
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

DECEMBER, 2015

KISLEV/TEVET, 5775

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

FROM RABBI STEPHEN LISTFIELD

Syrian Refugees and the Holocaust

A lot of rabbis are taking positions on the matter of Syrian refugees. The “default” position for a rabbi seems obvious: A Jew has to be compassionate. A Jew has to welcome the stranger. We Jews know what it means to have doors shut in our faces when we were fleeing oppression, so it behooves us to argue for opening our doors to the Syrians who are seeking refuge today. As Rabbi Jennie Rosenn of HIAS said, “For the first time in Jewish history, our community is mobilizing in force to help refugees – not because they are Jewish, but because we are.”

The issue might not be as overwhelming as the public bombast would have it. For example, Carly Fiorina announced that she’s “angry that President Obama unilaterally decides that we’ll accept up to 100,000 Syrian refugees.” Donald Trump said that “Our president wants to take in 250,000 from Syria.” But in fact, President Obama has only directed the

United States to accept at least 10,000 Syrian refugees next year. (Note, however, that the number could be significantly raised for 2017.)

In any case, this is a very hot topic among our American Jewish community. And in contrast to my many colleagues who profess to know what America should do about an influx of Syrians, I freely admit that I do not know. My study of the topic suggests that there is legitimacy to both sides of the question.

So what is the point of my article? It’s not to announce that I can’t solve a thorny political problem. It is rather to tell you that I absolutely reject the tiresome comparison of Syrian refugees today with Jewish refugees of 75 years ago. How many times have I seen reference to Syrians and the Holocaust? — One time is too many.

Syrians have a homeland. It’s called Syria. The Jews of Europe in World War II did not have a homeland. That’s enough of a difference already. Syrians are being killed (by their own leader) and are being

displaced, but no one has promised genocide against them. But genocide is precisely what was promised to, and was enacted against, the Jews of Europe. The Syrian refugees are *Arabs*, and there are vast spaces within the huge Arab empires that can take in their brothers and sisters. The Jews of Europe were *Jews*, and you can bet that no country thought of Jews as their brothers and sisters.

I try to avoid giving political opinions. I'm a rabbi not a pundit. But I write this article with some degree of passion. I don't announce what America should do about most political issues. But I do know a bad political analogy when I see one.

Sincerely,

Stephen Listfield

CHANUKAH 5776 (2015)

From Rabbi Stephen Listfield

Chanukah this year begins Sunday night, December 6 and continues through Monday, December 14. We wish everyone a happy Chanukah, and we add the prayer that our Festival of Lights may bring light to all parts of the world. Too many people are veiled in darkness. Too many creeds preach hatred and ignorance. This year as much as any year when Chanukah comes around we ask, Let there be light!

From Myjewishlearning.com

What is Hanukkah?
Hanukkah commemorates the victory of the ancient Israelites over the Syrian-Greek army, and the subsequent miracle of

restoring the menorah in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. The miracle of Hanukkah is that only one vial of oil was found with just enough oil for one day, and yet it lasted for eight full days.

How Do You Celebrate Hanukkah?

We celebrate Hanukkah at home by lighting the menorah (each night we light one additional candle to the number from the previous night), playing dreidel, and eating special foods unique to Hanukkah. Some people also sing Hanukkah songs or exchange gifts after lighting the menorah.

What are Hanukkah Foods?

Many Hanukkah foods are deep-fried in oil, symbolizing the oil from the menorah used in the Temple. These include latkes, or potato pancakes, and jelly doughnuts. Many also make the Sephardic delicacy *bimuelos* and use, of course, applesauce as a topping.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dec 01	Men's Club meeting
Dec 4-6	Rabbi Listfield Shabbaton
Dec 05	Rabbi Luncheon followed by discussion "Shouldn't ISIS learn to celebrate Chanukah?"
Dec 07	Sunday Brunch & discussion "Who tripped our father Jacob?"
Dec 13	Latke Party & Bingo, 11:30, EC
Jan 18	Sisterhood Game Night

MEN'S CLUB, ETC.

Men's Club Meeting: 1 Dec, Tuesday, 7:30 PM at the Synagogue

IMS: Deliveries made bi-weekly to Food Pantry and First Stop. Please bring food packages, cans and personal hygiene items and place them in the container in the Synagogue lobby.

