



The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

January 2013 • Tevet–Shvat 5773

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Dear members, friends and supporters,

We wish all our readers a happy and healthy 2013!

Please remember to pay your annual membership dues. The congregation depends on everyone to pay promptly so that we can continue our work.

There's so much to look forward to in January, but first let's reflect on wonderful and meaningful moments in December. Traditional and historic would aptly describe the events in December.



The month was truly celebratory! December began with a very special anniversary. Lev and Dora Vinnytskyi decided to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary by renewing their vows under a Chuppah. Rabbi Shillor was only too happy to help out. Fifty years ago in Kiev, celebrating their marriage in a synagogue and under a Chuppah was impossible. Thanks to their immigration to Germany and their membership in our congregation, their wish to have a Jewish wedding was fulfilled. The witnesses, bride and groom signed the Ketuba, the marriage contract Rabbi Shillor had lovingly prepared in Hebrew, German and Russian. The Chuppah poles were held by the couple's daughter Eva and granddaughter Anna. Happily they stood under the Chuppah, on the Bimah in front of the Aron HaKodesch and heard the Seven Blessings. They exchanged vows and rings, and the wedding service ended as all Jewish weddings do, with the groom stomping a glass to shards. The sanctuary was filled with calls of "Mazel Tov" and applause, and the newlyweds invited everyone to feast on the meal prepared by Dora and Valerij Bogachick.



The congregation celebrated Chanukkah on the eve of the holiday, December 8th. The synagogue sparkled with all the Chanukkah decorations, some old, some new. Stars of David, cutouts of Chanukkiot, and Dreidels in a rainbow of colors decorated the walls and created a warm feeling and general happiness as the members filed in.

A short but meaningful service, woven with prayers, poems and songs, recited in Hebrew, German and Russian and led by many congregants added a homey touch. The children received gifts, and “Shalom” gave us all a present with a Chanukkah concert. With hearts and souls satisfied, we all gathered around the beautiful Chanukkah buffet table, prepared by Liubow and Lydmylla, and stilled our appetites with delicious homemade potato latkes and sugary sweet Sufganiot. Fruit and sweets complimented the traditional Chanukkah delicacies made in oil. Dreidel games, a Chanukkah quiz with prizes and good conversation rounded out the evening.

We met again on December 14th, the seventh Chanukkah candle for a most auspicious occasion. County Commissioner Rüdiger Butte presented Rachel Dohme the German Medal of Merit, which German President Joachim Gauck awarded her for her work in re-establishing Reform Judaism in Hamelin, for interreligious work and for building the first newly constructed Reform synagogue in post-war Germany. The Medal of Merit is Germany’s highest civilian honor. The ceremony took place in the synagogue and was embellished musically by the synagogue choir and soloist Rebekka Dohme.

Commissioner Butte, Chairwoman of the State Board of Jewish Communities in Lower Saxony, Katarina Seidler and Rabbi Irit Shillor greeted the members and guests. The sanctuary was filled to capacity with well-wishers. Rachel Dohme made the point that the award was given to her but owned by all the members and supporters who had worked tirelessly to achieve the goals of a religiously sound congregation and new synagogue. It was apparent that the members recognized their congregational chairwoman with love and appreciation for all she has done with and for them. Members approached the Bimah with gifts of flowers spontaneously, and there were many moments during the laudations that were interrupted by applause. In her speech of thanks, Rachel Dohme recalled the congregation’s spiritual journey, the large and small miracles, so fitting at Chanukkah time, and everyone who helped along the way. She mentioned her staunchest supporters, her family, and they received thundering applause, especially as she noted, “I wish to especially thank my husband, Ferdinand, the most courageous man in the world, who, in quiet modesty, did so much for our congregation and the synagogue project.”

Dohme summarized the wonder of the community’s establishment with a twinkle in her eye as she said, “Who would have ever thought that an American Jewess would move to Hamelin and meet a Jewish woman from Odessa, Ukraine, Polina Pelts, and establish a Jewish congregation with Jews from the FSU?”

In conclusion she said, “I accept this award in deep humility, absolutely convinced that it belongs to all of us. I see it as a symbol of courage, faith and trust.”

