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# Chai Vekayam

## The Neve Shalom Synagogue Chai Members Newsletter

April 2019

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Dear Chai members;

First of all, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Neve Shalom Synagogue and the Jewish community in Suriname, I wish you and your families a **Happy and kosher Passover!!**

There is so much news to share with you. We will start with reporting on our holiday celebrations since our last newsletter:

### Sukkot (September 23 – 30, 2018)

As always, we built our community Sukkah in our synagogue grounds.



The perfect warm nights enabled us to meet at night in our beautifully decorated sukkah, eat and socialize – young and old.

### Simchat Torah (October 1, 2018)

In Simchat Torah ("Rejoicing with the Torah" in Hebrew) we celebrate and mark the conclusion of the annual cycle of public Torah readings, and the beginning of a new cycle. All of the Torah scrolls are taken from the Ark, and members of the congregation circle the reader's platform seven times as they carry the Torah scroll with them.



The Hakafot ceremony starts with circling the synagogue

The joyous climax of Simchat Torah is the dancing of *hakafot* ("circles" or "going around"), during which we dance and sing with the Torah scrolls. The *hakafot* is a memorable event, certainly one of the highlights on the Jewish calendar.

After circling the synagogue, we continued with the hakafot inside the synagogue building.



The Hakafof ceremony continued with circling inside the synagogue

### Hanukkah (December 2 – 10, 2018)

Hannukah is always fun. After each family lit their own Menorah in Mahamad (our community hall), the place was full of light. We had a lovely ceremony and for the kids there was a surprise, they went on a TukTuk tour around the synagogue area. A memorable holiday indeed!



Off we go on the TukTuk Tour

### Purim (March 20 – 21, 2019)

Purim this year was a kids party and a lovely family meal together.



is not an easy task.

The economic crisis in Suriname is in its third year and the Suriname government's restriction on the use of foreign currencies is making the importing of products for the Passover Seder a real challenge.

Thanks to a few Chai members from the US and Canada, we managed to import the products this year as in last year. Thank you so much for your generosity!

As always, we will report in our next newsletter on our community Seder.

### A Theater Play in the Synagogue

On Wednesday January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, the synagogue hosted a special event, a theatre play called "Het Verbrande Huis" (The burned down house), performed by the Dutch actress and play writer Bodil de la Parra. The play was a big success and the audience was very moved.



