of the rebbeim is also remarkable. No question is ever stupid to them. An all-accepting attitude prevails. Too bad there aren't more such programs across the country or in New York."

(continued on page seven)

Another young woman from Long Island, New York, who has studied in Israel for a year and was also involved in the JSI **Summer Program**, explains that there is "a very intellectual atmosphere at the JSI summer program. All students become engrossed in the textual halachic process. This summer's *chevra* is a wonderful one, and students actively interact with one another, despite their short-term aquaintance. The program is especially helpful for people who cannot take a year off to study in yeshiva. It gives them a taste of yeshiva life—through a very short, very busy, learning experience."

Sharon Lacks, a ba'alat teshuva from Riverdale, New York, who also participated in this program says that it has "given me the ability to make halachic decisions based on the evidence before

It takes not only special students, but also dedicated instructors and administrators to make the JSI education program a colossal success. One such exceptional educator, Ms. Suri Kasirer, director of outreach and of the Hebrew school at LSS, and a teacher of Jewish history and *Pirkei Avot* in the Summer Program, explained her personal goals as a teacher and what she perceived as the goal of JSI in general. She said she hoped to "teach people analytical skills that can be used in their future studies," and that the Institute attempts to "get people to commit themselves to serious learning."

Ms. Kasirer attributes the success of JSI year-round to the "large nucleus of people from which the Institute draws and a good, caring staff."

She describes the student body as being "interested, motivated, and of all ages. I even had a grandmother and granddaughter in the same class," explains Kasirer. She finds that she learns much from her students, and that her classes are interesting for her, as well as for the students. Ms. Kasirer appreciates the good mix of people with different ideas and experiences, all interacting openly and effectively.

The Joseph Shapiro Institute of Jewish Studies was made possible by a generous gift of Mrs. Joseph Shapiro and her children in memory of their departed husband and father. Joseph Shapiro was an American born businessman deeply involved in the development and organization of many Jewish Orthodox educational institutions.

For more information about the **Joseph Shapiro Institute** and other LSS programs, contact Lincoln Square Synagogue, 200 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10023, 212-874-6105.

Reprinted with permission from the Fall 1985 issue of Jewish Action, the quarterly magazine of the Orthodox Union.

The Joseph Shapiro Institute now includes over 50 classes. New and creative programs have been added in order to allow more people to find appropriate avenues through which to pursue the imcomparable experience of Torah learning. They include the Jewish Music Institute, featuring various courses on Jewish liturgical and folk music, as well as a performing chorale; a series of morning classes intended for people who can engage in daytime study (child care is provided); and Tuesday Torah for Seniors an opportunity to address the study needs of our retired adults.

As a result of these and other creative programs registration—has risen to approximately 700 course registrants per semester. The properties is currently under the direction of Rabbi Saul J. Berman 5 and Rabbi Kenneth Brander.





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# **YOUTH ACTIVITIES**

December was a very full month on the MRYC calendar, with a wide spectrum of programs ranging from Youth Shabbat to the Yachad Shabbaton to the Chanukah party for grades K-6.

January will be a bit slower, as we take exams and vacations and begin preparing for the third annual MRYC concert, to be held on February 17th. This year's performer has not yet been announced. In previous years we have featured the Miami Boys' Choir and Avraham Fried, as well as our own Sherwood Goffin and the LSS Chorale. Check your mail for more information and reserve your seats early!

Dena Landowne

Thanks to all of you who have paid the pledges you made upon receiving an aliyah on Simchat Torah.

For those who have not yet redeemed your pledges, and for those who did not remember to pledge, a gentle reminder: please send your contribution as soon as possible, indicating on the check whether it is for the Chevra Kaddisha or the Book Fund.

# LINCOLN SQUARE SYNAGOGUE STARS AT THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY'S MARGARET MEAD FILM FESTIVAL

One Generation More — the celebration of Passover in Estonia is a documentary exploring the renaissance of the Estonian Jewish community. In a land once declared "Jew Free" by the Nazis, this community has once again emerged as a vibrant force in Estonia's contemporary struggle for freedom.

*One Generation More* — opens our eyes to crucial choices facing Soviet Jewry. As Jews of Estonia prepare to celebrate their first free Passover in decades there is uncertainty if this might not be their last.

