

# The Menorah

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## **Ben Alexander Awarded an OAM in June 2009**



By Hynda Feldman

The North Eastern Jewish Centre's founding member, Ben Alexander was awarded an OAM in this years 2009 Queen's Birthday Honour's List.

Ben was honoured with a Special Kiddush on June 13th. In his address to the congregation, Ben explained how the founding committee wanted to build a Jewish centre that could provide from 'the womb to the tomb' and that is exactly what they did. In days gone by, there were around 30 activities a week being held at the Centre, ranging from playgroups to sports groups to Friendship Club.

For Ben, who was the architect for the Centre, coming to the Centre is like 'coming home' and that is what it should be like for all our Centre members. Ben is still heavily involved in the Centre and recently redesigned the Meat kitchen.

Together with his wife, Betty and daughters Angela, Georgina and Marita, sons-in-law and grandchildren, the Alexanders are a vital part of the community.

Ben has been a founding member of the Manningham Interfaith Network, working to break down the barriers between people of different religions.



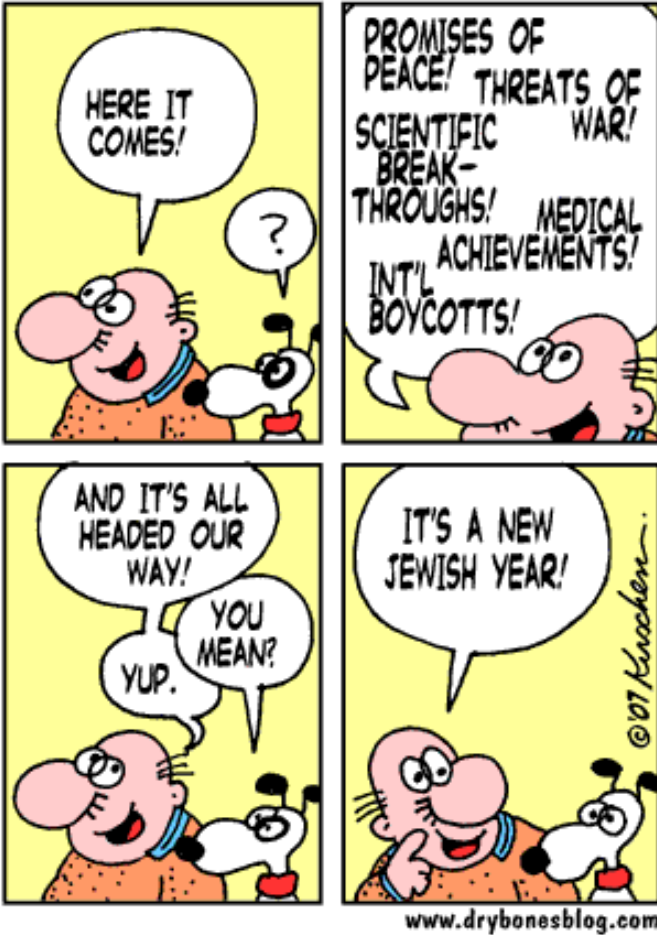
**Sheila Allen and Mary Hirsch at the  
NEJC catered Fox's L'Chaim  
More photo's inside.**



Past president of the Centre Peter King  
Mrs Tammy and PM Malcolm Fraser,  
Ben Alexander with Rabbi Ellis Sultanik  
at the opening of the Centre.

# Dry Bones

MR. SHULDIG AND HIS DOG DOOBIE



## 2010 BAT MITZVAH PROGRAM

The North Eastern Jewish Centre is planning a Bat Mitzvah program for 2010 culminating in a Bat Mitzvah ceremony towards the end of the year. Any girls who are currently 12 years old or will be turning 12 in 2010 and would like to participate in the program, are requested to please inform the office or contact Rebbetzin Sara directly at [saraglasman@yahoo.com.au](mailto:saraglasman@yahoo.com.au)



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## FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

If you enjoy food, lots of laughter and playing cards then come to the North Eastern Jewish Centre Friendship Circle.

Visit us every second Wednesday from 10.30am - 1.30pm and join in the fun.

Please call the office on 9816 3516 on Tuesday if you require a lift to these meetings.

We also offer a warm helping hand to all community members - everyone is a friend, tea is always ready and light lunch is provided.