The celebration in our synagogue brought many people of different backgrounds together, some of whom had traveled a distance to share the evening’s joy. Many congratulatory letters and cards were received, the following words from one of them:

“Rachel, your enthusiasm and honest dedication to Judaism is evident to all. You have helped to provide many people with a spiritual home and that in a historic site. They have taken ownership and made it their home and so the history of the Jews of Hamelin continues.”

We hope you will enjoy looking at the pictures on the next page.



The Union of Progressive Jews of Germany

The Winter-Machane took place from 12.23.2012 till 12.30.2012. The group of fifty children and youth spent eight days in the beautiful Harz Mountains (Bad Sachsa). Fun and learning and just being together made for a great week.

Pictures are available on the Web site of our Youth Department: www.upj-netzer.de.

New Year’s Reception

Let’s get together to welcome 2013. Join us on January 8th for a New Year’s Reception. There will be good music and food, an entertaining program and the chance to catch up with friends and neighbors. Faina Pelts and her team are organizing the evening.



Treasury Time

We are now introducing specific days of Tuesday and Thursdays for members to speak to the congregational treasurer. On these days members will be able to meet with our Treasurer Mrs. Olga Gerr to transact matters concerning membership fees, orders, shopping disbursement, bills and receipts or other paybacks. We hope this will make our work more efficient.

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. And 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@ighreform.org. We appreciate any and all support.

Jewish January

Please join us on January 25th as we celebrate our annual congregational Tu B'Shevat Seder. Rabbi Assessor Adrian Schell will lead our Seder for the "New Year of the Trees." Our Seder celebrates the "first fruits," and we will taste fruits and nuts, juices and wine together as we recall this beautiful tradition, which has its origins in the 16th century. The Torah teaches us that we are akin to a "tree in the field" held by our roots and yearning toward the heavens. We seek to understand our relationship with God and its meaning. Similar to a tree, we hope our lives leave something of value behind. A tree is a sign of life and hope, and it is our hope that a peaceful solution can be found in Israel and that everyone can enjoy peace and security within its borders.

January 27th is international Holocaust Remembrance Day and recalls the liberation of the concentration camp in Auschwitz in 1945 by Soviet troops. At 7:00 p.m. the city of Hamelin will remember the victims of the Holocaust with a presentation of Anja Tuckermann's biography of Hugo Höllermann.



Interreligious Work

Our congregation has enjoyed years of cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews. Congregational president Rachel Dohme has been a member of the board for years, and our congregation and many congregants are members in good standing. The series "Let's Talk" has helped many Hamelin citizens to gain a closer look and better understanding of our Reform Jewish religious and cultural practices. We have often hosted or co-sponsored events of the Society. As Reform Jews we reach out to our non-Jewish friends and neighbors, meeting in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance, and we open the doors of our synagogue for discussion. We feel our conscious interreligious and intercultural work has built bridges of understanding between our community and our local population.

On January 17th we will co-host a fascinating podium discussion between two female religious leaders. Rabbi Irit Shillor and Pastor Christine Brendel will address with us and each other the theological question of how we pray. Both women hope for an active audience and hope the discussion will enrich all in attendance. It is certain to be a stimulating evening and we welcome everyone to take part.

Our congregation has also been a sponsor of the Hamelin cultural series "Hamelner Forum" for many years. This year we are helping to sponsor the Holocaust Remembrance Day program on Sunday, January 27th. Anja Tuckermann will present the biography of Hugo Höllermann at 7:00 p.m. in the Weserberglandzentrum. The evening performance is open to the public and free of charge.

Russian Consul

We will host a visit from the Russian consul to benefit our members who still hold Russian passports. There will be an informational meeting on January 14th and the consul will visit on January 22nd.

New Youth Group — Netzer Hamelin

Rabbi Assessor Adrian Schell will offer a regular get together for teens. Netzer Hamelin will meet once a month, and the teens and Adrian will plan the activities. Don't miss it!

Mazel Tov

We extend our wishes of Mazel Tov to our congregational president, Mrs. Rachel Dohme, upon receiving the German Medal of Merit.

Mazel Tov to Joshua Wendt on his swearing-in ceremony in the German Armed Forces.

Mazel Tov to Alexander Gerr for winning 3rd place in the city-wide children's chess tournament.

We congratulate our sister congregation in Elmshorn on their new rooms.

Refu'ah shlemah

We pray for the complete recovery of all who are ill, and for everyone who is going through difficult times. We will recite Misheberach for them during services, and will be with you in our thoughts and prayers.



