



The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter



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July-August 2010 • Tammuz–Av–Elul 5770

[Program](#)

Dear members, friends and supporters,

It's finally summer! The sunny days and warm evenings are perfect for family vacations, meeting friends and just relaxing. In July and August our congregational activities will be reduced, but there are still opportunities to come to shul and we hope to see you there.

A review of last month's activities will follow in these next few paragraphs, and we hope you enjoy reading about all we've done. We begin with a report written by Miriam und Gabriel Brückner, two youngsters from our religious school about a field trip in which they participated:

Mrs. Julia Berhovski took our youth group on a trip to Bremen. There we spent the day at the museum called "Universum." The museum was great. Every exhibit is interactive. We were able to do lots of experiments and felt like scientists for the day. There were three major areas: Cosmic world, the Earth, and Humans. We could measure our shadow or experience an earthquake. It was really great! The best part was being together and having so much fun. Even the train ride was fun! Thank you Julia!

The Senior Café invited the residents of St. Monika Nursing Home to spend an afternoon in our congregation. This enjoyable afternoon showed that integration knows no age limit. Vice president Polina Pelts said, "Rachel Dohme welcomed our guests and held a short lecture about our congregation and Jewish life. Many interesting questions were posed. Afterward everyone enjoyed refreshments, and a concert by our choir 'Shalom' rounded off the afternoon. Our guests and members enjoyed the afternoon and look forward to another opportunity to spend time together."

Board members Polina and Faina Pelts and Mr. Adolf Späth organized an excellent outing to the city of Höxter where they visited the Jacob Pins Museum. The group was given a guided tour of the works of this Jewish artist who was born in Höxter. Our members spontaneously gathered around a piano and gave an impromptu concert in a gesture of thanks. Mr. Späth had arranged for refreshments in the sunny garden terrace of a local café. After the long day, our members returned home, tired but happy. We look forward to hosting Mr. Späth and members of the museum association on Sunday, June 27, when they will visit Hamelin.



A bittersweet Friday night service was celebrated on June 4th as the congregation officially said goodbye to our religious school teacher, Lior. Rachel and Rebekka led services. Rebekka's lovely voice was accompanied by Faina on the piano. In a gesture of thanks for "his Jewish home," Lior gave the following sermon. We feel his words were so moving that we have decided to print them here:

"To everything there is a season
and a time for every deed under heaven."

I came to the community for the first time about nine years ago. I was already then very much interested in Judaism, and some time ago Polina reminded me of my first words: "I would like to convert."

It all began nine years ago. I began growing and maturing in and with Judaism. When Rabbi Shillor asked me after the giyur course why I wanted to convert, I did not have an answer.

I thought about it. All the answers I had given before no longer applied. In the end I found my answer: I cannot imagine my life without Judaism. I had found my home in Judaism—the home in which I am living and enjoying. I know



that this feeling comes from the Jewish Community of Hamelin. Every time I came to the community, I was greeted with open arms. I found friends and people who have shaped my life and gave it meaning.

Only recently I had a conversation with a friend who said, “But you don't have a Jewish family.”

I pondered, looked at him and said, “Yes, I do have a Jewish family—my community.” And it's true. The more I think about it, the more I know that my community is also my family. I have mothers (even though in the plural, but the more the merrier), grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins.

A family shapes a person, since it is usually the closest environment one has in childhood and teenage years. The community shaped me, coming to it the first time as a 15-year-old teenager, and standing here now as a 24-year-old student.

The community did not only shape my religion but also my wish for my career. When I began my *giyur* a couple of years ago I was certain that I wanted to become an English and Spanish teacher. But then I was asked if I would like to teach the children.

A big mistake or maybe a big opportunity? After the first session I already knew that I did not want to teach English and Spanish, but that I had found my real profession in community work. Just as I had grown in Judaism, I want to help children and teenagers to find their way in and with it. New perspectives were opened in my life through the community and especially thanks to Rabbi Irit Shillor and Rachel Dohme. I went to many seminars and conferences and learned a lot and met a lot of people.

Now I stand before an important step in my life. I will be going to Israel in a couple of weeks to study at the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem. I will continue my journey in and with Judaism—a journey that began here in the Jewish Community of Hamelin.

