

# the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

APRIL, 2014

NISAN, 5774

Friday evening services begin at 7:30 p.m.  
Saturday morning services begin at 9:30 a.m.

## FROM THE RABBI

I went into my desk today for a stamp and discovered a card from an old friend that I'd kept in my desk drawer for safekeeping. For a moment, I was transported back to the last time I'd seen him, and as I looked over his card again, which he wrote me shortly after his father passed away some years ago, I could feel his presence with me. In our world of text messages and emails, a handwritten note is a rarity, truly something to be treasured. We might store such keepsakes in a particular place, but this chance occurrence in my desk drawer brightened my day and tugged at my heart-strings. It brought back many happy memories of time spent together.

Finding the card made me think of a famous story from the Tanakh, from the 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter of the book of Second Kings. In the year 623 BCE, King Josiah ordered his scribes and priests to clean up the Temple, and when they had finished the job, the high priest Hilkiah reported that he'd found something—a "*sefer Torah*"—in the Temple! When the scroll was read to King Josiah, he experienced a religious revival of sorts. He rededicated himself to the path from which

he and many of his subjects had strayed during the preceding decades, and he renewed the covenant with God—and in fact all the people joined him in doing this. That chance discovery was truly life-changing for Josiah and his people.

Even biblical scholars think that this was a momentous moment for the Jewish People. Many scholars think that before this discovery, the Torah was just four books (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers)—but Josiah and his priests added the scroll that they found in the Temple on to the other four books to make the five books of the Torah. That is to say, the scroll became the fifth book, Deuteronomy—which means in Greek, "A later law", pointing to its origins hundreds of years after the first four books.

As we move from Adar into Nisan, we are contemplating all the effort it's going to take to make our kitchens ready for Passover. Going into our closets, we'll discover not only old dishes and utensils, but also old Haggadot and perhaps even newspaper clippings related to Passover that somehow ended up in our storage boxes. We might find old toys that our children or friends'

children used in prior years, a stray recipe or book, or maybe even a letter that found its way by accident in with our Passover utensils. The job of preparing for Passover is a daunting task, and it's no picnic to be sure, but the act of cleaning our homes and preparing our souls for the holiday is also an act of discovery. We search for *hametz* the night before Passover begins, but we're also going back into our past to see what we might find. I encourage you to take this opportunity to re-engage your own past even as you prepare to relive the past of our people retelling the Passover story at the Seder.

Rabbi Phil

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings & Happy almost Pesach,

We are in the leap month of Adar II & approaching Nissan, which I have discovered means "miracles". "This month shall be for you the head of the months. It shall be the first of the months of the year" (Exodus 12:2). What does this mean?

The Jewish calendar has two New Years, Rosh Hashanah (RH), on the first of Tishrei, and Pesach, Nissan 1. Where RH is a day of judgment & holds us accountable for our behavior, Pesach marks the beginning of our liberation from Egypt and teaches us that G-d watches over us. We should always remember that we are not pointless objects floating around in a self-governing world, but that we are, at every moment, under the watchful eye of G-d. We are beneficiaries of countless miracles.

Nissan is also the month of freedom. Our actions year round should be the actions of a

free people. This month, we became free, and we must *never* allow ourselves to be enslaved by our actions.

Six months separate the two New Years. The personal inventory and analysis of our mistakes and character defects, which we take note of during the solemn days of Tishrei, are very sobering tasks. On the other hand, realizing that we hold a special status as the children of G-d and that we are constantly under his watch, is exhilarating. Both attitudes are essential, but it is difficult to achieve them at the same time without confusion.

In the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, Solomon points out that we should dedicate appropriate times in life for conflicting acts & attitudes. He says, "There's a time to plant & uproot" (3:2) and "There is a time to cry and a time to laugh" (3:4), etc. A healthy adjustment to life is a delicate balancing act. With proper learning and guidance, we can learn to determine appropriate times for what we are supposed to do. So

Today I Shall: ... ***Give thought to scheduling my hours and days, so that I can achieve a healthy balance of diverse attitudes.***

From Gabi, Molly & myself, I wish you the most joyous of Pesach seasons.  
Chag Pesach Sameach,

Michelle

## SISTERHOOD

Purim was a lot of fun as we joined together for dinner and a spriel presented by BBYO and congregation members. Kudos to Holly Kent and Larisa Thomason for pulling

together the sphiel, to Brenda Liles for the hot dog dinner, and to Lauren Goodman and Shoshana Rosenthal for homemade hamantaschan. If you weren't there, you missed a load of fun and should plan to come next year.