The Jews of Estonia are unable to lead a Passover seder. A team of teenagers from Lincoln Square Synagogue with one of the synagogue's rabbis, Rabbi Kenneth Brander, conducts the first-ever collective seder in Tallin for more than 450 people.

This film has aired in England and Canada and has been praised by journalists throughout these countries as one of the most informative pieces on cultural activities in the Soviet Union.

In the film, Dr. Levin, a leader of the Estonian community sums it up.: "Moses had to travel 40 years in the desert so that a new generation could come of age . . . I think that the process here needs maybe not 40 years but one generation more."

A special preview of this film will take place at Lincoln Square Synagogue during Jewish Free University, January 29 - February 1.

## MAZEL TOV AND BEST WISHES

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#### MARRIAGE

Chavy Roth and Ira Roth

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Heddy and Scott Wright on the birth of a son

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Dr. Jacob Lewittes on the loss of his brother Israel Lewittes
Harry Tropp on the loss of his mother Edna Tropp
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ROAST TURKEY BREAST
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Sunday Morning Servi	ices	7:15 & 8:30 a.m.

Sunday Morning Services
Sabbath Morning Services
Hashkamah Service 7:50 a.m.  Main Service 8:45 a.m. Intermediate Service 9:00 a.m. Beginners Service 9:15 a.m. Shiur Cholent-Kugel Service 9:45 a.m. Youth Service 10:00 a.m. Child Care From 8:30 a.m.  Monday, January 1st New Year's Day Morning Services 7:10 and 8:30 a.m.
No Maariv only services
Friday, January 5th Kindle Shabbat candles 4:25 p.m. Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat 4:35 p.m.
Saturday, January 6th (VAYIGASH)       8:00 a.m.         Daf Yomi       8:00 a.m.         Talmud and Bible Class       3:40 p.m.         Mincha       4:25 p.m.         Daily Mincha and Maariv       4:35 p.m.
Maariv only Mon-Thurs 6:20 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 7th (Asarah B'Tevet) Fast day
Fast begins       6:08 a.m.         Morning services       7:00 & 8:30 a.m.         Mincha       4:25 p.m.         Fast concludes       5:16 p.m.
Friday, January 12th Kindle Shabbat candles 4:32 p.m. Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat 4:40 p.m.
Saturday, January 13th (VAYECHI)Daf Yomi8:00 a.m.Shabbat morning services8:45 a.m.Talmud and Bible classes3:45 p.m.Mincha4:30 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv4:45 p.m.Maariv only Mon-Thurs6:20 p.m.
Friday, January 19th Kindle Shabbat candles 4:40 p.m. Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat 4:50 p.m.
Saturday, January 20th (SHEMOT)         Daf Yomi       8:00 a.m.         Talmud and Bible classes       3:55 p.m.         Mincha       4:40 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv .4:55 p.m. Maariv only Mon-Thurs .6:20 p.m.
Friday, January 26th Kindle Shabbat candles 4:48 p.m. Mincha and Kabbalat Shabbat Rosh Chodesh 5:00 p.m.
Saturday, January 27th (VAERA) Rosh Chodesh Shevat Hashkoma Minyan
Daf Yomi       8:00 a.m.         Talmud and Bible classes       4:00 p.m.         Mincha       4:45 p.m.
Daily Mincha and Maariv5:00 p.m.Maariv only MonThurs6:20 p.m.

Lincoln Square Synagogue 200 Amsterdam Avenue New York, N.Y. 10023

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# **JANUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

FRIDAY Oneg Shabbat 5 —

MONDAY

Women's Tefillah Group; Hamilton Senior Center **SATURDAY** 6 — Beginners Luncheon

Fast of Asarah B'Tevet SUNDAY 7 —

Asarah B'Tevet Food Drive 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Beginners Schmooze - 8:15 p.m.

Additional Oneg Shabbat FRIDAY To be announced.

Jewish Free University Begins MONDAY 29 -

> (Theater Party postponed until February watch for MRYC Annual Concert February 17)

WE'RE BACK! The Lincoln Square Synagogue Bulletin will be published at the beginning of each month from September until June. Articles and announcements are welcome and should be submitted to the Editor in care of the Synagogue office one month prior to publication.

> FIGURE DRAWINGS BY JOSHUA FALLIK, STILL LIFE AND PORTRAIT ARTIST, ENGLEWOOD, N.J.