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# the Shofar



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Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

JUNE, 2015

SIVAN/TAMUZ, 5775

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

## FROM RABBI STEPHEN LISTFIELD

Dear members of the Etz Chayim family,

Leslie and I were delighted to meet you during the weekend of May 15-17. You are a lovely community! I was especially impressed with your vibrant participation in singing and *davening*.

Try to guess how many Talmud study groups took place in the entire state of Alabama in the early 2000's. In Yiddish! With the study partners dressed in prison fatigues!! I don't know how many, but I participated in one of them. (I hasten to explain that I was wearing civilian clothes.)

When I was rabbi at the Conservative synagogue in Montgomery, I received a call from the chaplain at the federal prison there. He's a Baptist, and he asked me if I could help him because he was serving a growing number of Jewish prisoners. How many Jewish prisoners? More than you'd think. So I became the Jewish chaplain at FPC (Federal Prison Camp, Montgomery), visiting our kinsmen every other week in order to study, pray and bring them good cheer. Among my flock were quite a few *chasidim*

from Brooklyn. These fellows were intensely serious about their religion -- heads always covered and tzitzit hanging out from their prison uniforms -- and a couple of the men were the ones I studied Talmud with in the prison courtyard. That was for me a tableau not to be forgotten!

Whenever I talk about my happy years in Alabama of leading a congregation and pastoring the Jews in prison, the question always arises as to how such pious people could be so dishonest. FPC is for white-collar crimes; the inmates were not violent. But still, how could people practice sacred ritual to the most exacting degree and nonetheless lie and cheat and steal?

I'm here to tell you that I don't know the answer. *Akav halev mikol* — "The human heart is the most complex thing," says the prophet Jeremiah. What I can say is that there are many ways to ignore or misuse or pervert religion. The faithful and fervent can be unethical and for that matter the scoffers and skeptics can be unethical. Our task is to be ethical.

To me the most important Jewish statement is *lo nitnu hamitzvot elah le-tzoref bahen et*

*ha-briyot* — "The whole purpose of the *mitzvot* is to make us more ethical and more sensitive." As one rebbe said, "If you go to synagogue, and a few hours later you leave the synagogue, and you're the same person going out as you were coming in — then why did you go to synagogue?"

Jewish teaching, Jewish living, Jewish observance; the Jewish temple and the Jewish community -- all exist in order to help us become better people. Now, we should always be humble about how good we are and how much better we are becoming. But ethical living is absolutely the core of our religious teaching. To be Jewish is to strive to be kind, to be thoughtful, to be helpful, to be honest; to "do justice and love mercy" (Micah 6:8). Etz Chayim is, from what I've seen, a wonderful community. Let us keep striving to keep becoming even better.

Best wishes from Leslie and me,  
Stephen Listfield, Rabbi

## UPCOMING EVENTS

May 24, 25

Shavuot services begin at 9:30 AM, with Yizkor on Monday, the 25<sup>th</sup>, at approximately 10:30 AM. Services followed by Kiddush.

May 31 Congregational meeting, 11AM, EC

Jun 07 Etz Chayim Picnic on Green Mtn.

Jun 16 JFHNA meeting

Jun 23 Men's Club meeting at EC, 7:30 PM

Jun 28 String Concert Benefit at EC, Noon

July 10 New Year Book entries due date.

Aug 28-30

Bluff City Bash, 20's & 30's Jewish singles event in Memphis

## ONEG SIGNUP OPPORTUNITY

Hello, from the desk of the Oneg Chair. As we have 26 Fridays without sponsors from July 5 to December 25, if every family participates once every 6 months we are spreading this task evenly across the congregation. To schedule a date you will sponsor, please email: [etzchayimoneg@gmail.com](mailto:etzchayimoneg@gmail.com) or call me (my phone number is in the yearbook).

If you have never sponsored the drinks and dessert for a Friday night at the synagogue, you can find information online, at the Etz Chayim website [etzchayim-hsv.org](http://etzchayim-hsv.org), and/or I can pair you up with a partner. So, go ahead and get your date in mind.

Thank you,

Lynne Edmondson

[Etzchayimoneg@gmail.com](mailto:Etzchayimoneg@gmail.com)

## MEN'S CLUB, ETC.

Next meeting: June 23, Tuesday, 7:30 PM at the Synagogue

IMS: Deliveries made bi-weekly to Food Pantry and First Stop. Please support these worthy projects by dropping off items in the entry way of the Synagogue.

Synagogue Annual Picnic: June 7, Sunday, 11:30 at Green Mountain Nature Trail. Directions: take a left off Bailey Cove Road to Green Mountain Road, follow the sign going East (approx. 7 miles up the mountain) to the Nature Trail. Bring a picnic lunch. Men's Club will sponsor the desserts. For info contact Joe Sacks, 256-883-1889. It's a family affair. Let's have a great turnout. See u there.

