



# The Jewish Community of Hamelin Newsletter

April 2014 • Adar II–Nissan 5774

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**Dear members, friends and supporters,**

**Please remember to pay your annual membership dues. The congregation depends on everyone to pay promptly to enable us to continue our work.**

It's finally spring! The first flowers have pushed their way up and out of the garden soil, the trees are in bud and sprinkled with blossoms of pink, white and yellow, and the birds have begun to serenade everything out of its winter sleep. It's the perfect scenario for our Festival of Freedom-Pesach.

Let's review our congregational events in March.

Our Israeli dance group "Chag Sameach" has been led by Boris Markhaseev for many years. Mr. Markhaseev volunteers his services to all who have an interest and love of dancing. Their last performance included Israeli and Jewish folkdances and set the stage for an enjoyable afternoon for the seniors of our congregation. The dancers were showered with grateful applause and, with a minimal amount of encouragement, the seniors joined in. Soon everyone was up and involved, laughing and dancing together. A sweet table was provided, and the afternoon ended with cookies and conversation. We thank Boris Markhaseev and Polina Pelts for organizing the afternoon program.

We were thrilled and honored to host Harold Brown from Sydney, Australia for a week in early March. Due to health concerns his wife, Eva, could not accompany him on this trip. Harold is the husband of Eva Kratzenstein Brown, the granddaughter of Dr. Siegmund Kratzenstein of Hamelin. Dr. Kratzenstein was the last president of the Jewish Congregation of Hamelin until the Nazis came to power and destroyed the synagogue and community. The Browns visited us in 2009 and took part in a benefit concert on November 9th, which was organized to raise money for the building of the synagogue. Can you imagine his emotions as he set foot in our beautiful new house of worship? This and many other moments during his visit were very moving, and we feel blessed to have been the vessel.

The week began with a reception in the Court House hosted by assistant mayor, Mrs. Slyke Keil, of the CDU party. It was a friendly meeting over coffee, but Harold Brown did not forego the opportunity to emphatically express his family's rejection of the laying of "stumbling blocks" in front of Dr. Kratzenstein's former home and office. He joins our congregation in the opinion that the "Stolpersteine," as they are called in German, are not a dignified way to honor the victims of the Holocaust. The stones, engraved with the names of the murdered, are set in the sidewalk. Naturally people not only "stumble" over them but walk on the names, dirt and litter builds up on them, and animals defecate on them. For many Jews this form of remembrance is offensive—especially in the city of Hamelin where similar-sized stones with rats on them show tourists points of interest.

A very positive and meaningful encounter took place with an 11th grade class from the Business High School. Harold told the fascinated students about his long and eventful life, and the students wanted to hear his story. It was especially moving when the students presented Harold with a "leaf" for our Tree of Life. Harold was so touched, he couldn't hold back the tears, to which the students responded with loving hugs. What better way to educate and to heal than this!

The next evening he was interviewed by members of the Society of Christians and Jews, Daria Leuthier and Niklas Delp, in our synagogue. It was a fascinating evening with a fascinating octogenarian. We thank local journalist, Wolfhard Truchseß, for an excellent article which appeared in the daily Hamelin paper and which can be read at length on our Homepage.





The day was warm and sunny-perfect for celebrating International Women's Day, Faina Pelts welcoming everyone in our sanctuary on Sunday afternoon, March 9th. Each of the lovely ladies was given a red carnation and in honor of the day and a concert performed by students of the student's ensemble of Viktoria-Luise high school rounded the afternoon out. We thank these young people and their teachers for making the day special. It was evident that both musicians and audience shared an appreciation for music. Let's hope this is the beginning of a tradition!

The concert concluded with a glass of bubbly and hand-dipped chocolates. Thanks to Faina for organizing the program.



The second meeting of the Interreligious Women's Group continued with this year's theme on Food and Religion. Thirty Muslim, Christian and Jewish women took a seat at the table in our Kiddush room to learn about the laws of Kashrut, explained by Ioulia Berhowski and were led through the Jewish year by Rachel Dohme, who explained what traditional foods we eat when and why. There were many questions and homemade food to sample. The relaxed atmosphere encouraged women of different religious and cultural backgrounds to come together in friendship and understanding. We believe that programs such as this promote respect and tolerance, a basic principal of Reform Judaism. We thank Mrs. Liubow Pesina and Mrs. Feana Engler for preparing the dishes.