Donations — Tzedakah

We thank the following people and organizations for supporting our community life and the synagogue construction with generous donations: Mr. Adolf Späth, Mr. and Mrs. Vinnytskyi, Polina und Faina Pelts, Pelts and Golberg family, Lampe family, Söhlke family, Mr. Freddy Klingemann, Mr. and Mrs. Schultz, Dr. Sally Lipsky, as well as Mr. Hans Weltner, Mrs. Rachel Dohme and, as always, thank you to Mrs. Ute Gibas.

May you all be blessed for your generosity.

Etz Chayim — Tree of Life

Winter is upon us. The wind is cold, the sky gray and the trees are bare. But inside our synagogue we hope to continue adding leaves to our tree and you can help! You can donate a leaf with an engraving in memory of special events, such as a birth, Bar or Bat Mitzwa, wedding, or other memorable occasions. Your donation contributes to the maintenance of the synagogue. Forms are available in our office. Thank you!

Newly added were:

- For Rachel with love, from the Jacobsberg family
- Best wishes to Family Schwartzkopff from the Holz and Schor families

Newly ordered were:

- Happy 75th birthday Dora Vinnytska from Lev Vinnytskyi
- Our Golden Wedding Anniversary from Vinnytskyi Family
- Todah Rabah In honor of Rachel Dohme from Polina and Faina
- Happy Birthday Leah Golberg from Opa, Oma and Uroma
- In Honor of Rachel Dohme, awarded the German Medal of Merit

Thank you — Todah Rabah

Rachel Dohme wishes to thank everyone who made her award ceremony so memorable.

We thank everyone who helps in making our holidays and cultural events very special. Our thanks go to everyone who plans and organizes activities in our community. All the regular group activities, led by volunteers, contribute to our community life. We appreciate your commitment.

Condolences

We express our deepest sympathy to Professor Dr. Rabbi Walter Jacob, President of the Abraham Geiger College on the death of his beloved wife, Irene Jacob, of blessed memory.

We express our condolences to all the families who lost family members in the Newtown elementary school tragedy.

We express our condolences to the family of Milja Golberg, of blessed memory.

Yahrzeit in January

Chaja-Rahel Kruchkovitch — January 29, 2003 / 26. Schwat 5763

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



We wish everyone a Happy 2013! ♪ Shalom! —The Congregation Board

Program for January 2013 • Tevet–Shvat 5773

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

Thursday, January 3	1:00 p.m.	Monthly Board meeting
Monday, January 7	12:00 noon	“Judaism”: a course in Russian with W. Pesok, Tu B’Shvat
Tuesday, January 8	3:00 p.m.	Congregational New Year’s Reception, 8 Euros
Saturday, January 12	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with F. Pelts and H. Braun
Monday, January 14	10:00 a.m.	Informational Meeting: Russian Pensions
Wednesday, January 15	11:00 a.m.	Russian Book Club with A. Konstantinova
Thursday, January 17		Rabbi Irit Shillor’s monthly visit
	4:00 p.m.	“Rabbi’s Table” Topic: Bar/Bat Mitzvah — Questions and Answers
	7:00 p.m.	In cooperation with the Society of Christians and Jews, Podium Discussion: “How we pray” with Rabbi Irit Shillor and Pastor Christine Brendel in our sanctuary
Friday, January 18	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services with Rabbi Shillor
Saturday, January 19	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with Rabbi Shillor
Tuesday, January 22	12:00 noon	Russian Consul’s visit
Thursday, January 24		Rabbi Assessor Adrian Schell’s monthly visit
	3:00 p.m.	“Rabbi’s Table” Topic: Minor Jewish Holidays—Questions and Answers
Friday, January 25	4:30 p.m.	Bar Mitzvah class
	5:30 p.m.	Tu B’Shvat Seder
Saturday, January 26	10:00 a.m.	Shacharit services and Torah study with A. Schell
	1:00 p.m.	Bar Mitzvah class
	2:00 p.m.	NEW: Netzer Hamelin Youth group with Adrian
Sunday, January 27	3:00 p.m.	Young and Jewish group with Marysol Fischer
Outside the congregation		
Sunday, January 27	7:00 p.m.	Hameln Forum: Holocaust Remembrance Day Weserberglandzentrum, Hamelin

[Newsletter Archives](#)

Jewish Community of Hamelin

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

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