Simcha & Memorial Plaques: \$50.00 & \$75.00, respectively. For further info, please call Joe Sacks.

Have a wonderful day, every day... JOE 😊

## SISTERHOOD

Well, this year has flown by. I would like to thank all of my Board members, the Past Presidents who still come to our board meetings and the Committee Chairmen for their incredible support. They have helped tirelessly for every planned and unplanned event. They love this synagogue and care very much. I give to them my thanks and gratitude. I couldn't have asked for a better group of people to be associated with. I would also like to thank all of the ladies and gentlemen who worked so hard to bring us those wonderful Rabbi Luncheons. They all made an effort to present us not only with great food, but they also went out of their way to make sure that there was something there that everyone could eat.

Congratulations to our graduates. I wish them much luck in their future endeavors.

Sisterhood will begin working on the New Year Greeting and Memorial Booklet for 2015 this month. Look for your notice in the mail. Please continue to support this fundraiser, which earns funds for lots of things throughout the year.

I am already looking forward to next year. Hoping that we will be able to complete more of those events that are on our bucket list. There is always room for improvement and innovation.

Thanks to all our Sisterhood members that were always there for me with help and advice. Both were very much appreciated.

Sandra Wiederecht, President  
256-797-4013

## GOOD NEWS

We love to hear good news! Our warmest "Mazel Tov!" to our families for the following accomplishments:

College Graduates:

Skylar Green - Bachelor of Science, Magnum Cum Laude, in Political Science with a minor in Sociology - Emory University, BA in International Law from Emory, 2014. Plans to enjoy a gap year in NYC before Law School.

Ivan Barnett Levingston, grandson of Howard Levingston - finished his sophomore year at Harvard (took a gap year in Israel). Accepted a summer job in Washington, DC, writing for "Roll Call," which reports on Congress.

Blake Zelickson - Tel Aviv University Medical School- Medical Doctor degree, Residency in Dermatology at Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn, NY

High School Graduates:

Lucas Copeland - James Clemens High School- awarded Spirit of Auburn Scholarship- will attend Auburn

Molly Lapidus- The Pinnacle Schools- will attend Calhoun

Miranda Bernice Levingston, granddaughter of Howard Levingston - Springside Chestnut Hill Academy (in the Philadelphia area), planning to take a gap year in Israel before matriculating at New York University

Middle School Graduates:

Matisse Copeland- Home School-will attend Home High School

Jordan Hall- Challenger Middle School- will attend Grissom High School

### A STRING CONCERT TO BENEFIT FIRST STOP & FOOD PANTRY

There will be a String Concert on June 28, 12-2pm at Etz Chayim Synagogue. The string group known as Consort a l'Ancienne will perform. A light lunch will be held at noon, followed by Jewish liturgical and Klezmer music at 1pm. Admission for this fundraiser: please bring 5 items for First Stop and Food Pantry in lieu of tickets.

Enjoy a concert of Jewish music and help your community.

### AN INVITATION

It is with great excitement and enthusiasm that Rabbi Elizabeth and Uzi Bahar invite you to celebrate the traditional Jewish ceremony of Baby Naming and a Bris (ritual circumcision) for their son which will take place eight days following his birth.

The ceremony will be held at Temple B'nai Sholom for our family and friends, and we very much hope that you will be able to attend.

### DONATIONS

#### General Fund

From: Sandy and Marvin Kalachman Anniversary Plaque

From: Natha and Scott Hancock

#### Rabbi Fund

From: Millie and Max Rosenthal  
To: Janet Schindler – Whishing you a speedy and walking recovery.

From: Lucy and Charlie Fisher

#### Sisterhood Fund

From: Diana and Howard Polin  
To: Janet Schindler – Rush your recovery, we miss you. Lots of Love.  
To: Shirley and Ted Roberts – We want you both feeling good. Much love to you.  
To: Millie Rosenthal – Heal quickly and stay well. We love you.

#### BBYO

From: BJ and Bill Brigadier

#### Outdoor Lighting Fund

In Memory of Gertrude and Perry Schlein from their loving daughters, Natha Hancock and Robin Slomka and their families.