Surin was the place for our Lunch Bunch, and we had a blast. Lunch Bunch is always a great time to get together for food and some good conversation; to visit some people you don't get to see often. The next time will be our annual meeting in May, with place and time to be announced.

March 30<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 will be our program with Max Rosenthal discussing the Arab Israeli Conflict. It's at Etz Chayim, and everyone is invited. Come join us for an afternoon of discussion. Refreshments will be served.

As I'm writing, the sun is shining outside and the day is beckoning me to forget my chores and spend an afternoon walking around my neighborhood. I believe I'll take a few minutes to do that today, because our Spring doesn't last long. I hope you can abandon your cares and take a walk for a few minutes, or do something to enjoy the sunshine too.

Until next time,  
Leigh

### MEN'S CLUB, ETC.

Men's Club meeting: **March 27**, 7:30 PM, Thursday, Synagogue; **April 29**, 7:30 PM, Tuesday, Synagogue. Come and enjoy fellowship, plenty of food and drink. What more can you ask for—fun and relaxation. Please mark these dates accordingly. RSVP.

IMS: Food Pantry & First Stop need your support. Please leave items in the container

at the entryway of Synagogue. Deliveries are made to these worthy projects biweekly.

Simcha & Memorial Plaques: \$50.00 and \$75.00 respectively. For further info, please contact Joe Sacks at 256-883-1889.

Spring is here.....ENJOY.....Joe 😊

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Jewish Federation  
of Huntsville and North Alabama

invites you to

Yom HaShoah  
Holocaust Day of Remembrance

"America in the Shadow of the Holocaust"

Guest Speaker, Leslie Kahn  
Granddaughter of Holocaust survivors who  
were rescued by Huntsville's very own  
Goldsmith family

Sunday, May 4, 2014  
2:00 p.m.  
Huntsville Museum of Art

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

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| Apr 4-6   | Rabbi Phil Weekend including<br>Matisse Copeland Bat Mitzvah   |
| Apr 06    | "G-d in a Box" at TBS, \$20, 3 PM  |
| Apr 07    | If you would like to sell your<br><i>hametz</i> for Passover, please<br>email Phil Lieberman BEFORE<br>8am on 8 April:<br><a href="mailto:phlieberman@alumni.princeton.edu">phlieberman@alumni.princeton.edu</a> |
| Apr 11,12 | "Voices of Terezin" by Ars Nova<br>at Weatherly Heights Baptist<br>Church  |

Apr 29 Men's Club, 7:30 PM at EC  
May 04 JFHNA Yom Hashoah, 2 PM at  
Huntsville Museum of Art

Please join Mark and Tatjana Copeland in a  
Bat Mitzvah celebration for

Matisse Copeland

Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 10am  
Etz Chayim Synagogue

Kiddush Luncheon following service  
Dinner at 6:30pm, 514 Mill Rd Madison, AL  
[copela\\_m@bellsouth.net](mailto:copela_m@bellsouth.net) to rsvp

## ONEGS

4/04 Copeland  
4/11 Edmondson  
4/18 Roberts  
4/25 Wiederecht  
5/02 Leites

## BIRTHDAYS

4/02 Dr. Arthur Polin  
4/04 Diane Belsky  
4/04 Dorothy Goldberg  
4/06 Eli Sacks  
4/10 Tatjana Copeland  
4/15 Sandy Kalachman  
4/15 Howard Polin  
4/17 Lynne Edmondson  
4/18 Jacob Sacks  
4/19 Joshua Brigadier  
4/19 Gavin Hancock  
4/21 Blake Zelickson  
4/21 Megan Polin  
4/22 Lisa Roberts Harris  
4/23 Susan Levitt  
4/27 Gary Hall