We wish you all a Shanah Tova and well over the Fast.

We look forward to meeting you at our next Friendship Circle.



# *President's Report*

## **President's Report**

We have a Centre, we have a warm and wonderful shul, we have a dynamic Rabbi and Rebbitzin, we have an assortment of other buildings, but all this is meaningless without you, the members, to fill it.

During Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, which are fast approaching, the services will be well attended and the Shul will be packed on Yom Kippur, Kol Nidre night. But what is your commitment to follow up and attend the regular Shabbat Friday night and Saturday morning services together with the other Chagim?

We are indeed fortunate to have a dedicated group of women and men congregants who come to the weekly morning Shacharit services, who come to the minyanim for a yartzeit, and who come to shul over Shabbat. Without their commitment we would be unable to function. We are indeed blessed to have congregants who participate in these services.

I am personally asking every one of you to make an extra effort this year to come to shul on a more regular basis. I am realistic to know that it won't be every week, but perhaps once a month or more often if possible. This will support the shabbat minyanim. Your participation will ensure continuity and enhance our services.

Security has always been an important aspect at the Centre and we should be constantly aware of the need to be vigilant and request that our members do their utmost to assist as well. What can you do?

You can help by:

- Ensuring that the door is properly closed when you leave the building by "testing" to see that the catch has engaged.
- Make sure that the main gates are closed if you are the last to leave.
- Do not leave bags or parcels lying around unattended.
- Advise the office when you have a meeting at the centre Advise the office if you are meeting non members, tradesmen etc.
- Most important – DO NOT congregate outside after the conclusion of the services.
- Please cooperate with the security team. They are trained and know best.

On behalf of myself and the Board of Management we wish you all Shanah Tova and well over the Fast and may this coming year bring a lasting peace in Israel and to us all

Milton Shenker  
President



## *Rabbi's Report*

The past several months have seen much activity at the North Eastern Jewish Centre thanks to the ongoing involvement and support of a dedicated team of committee members. The Board of Management have aided Rebbetzin Sara and me in continuing to provide the fantastic social, religious and educational services to the many valued members of our community.

During the period of counting the Sefirah in May, traditionally a time of communal mourning between Pesach and Shavuot, we celebrated Lag B'omer (the day the students of Rabbi Akiva's Talmudic Academy stopped dying). A barbeque was held at the shul in what has now become a yearly tradition. The food was absolutely fantastic thanks to Rebbetzin Sara, and the bonfire, music and singing made it a truly memorable experience.

In late May, the community celebrated Shavuot - the day when G-d gave us the Torah and we first became a nation. The event was marked with a delicious Shavuot Dinner which was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended. Much thanks to those who volunteered to help in the kitchen. Following the meal we enjoyed a series of stimulating shiurim and talks about issues such as Science vs Religion, Interfaith Dialogue according to Jewish Law, and learned of some fascinating insights into various prayers including the Shema and Brich Shmay – the prayer recited prior to taking out the Torah from the ark. Thank you to those who prepared these wonderful talks.

The weekly Monday night classes have been going for over a year now and are relatively well attended, although Jewish adult education is something I would warmly encourage more members of the community to consider participating in. The classes are highly interactive, and are open to men and women. Classes cover insights into the weekly Torah portion and fascinating explanations on Jewish ethics.

The website continues to be updated each week, including a short weekly Rabbi's Video providing some food for thought on current affairs and their relationship to the weekly parshah. Members may subscribe to have the weekly video emailed to them directly each Thursday. Any members who'd like to provide feedback about our website are encouraged to do so. You may also wish to suggest ideas for new features that may be of interest.

Shul attendance on Saturday mornings has been better in the past. There are many programs and activities in which members of the community can and do participate, be they social or educational, but Shul attendance is one area where I'd love to see improvement. Those who choose to attend, whether regularly or from time to time, can attest to the exceptionally high quality of the Kiddush we enjoy after the service each week (not that this is why people come to shul, of course).

I would like to thank my wife, Rebbetzin Sara, for her continued and ongoing support of my work and for organizing our weekly Playgroup sessions at the Centre as well as our six-weekly Women's Circle events. Finally, I'd like to thank the Board of Management for the wonderful work they do in ensuring the smooth running of our Centre so that all members of our community can continually enjoy their involvement with the NEJC.

