Community Newsletter
May/June/July 2004        Iyar/Sivan/Tammuz 5764

Services:

Shavuot

Shabbat           Eve     Fridays @ 5.30 p.m.
                 Day     Saturdays @ 10.00 a.m.

Feast of weeksEve  Tuesday, May 25 (Sivan 5)
        Day     Wednesday, May 26 (Sivan 6)

Fast of Tammuz     Day     Tuesday, July 6 (Tammuz 17)

President’s comments:

Congratulations to all who helped to make the Seder a very outstanding occasion in our annual calendar this year, those who planned it, those who executed it and those who attended.

Please remember that your support is vital for the life of our congregation. Please try to attend at least one service each week. Those with children, please remember to support our religion school and the Star club activities. Both you and your children will reap the rewards of this effort.

Community Notes:

The Seder was a splendid occasion. It was held at the Terra Nova hotel and attended by over 120 persons. The children were well organised and participated fully in the service, a great opportunity and experience to enjoy being a part of our congregation. Congratulations to all who arranged the occasion.

Our congratulations to our recent converts and those returning to Judaism. May they add a richness and continuing awareness of our Jewish responsibilities to this historic congregation.

We continue to be inundated with requests from schools for tours to explain Judaism and to show the Synagogue as our place of worship. Stephen Henriques, Michael Matalon and Judy Bruce have been volunteering manfully to accommodate these requests. After the permanent exhibition which opens in May 2005 it may be necessary to provide a trained tour guide and make a small charge for each tour visit.

Deborah Galan-Stevens visited recently. She is one of the two daughters of Sammy and Jean Galan. Sammy was a past president of our congregation and a lay reader of our services.
Jennifer Lim hosted a gathering at her home recently and showed a move of a WIZO (Women’s International
Zionist Organization) visit to the death camps of Europe and to Israel. She has promised to show films of Jewish and Israeli interest on a regular basis so look out for more interesting afternoons. Please support her efforts.

The UJCL conference was held in Aruba in early May. Regretfully no one from our congregation was able to attend. To date there have been no reports emanating from the conference.

**Hillel Academy:**

The recently appointed Director of the Hillel Academy, Mrs. Sheila Purdom, reports that the first ever whole school production, a musical based on the biblical story of Joseph was a smashing success. It was a “technicolour Dreamcoat” with all participating to make it the success that it was. Congratulations to all who took part.

Dates to watch for are May 27 & 28 Inter - school track and field champs for Prep schools. Most importantly on May 28 there will be Parent Teacher Consultations. Then in June on the 23 and 24, Awards and Graduation ceremonies will take place. Best wishes for continued success to our 35 year old Prep, and our High School.

**Star Club:**

The Star Club continues to meet every Monday at Hillel between 3.30 p.m. and 4.30 p.m.

**350 Celebration:**

The planning for these celebrations, which will have a number of different components, are just beginning to gear up. They are expected to commence with the opening of the permanent exhibition on our origins, history, contributions to Jamaica and our religion. Then there will be a series of events planned to highlight aspects of these displays, Music, Art, Children and Religion.

The planning for the permanent exhibition at Duke Street is under way. A script for this exhibition has been prepared and items are now to be selected for display.

The music project is being done in two phases, the first is the transcription of the hand written music to CD. This will enable us to reproduce our music in written form as a compilation for each service with it’s appropriate music. The second is the concert being planned by a separate committee under the chairmanship of our Hazzan, Dr. Davidson.

Then we hope to mount an exhibition of art by Jamaican Jewish artists of yesteryear and today. Much of the art may be reproductions or facsimile images so that the originals stay with their owners reducing our costs for insurance and transportation. If you have such painting in your collection please let me know and we will work out how to photograph it for reproduction for the exhibition.

And there is more to be announced. Your ideas and your participation are both welcome and solicited.

**Jamaica Jewish Genealogical Society (JJGS):**

The president reports that more and more people of Jamaican Jewish origin keep turning up from email correspondence and in their search for roots. Two such recent persons were from California and Jerusalem, yes believe it or not.

Please try to attend what could be the most important International Association Jewish Genealogical Societies
conference in Jerusalem starting on July 4. The most important comes from the emphasis being placed for the first time on the genealogy of the Sephardim. It should be very interesting.

**Jewish Home:**

The Board of the United Congregation of Israelites has just appointed a Jewish Home Board to examine and to report on how best the physical facilities should be developed and used. This report is due within three months and is expected when implemented to increase significantly the revenue of the home. One aspect of the Board’s brief is security. In these troubled times we have to take more care, particularly of those who need to be assisted. The Board is being chaired by Maurice Stoppi and includes David Braham Judy Bruce, Mark Harris and Michael Matalon.

**Consulate of Israel Report: News:**

The Consulate continues to disseminate the opportunities offered for scholarships for professional course in Israel. The program for these courses is called the Mashav Training Courses. Graduates or Alumni of this program automatically become members of the Shalom Club. Hundreds of Jamaicans have participated in these courses. However the Shalom Club is not active at this time. If anyone wishes to know more about the program or the Shalom Club please contact the Honorary Consul.