Hermann Hesse wrote: “And in every beginning there is something magical which protects us and helps us to live.”

My studies in Israel are a new beginning, something completely new, in which this magic dwells. But I ask myself if this magic only comes from the new beginning itself. I believe that the magic can only come to be if something comes to an end. And from this end the magic grows. My beginning grows from the foundation which I have found in this community.

I am very grateful for all your support, help and for belief in me. You helped me to find my way. Without our community, I would not have been granted this opportunity, which I am about to take and certainly would not be who I am today.

After these moving words there wasn't a dry eye in the sanctuary. Still we also managed to show Lior how much we he means to all of us. Congregational president Rachel Dohme presented him with a watch, which was engraved with the words “In love from JGH” and told him that while he was studying in Israel the watch was to remind him of all the hours he spent with his Jewish family in Hamelin. The parents and students presented him with a T-shirt they had made with the emblem of our religious school on it. More tears fell and the consolation was the hope of seeing Lior “back home” after his nine months of studies.





Our choir “Shalom” represents our congregation at many local events. They are our interreligious ambassadors. So it was that they were invited to perform at the opening of the city’s new Family Center in the Old City on June 12th. Hebrew songs filled the streets of Hamelin for all to enjoy.

In a very different vein, Rachel and Rebekka Dohme were invited to take part in a most unusual dedication ceremony. The invitation came from the Lutheran Church of Ith in nearby Bisporode. It had to do with two gravestones of Moses and Esther Spiegelberg. There had never been a Jewish cemetery in this small town although several Jewish families had lived there. The graves and stones had stood near the Christian cemetery. During the Kristallnacht on November 9, 1938, someone removed the stones and spared them from destruction. The great-great granddaughter of the

Spiegelbergs, Dr. Susan Comay of Vancouver, Canada, visited Bisporode last year and together with local historian Bernd Gelderblom, researched the family history. The result is an information plaque, dedicated next to the two gravestones, now erected in a special field of the town’s Christian cemetery. For their part and with the consent of Dr. Comay, Rachel read the translation of the Hebrew inscription, Rebekka sang “El Male Rachamin” and they recited Kaddish together. We were honored to support the family and stand for them there.



Our Internet Presence

Those of you reading this newsletter in English are reading the Internet version. The newsletter is also available in print form in [German](#) and [Russian](#) for members and supporters here in Germany. Many hours and many hands and heads go into producing this monthly informational newsletter. Keeping us online is no small expense for our small community of 90 percent Russian Jewish immigrants. We recognize the importance of this media tool in connecting and informing others of our congregational efforts and developments. This newsletter has been the most efficient and successful outreach tool in our attempts to network internationally. Many new relationships have been established and built as a result of this newsletter and we are grateful to all involved. If you would care to help us stay online, please contact Rachel Dohme at racheldohme@jghreform.org. We appreciate any and all support.

CD *Shabbat Melodies*

We are pleased that the CD has met with such positive reaction. The CD is selling for a contribution of \$25, and 100 percent of the money raised will go to our synagogue building fund. Please visit us online at www.jghreform.org and listen to an MP3 selection. It is also possible to download the CD liner notes in German and English.

We are thrilled that all 800 copies have been sold in Germany, England, and the U.S. We thank all those who have supported this project. We have just re-ordered and 300 CDs await happy listeners. Our vision was to share beautiful Shabbat music and help ourselves. Buying the CD affords one the performance of a double Mitzvah: contributing money to the building project and listening to Shabbat liturgy.

This CD makes the perfect gift for any occasion.



Synagogue building Progresses!

Our synagogue building progresses day by day. We can't say it better than *Dewezet* journalist Wolfhard F.Truchsess did in an article that appeared in our local paper.

The Cornerstone is laid: Roof-Raising Ceremony planned for August

By Wolfhard F. Truchsess

Dieter Vogelhuber concentrates as he places a slender copper time capsule between several bricks especially prepared for the ceremony. The cornerstone for the first newly constructed Reform Synagogue in post-Shoa Germany has been laid. "Today we lay the cornerstone for our new synagogue," said congregational president Rachel Dohme in her opening remarks. "This cornerstone is unique because it is the first stone. Many will follow, one by one, building our new home. We stand here today to rebuild a spiritual home for the Jews of Hamelin. Stone and mortar build a house; spirituality and love fill it."

