Bingo!

The real excitement of a bingo game...

By DAVID LEE

Thursday night the faithful turned out 110 strong at the B'nai David synagogue on Southfield Road and the name of the game was Bingo.

The crowd was hardly the group of dowdy old ladies one might expect. Housewives, businessmen, pretty girls and senior citizens...all were there.

For some, it was the first time. For others, it was only one night in a four-game-a-week schedule of area bingo games.

Why people come to play bingo is a question with many answers.

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JOSEPH HASSAL of the B'nai David Men's Club, who helped out Thursday night, said he thinks bingo helps people relax.

"When people come to play Bingo, they concentrate on their cards and everything else expires from their mind...everything else ceases to exist," he said.

The players say they come because it's an enjoyable way to spend an evening.

Bingo also seems to be contagious.

Shelly Ross, a pert 23-year-old office worker was interested in the game by her mother.

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MISS ROSS then talked Tina Friedman into coming along a few times, and she got hooked. Then they got Mrs. Barbara Smith to join them.

Now they all get together two or three times a week to play bingo.

The prize money doesn't seem much of a factor.

Mrs. Betty Stanczak said she just couldn't come if she had to rely on her winnings to play.

"If I had to depend on the money, I'd quit playing," she said.

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THE REAL excitement in the game is the winning, the chance to yell, "Bingo."

But for most players, winning isn't all that simple. Few are content to rely on mere chance.

Everyone has his own special lucky formula. Some players have "lucky hats" they always wear. Others will only play while sitting in their "winning seats."

Mrs. Stanczak doesn't like taking any chances, so she brings three different good-luck charms.

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SPREAD IN a neat semi-circle in front of her were: "Waldo," a rubber octopus, "Oscar," a rubber spider, and "Felix," a well-worn rabbit's foot.

"They go with me every time I play," she said.

Not all the players put stock in lucky rubber octopi. Some think the real luck lies in the numbers you have on your bingo card.

Mrs. Smith always looks for cards with the numbers 15 and 28. She explained that 15 is lucky because that's her birthday and 28 is a winner because that's the date of her wedding anniversary.

Miss Ross says she goes for the cards with 16, her birthday, and 69, her boyfriend's apartment number.

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AFTER WINNING $75, Suzi Swartz of Southfield said she thinks all 75 numbers are lucky.

But whether you had favorite numbers or you liked all 75, Mrs. Rose Kruger was the lady you saw about exchanging your cards Thursday night.

Mrs. Kruger said she thinks people exchange cards for the same reason people bet on different horses.

"It's just like betting on a horse. If you keep betting on him and he doesn't get to the winner's circle, you bet on a different horse," she said.

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NO MATTER what numbers you have on your card or what lucky paraphernalia you bring along, the whole difference between winning and losing comes down to what numbers are drawn.

Thursday night, the man who made winners of some and losers of the rest was Charles Lampert.

During regular business hours Lampert is an attorney, but on Thursday nights he's the man everyone listens to for the last number that will bring him $25.

He sits elevated on a small stage behind a microphone.

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IN FRONT of him are rows and rows of tables all littered with marking pens, broken crayons, dirty ashtrays, chips and bingo cards. Everywhere there are bingo cards.

Few players have only one card, most have four and some have as many as 14 cards to hurriedly scan each time a number is called.

The numbers are all printed on Ping Pong balls whirling inside a machine resembling a popcorn popper.

Each time Lampert picks a numbered ball from the hopper, the players check their cards for that number. If they have it, they cover the square with a chip.

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THE FIRST player in a game to cover any five squares in a row or each of the four corners, from the possible 24 squares, goes home a winner.

Lampert's manner is calm and casual. He jokes with the crowd as he calls out the numbers. He senses the growing anticipation of the players each time they edge closer to winning.

And those that lose are always anxious to begin the next game.

Workers hustled noiselessly all night distributing prize money to the previous game's winners.

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"YOU CAN'T slow up the game. They want to play," yelled Lew Kruger as he doled out $25 more to one of his co-workers.

Midway through the night there is a short break, but it doesn't last long.

"It's just enough time to go to the bathroom, get a soft drink, and visit with a friend to say, 'Oh, I never win,' " Mrs. Kruger said.