## ANNIVERSARIES

4/03 Leigh & Randy Miller  
4/08 Haley & Michael Rosenthal  
4/30 Sharon & Jeff Yalowitz

## YAHREZEITS

4/02 Nissan 02 Hersh Tzvi Bayers  
4/03 Nisan 03 Robert Lukin\*  
4/07 Nisan 07 Paul Schlein\*  
4/07 Nisan 07 Gertrude Schlein\*  
4/08 Nisan 08 Morris Wittenstein\*  
4/09 Nisan 09 Cecil Hollenberg\*  
4/10 Nisan 10 Irwin Goldstein\*  
4/10 Nisan 10 Gerson Garbeil  
4/11 Nisan 11 Norman Greenbaum  
4/15 Nisan 15 Yakov Cszerny Drake  
4/15 Nisan 15 Yolanda Cszerny Drake  
4/16 Nisan 16 Marvin M. Schreiber  
4/16 Nisan 16 Lilian Jaffee  
4//20 Nisan 29 Henry Sevin  
4/22 Nisan 22 Simon Blum\*  
4/23 Nisan 23 Leo I. Goldberger  
4/29 Nisan 29 Joseph Goldstein\*  
4/30 Nisan 30 Leo Ginsburg

\*Memorial Plaque

\*\*Light Memorial candle at sunset the prior evening

## MAZELS

To: Skylar Green, daughter of Holly Kent, for  
being offered and accepting an internship for  
the Summer in Israel with the Knesset.

To: Esti Trudeau, daughter of Miry & Richard  
Trudeau, for being awarded the City of  
Huntsville/CAFY Young Citizen Award.

## SELL YOUR HAMETZ

If you would like to sell your *hametz* for Passover, please email Phil Lieberman at [phlieberman@alumni.princeton.edu](mailto:phlieberman@alumni.princeton.edu) BEFORE 8am on 8 April.

## LOST

Please look in your closet for a black wool coat (finger length, London Fog) taken by mistake from the Etz Chayim entryway. If found, please contact Diana Polin at 256-533-6669.

## DONATIONS

### General Fund

From: Marie & Mike Sumerall  
In Honor of our friends at Etz Chayim.

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal  
To: Carla & Robert Krigelman - Mazel Tov on the birth of your newest grandchild. Wishing the entire family good health and much happiness.  
To: Diane & Stan Belsky - We are thinking of you. Sorry to learn about the loss of Stan's sister, Edith Gross.

From: Kimberly Reece

### BBYO Fund

From: Shirley & Ted Roberts  
To: Diane & Stan Belsky - Sorry to hear about the loss of Stan's sister, Edith Gross. We are thinking of you.

### Sisterhood Fund

From: Sandra Wiederecht  
To: Carla & Robert Krigelman - Mazel Tov on the birth of your newest grandchild.

To: Diana & Stan Belsky - In Memory of Edith Gross.

### Outdoor Lighting Fund

In Memory of Gertrude & Perry Schlein from their daughters Natha Hancock and Robin Schlein and their families.

## VIRTUOUS JOSEPH – NATIONMAKER, by Ted Roberts

“Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.” Genesis 15:13

Have we ever considered that the morality of Joseph, son of Jacob, determined the destiny of the Jewish people? You might even say that the fate of the Judeo Christian world hinged on the character of Joseph, son of Hebrew shepherds. History held her breath. Judaism and Christianity were at stake.

I refer to that pivotal incident when Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife. Remember that with the exception of Moses, Joseph is the sun, moon, and stars of the biblical galaxy. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and Solomon – good people, but many of them struck with flaws still to be seen in all of mankind, which is only to say that they were not perfect. Joseph comes close. And with world-shaping results.

The proof? Potiphar's wife – Joseph's boss's wife – sees Joe doing his work one day. WOW! Goes her feminine heart. “Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance,” says the Chumash. A singular statement made about no other character. Potiphar's wife is a blunt-speaking lady: “Come lie with me,” she purrs. Instead of

ripping off his clothes (Joe hesitates for a nanosecond - he is human, you know) – he replies with a speech that cites his obligations (and gratitude to Potiphar) – none of which includes pleasuring his wife. Joseph, in an age of lascivious misbehavior, has a soul pure white as snow. The wife, probably an ex-street walker screams rape. (She's so unimportant we don't get her name unless it's "Heyuu".) But she grabs a chunk of his sleeve.