The annual membership meeting of the Society of Christians and Jews was especially interesting this year because after the business meeting concluded, Rabbi Adrian Schell and Deacon Hans-Georg Spangenberg spoke about "Purim and Carnival—Differences and Similarities." We were pleased to host the evening and have the opportunity to expand our knowledge about these two holidays.

On Friday morning, March 14th, Polina Pelts magically transformed our synagogue kitchen into a Hamentaschen bakery. Polina was assisted by Tamara Ovsievykh, Larisa Dvortsis, Ioulia Berhowski, Nadja Artamonova, Berta Fridman, Feana Engler, Inna Lyubich, Claudia Fischer, Olga Gerr, Irina Grach (and Rabbi Adrian), all of whom mixed, kneaded, rolled out, stuffed and baked the traditional three-cornered, poppy seed Purim cookies. The smell of sweetness permeated the air throughout the day and welcomed those who attended Friday night services.

On Saturday afternoon, Patrizia Berhowski had prepared an afternoon of Purim fun for the youngsters, and several hours later the sanctuary filled with members anticipating an Erev Purim celebration with Rabbi Adrian. Princesses, cowboys, Spiderman, harem dancers, Spanish dancers and everything in between settled into their chairs as we recounted the Book of Esther (Megilla Esther) in Hebrew, German and Russian. With graggers in hand we drowned out the name of the villain Haman. Valerij Bogatchyk had organized two Purim films in Russian, which were understood by everyone. It was a wonderful holiday celebration.

Enjoy the pictures taken by Adrian and Chayim!





Our annual membership meeting was held on March 23rd. We began with a hearty “L’Chayim” for our synagogue’s third birthday. The business meeting was well attended and included a report from each board member in addition to the president’s report of annual activities and a detailed treasurer’s report. Questions were posed and answered. Each board member was thanked for their work with applause and a flowering plant and chocolates from our congregational president. The board members presented our president with a beautiful bouquet of spring flowers with thanks for her hard work for the congregation. We thank Mrs. Heidi Braun for once again writing the meeting minutes, which will be available in our synagogue office.

## Jewish April



It’s April and that means Pesach. The synagogue will be scrubbed clean and shiny and rid of Chametz in preparation for the festival week. Please remember not to bring any food into the synagogue from April 14th to April 22nd that is not kosher l’Pesach. Wine, Matzah and other Pesach products can be purchased in our synagogue. Stop by and stock up on your Passover needs.

Our congregational Seder will commence on Monday, April 14th at 5:30, and will be led by Rabbi Adrian. We will observe a traditional Seder, sitting as a family for the fourth time in our new building. We are proud to be one of the only congregations in Germany that does not charge its members for the Seder and Pesach meal. The organization and planning is immense, and we are thankful that we can celebrate the holiday together.

**We wish all our members and friends a kosher Pesach!**

The month will end on a solemn note as we observe Yom HaShoah on Monday, April 28th. Almost all of us have lost relatives in the Holocaust. Please join us at 5:00 p.m. for a short memorial service, the kindling of six yellow candles in memory of the Six Million and the recitation of the names of the murdered Hamelin Jews. We will never forget!

*“The silence of the Six Million. The silence of the Others. The silence of Remembrance. Let us honor them.”*

## 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@jghreform.org](mailto:racheldohme@jghreform.org). We appreciate any and all support.

## Klezmer Concert in April

We invite members, neighbors and friends to attend a fabulous Klezmer concert on Sunday, April 6th at 3:00 p.m. in our synagogue. Our musical guests are the “Klezmer Tunes” from Cologne. The concert is supported by the Central Council of Jews of Germany and is open to the public. The concert is free of charge, but we welcome contributions which will go to our synagogue fund.

## Grants

We thank the Central Council of Jews of Germany and “Aktion Mensch” for help and support through two grants we applied for. One grant will address the needs of our older congregants while the other will support our congregational choir “Shalom.”

## Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to Ingrid Wettberg, Hannover, and Klara Benke, Bad Pyrmont, on being re-elected to presidents of their liberal congregations. We congratulate them and their synagogue boards.