Talking books are credited with starting college career

By JACKIE KLEIN

Blind since five, Dr. Robert Russell discovered the wonders of library "talking books" many years ago.

He is now a distinguished author, scholar and English professor at a college in Lancaster, Pa.

Dr. Russell recalls how he learned to read and write twice.

"I am perched on the arm of my father's chair studying the bluish column of print from which he is reading the days adventures of Uncle Wiggily," he writes.

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"HALF of me is completely listening and the other half is silently working at the bluish column, trying desperately to figure out how my father can get a story from it."

The block of tiny, compressed shapes remained impenetrable to the young boy.

"I am hunched on the bare floor working on the first three letters of my name R-O-B. I jam the pencil down, drive the point carefully to the tip and from the letters. The O is too big."

Russell remembers sitting at his college desk years later, trying to trace from memory the loops he had practiced drawing as a child.

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"WHEN I was five, a backyard accident cost me my sight," he explains. "A curtain was drawn between me and the column of print on my father's newspaper."

"Instead of puzzling over the dense mass of odd blue shapes, I struggled with sheets of heavy paper covered with hard little pimples. Braille didn't come easy.

"But it was required in the first grade at the New York Institute for the Education of the Blind."

Russell was strongly driven by an active imagination, a love for stories and a deep need for escape. But he read Braille too slowly to get any pleasure from it.

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"MY FAMILY read to me for hours, but my attentive ears could outlast the power of any human throat. One day my older brother plunked a talking machine with a big box of records on the dining room table.

"The doors of the Library of Congress had swung open for a boy in Binghamton, New York, and they would never close."

Russell listened to "War and Peace" until 3 in the morning for days until it was over.

"Tolstoy, Melville and Plato began gradually to move into the house of my mind. The terror of living alone and not meeting inevitable challenges was shared by others thrpugh books. The pain of solitude lost its killing edge.

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"A MIRACLE had taken place. A lover is not a lover until he has an object to love. That's how I felt about talking books and still do."

When he was a senior at Yale, Russell decided to teach in a college, not a school for the blind. Nobody wanted a blind English instructor.

"I was finally interviewed by the deal of a local college who was in a bind. I got the job.

"A year later, I was awarded a fellowship for study abroad and managed to stay at Oxford for three years with the help of two Fulbrights.

Then came rejections from many colleges. In response to an application, a letter said, "You have an ace in the hole. Why don't you play it?"

Russell hasn't played it yet. He has written many books and is chairman of the English department at Franklin and Marshall College.

"The happiest accident of them all was when my brother plunked that first talking machine on the table."

Summer overseas work offered through OCC

A Peace Corp - type work experience is being offered through Oakland Community College this summer. It will take place in Africa, South America and the Caribbean for about the cost of transportation to Oakland County students.

Sponsorship is by Randolph Ston, a counselor at OCC and Volunteer for International Development.

Prof. Ston, regional director for the program said, "Anyone 18 years of age or older can apply for the six to ten week program.

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"THERE ARE 30 scholarships available on a first-come, first-served basis. Financial need, the applicants history of humanitarian service and his or her character are the important factors in the awards."

People involved will be working in assigned villages building roads, working in a clinic or possibly aiding village women with the cooking.

"Students will be given a chance to see the country and visit its top officials," said Ston.

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WHILE IN the host country, the volunteers will receive room and board through the village they are assigned to.

College credit for the program has been authorized by several Michigan and Illinois colleges, including Michigan State University.

Interested persons may obtain further information regarding the program by contacting Ston at 852-1000, ext. 231.

2 beginning basic training

Two Farmington men completed eight weeks of basic training at the U.S. Army Training Center, Armor, Ft. Knox, Ky.

They are: Pvt. John T. Hussey, 17, son of Mr. and Mrs. John H. Hussey of 29816 Club House Lane and Pvt. Bernard I. Charboneau Jr., 19, whose parents live at 32172 Loomis.

Both received instruction in drill and ceremonies, weapons, map reading, combat tactics, military courtesy, military justice, first aid and army history and traditions.

On dean's list

Shawn M. Conway, 25879 Dumas, Farmington, has been named to the dean's list for the winter term at Northwood Institute. He earned all A's.

Helene Goodman, 24297 Ridgeview, Farmington, achieved a 4.0 grade point average (straight A) during the fall semester at Eastern Michigan University.