**Family News:**

We regret to record the passing of Gloria Jacobson, nee Matalon and her elder sister Pauline Goodman in Miami recently. Our deepest sympathies go out to their families.

We also regret to record the passing of Lt. Colonel Hurley Whitehorne, who although not Jewish, attended many of our services with his wife Dorothea. Our deepest sympathies go out to his family.

Our prayers go out to all who are ill in our community, in particular Rachael Delevante, the daughter of Michael and Barbara Delevante in Mississauga, Canada. May they all be restored to health.

We are pleased to announce the birth of a son, Caleb Levi to Aron and Jodi Wohl. Aron’s parents came from England for the birth and attended our services.

We are pleased to record the blessing in Miami recently of the 7th great grandchild of Evelyn Matalon. She was blessed as Daniella Perera at a
sumptuous affair attended by family and friends.

We are happy to note the following birthdays without giving their ages, and celebrate with Hyacinth Davidson on the 1st of May, Lois Brandon on the 2nd, Wallace Campbell on the 4th, Sarah of Phillip and Mary Henriques on the 7th, Tony Lindo and Danielle Goodman on the 8th, Dennis Miller, Daniella’s grandfather on May 10th, Mark Harris and Robert de Souza on the 11th, Joan Matalon on the 12th, Danielle Eisen and Mary Henriques on the 16th, Phillip Henriques and Tracy Matalon on the 19th, Judy Bruce and Alex of Helena and Ronnie Haddad on the 21st, Douglas Reid on the 29th, Judy de Souza on the 30th. In June we celebrate with Tiffany Reid on the 6th, Diane Cooke and Michele Phillipps on the 13th, Jaime Mendel on the 15th, Nicola Clarke on the 19th and in July with Vernon Matalon on the 16th, Laura Chandley on the 23rd, Michael Delevante on the 30th.

Congratulations are in order for Ursula and Richard Ashenheim on the occasion of their 51st wedding anniversary on May 3. May they have many more happy years together.

**Sekel:**

In this tumultuous world today, issues get clouded over with sound byte reporting. It is a common view that many important issues do not get reported at all. An interesting recent report from the UN (United Nations) highlights a list of the 10 most under reported issues. These have been chosen from the opinions of their staff and from their agencies around the world, issues that have not been significantly mentioned by the Western Press.

It seems especially true for the media that is judged to focus on the sound byte reporting. In a sense we are lucky in Jamaica that we do have some reasonably in-depth and wide ranging media reporting in all three media, Newspapers, Radio and TV.

What are these issues? Some are the crises taking place or about to happen in Africa, in Asia and even at home in the Caribbean, AIDS for example. Others are the good news based on the adage that “no news is good news” hence “good news is no news” How true!

So what should we be looking for at this time? Of particular concern to us nationally is Education. And as this is being written the grading of schools has been published. How significant save that the private schools grading was not published and that would have included Hillel! Gone are the days of being able to absorb and perhaps even exploit cheap and under educated labour. The new world requires education, but not just book learning. It requires a rounded person, socialized and conscious of all around him or her. And how do we get there, is it only the state’s responsibility? In one sense it is theirs to create and enunciate the policies that will take us to the promised land but much of the effort and the resources will come from us, the people.

We in the Jamaican Jewish community can be proud of our commitments and achievements in education. No! It did not start with the Hillel Academy, but with “the Beth Limmud in March 1843 to teach Hebrew and English in connection with moral and religious instruction” (Andrade). By 1844 there were 42 students enrolled in the Day and Sunday schools. Hillel over the past 35 years has been exemplary and must blow its trumpet some more. Let us look at the Reading Rooms at the University of the West Indies and glory that these were designed and built and paid for by us and some of our members with help from our Canadian and US associates at that time. Yes we have made a difference but more, much more needs to be done. Perhaps by us and by our encouraging others to join us in this venture.

Peace will not come because we want it. It will come because we are willing to work towards it. We need to
make the sacrifices to bring all humanity up to a conscious level, a level of understanding where differences are accepted and respected. This is really the only way to prosperity and peace. Some of our businesses, in tourism and others, have made significant investments in training and we laud them. There is a much greater percentage of our population in tertiary educational institutions today. One only has to look at the enrolment in overseas programs to know that there is a sense across Jamaica towards self improvement. So let us go for it, facilitate it, nourish this sense. It is perhaps our road map to peace..

Special Report:

Our cemetery on Elleston Road has been brought back with a welcomed clean up after a number of years. We can now open the gate and see the graves. Thank you and we hope that the bush and grass will be kept under control.

The Falmouth cemetery is now being restored. The graves of the 19th century are being put back to their original state by the skills of Dr. James Parrent and his team from the Falmouth Restoration Company. They are collecting the pieces of the slabs and matching them properly. They are collecting the brick and replacing them using the original mortar mix. The results are quite spectacular. If anyone would like to have a copy of the last report please notify me and I will email it. A new one should be out as soon as we have received current photographs.