Hanukah Latke Party: Dec 13, Sunday. Men's Club will sponsor free BINGO starting at 11:30 AM, with a latke and huge salad bar lunch (\$7 for adults) to follow.

See you there. Thanks.....Joe😊

SISTERHOOD

Greetings! The months are going by so fast. It is hard to believe that it is already December. The Sisterhood has been very busy this year. We have had wonderful turnouts for our events. If you have not joined the Sisterhood yet there is still time. Please support YOUR Sisterhood.

Don't forget our gift shop is open, and Holly has done a wonderful job setting it up and purchasing lots of new, quality items. We also have a great variety of gift wrap. Thank you so much, Holly, for your hard work. It is very much appreciated. Thanks also to your helper, Skyler. It was wonderful to see you and your help was also much appreciated.

This week we had our Craft Event: wine, cheese, other goodies and a painting art project. We had a very large crowd, and Natalie Young did an incredible job teaching us to paint a Tree of Life. They were all different, memorable and beautiful. Thank you very much, Natalie for your patience, help, kindness, and expertise. Thanks also to Shoshanna Rosenthal for helping out. I felt that we all had fun and went home with a

feeling of accomplishment. Some of us have never been able to draw anything that we would show in public, and Monday we left with plans to hang up our creations. We were having such a good time that even when we were finished painting, no one was in a rush to leave. We enjoyed each other's company. It was a great night. Thank you again, Natalie.

Our next event will be the third Monday in January (18th.) We are planning a Game Night. Any suggestions that you have for different games you would like to play are welcome. We would love your input.

Sandra Wiederecht (256) 797-4013

DONATIONS

General Fund

From: Renate Stone
In support of the Onegs

BBYO Fund

From: Diana & Howard Polin
To: Isabella Garbeil - In Honor of your Bat Mitzvah

Rabbi Fund

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal
Thanks to Rabbi Listfield for an informative and wonderful weekend.
To Shirley & Ted Roberts - Good news that your daughter Lisa Harris's surgery is over and she is doing well.
To: Linda Kolchin - Thank you for presenting the congregation with a delightful Israeli movie night.

From: Shirley & Ted Roberts
Great Rabbi weekend.

From: Nannette Schwartz
To: Christie and Richard Berry - In Honor of
your wedding.
To: Lynne Edmondson - Wishing you a
happy retirement.

From: Victor Haas
In appreciation for Bill Goldberg's Hebrew
Class

From: Lucy & Charlie Fisher
In Honor of the marriage of Christie and
Richard Berry.

From: Sandy & Marvin Kalachman
In Memory of Baby Devorah Leah Cohen,
daughter of Rabbi Moshe & Mushky Cohen

From: The Hebrew Class

Outdoor Lighting Fund

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

ONEGS

Dec 04	Berry
Dec 11	Goodman
Dec 18	Hancock
Dec 25	Schwartz

BIRTHDAYS

Dec 04	Joe Paddock
Dec 06	Gabi Lapidus
Dec 11	Charlie Fisher
Dec 12	Nicole Sacks
Dec 13	Joe Roberts
Dec 13	Martin Freeman
Dec 16	Sue Paddock

Dec 18	Dennis Bulgatz
Dec 25	Holly Kent
Dec 27	Kaitlin Polin
Dec 31	Joshua Dixon

THANK YOU

To the Etz Chayim Community,

The Berry Family would like to extend a
heart-felt, "Thank You," to everyone for
supporting us in our recent wedding event!
With the help and participation of our Etz
Chayim Family and many Friends our
wedding was more wonderful than we could
have ever imagined! We could not have
done it without every one of you! Toda
Rabah!