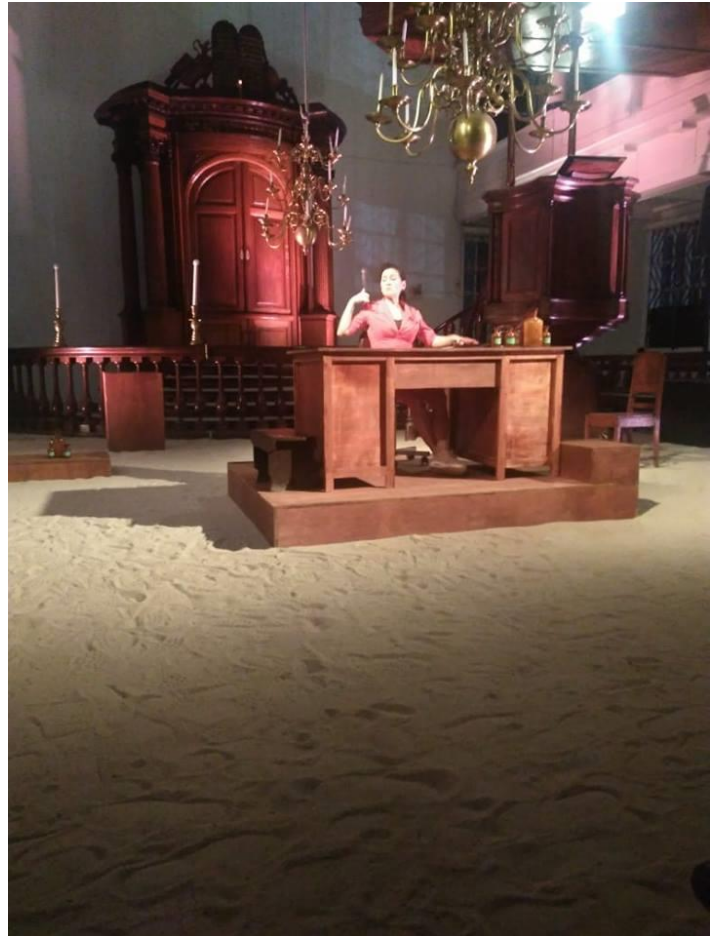
### Preparing for Passover

As you already know, Passover in Suriname is a big challenge. We have to import from the USA our Matzot and Kosher wine. The products then have to be shipped by sea to Suriname, cleared with customs and delivered to the community on time, and that



Bodil has been visiting Paramaribo her whole life - it's the city of her father. Since she was a little girl, she visited the house where he grew up. She met her aunts, slept under a mosquito net with her nephews, and got to know her grandfather, the pharmacist R.L. de la Parra. In the night of 12 October 2012 the house burned down.

In the play, Bodil brings the house and the stories of her family back to life. A story that is intertwined with the Dutch-Surinamese Jewish history.



The Burned Down House, performed by Bodil de la Para at the Neve Shalom Synagogue



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## HET verbrande HUIS een surinaamse familiechroniek regie: wimie wilhelm

In *Het Verbrande Huis* wekt de la Parra het huis en haar bijzondere Surinaamse familie weer tot leven. Ook gaat ze terug naar haar Joods Portugese voorouders, ooit op de vlucht voor de inquisitie. Een persoonlijk verhaal dat zijn licht laat schijnen op de Nederlands-Surinaamse geschiedenis.

Deze voorstelling is opgedragen aan de familie De la Parra

Na de voorstelling is er een Meet & Greet met Bodil de la Parra.

**Woensdag 23 januari 2019**  
**Neve Shalom Synagoge**  
**20:00**  
Inloop vanaf 19:30  
Ingang via de Wagenwegstraat

*Deze uitnodiging is strikt persoonlijk.*

Bent u aanwezig op 23 januari?  
Laat dat weten via [anco@sr.net](mailto:anco@sr.net)  
nog **vóór 20 januari**

*Wij kijken uit naar uw komst!*

**anco**  
Productions

**RUDOLPHI**  
PRODUCTIES

Anne-Marie Hermelijn & Marie-Anne Rudolphi

Deze voorstelling wordt medemogelijk gemaakt door de Nederlandse ambassade



Koninkrijk der Nederlanden

Bodil de la Parra is the daughter of the famous Surinamese – Dutch filmmaker and director Pim de la Parra.

The de la Parra family are descended from Sephardic Jews who have lived in Suriname for four centuries. When Pim de la Parra was seven years old, his mother died and he was raised by his aunts in that house.

## Extensive Damage to our Cemeteries' walls

In the last few months, the walls and the gates of both of our cemeteries in Paramaribo were damaged by vandalism and falling giant trees during a big storm.



Repairing the wall in the Ashkenazi Cemetery

Parts of the walls had to be rebuilt and the damaged gates had to be repaired.

Unfortunately the unexpected costs are a heavy burden on our finances. Any donations will be highly appreciated. Thanks to Kulanu USA and Kulanu Canada, we are able to issue tax deductible receipts against your donation. Many thanks!!

### Restoration of the Old Wooden Grave Markers at the Creole Cemetery in the Jodensavanne



Over the years, many of the wooden grave markers at the Creole cemetery in the Jodensavanne (the Jewish Savannah) have been severely effaced and/or rotted. On February 23, 2019, a project funded by the Dutch government to try to preserve the several dozen remaining grave markers,

using sophisticated techniques, has been launched. Let's hope that this project will be successful.



### Final Comments

I'd like to thank Roosje Verschoor for her photos, translations and updates on the community events;

To Donna Eekie, Joan Duym, and other friends for their lovely photos;

To Lilly Duym for her on-going support for the Chai membership program and to Norma Hutchison-Steinberg for her editing of this newsletter.

Please feel free to contact me at: [surjewicom@gmail.com](mailto:surjewicom@gmail.com)

Jacob Steinberg