

THE DENVER COMMUNITY KOLLEL KOLLEL UPDATE

Because Torah Is for Every Jew



November/December 2008 - Cheshvan/Kislev 5768

'Chanuka' at Thanksgiving Learning Program

It may have been Thanksgiving morning, but on Thurs., Nov. 28, some 40 men from throughout the Denver Jewish community had their minds on something else entirely – Chanuka.

The men had come to the Kollel *beis medrash* to participate in the Kollel's legal holiday Torah study program, and the topic of discussion was "Deriving benefit from the Chanuka lights."

"The learning enhanced my appreciation for Chanuka, which is so important considering the time of year it is," says George Gumbiner, President, Marathon Investments, and a member of Aish/Ahavas Yisroel.

Program participants hailed from East, Southeast and West Denver; some had extensive Torah knowledge, while others came with a more limited background.

According to Mr. Gumbiner, the mix of people enhanced the event.

"It was a great opportunity to



Kollel Scholar Rabbi Avraham Abrams (c.) leads one of the study groups at the Legal Holiday Learning Program, held at the Kollel, on Thanksgiving.

visit with people you don't normally see," he said. "The camaraderie was wonderful."

The event began with *davening* at 8 a.m., followed by breakfast and an hour of small-group, *chavrusa*-style study led by the Kollel scholars.

Kollel Scholar Rabbi Ari Jakubowicz then presented a summary of the discussion.

Dan Ashkenazi, also a member of Aish/Ahavas Yisroel, called the program "very inspirational."

Continued on back

Partnership with the Scholars: 'An Easy, Low-Risk Way to Support the Kollel'

In today's volatile economy, we are all looking for ways to use our money wisely.

Take Jesse and Pennie Aragon, President and Vice President of Ark Seal International. Last month, they joined the Kollel's Partnership with the Scholars program after embarking on a new business venture.

Without laying out any money up front, they have made the Kollel a partner in a percentage of the future profits of their business.

"The Kollel has provided wonderful teachings and examples of how to enhance our life, with Torah as our guide," says Jesse. "Pennie and I take great pride in having the Kollel



Kollel Outreach Director Rabbi Yechiel Erlanger (l.) with Jesse Aragon, who, together with wife Pennie, recently joined the Partnership with the Scholars program.

as partners in the success of our new venture."

Partnership with the Scholars is a unique program in which those who can't dedicate themselves to full-time

Torah study can share in its merits by supporting those who can.

When someone signs up as a "partner," the Kollel scholars study and pray for the success of the partner's business. When the partner sees an increase in profits, the Kollel receives a percentage of those profits.

"Partnership with the Scholars isn't a new concept," explains Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers. "The tribes of Yissochor and Zevulun were the originators of this kind of partnership. Zevulun, whose members were successful traders, partnered in Yissochor's full-time Torah study by financially supporting them. In exchange, they receive their share of

Continued on back

Special Post-Election Day T4T With Sen. Ken Gordon

In a special post-election day Torah for Tycoons, "Higher Standard or Double Standard," Colorado State Senate Majority Leader Ken Gordon joined Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers for a discussion on the type of politicians we should vote for in elections.

According to Sen. Gordon, because voters often chose candidates based on "mindless television ads," many politicians accept donations from political action committees so they can afford such ads.

"The system kind of selects people that don't have strong principles, because if you need to please interest groups to get the money to get on TV to win, you have to have flexible principles, and you have to say yes to groups that have different views," he said.

Sen. Gordon added that rather than complaining that legislators are corrupt, voters should pay attention to the candidates' "individual characteristics" as opposed to participating passively in the process.

In his presentation, Rabbi Sommers agreed with Sen. Gordon about



(l. to r.) Moderator Rich Sokol, Rabbi Shachne Sommers and Sen. Ken Gordon at the post-Election Day T4T: 'Higher Standard or Double Standard?'

the need to vote for people with strong principles. He said there are sources throughout Jewish history that teach us which characteristics to look for.

Rabbi Sommers first cited the verse in the Torah in which Yisro tells Moshe to choose "men of accomplishment, G-d fearing people, men of truth, people who despise money" (*Shemos* 18:21).

This refers to someone "who cares a whole lot about doing what's right, even at the expense of his own self-interests," he explained.

Rabbi Sommers then cited the Talmud in which Rabbi Yehuda the Price chooses his son Gamliel as his successor, though Gamliel "was not suited to fill his father's place in wis-

dom, [but] was suited to fill his father's place in fear of sin" (*Kesubos* 103).

Rabbi Sommers pointed to Maimonides who says that, "If he fills his father's place in fear [of sin], even if he does not fill it in wisdom, we appoint him in his father's place and we teach him (*Laws of Kings* 1:7).

"You can take a person who doesn't have knowledge or experience and train him in," said Rabbi Sommers. "But having the commitment and will to do what's right at all costs... on the job training won't work for that.

Rabbi Sommers then cited the *Divrei Malkiel*, which gives additional qualifications one should look for in a candidate (4:82). He concluded that even though Sen. Gordon may be correct that the system is such that it is hard for these kinds of people to get elected, our goal when voting should be to choose those people "who have the kind of character to do what's right."

Please join us next month for "Elective Surgery: Good Medicine or Good Business?" with Neil Baronberg, M.D., on Wed., Dec. 3. To RSVP, call 303-820-2855 or email info@denverkollel.org

'Chanuka' at Thanksgiving

Continued from front

"On Thanksgiving, America stops its everyday routine in order to relax, be with family, eat, and give thanks to G-d," he said. "This sounds a whole like what we call Shabbat.



Some 40 men from throughout Denver attended the Legal Holiday Learning Program in the Kollel beis medrash on Thanksgiving.

"Fortunately, we don't have to wait for once a year... we have the opportunity to give thanks to Hashem every Shabbat, every day, and every moment."

Kollel Outreach Director Rabbi Yechiel Erlanger, who arranged the program, said he was "delighted that so many people chose to begin their day off in a Torah study environment."

Plans are already underway to hold similar learning programs on December 25 and January 1.

Mr. Gumbiner, for one, is looking forward to attending.

"I hope we have many more learning programs like this," he said. "It was so refreshing." ❖

Partnership with Scholars

Continued from front

the merits of Yissochor's Torah study."

The Aragons join several others who have become "partners" with the scholars, including Brad Licht, Owner, Valu-builders, and Neil Olesky.

"In today's economy," said Kollel Dean Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab, "this is a great way to still maintain your commitment to the Kollel. It provides an easy, low-risk way to support the Kollel because it is directly tied to your income. And in these times, we appreciate our supporters' help more than ever."

For more information, visit www.denverkollel.org or contact Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab at 303-820-2855 or at rays@denverkollel.org. ❖