

Dobbs Ferry

Happenings

This month's **Cult Classic Movie Night** at the public library features "Cop Car" starring Kevin Bacon and directed by Jon Watts tonight (June 15), 7 p.m.

The **school board** meets Tuesday, June 19, 7 p.m. in the middle/high school library.

Friends of Wickers Creek Archeological Site (FOWCAS) hosts its annual meeting on Wednesday, June 20, 8 p.m., at the headquarters of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society at the Mead House, 12 Elm Street. Special guest presenters will be three Native Americans from the Moravian of the Thames Band of the Delaware Nation, close relatives of those who first lived in Dobbs Ferry. Also on the agenda is the legal and environmental status of Nuns Beach and the need to refurbish the archeology exhibit at village hall.

The free **Summer Music Series** at Waterfront Park, at the foot of High Street, kicks off on Wednesday, June 20, 6:30-8 p.m., with jazz harmonica player Hendrik Meurkens and his



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Rabbi Benjy Silverman puts his hand on Joshua's shoulder during the bar mitzvah.

Jewish community embraces CV resident

By Kris DiLorenzo

A special bar mitzvah took place on June 7 at Chabad of the Rivertowns in Dobbs Ferry, when Joshua, a soon-to-be 13-year-old resident of The Children's Village, celebrated the Jewish rite of passage from boyhood to manhood.

Rabbi Benjy Silverman, the impetus behind the event, presided over the ceremony, which was attended by approximately 35 people — most of

them unknown to Joshua. People who regularly came to temple to say morning prayers on Thursdays joined in, and so did four other strangers, senior citizens. The seniors were members of a 30-strong weekly gathering called "The Shmooze," who meet with Silverman on Wednesday mornings at the High Point condominium complex in Hartsdale to study and discuss contemporary issues from a Jewish perspective.

Two months ago, Silverman had

received a call from Joshua's grandmother, asking him to hold a bar mitzvah for her grandson. Though none of the "Shmooze" group are Chabad members, according to Elliot Weitz, a regular participant, "We asked the rabbi if there was some way we could make a contribution to the Chabad community. He came back and said that what would be nice for the group to do is to sponsor

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Bar mitzvah

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this boy's bar mitzvah. We took up a collection, and funded his celebration after the bar mitzvah."

Joshua, who is from Queens, is the only Jewish boy at the Dobbs Ferry-based residential treatment center. He had never seen a bar mitzvah, but he wanted one. "It's how every Jewish boy becomes a man when they turn 13," he wrote in an e-mail to the Enterprise.

Though he knew how to speak some Hebrew, he prepared for the event by studying on his own and with his mother, and met once with Rabbi Silverman. "I spoke Hebrew during the ceremony — all the *brochos* [blessings]," Joshua said. The blessings were for family members, whom he thanked for being there, and for everyone who made his bar mitzvah possible. "My mom, grandma, grandpa, and uncle were there," he explained. "My uncle surprised me and my mom by coming — he drove from New Jersey. They all got up so early to support me."

To accommodate Joshua's class schedule, the event was held from 7 to 8:30 a.m. "His mother wanted him to go back to school," Silverman noted, "but he was hanging out here as long as possible, until 10:30."

The post-ceremony festivity included breakfast, Jewish music, disco lights, and dancing. The bar mitzvah boy made a special request: the song "Hashem Melech," whose title loosely translated means "God is the King, in control of our world." Another high point for Joshua: "I really liked the candy — candy corn is my favorite — cake, and presents."

The Chabad community presented



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Joshua and other attendees dance after the ceremony.

Joshua with one of those presents: a kiddush cup featuring colored designs and gold leaf, created by an artist in Israel. The chalice-like cup is typically used on Friday evening to hold wine or grape juice, over which blessings are said, welcoming in the Sabbath. "I think he was happy with it," Silverman said. "It was a meaningful present, not an Xbox."

Perhaps the biggest gift for Joshua was the opportunity to feel connected to the Jewish community, especially

since there are no services held at CV. The Shmooze members benefited, too. Weitz commented, "The people at the Shmooze became part of a larger circle. To be part of this boy's special day was very uplifting to those who were there, even though we didn't know him. It was a special day for everyone."

Silverman concurred that everyone was happy to feel they were part of Joshua's transition from childhood to adulthood. In turn, Joshua was impressed

with how nice everyone was, especially Silverman, to whom he gave a big hug, and was enthusiastic about continuing the connection. "His *shul* [synagogue] is awesome," he said. "I really want to learn there."

"He was in seventh heaven," Silverman added.

Joshua, summing up how he felt about becoming a man, said, "I will remember it for my whole life. I feel different now: bigger, better, stronger, wiser."