The libidinous ex-street walker swears that he assaulted her, look his sleeve! Joe claims his innocence, but who is going to believe a slave. Joe finds himself in jail where he enters the dream interpretation business. Business booms and our ex-prisoner finds himself in Pharaoh's court. They need a dream reader. You know the rest of the story – how, eventually, he brings his family to Egypt. They prosper and grow until that pharaoh, who knew not Joe, enslaves the Israelites. What follows? The Exodus, Sinai, Torah – all of which made Judaism and the world as we know it.

All because of Jacob's son's virtue. It's incredible that one man who turned his back on lust and disloyalty could shape our world. Yes, Generals have politically carved new nations on the globe with their martial skills. And politicians have drawn new maps and great collectives of similarly minded people and constructed new nations. But it's hard to find a single act of virtue that has created a people and their mission – a mission so fitting to their charter – a provenance built in the resistance to treachery and rejection of lustful love. Put it any way you like: Tikuun Olam – a lamp to a barbaric world. When Joseph said "no" to temptation, G-d smiled and future Napoleons, Caesars, and even Einsteins were diminished. And Joe's weapon was not muskets or theology, but

intellect.

It seems unnecessary to point out that had he yielded to his normal desires, the most explosive event in history – the Epiphany at Sinai – would never have happened. Fate would not have pushed him into the ruling circle at Egypt. Pharaoh would have said "no" to a few dozen starving shepherders from Canaan who wanted grazing land in Egypt. And Judaism would be a footnote to history.

The shepherders, yes, were enslaved. But their trek to freedom, lit by the lamp of G-d, encountered Torah and brightened the world. Joseph, the man who made a nation.

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## "THE VOICES OF TEREZIN" AND ELA WEISBERGER

The next Ars Nova production, entitled "The Voices of Terezin", will be performed at the Weatherly Heights Baptist Church (1306 Cannstatt Drive Huntsville) on April 11th and 12th.

"The Voices of Terezin" will feature Tony Kushner's English translation of the original opera BRUNDIBAR, with a libretto by Adolf Hoffmeister that was set to music by Hans Kraása and was completed in 1938. It was performed fifty-five times by the children of Terezín Concentration Camp, rarely by the same cast as children were deported east. Kraása, also Jewish, was killed in Auschwitz in 1944.

The story of BRUNDIBAR begins with a poor family in crisis. The father has died, and the



mother has fallen sick. Her two children go to sing in the town square to raise money for the milk she must have to get well. Brundibar, the town bully, chases them away, but three hundred children and several talking animals come to their rescue. The townspeople then shower the two children with cash and they, along with a cop, a cat, a dog and a sparrow drive the bully, Brundibar, from the square. The children go home with the milk for their ailing mother.

The Ars Nova production of BRUNDIBAR will be styled after the book and the opera produced by Maurice Sendak and Tony Kushner.

Also featured in "The Voices of Terezin" will be Charles Davidson's "I Never Saw Another Butterfly" Song Cycle for Soprano, which is based upon the book of the same name that collected drawings and poems from children who lived in the Terezin Concentration Camp from 1942-1944. Christie Weber is the featured performer for the Butterfly Song Cycle and will be accompanied by an ensemble from Huntsville Community Children's Chorus (HCCC) and Ars Nova singers prepared by Lea Hoppe, the director of HCCC.

A very special guest will come to Huntsville from her home in Tappan, NY to support Ars Nova's production. Mrs. Ela Stein Weisberger will provide a pre-show discussion of her experiences at Terezin. She was eleven years old in February of 1942, when she was sent to the Terezin Concentration Camp with other Czech Jews. By the time she was liberated in 1945, she was fifteen. Somehow during those horrendous three-and-a-half years of sickness, terror, separation from loved ones, and loss, Ela managed to grow up. While in Terezin, she was chosen to play the pivotal

role of the cat in BRUNDIBAR. Now 83 years old, she still travels around the world to talk about her experiences. She will describe the tragedy and sorrow of the Holocaust, but she is persistent in her belief that humans can triumph over evil. Alabama is very fortunate that she will be visiting Huntsville.

