

# Around the LOCAL NEWS Community

## Inaugural Reception for Yeshivas Iyun Halacha Held in the Five Towns

On Sunday evening, dozens of Five Towns residents – including several local *rabbonim* as well as former and prospective *talmidim* of Harav Aharon Schenkolewski, Rosh Yeshiva, *Yeshivas Iyun Halacha* – crowded into Dr. and Mrs. Joe Rozenbaum’s spacious Woodmere backyard to greet the Rosh Yeshiva on the New York leg of his East Coast visit to the United States and to learn more about *Iyun Halacha*, an email-based *halacha* learning initiative spearheaded by Rav Schenkolewski. He was joined by Rabbi Shmuel Simenowitz, Dean of the Yeshiva, who, in addition to his duties with the yeshiva, is much sought after internationally as a speaker and scholar-in-residence, and by R’ Dovid Engel, a longtime supporter and *chaver* of Rav Aharon who currently serves as *menahel* of the yeshiva. The ambience was enhanced by the delightful background music lovingly performed by Kuti Roberg.

After a spirited *mincha*, R’ Dovid Engel greeted the crowd and introduced the guest speaker. In his talk entitled “Subversive or Superstar? Harnessing the Korach in each of us,” Rabbi Simenowitz delivered a bold and original



analysis of Korach in his unique and playful style. He considered the imperative to learn *halacha* as an existential gauntlet thrown down by Korach whose challenges to Moshe were specifically couched in *halachic* terms. For example, the Midrash has Korach inquiring as to whether a “*bayis malei seforim*,” a house full of Jewish books still requires a *mezuzah*. He explained that the term, “house full of books,” suggests complacency and lethargy as in having “shelves of unused books lined up like chiropractic patients waiting silently for their spines to be cracked,” whereas the *mezu-*

*zah* represents a certain dynamism – the comings and goings of a Jewish family, the father going to *shul* or a *shiur*, the mother perhaps bringing a “*bekel*” of chicken to an elderly neighbor, the children going to yeshiva, etc.

He explained that *halacha* was not so much a set of rules but rather a range of spiritual opportunities for growth. He compared it to a yardstick by which one could measure the progress between the two poles of what one can do and what one should do.

He concluded with several anecdotes involving his own experiences learn-

ing over the phone each night for years with his *chavrusa* (from the Five Towns) while he lived on a maple syrup farm in rural Vermont and the positive effects that the learning had on him and his family. He concluded with a passionate challenge of his own: “We are already living *halachic* lives; why not really try to nail it?”

He then introduced the Rosh Yeshiva who thanked his hosts, Dr. Joe and Dina Rozenbaum, for graciously opening up their hearts and their home and for the lovely and lavish barbecue buffet to which the participants were treated. Moreover, he acknowledged the community at large for its enthusiastic display of support and dedication both to the yeshiva but more importantly to the study of *halacha*. He explained that the Yeshiva’s slogan is “bringing the *beis hamedrash* home” – whether one is online at the bank, waiting for a plane or just wants to get the most that of a few minutes of downtime, *shiurim* are always at your fingertips.

For further information about *Yeshivas Iyun Halacha*, please visit their website at [www.iyunhalacha.org](http://www.iyunhalacha.org).

## Woodbourne’s “Klal Yisroel Shul” Proudly Reopens

By Dov Levy

The doors of the iconic *shul* at 457 Route 52 in Woodbourne will open wide to embrace the public once again beginning this Thursday, June 26. Rabbi Mordechai Jungreis *shlit”a* of Woodbourne’s Congregation Bnai Israel reassures the public that *minyanim* will begin on schedule regardless of whether the final stages of the building’s reconstruction have been completed.

Last summer saw a record 80,000 people pass through the doors of the Woodbourne *shul*. Since its reopening in 2010 under the auspices of Rabbi Jungreis *shlit”a*, Niklesburg Rebbe, the *shul* has become a central gathering place for travelers and Catskill vacationers looking to catch a *minyan*, to refresh themselves or for a *brachah* and words of encouragement from the legendary Rebbe.

But the steadily increasing flow of traffic took its toll on the historic 95-year-old building which was never intended to handle even a fraction of the crowds it now sees. Last summer, the floor began sinking and other signs of

serious deterioration became apparent. As a result, Rabbi Jungreis was forced to undertake a major overhaul of the building, laying out tens of thousands of dollars that he was forced to borrow to ensure the *shul* would be able to serve the public this summer.

During the winter months, while all of us forgot completely about the *shul* and its important summertime role, Rabbi Jungreis traveled regularly to Woodbourne to oversee the progress of the renovations. Every effort was made to conclude the work in time for the summer vacation season.

Now the work is winding down so the building can again host dozens of *minyanim* daily. Rabbi Jungreis is proud to announce that, regardless of the state of the construction work, *minyanim* will resume there this Thursday afternoon. He will be there as always to greet visitors and offer the free refreshments and cold drinks. And, of course, he will be ready with the traditional steaming bowls of Thursday evening chulent.

The sign in front of the *shul* pro-

claims “EVERYONE IS WELCOME,” and that is the Rebbe’s motto. Jews of all stripes feel at home and the blending of all walks of life is a salient feature of this unique congregation. The Rebbe greets each and every person who enters, regardless of their appearance and background, with characteristic warmth. His bubbly congeniality is contagious and filters down to everyone there.

When the *shul* was first incorporated, the Rebbe was asked whether he would name it after one of his saintly ancestors. The Rebbe looked up at the sign on which the *shul*’s former name was written, Congregation Bnai Israel, and announced that this name was good enough for him. To him it has always been “Klal Yisroel’s *shul*.” It is a *shul* for *Klal Yisroel*, by *Klal Yisroel*, and he sees himself as serving merely a custodial role in maintaining the premises and overseeing its services.

*Minyanim* for Shacharis begin at 8 AM (7 AM on Mondays only) and continue throughout the morning. *Minchah* begins at 1:30 on Sundays and 6 PM on



other days, segueing into Maariv *minyanim*, which are held until 2 AM. In addition, the *kollel* that meets in the *shul* is also scheduled to resume.

The high cost of the renovations must be covered and more work is still needed. Anyone who can help is urgently requested to contact Rabbi Jungreis directly at: 646-256-4049. Donations are tax deductible.