

School scheduling processes forget Jewish High Holiday celebrations

By Lynn Mongar

The ram's horn is blown to wake us to the passage of time, said Rabbi Mark Bisman, describing one aspect of the Jewish High Holidays, which begin tonight.

"The whole period is a time of reconciliation. We hope that one becomes reconciled with his fellow man, with God and with himself," Bisman said.

The Jewish High Holidays, the most important of the Judaic holidays, begin tonight with Rosh Hashana, the Jewish New Year, and end 10 days later on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

"It's a time to reflect on one's life and think about which way you want to turn," Bisman said.

It also is a time Jewish students and teachers realize that they live in a predominantly non-Jewish region, and sometimes they have to make special arrangements to take time out for the holidays.

Michel Ajchenbaum, a UNL educational psychology instructor, said the emphasis of the high holidays is on action rather than thought.

Ajchenbaum compared the holidays to a New Year's resolution.

"Except you don't do it in a state of drunkenness," he added.

Another UNL instructor, Rifka Keilson, said that the holidays can be a lonely time for her.

"I feel alienated. I wish someone would wish me happy new year," she said.

Keilson, a New York City native, said she misses the way the holidays were celebrated in New York City. Keilson said New York City public schools close during the holidays.

"The school system is paralyzed. You can feel Jewishness in the air," she added.

However, living in Nebraska has made her more aware of her religion, she said.

"I have to make more of an effort," she added.

She said that Lincoln's Jewish community of about 1,000 has been supportive.

"I was invited to Jewish homes for dinner and warmly welcomed when I first arrived in Lincoln," she said.

The Jewish community is a tightly knit group and supportive of one another, she added.

For UNL students away from home, the Hillel organi-

zation arranges for students to spend time with Jewish families during the holidays.

Steve Swartzbach, a UNL Life Sciences instructor, and faculty adviser for Hillel, said the organization attempts to make students feel more at home.

Schedule juggling is imperative, because Jewish holidays don't fall during school vacations like most Christian holidays.

Dave Stern, a UNL sophomore said he and his friends had exams on the holidays last year.

"It kept some of us from going home for the holidays and being with our families. But, I guess school's got to come first," he said.

Ajchenbaum said that many universities don't schedule exams during the holidays.

"I don't see why the regents don't do that here," he said.

Ajchenbaum said he wished that Lincolnfest was not scheduled for this weekend.

He said it's another sign that "people aren't aware."

This year schedule problems have been somewhat alleviated because the holidays are on the weekends.

UNL Ombudsman, Al Dittmer, said the university never has referred to the vacation periods by religious names. However, he conceded that the vacations are "geared more toward Christian holidays."

Taking a "pause at a different time of the year" is beneficial to Jews, according to Rabbi Bisman.

"It gives a different, renewed perspective," Bisman said.

Gallery exhibits set

Haymarket Art Gallery shows in October will include the work of Anne Burkholder, who paints Nebraska landscapes in oils, and Margaret Furlong, who works with stoneware and porcelain. The show begins Oct. 7 with a reception from 2-4 p.m.

Burkholder, who teaches at the Haymarket, is a graduate of UNL, as is Furlong. Both artists' work has been shown widely throughout the country.

The Haymarket's southeast gallery will show the engravings of Priscilla Steele, Oct. 7-Oct. 21. Steele is a graduate of the Kansas City Art Institute.

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