References: 1)

<http://www.pbs.org/now/arts/brundibar.html> and 2) The Cat with the Yellow Star: Coming of Age in Terezin Hardcover by Susan Goldman Rubin (Author), Ela Weisberger (Author)

## ETZ CHAYIM VIDEO HISTORY PROJECT

A project is underway to capture the history of Etz Chayim Congregation through video. The project was conceived several years ago, and has been organized by Ann Sheree Greenbaum and Carla Evans (Krigelman).

Participants sit down with a moderator and answer a few questions about their personal history, the founding of the synagogue, and Jewish life in Huntsville and Northern Alabama in times past. Participants are welcome to digress from the line of questions as they wish, and just tell their stories about Etz Chayim. The ensuing discussion lasts a total of about an hour. Any person/family that has been a member of Etz Chayim is welcome to participate. The amount of time you have been associated with Etz Chayim does not matter. Each participant (couple, family) will receive a dvd with their own story. The project will be edited and a final document will be kept at the Synagogue. Depending on interest we may sell the completed project as a fund raiser for the synagogue.

So far, several founders and long-time members of the congregation have participated, and your contribution to the project is desired. If you are interested in participating in the project, please contact Carla at 256-665-3090 or by email at [cjevans1@gmail.com](mailto:cjevans1@gmail.com).

Thank you,  
Carla Evans



## *Huntsville Hadassah*

We had our Tea, Sunday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, and had a wonderful speaker, Lucy Fisher, who talked about a program that she recently did called Volunteers for Israel. The main discussion at this Tea was the future of Huntsville Hadassah. Please see below a letter from our Regional Vice President, Gwen Cooper-Simon. If anyone is interested in continuing our Chapter, please contact Gwen by April 15<sup>th</sup>.

I would like to thank the Huntsville Hadassah board, Sara Crocker, Ann van Leeuwen, Clare Grisham, Michelle Lapidus, Lydia Honan, and Larisa Thomason. Without this board, Huntsville Hadassah would not have been as successful as it has been for so many years. I also want to thank each of you for your many years of support.

*Ann Denbo*

*~ Please read the letter below from our Area Vice President ~*

March 22, 2014

Dear Hadassah Sisters,

My name is Gwen Cooper, and I am your area vice president, meaning that I am a consultant, friend, and advisor to the Huntsville Chapter of Hadassah. In recent weeks, Ann, Sara and I have been discussing the difficulties facing the continuity of the chapter. The present Board of Huntsville have gone above and beyond juggling personal responsibilities with chapter responsibilities for years and it has become an untenable situation.

I want to tell you a little bit about myself; I am also President of Auburn Chapter and we are just 4 years out. We only have maybe 18 members but we all joined just like you did, something about Hadassah touched us, maybe it was the medical research, the hospital, the college, maybe the good works rescuing the kids from dire situations; maybe it was just because your friends are in Hadassah and that's where you went! No matter the reason, Hadassah will only survive because of you, one woman had a vision and it still depends on the one woman, each and every one of us to carry it out!

I am also an ob/gyn physician in solo practice with as you can imagine 24/7 kind of days, but if you will make the time, there is always time for the important things, and I count Hadassah as one of the important "things". Now, please reach into your heart, and think about why you joined, why you send your hard earned money to Hadassah, and give just a little bit of the most precious commodity, your time to your chapter.

Send me an email and tell me that you will give some time to pull the chapter together, I am not asking for anyone to assume any positions or promise a set concrete time, just a willingness to work with your chapter and get her back on the road to viability and productivity, all your good efforts in the past need to continue onto the future!

In front of me is a list of 109 ladies, how wonderful would it be for me to sit down with you all and we can solve this situation together.....

Best,

*Gwen*

[gwencoopersimon@bellsouth.net](mailto:gwencoopersimon@bellsouth.net)