# Upcoming Events at the NEJC

## September

6th September-"The Case for Israel" Movie Night.  
12th - Cholent Shabbos  
13th - Women's Circle - Rosh Hashanah Gift Cards

## October

11th—Simchat Torah Lunch  
14th - Friendship Circle  
25th - Women's Circle- Sausage Sizzle  
28th - Friendship Circle

## November

11th - Friendship Circle  
14th - Cholent Shabbos  
25th - Friendship Circle

## December

9th - Friendship Circle  
12th - Cholent Shabbos

**Friendship Circle recommences  
3rd February 2010**

## On-Going Events

### Shiurim

Rabbi Glasman holds regular Monday night Shiurim at the North Eastern Jewish Centre.

**7:30– 8:15 pm** is a shiur on the Torah portion with commentaries.

**8:15-9:00 pm** is a shiur on Pirkei Avot - Jewish Ethics. These are both ongoing.

### Betar

Betar runs activities for our Youth every Sunday from 2:00pm - 4:00pm at the Centre.

Betar also runs Leadership Courses for Yr 10's. For more information about Betar please contact Eytan Epstein on 0414 541 637.

## Vale John Brustman

Our community was deeply saddened to hear of the passing of John Brustman when he lost his bravely fought battle with cancer, aged only 65. John and Helen OAM (Helsie) were key figures in our community and particularly at our Centre during the 70's and 80's. Helsie was President of NEJWMC for many years.

John was a gentle soul, who was involved with the AJAX Amateur Football Club, having served as a committee member for more than 40 years. He held every role bar President, because, as was mentioned at his funeral, 'the other roles did all the work'. He was honoured - as a Life Member of the football association earlier this year.

John's funeral was one of the largest held at the Springvale Cemetery, with people from all walks of life paying their respects to John and

supporting Helsie, John's mother and his sister. There were many familiar faces from our Centre, both past and present congregants.

The photo below was taken in happier times - at Helsie's OAM presentation last year. May we all remember John as the happy, good humoured person pictured below, respected by all and loved by so many. Our Community joins together in expressing our heartfelt condolences to Helsie and John's family.



## FOR SALE (Price Negotiable)

- Complete set, perfect condition  
"Encyclopaedia Judaica" publ. 1972
- 16 volumes incl Index
  - 8 vols Year Books 1973 to 1991
  - 2 Decennial vols 1973-82; 1983-92

Contact Beverley 9882 2600



## NOTIFICATION OF EVENTS AT THE CENTRE

For those people that **DO NOT** have email and would like to be informed of Events at the Centre, please contact Elaine at the Office on 9816 3516 to be put on a Special Mail Out List.

## UJEB REPORT

By Grace Schwartz  
(Teacher)

The teachers and students at UJEB at the North Eastern have been very busy over the last few months. With many of the forthcoming Sundays taken up with the yamim noraim we have had to cram a lot of learning in before our extended break.

We'll be back on Sunday the 18th of October for business as usual including studies of tefilla, ivrit, torah, holidays and traditions jazzed up with games, arts and crafts, music, cooking and making new friends.

We currently have 3 classes that are run at the Centre on Sunday mornings for 3 hours (9.30 am – 12.30 pm) for all primary school aged children. For more information call Esther Raitman on 9525 9016.



### NEJC Women's Circle – 2009

March 15

#### Sushi - Food Safari Style

Sushi. Whether you love it or hate it - it's great to know how to make it. A sushi expert starred on the "Food Safari Show" presents sushi-making demonstrations to a wide range of audiences across Melbourne. Join Batya as she guides you through a step by step demonstration on how to make two kinds of mouth watering sushi that will keep your guests coming back for more!  
Cost: \$5

Past event



May 24

#### Personal Reflections of a Cultbusher

Cults and other addictions can be a worst nightmare and we all know what can happen to us - but it does. Raphael, Director of the Gateway Family Centre, is a key figure in the field both locally and internationally. He has been sought after speaker on many occasions. Other addictions. Raphael's previous books: "Cults: Too Good to be True" - Harper Collins, has become the definitive work on cults in Australia. Join Raphael as he takes you through a breathtaking journey of his personal experiences in his rescuing and deprogramming of cult victims.