### ONEGS

May 22	Berger
May 29	Copeland
Jun 05	Meyer
Jun 12	Levitt
Jun 19	Yalowitz
Jun 26	Spraggins

## BIRTHDAYS

Jun 01	Jeffrey Zelickson
Jun 03	Benjamin Yalowitz
Jun 10	Adam Liles
Jun 19	Jacob Copeland
Jun 19	Sheree Greenbaum
Jun 26	Natha Hancock
Jun 30	Bill Brigadier

## ANNIVERSARIES

Jun 05	Brenda & Cliff Liles
Jun 27	Diane & Stan Belsky

## YAHREZEITS\*\*

May 28	Sivan 10	Molly Meyer
Jun 02	Sivan 15	Harry Kaufman*
Jun 03	Sivan 16	Myrna Klazmer
Jun 04	Sivan 17	Harriet B. Schlein*
Jun 07	Sivan 20	Julius Strimling*
Jun 12	Sivan 25	Goldie N. Brown
Jun 14	Sivan 27	Al Krupnick*
Jun 17	Sivan 30	Phyllis E.A. Schreiber
Jun 22	Tamuz 05	Charles Klazmer
Jun 22	Tamuz 05	Doris Mae Aaronson Kirshtein
Jun 22	Tamuz 05	Morris Schindler
Jun 23	Tamuz 06	Abraham Kalachman*
Jun 23	Tamuz 06	Meyer (Mike) Zelickson*
Jun 24	Tamuz 07	Jacob Milton Ludmer*
Jun 24	Tamuz 07	Jacob Zarovsky
Jun 24	Tamuz 07	Virginia Johanna McDonald*
Jun 26	Tamuz 09	Etta B. Roberts
Jun 27	Tamuz 10	Rose Flashner*
Jul 01	Tamuz 14	Gary Shelman
Jul 05	Tamuz 18	Sam Goldstein*
Jul 05	Tamuz 18	Benjamin Sinker*

\* Plaque

\*\*Light Memorial candle at sunset of the previous evening

## FATHERS OF THE TANACH: AND TODAY

By Ted Robert

Father's Day inspires us to consider the Tanach and the colorful parade of fathers and sons that march through its pages. I must be as honest as the Torah is honest and report that this is not a totally uplifting experience. Fathers and sons - a complex duality, especially in our book. And in bible times nobody's camel had a sign on its rear end asking if you hugged your kids that morning. There is not much affection in the biblical male world - including fathers and sons - though that grand reunion of Joseph and Jacob is a touching scene. "Joseph wept on his neck a long while."

But first we have Abraham and Isaac. Yes, it's good to obey the Lord when he demands the almost ultimate sacrifice. But Isaac must have been mildly depressed until he saw the ram caught in the thicket and realized he was off the hook. I would guess that after this misadventure, their father-son relationship wasn't what it used to be. I don't think they attended the wrestling matches in the meadow like they did in the old days. The Chumash is silent on their later relationship.

Isaac grows up and begets Jacob. Shepherding must be a full time occupation, like managing Microsoft, because Isaac, like his father before him, does not dedicate a lot of attention to Young Jacob. In fact, who can forget that great historical deception wherein Jacob, with the help of Mama and a bowl of savory stew, steals the blessing? (Emeril would have used a generous handful of chopped garlic and a spoonful of cumin. The Chumash doesn't even mention salt and pepper!) Another father-son inter-generational failure!!

It gets worse. Jacob, the spiceless goat-stew chef, suffers a commensurate punishment with his own unruly boys who, in turn, deceive their father about Joseph, his favorite son. Thinking him dead, there's no communication for a couple of decades between the two - not a single letter. Finally, they have that enthusiastic reunion in Egypt. All's well - in this relationship - that ends well.

The next significant father and son drama features David and his boys. It almost cannot be told in a family publication like the Tanach. David must have used an early version of Dr. Spock's childrearing manual to raise his brood. David's permissiveness results in a son who - ahem - forces himself upon a half-sister; and much worse, a son, Absalom, who tries to steal his father's throne. David - ever the loving father - cries at his death.

And let's not forget Jonathan, Son of Saul. Crazy King Saul, who was as green as the meadows of Sharon - with Jealousy of David. So, who was David's best pal? Every Sunday School child knows the answer. Saul's own son, Jonathan! whose loyalty to his friend exceeds his love for father Saul. Another flawed relationship. Fathers and sons - as dysfunctional in the Tanach as in real life. But is that not the test of truth, in our Holy Book?

In real life still, as in the Chumash, it's a rare grown-up child who, looking back on father, doesn't shed a few hidden tears of regret over youthful inattention - to the imperfect man who, along with mother, gave him life. Sins of omission. What adult son has not thought: I wish I had said this, done that. Given some signal of love and appreciation; especially to the departed father. Gifts no longer work. We can only give him his dream

- we can be what he wanted us to be. Mothers, on the other hand, are easy to love. Their job, like a heart pumps oxygen, is giving and receiving love. But a father's love is not so visible. And not near as easy to return. The Tanach understands this.

The humor of Ted, the Scribbler on the roof, appears in newspapers around the US, on National Public Radio, and numerous web sites. Buy Ted's collected works at Amazon.com or the Sisterhood Gift Shop.