Dear Chai members;

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 New Year and Gmar Chatima Tova!!**

May this be a year of health, happiness and peace!

**Celebrating the 2019 High Holidays in Suriname**

We are blessed again this year with our wonderful guests, Loeki Robles from Aruba and Yebudai Webster from New York as our Torah readers during the High Holidays. I’m looking forward to attending the Yom Kippur service this year and will report on it in our next newsletter.

**High Holidays service at the Neve Shalom synagogue**

**We are Starting Two New Projects**

We are so happy to report on the beginning of two very important projects:

The first project will be adding a new marker near the Holocaust Memorial monument that will briefly explain in Dutch and English what the Holocaust was. Many visitors, Surinamese and international, do not know what the Holocaust was and its impact on the Suriname Jewish community. The marker will help give context and understanding to the memorial for these visitors.

During my coming visit in Suriname, we will meet
with the architect who designed the monument and
will start production of the marker.
We are so grateful to The Jewish American
Society for Historic Preservation (JASHP) who
offered to fully cover the costs of this project! Our
aim is to complete this project before January 27th,
2020, the International Holocaust Remembrance
Day.

The second project will be documenting all the
wooden grave markers in the three Paramaribo
Jewish cemeteries. In the past, poor members could
not afford paying for a tombstone, so their families
used wooden markers that indicated their name, date
of birth and death. Over the years, as a result of the
harsh Amazon basin weather conditions and
termites, many of the wooden markers are rotting
and disintegrating. Our objective is to document all
the wooden markers that are still readable and
replace them with simple metal markers so that their
memory will stay with us.

I will join two other volunteers, Scott Forler from
the U.S.A. and Isabella Lo from Denmark in
helping Lilly Duym (the community Vice President)
to document and photograph all the remaining
wooden markers. We will have long days in the hot
and humid weather ahead of us, but it is a mitzvah!
Once the inventory is completed, we will get quotes
for the metal plates and a budget can be prepared.
Again, thanks to a very generous donation from
the Jewish American Society for Historic
Preservation, we are able to start this important
project before it is too late.

Detailed reports on both projects will be presented
in our next newsletter.

Celebrating the Community 2019
Passover Seder

In April, as always, we celebrated together the
Passover Seder. This year we had special guests
from Israel who conducted the Seder. They were
Juliette Emanuel, Surinamese born and 92 years
young, who came for a visit with her daughter
Miriam, her husband, their son Uri and his wife and
daughter - four generations of ex Surinamese now
living in Jerusalem!!

Our community Seder (April 2019)

As the economic crisis in Suriname and the
Government restriction on the use of foreign
currency (U.S. dollars in our case) both continue, we
faced the same challenges as last year on how to
purchase the Matzot and Kosher wine for the
community as they have to be imported from the
United States. We are so fortunate that again, a few
Chai members and Kulanu Canada helped us with
their donations to overcome this obstacle.

Our suppliers in Florida did what they could to help.
Thanks to the support of local business people, the
Matzot and Kosher wine were shipped at no cost to
us and arrived on time. Another wonderful
community Seder took place in our Mahamad (our small community center).

For the donors – **THANK YOU** again for your generosity!!

**The 2019 Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony**

Our President, Jules (Shul) Donk conducted the open air ceremony and service.

On May 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2019, we gathered near the Holocaust Memorial Monument at the Neve Shalom synagogue grounds to commemorate the 104 Surinamese Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust.

Flowers in memory of the da Costa and Bueno de Mesquita family members who were murdered in the Holocaust

It is so touching to watch the video of the ceremony. We all feel so fortunate that we were able to build the monument with your kind financial support. Now and always, the victims will be remembered!
Another Successful Paramaribo Museum Night event

As it becomes a tradition in Paramaribo, on June 26th, the City of Paramaribo organized Museum Night. In order to encourage the residents to learn about history, culture and the arts, all the Museums in the city had free admission. Again, our synagogue drew a crowd of over 2,000 visitors, the biggest attended event in town!!

This year the theme of Museum Night was: “Living legends – the future of tradition”.

Our Legends were:

**Leendert Duijm** who is 88 years old;

Leendert told the visitors about the maintenance of the Jewish cemeteries in Paramaribo from his days as a little boy when he helped his father and mother who took care of the maintenance.

**Anita Yvonne Bueno de Mesquita** who is 85 years old;

Anita told the visitors about the burial ritual in the Jewish tradition. She explained about the use of **Tachrichim** (traditional shrouds) - these garments are hand-made from linen or muslin and are considered fitting for someone who is about to stand before G-d in judgment and the **Tahara ritual** - preparing the body by the **Chevra Kaddisha** (burial society) for its final rest. A proper Tahara includes cleansing, ritually washing and dressing the deceased's body. As a very small Jewish community, our Chevrah Kaddisha consists of volunteer members. We sew our own Tachrichim and perform the Tahara ritual.

**Georgine de Faria Abrahams** who is 85 years old;

Georgine talked about the old days where the community used to do the baking of matzos for Passover and the kosher slaughter of chicken. Unfortunately, today, as a very small community we have to import the Matzot and there are no more butchers who perform Kosher slaughter of chickens.

**Armand van Alen** who is 82 years old;

Armand spoke about the financial contribution of his father to preserve the Jewish buildings in Paramaribo and his wife **Adrianne van Alen**, who worked hard for many years with the Jewish Archive that contained the original documents of the community, which is almost 400 years old.

A very special **THANK YOU** to all who organized and managed the event with Lilly, and the wonderful volunteers who worked tirelessly to make the event a great success.
Big Storms Caused Extensive Damage

A severe storm in late July caused extensive damage to two big old trees in the synagogue yard. They were uprooted by the storm but Toda La’el (Thank G-d) caused no damage to the synagogue building!!

After extensive cleanup operation, new trees and flowers were planted to keep our yard beautiful for generations to come.

New trees were planted to replace the fallen trees

In April, our Passover guests from Israel went on a trip to visit the Jodensavanne (the Jewish Savannah), to see the remains of the Bracah ve Shalom synagogue (built in 1685) and the cemetery in the jungle (the oldest tombstone dates back to 1683).

A huge storm had uprooted gigantic trees which blocked the dirt road near the Jodensavanne.

To their great luck, a group of AmerIndians from the nearby village of Roti Doti came to their rescue.

With big chain saws, and a collective effort by all, they managed to clear the road which allowed the visitors to complete their tour and return safely to Paramaribo. What an experience!!
I’d like to thank Lilly Duym and Norma Steinberg for their contribution to our newsletter and to Marina da Costa, Lilly Duym, Joan Duym and Roosje Verschoor for their beautiful photos.

Please let me know if you have any comments, suggestions or ideas on how to make this newsletter better. Please feel free to contact me at: dingoson3@gmail.com

Wishing you all Shana Tova and Gmar Chatima Tova!

Jacob Steinberg