ANNIVERSARIES

Dec 14	Lucy & Charles Fisher
Dec 23	Dorothy & Bill Goldberg

YAHREZEITS**

Nov 30	Kislev 18	Lily Yedid
Dec 04	Kislev 22	Yetta Michaelson
Dec 07	Kislev 25	Katherine Harris
Dec 09	Kislev 27	Moe Post
Dec 10	Kislev 28	David Amiel Wertheim*
Dec 10	Kislev 28	Morris Freeman
Dec 11	Kislev 29	Rita Goldstein*
Dec 13	Tevet 01	Meyer Rodkin*
Dec 15	Tevet 03	Max Theodor Hoehne*
Dec 16	Tevet 04	Freida Makower*
Dec 18	Tevet 06	Fannie Ginsburg
Dec 18	Tevet 06	Estelle Okeon
Dec 20	Tevet 08	Dan Polin*
Dec 21	Tevet 09	Florence Goldstein*

Dec 21	Tevet 09	Rose Kahn*
Dec 24	Tevet 12	Gilbert Brodtkin
Dec 24	Tevet 12	Lou Herbin*
Dec 24	Tevet 12	Bea Smolker*
Dec 26	Tevet 14	Betty K. Greenberg
Dec 28	Tevet 16	Bertha P. Smolker*
Dec 29	Tevet 17	Joseph Cohen*
Dec 30	Tevet 18	Howard S. McCall
Dec 31	Tevet 19	Bruce Roberts*
Jan 01	Tevet 20	Abigail Michaela Sawyer*
Jan 01	Tevet 20	Alex Harris

CHANUKAH: THE WAY WE WERE

By Ted Roberts

Wow, has Chanukah changed! In my day it was a thrifty, little holiday wherein kids received a few coins on each of the eight days. A thin, silver dime was a pleasant surprise on the first night of the Holiday.

In my time - and we're talking the forties - Chanukah meant only a dime - maybe a quarter if you were a world-class kid. It also meant potato latkes, naturally; and a visit to grandparents and aunts.

We kids lined up in front of Great Aunt Dora - the mother of all grandmothers. The line ended at a deep armchair that Aunt Dora filled up nicely. She was old and large. And she smelled like her kitchen, whose walls were impregnated with sixty years of onion odors. When your parents pushed you into Aunt Dora's arms, you knew right away she was an olympic fryer of onions. And when you kissed her, you couldn't help thinking that she probably loved cold goose grease smeared on pumpernickel.

But on Chanukah it was worth it because after the oniony hug, she pressed a coin into

your little hand. She gazed steadily into your eyes and with her hands on yours, folded your finger around a dime? A quarter? A half dollar? Who knew? The protocol of the event called for you to answer her steady gaze with your own and not immediately examine your gift. That was greedy. The bag beside her was full of coins - from nickels to silver dollars. Maybe, I thought, she rewarded the best huggers and kissers with silver dollars. And the shrinkers who only offered a light squeeze - trying to avoid all those onion fumes - earned only nickels. I was usually strong enough to squeeze a quarter out of the ordeal. My cousin, Arlene - a wily charmer who was manipulative enough to visit Aunt Dora a week BEFORE Chanukah - always scored with a shiny silver dollar.

Besides visits to Aunt Dora, coins, and potato cakes, the holiday featured frequent re-telling of the feats of the Maccabee brothers, the leaders of the ragged Jewish army that ambushed the Syrian hordes of Antiochus in Judea's mountain passes. It was a glorious victory. It was one of our few victories. The year, remember, was early forties, pre-Israel. Jewish victories were as rare as those of the Washington Senators on the baseball field. In fact, as far as we kids understood history, the last time a Jewish army had won a war was the face-off with the Canaanites. And we didn't get full credit for that because the Almighty, with "outstretched arm and mighty hand", marched at our side.

Besides, we heard our parents discussing the news out of Germany and Poland. More humiliation. Chanukah reminded us that at least once, the Jewish team won a pennant. And Hank Greenberg's heroic feats with the Detroit Tigers confirmed that Jews could be

athletes as well as accountants, physicists, and novelists; professions we considered inferior to that of first baseman for the Detroit Tigers.

So once a year we kissed Aunt Dora and feasted on applesauce-smothered potato cakes - or latkes as we called 'em.

In the living room, the adults talked about business, family, and Aunt Dora's ailments as they listened to the music of frying latkes coming from the kitchen. My cousin, Arlene, used to desert our games and sit and listen at Aunt Dora's knee. Thinking, all the while of next year I'm sure.

Then, we all sat around the dining room table and dug into mounds of latkes. Aunt Dora - due to her age and silver dollars - always went first. My cousin, Arlene, usually cut up her potato cakes for her. I know what was on her mind. She was already planning on next year's reward from Aunt Dora.

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, <http://www.lulu.com/content/127641> or the Sisterhood Gift Shop.