The copper capsule contained the following items: Psalm 126, a declaration of gratitude, a list of the Foundation's sponsors and board members, a copy of the architect's plans, a copy of the Foundation's by-laws, a fundraising brochure, the title page of the daily newspaper, wishes written on slips of colored paper for the new synagogue from "Netzwerk Bünde" and former Jews from Bünde, a USB stick of the groundbreaking ceremony, and finally a small piece of charred brick, a relic from the destroyed Hamelin Synagogue. Gerd Scheunpflug concluded, "The Foundation wishes to express its gratitude to the founding sponsors, supporters, donors, and the citizens of Hamelin who encouraged us to work for the realization of this project."

Architects Peter Nasarek and Cedo Bojic are pleased with the project's progress and envision that the building's roof will be finished by mid-August.

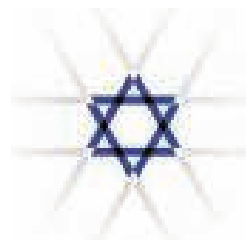


Farewell service for Rabbinical Student Natasha Lyskovoy

We will be celebrating a special farewell Erev Shabbat service on July 23rd for rabbinical student Natasha Lyskovoy. We are sorry to see Natasha go and have enjoyed having her with us this past Jewish year. Natasha will be accompanied by her husband and our honored guest, Rabbi Sascha Lyskovoy. We hope many of you will make a special effort to celebrate Natasha's farewell weekend with us. We wish Natasha the best of luck and continued success at Abraham Geiger Rabbinical Seminary.

Sixteenth annual Conference of the Union of Progressive Jews of Germany

The 16th annual conference of the UPJ will be held July 8–11 in Berlin. This year's theme is "Liberal Judaism Today." Fascinating and informative workshops and seminars will be offered by leaders and teachers from Germany and around the world. Moving services in Hebrew, German, and Russian will also be celebrated. New this year is a Music Festival, which will run parallel to the conference. Our synagogue choir "Shalom" will perform and we wish them the best of luck.



Jewish Culture in June

Things will be a lot quieter during the summer months as many members take advantage of the warm months and go on vacation. We extend an invitation to all our members and friends to the following cultural events which will take place in August. On Saturday, August 7, our synagogue choir "Shalom" and our Israeli Dance Group "Chag Sameach" will represent our community and Jewish life at this year's Cultural Festival, which will be held in Bad Münder. Besides the choir's musical

program and the performance of our dance troupe, we will offer information about our congregation and the building of the new synagogue.

On Wednesday, August 26, the Society of Christians and Jews are offering a day trip to the city of Braunschweig. We will take a walking city tour and visit the museum, synagogue, and cathedral. We will meet at the Hamelin train station at 8:30 a.m. The cost is 10 Euros. Mr. Hans-Georg Spangenberg and Mrs. Polina Pelts will lead the group. Register now for this interesting outing.

Mazel Tov

- We congratulate Julian David Dohme on his graduation from Albert Einstein Gymnasium. Julian will begin alternative military service in August working in the Home for Deaf and Blind.
- Congratulations to Malin Wendt on her graduation from Realschule in Lemgo. Malin will begin her studies at nursing school.
- We congratulate our former rabbinical student Adrian Shell on completing his year of studies in Israel and welcome him back home. We wish him continued success at Abraham Geiger Rabbinical Seminary.

Mazel Tov to you all!

Donations — Tzedaka

- We are grateful to the many people who continually support our work and our plans to build a new synagogue.
- We wish to thank each and every person and organization who has purchased our CD *Shabbat Melodies* in Germany, England, Israel, and America.
- We also wish to recognize and thank the following people for their contributions: Mr. and Mrs. Keijer, Friends of Progressive Judaism, Rachel Dohme, Dr. Laby, Mrs. Snyder, Mr. Gershmman, Mrs. Leavitt, Mrs. Ursula Japtok, Mrs. Thekla Khan, Mr. Wolfgang Giese, the Lutheran Reform Church of Hamelin-Pyrmont, and the Religion Teachers Seminar of Hamelin.
- We wish to recognize the very generous donation from Mrs. Elaine Spanier, Denver, Colorado. Mrs. Spanier has continually supported our congregation and building project since its inception. Her generosity is inspiring.
- We recognize an anonymous donor who also made a generous contribution for our synagogue project.