Past event

July 19

#### Natural and Conventional Medicine – Can They Work Together?

Much has been said about the advantages of natural and conventional medicine, but should they be combined? Join Dr. Mark Glasman, Dr. Mark Glasman, Director of Melbourne University, who has demonstrated a keen and active interest in complementary medicine throughout his medical career, as well as completing a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychiatry in 2002. Dr. Glasman is the proud father of five wonderful children, including the rabbi of the North Eastern Jewish Centre.

Past event

September 13

#### Rosh Hashana Card Designs

Do you remember the fantastic jewellery making presentation in 2007? Even if you missed out, professional art instructor Melanie Rosenzweig is back by popular demand! Melanie, known for her creative and artistic expressions, is highly sought after for her interactive workshops and presentations. Join her before Rosh Hashana this year and create your very own, personalized Rosh Hashana greeting card. Whether it's for family, friends, workmates or associates, you'll be sure to bring a Rosh Hashana smile to some faces this year!  
Cost: \$7.50 Each person will make 10 cards and envelopes



October 25

#### Women's Circle Sausage Sizzle

As you go into summer mode, what better way to enjoy a social get-together than delighting over a delicious barbeque. Not a meat eater? Don't worry – enjoy tasty vegetarian dishes and salads as well. Great people, great food and great fun!  
Cost: \$5



All sessions begin at 7:30 PM  
6 High St. Doncaster  
For more information please call Sara Glasman on 9848 6840

## Ben Alexander – “A Pillar of the Jewish Community”

Ben Alexander is the longest standing founding member of the North Eastern Jewish Centre. He was one of the pioneers in establishing the Centre, which, since its inception in 1962, has been the religious, cultural and social centre for over a **thousand** Jewish families living in the North Eastern region of Melbourne.

Ben began his role as a communal servant in 1948 when, as a teenager, he went from door to door raising funds for charitable organizations in Israel. He is currently the Senior Vice President for B'nai B'rith of Australia & New Zealand. It is known for its humanitarian, human rights and advocacy work promoting tolerance in the local community and love, truth and benevolence

However, what may be considered Ben's greatest personal accomplishment was his unwavering commitment to the establishment and continual growth of the North Eastern Jewish Centre.

Mr. Alexander helped form the first committee to establish the Jewish Centre in 1962 and remained a devoted member of the committee for over 35 years, having been voted in as President 5 times during this period and Vice President 12 times. Even after retiring from the committee in 1997, Mr. Alexander continues to dedicate himself as a servant of the community. He is the only original founder of the community remaining in the area and is viewed as a beacon of guidance and mentorship by hundreds of Jewish families who benefit from his diligent work on a daily basis.

Ben's vision was to create a Jewish Community Centre to encompass religious, social, educational, cultural and sporting facilities all under the one roof. This has proven to be unique in Australia and as far as we know unique in the world, as it is hard and sometimes controversial to have all these activities together.

Ben donated a tremendous amount of time to the establishment of the Centre, pioneering and organizing the initial fundraising campaigns, often at the cost of his own business.

Whilst organizing fundraising trade fairs attended by tens of thousands of people, he would close his Architect business for two weeks. Ben, who was also the Architect of the North Eastern Jewish Centre, has said on numerous occasions that of the 1,500 buildings he designed in his career, the NEJC is his pride and joy. At one stage in its history, whilst under Ben's lay leadership, the Jewish Centre was home to over 35 clubs and activities for all ages and affiliations within the community, whether social, religious, sporting or cultural. Until this day, many married couples in the community relate how they first met at sporting activities organized by Ben. He has also been involved architecturally in the design of six other synagogues Melbourne.

In the 46 years since its establishment Ben has been involved in many areas of fund raising for the Centre. He obtained permission from the Government to hold Trade Fairs on Sundays at the Royal Exhibition Building. Twelve such trade fairs took place. Ben organized them all. The money which was raised helped initially establish and subsequently maintain the Jewish Centre.

Ben's activities have not been limited to the Jewish community. He was one of the founding members of the Manningham Interfaith Network (established in 2004 in response to the devastating Tsunami in Indonesia), in which he has been the Vice President since its founding.



Members of the Interfaith Network - Ben is 4th from the left at the back

The Interfaith Network consists of representatives from the Christian Uniting, Baptist, Anglican and Catholic churches and the Jewish, Hindu, Islamic, Buddhist, Sikh and Baha'i communities, of which Ben represents the Jewish faith.