

Mother's Day

# Dorshei Emet receives Torah written by female scribe

Compiled by C/JN Staff

A parade in Hampstead will shortly usher in what is believed to be Canada's first sefer Torah written by a female scribe.

Congregation Dorshei Emet, the Reconstructionist Synagogue, commissioned Jen Taylor Friedman of New York to pen the Torah as part of its 50th anni-

versary celebrations.

The parade will start May 16 at 2 p.m. at the corner of Cleve and Finchley roads. Congregants and guests will walk down Cleve and pass the scroll from hand to hand until it reaches Dorshei Emet, where it will be carried into the sanctuary under a chupah and placed in the Ark.

"This has been a year-long process," event committee co-chair Joyce Becker

says. "We started with an exciting family day last May, where members were invited to hold hands with the *soferet* [the designation for a female scribe] as she initiated our Torah. [She] returned several times during the year, to show us her progress and to continue writing with members."

"Dorshei Emet was Canada's first Reconstructionist synagogue," Rabbi Ron Aigen says. "It is an egalitarian, participatory community of Jews where woman have always been equal players and full participants in Jewish ritual life, including reading from the Torah. The name, Dorshei Emet, or Seekers of Truth, reflects a commitment to lifelong spiritual growth."

Following the parade there will be an afternoon of festivities including singing, dancing, refreshments and a slide presentation that will show Taylor Friedman inscribing the Torah with members who

participated during the year.

Dorshei Emet has been told it is only the third synagogue in the world to have a Torah written by a woman. Taylor Friedman is believed to be the only female scribe anywhere – there are a handful of others – to have completed a Torah. Dorshei Emet's is the third she has completed since 2007.

The congregation will receive the scroll in time for Shavuot, the holiday when Jews celebrate receiving the

Torah.

This scroll is identical in text to all others, composed of 79,847 words (304,805 letters) written on 62 panels of parchment joined by a sinew string from a kosher animal. It is slightly smaller and lighter than average, making it easier for women and bar or bat mitzvah-aged children to handle.

For more information, phone 486-9400.

*In time for Shavuot*



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