May all donors be blessed for their generosity.



Tree of Life — Etz Chayim

Who will contribute the next leaf? Each leaf not only adorns our sanctuary but also helps us raise funds for our synagogue. Leaves can be ordered through our office or by contacting Rachel Dohme or on this Web site: Tree of Life. Each leaf costs a minimum of \$100 (quadruple chai plus expenses). Please contribute a leaf and help us to build our synagogue!

A new leaf has been donated by Mrs. Bachmatchnikov:

“In memory of my parents Leiba and Lubov Stukmeister”

Thank you — Toda Raba

We appreciate and thank our community members who helped make our holidays, services and celebrations special. The homemade dishes were delicious and we thank everyone who helped with the planning, organization and implementation of our festivals.

There are so many regular activities offered in our congregation by congregants for congregants, and we are grateful for their hard work and dedication.

We thank the Maslovych and Bachmatchnikov families for creating a YouTube video of our groundbreaking ceremony, which can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewAVUmBYPTM.

Yahrzeit in July-August

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|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| Nataliya Zaychenko | July 1, 2003 / 1st Tammuz 5763 |
| Sergei Jevdokimov | July 21, 2008 / 18th Tammuz 5768 |
| Inge Dickmann | July 16, 2008 / 13th Tammuz 5768 |
| Ethel Lazer | August 16, 2009 / 26th Av 5769 |

May their memory be for a blessing. Please join family members during Sabbath services as we recite Kaddish. Yahrzeit candles are available in the office.

**Shalom and have a great summer,
Your Synagogue Board**

Program for July-August 2010 • Tammuz–Av–Elul 5770

Office hours: Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

Ms. Faina Pelts is on vacation the week of July 12th.

All courses will resume in September.

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| Tuesday, July 13 | 3:00 p.m. | Monthly board meeting |
| Friday, July 16 | 5:30 p.m. | Friday night services with Rachel and Rebekka Dohme |
| Friday, July 23 | 5:30 p.m. | Friday night services and Birthday Shabbat with Rabbinical student Natasha Lyskovoy. Honored guest: Rabbi Sascha Lyskovoy, Moscow |
| Saturday, July 24 | 10:00 a.m. | Saturday morning services and Torah Study with rabbinical student Natasha Lyskovoy. Honored Guest: Rabbi Sascha Lyskovoy, Moscow |
| Tuesday, August 3 | 3:00 p.m. | Monthly board meeting |
| Friday, August 6 | 5:30 p.m. | Friday night services with R. Dohme |
| Friday, August 20 | 5:30 p.m. | Friday night services with R. Dohme |

Außerhalb der Gemeinde

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|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Thursday–Sunday, July 8–11 | | 16th Annual Conference of the Union of Progressive Jews of Germany in Berlin/Spandau |
| Saturday, August 7 | 10:00 a.m.– 5:00 p.m. | “Cultural Festival” Bad Münde Performances from “Schalom” and “Chag Sameach” |
| Thursday, August 19 | 12:00 p.m.– 5:00p.m. | “Pied Piper of Hamelin” public reading Hamelin Mall Our members will read in their mother tongue |
| Thursday, August 26 | 8:30 a.m. | Society of Christians and Jews Hamelin Main Train Station Bus trip to Braunschweig City tour, Museum, visits to the Synagogue and Cathedral P. Pelts and H.-G. Spangenberg. €20,- / €10,- Organization: H.-G. Spangenberg and Polina Pelts |

Archived Newsletters:

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|-------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--|
| 2010: | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | | | | | | |
| 2009: | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul–Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | |
| 2008: | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul–Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | |
| 2007: | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul–Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | |
| 2006: | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul–Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | |
| 2005: | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul–Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | |
| 2004: | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul–Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | |
| 2003: | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul–Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | |
| 2002: | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun–Aug | | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | |
| 2001: | | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | |

Jewish Community of Hamelin

Member of the Union of Progressive Jews in Germany
Member of the World Union of Progressive Judaism
Member of the Central Council of Jews of Germany

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