

UT CHABAD

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There is no better way to unwind from a long week than at a Shabbat dinner at Chabad at UT. You know you're in Texas when heads around the room form a quilt of burnt orange and white kippahs, but when the aroma of hot matzah ball soup permeates the room, you are transported to the traditional Friday night meals of your childhood, be it at home, your grandparents' or the house of a friend. Soup follows wine, challah, salads, and a pasta dish, but regulars know to stick to moderate portions, as those are all just appetizers. Chicken and kugel are likely to emerge next, unless it's a themed Shabbat, in which case the menu may include anything from fajitas to falafel. In an apparent contrast from the hustle and bustle of the week, the concept of time evaporates as the night goes on. This encompasses Shabbat's ultimate purpose- to serve as a complete reprieve from the rest of the week, a time of recovery and relaxation.

A Shabbat regular, sophomore Paige Koeppel explains her frequent attendance. "I go to Chabad because I think it's a good way to close your week, and it offers up a time of reflection. It's a good atmo-

sphere, there's a great homey feel and it's a great way to start off your weekend." What differentiates Chabad isn't something tangible, but Koeppel pinpoints a couple key traits. "Its hard to explain ... Chabad is like a home away from home because when you're there you just feel comfortable. You have home-cooked food — a welcome change from the rest of the week. It's just great. I love the welcoming atmosphere-anyone can feel comfortable there. They don't care how religious you are, even though they are religious. They make everyone who comes feel important."

Additionally, Chabad relationships surpass all previous quarrels, even doing the seemingly impossible in dissolving the divide between rival fraternities. Among the over 120 students at a typical Shabbat dinner, you can find Greeks and non-Greeks, representatives of all three Jewish fraternities and the Jewish sorority. You turn to ask the person next to you to pass the hummus, and your neighbor turns out to be the guy you sit next to in accounting. As the night goes on you discuss local restaurants with the law school student to your right, and contrasting campus politics with the Texas State student across from you who makes the 45 minute trek every week in order to have this experience. The one-

of-a-kind, quintessentially Austin, incomparably hospitable Friday night experience attracts them all.

"While we have many cultural, social and learning activities, at the end of the day our anchor program is our Shabbat programming," Rabbi Johnson said. "It encompasses all of the above and brings so many unique, beautiful human experiences to the table. The unity of so many different types of Jews from so many different backgrounds is captivating. The singing and dancing and ruach is something that words can not express. It must be experienced."

Although Judaism is the unifying factor among Chabad's visitors, no one level of religious observance makes up the majority of students who go there. "Every Jewish student should know that we are open to every Jew on their respective terms," Rabbi Johnson says. "We are what we are, and you have the ability to connect and tap into what you are interested as a unique individual here at Chabad at UT."

To keep up with the latest activities at the UT Chabad House, find Rabbi Johnson on facebook at www.facebook.com/RabbiZev as well as www.JewishLonghorns.com.

Daley Espstein is from Dallas and a University of Texas at Austin sophomore.

FRIED

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statement about your commitment to Judaism and your place in *Klal Yisrael*, the Jewish people.

The Midrash teaches us that "there's no King without a Nation;" only when we join together, as a congregation of Jews to coronate the King on Rosh Hashanah, then do we build a kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

If you're not affiliated with a synagogue and are looking for a comfortable place to pray that doesn't require much background, I am happy to inform you of the "High Holiday Learner's Services" that are taking place in multiple locations throughout the Metroplex.

DATA is conducting these interactive, explanatory services, which take place mostly in English. The

services rely on a fresh, new approach; they combine ongoing explanation, discussion and camaraderie with other bright, interested Jews who are seeking to add meaning and understanding to their High Holy Day experience. Holiday meals and child care are also available to remove those concerns and help you make the most of the day.

Feel free to contact me at my e-mail address and I can advise you where there is a High Holiday Learner Service closest to you.

With best wishes for a healthy, meaningful and joyous Rosh Hashanah to you and all the readers, with peace in Israel and for all of Klal Yisrael and the world.

Rabbi Yerachmiel D. Fried, noted scholar and author of numerous works on Jewish law, philosophy and Talmud, is founder and dean of DATA, the Dallas Kollel. Questions can be sent to him at yfried@sbcglobal.net.

SEYMOUR

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its branches. At that moment, God caused a wind to blow. From the top of the apple tree an apple fell. When it hit the ground, it split open. "Look," commanded God, "look inside yourself. What do you see?"

The little apple tree looked down and saw that right in the middle of the apple — was a star. And the apple tree answered, "A star! I have a star!"

And God laughed a gentle laugh

and added, "So you do have stars on your branches. They've been there all along, you just didn't know it."

Epilogue: Usually when we cut an apple, we do so by holding the apple with its stem up. But to find its star, we must turn it on its side. Likewise, if we change our direction a little bit, we too can find the spark that ignites the star inside each of us. Look carefully, look closely, and you'll find that beautiful star.

Laura Seymour is director of Camping Services at the Aaron Family Jewish Community Center in Dallas.

TEXAS A&M

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za get-togethers to a new program dubbed "Hillel Kitchen." This year's "welcome back" bash was a swim and barbecue party designed to allow new students to integrate with students who are already well established at Hillel.

As always, Hillel combines unique individual programming with weekly programs such as Mocha Mondays, a place where Jewish students come to shmooze, exchange ideas and socialize. Friday nights are dedicated to both individual spiritual and Jewish philosophical growth. Hebrew classes continued throughout the summer and with the onset of fall, will in-

tensify. Hillel is also working to promote Israel on campus, to allow Jewish students to grow both psychologically and spiritually and to develop a sense of community.

Of course the month of September means High Holy Day preparation and the many religious activities associated with the months of Elul and Tishrei. Due to building construction, this year's High Holy Day services will take place at the College Station Conference Center, 1300 George Bush Dr. A list of services appears online at www.tamuhillel.org.

Hillel students are invited to deliver sermons, be part of the cantorial team or run any part of the service. Students are also invited to read the weekly bilingual Torah portion. Sign up for this free news-

letter by emailing Rabbi Tarlow.

Those wanting to know more about Texas A&M Hillel can log on to www.tamuhillel.org, call 979-696-7313 and/or write to either Rabbi Peter Tarlow at ptarlow@tamuhillel.org or Program Director Mindy Prenalder at mindy.prenalder@gmail.com.

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The Board of Directors and Staff of the Jewish Federation of Fort Worth and Tarrant County wish you a happy and healthy New Year.

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May you and yours be inscribed for a good Year.
www.tarrantfederation.org