Do you have Naches to share? Let us know and we’ll print it in next month’s newsletter for all to see!

## Refu’ah shlemah

We pray for the complete recovery of all who are ill, and everyone who is going through difficult times. We will recite Misheberach for them during services.





### Donations — Tzedakah

We thank the following for their contributions to our congregation or our synagogue fund: Mrs. Westphal and Mrs. Lindert and the 7th grade of the Emmerthal Middle School, Pastor Christiane Brendel and the Lutheran church county conference, Hameln-Pyrmont, Mrs. Spangenberger and the 11B class of the Hameln Business High School, Mr. Paschwitz und the CDU Seniors, Mr. Gorkow, VHS Hameln, Mr. Musch and the Lutheran men's group Tündern, Mrs. Lehrke and the 7th grade of the Theodor-Heuss Middle School, Mrs. Klein and three church confirmation groups, Bodenwerder, Mr. Schnell, Mr. Wolandowitsch, Mr. Frenschock, Mr. Drejzer and Mrs. Heidi Braun.

We thank Mr. Hans Weltner, Mrs. Rachel Dohme and Mrs. Uta Gibas for their monthly contributions.

We thank the Krasa-Meschede family from America for Purim graggers.

We were touched to receive a donation from Harold and Eva (Kratzenstein) Brown, Australia.

May you all be blessed for your generosity.

### Etz Chayim — Tree of Life

Spring has sprung and our tree has added a new leaf. Please do your part and help a few more grow! The tree offers our members, friends and supporters the opportunity for two mitzvot (good deeds) at once. One can commemorate special occasions, such as births, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, weddings, Yahrzeits and special honors and also support the maintenance of our synagogue.

A new leaf was donated: "In memory of the Yahrzeit of Alla Drejzer from her husband, children and grandchildren"

### Thank you — Todah Rabah

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.

### Yahrzeit in April

Tetyana Khodos	April 4, 1998 / 8. Nisan 5758
Anna Pototcaia	April 11, 2000 / 6. Nisan 5760
Eugenia Borishanskai	April 26, 2004 / 5. Ijar 5764
Boris Frid	April 28, 2011 / 24. Nissan 5771
Juriy Lebedinskiy	April 4, 2012 / 10. Nissan 5772
Alex Voronov	April 4, 2012 / 18. Nissan 5772

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.

**Shalom!**  
**The Congregation Board**



[Newsletter Archives](#)

## Program for April 2014 • Adar II–Nissan 5774

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

Tuesday, April 1	10:00 a.m.	Monthly Board Meeting
Saturday, April 5	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services & Torah study with F. Pelts & S. Koudinov
Sunday, April 6	3:00 p.m.	CONCERT: “Klezmer Tunes,” Cologne Sponsored by the Central Council of Jews in Germany
Monday, April 7	12 noon	“Judaism,” a course in Russian with W. Pesok

### **Rabbi Adrian Schell’s monthly visit**

Friday, April 11	10:00 a.m.	Rabbi’s office hours
	4:00 p.m.	<b>NEW!</b> Judaism from A to Z with Rabbi Adrian
	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services with Rabbi Adrian
Saturday, April 12	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with Rabbi Adrian
	2:00 p.m.	<b>NETZER</b> Hameln with Rabbi Adrian
Monday, April 14	5:30 p.m.	<b>Congregational Pesach Seder</b> with Rabbi Adrian
Tuesday, April 15	11:00 a.m.	<b>NEW!</b> “Breakfast Club” with P. Pelts Speaker: M. Olvovska, The works of J. Mandelstamm Sponsored by AKTION MENSCH
Saturday, April 19	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with F. Pelts & P. Wendt
Sunday, April 20	3:00 p.m.	Concert: “Russian Folksongs” with Larissa Bellgardt

### **Rabbi Irit Shillor’s monthly visit**

Friday, April 25	4:00 p.m.	<b>NEW!</b> Let’s study Talmud
	5:30 p.m.	Friday night services with Rabbi Irit Shillor
Saturday, April 26	10:00 a.m.	Saturday morning services and Torah study with Rabbi Irit
Monday, April 28	5:00 p.m.	Yom HaShoah Memorial services Reading of the names of the Hamelin victims of the Holocaust

**We wish everyone a kosher Pesach!**

### **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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