
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

FEBRUARY, 2018

SHEVAT/ADAR, 5778

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

FROM THE RABBI

IDEAS AND IDEALS

“The Road Not Taken: Edward Lansdale and the American Tragedy in Vietnam” by Max Boot is a new biography of a talented CIA operative who strived but failed to re-direct American policy in the Vietnam war.

Lansdale seemed to have understood the conflict better than the President and all of America's generals did. He told his superiors that the struggle was not about weapons and the material things in life (which the US could supply) but about “ideas and ideals,” which is what the communists were offering. In one telling passage in Boot's book, Lansdale walked into the office of Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and dumped a bunch of mud- and blood-stained weapons onto McNamara's immaculate desk. He proceeded to tell the Secretary why the Viet Cong were defeating the South Vietnamese despite all those powerful American guns. It was because the Cong, in their tattered pajamas and sandals, offered the promise of higher and nobler values. The communists, alas, were the ones with the ideas and ideals. (How it worked out in the end is a topic for another time.)

According to Boot, McNamara sat there stone-faced. He didn't get it. McNamara “lived by logic and mathematics.” The rest didn't compute.

A rabbi doesn't have to be an expert on Vietnam. But a rabbi resonates to the truth that a people need ideas and ideals. Among the ideas and ideals that we share are the intellectual value of studying our great Jewish tradition; the communal value of our sincere fellowship; the political value of our support for the national liberation movement of our people (that maligned but precious word, Zionism); and the humanistic value of our respect and concern for all God's children, which means all people, without exception.

Quiz: Which is larger, the number of people who live in Shanghai, China, or the number of Jews in the entire world? It's not even close; there are twice as many people in that one city as there are Jews world-wide. How about Dhaka, Bangladesh? It's a city that most of us never heard of. It's also a city that has 10 MILLION MORE PEOPLE than the number of Jews in the entire world.

So, dear friends, it's a good thing that our remarkable run through history is not about numbers, nor weapons, nor power. At its

core, Judaism is about ideas and ideals. We are blessed with some good ones. Let that be the road we continue to take.

Sincerely,

Stephen Listfield

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Besides Rabbi Listfield's visit in mid-month, the highlight for February is Purim, beginning at sunset on Wednesday, February 28. We will have our traditional hot dog meal followed by our Purim Spiel. It is never too late to put together your costume. This month, I want to recognize Scott Hancock for his efforts in helping to make our Synagogue more secure, along with his other "duties" on the Building & Grounds. On the other side, Millie Rosenthal, in addition to formally serving as the Membership Committee Chairperson, performs many behind the scenes efforts to help make our Synagogue more welcome to all. Thank you: Scott and Millie.

שלום
Barry Meyer

SISTERHOOD

Greetings All,

If you weren't at the Lunch Bunch last month at the Chocolate Bar, you missed a good time. We had 15 ladies in attendance! We enjoyed good food and great company, despite the rain. If you have suggestions as to where you want to go for the next one, please let Nannette know.

At the end of the month, on February 28, the Sisterhood will provide a hot dog dinner for Purim. Hope to see everybody then.

The Passover Seder is planned for the first night, which is March 30. The Synagogue/Sisterhood is looking for someone to lead the actual Seder. Please let Barry know if you will do the service. Sisterhood will take care of the food. The price will be determined shortly.

If you are interested in being on the Sisterhood Board next year, please let me know. We would love to welcome some new ladies.

Natha Hancock

Has your contact information changed? Have you cancelled your land line? Do you have a new email address? Have we missed a birthday, anniversary, or yahrzeit? Please keep us informed. Brenda: Shofar@EtzChayim-hsv.org

If you would like to reserve an Oneg for a special occasion, please let us know. Lynne: Hospitality@EtzChayim-hsv.org

HUNGRY FOR HADASSAH EVENT 2/25

Hadassah of Huntsville is being reinvigorated, and you are invited to help kick off the new venture. Please join us for an afternoon of healthy Hadassah nosh and news during "Are You Hungry for More Hadassah? Every Bite Counts!" During this free event, which will be held Sunday, February 25, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the home of Karen Hirsch, 2725 Downing Street SE in Huntsville, Middle Eastern snacks and beverages will be provided. A printed invitation will be sent soon. For more information or questions, contact Karen at: karen@physicsconsultants.com or Michelle Persons at: weisspersons@gmail.com.

ONEGS

Jan 26 Mauldin
Feb 02 Fisher
Feb 09 Goodman
Feb 16 Thomason
Feb 23 Liles
Mar 02 Schwartz

DONATIONS

General Fund

From: Mr. & Mrs. Joe Marcus

To: Etz Chayim Congregation - We enjoyed the Shabbat weekend we spent at the synagogue.

From: Elizabeth Kessler & Dennis Gilbride

To: Etz Chayim Congregation - Thank you all so much for the warm and welcoming way you received us when we visited for a Shabbat weekend.

Rabbi Fund

From: Nannette Schwartz

In Memory of my sister, Lynda Siff
In Honor of David Siff's Installation

To: Richard Berry & Family - In Memory of Richard Berry Sr.

From: Lucy & Charlie Fisher

Joe Sacks Memorial Fund

From: Lucy & Charlie Fisher

Sisterhood

From: Sandra Wiederecht

Outdoor Lighting Fund

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb 16-18 Rabbi Listfield Shabbaton
Feb 28 Erev Purim, Hot Dog Supper
and Shpiel!

EC PHOTOGRAPHER NEEDED

As I'm the editor of this fine publication, I was contacted by Diana Polin and asked to write up a notice asking for someone to take over one of her EC jobs. So here it goes:

After many, many years of enjoying recording events at Etz Chayim by photographing them, Diana Polin is looking for a volunteer to take over this honor. You will not be required to spend hours (or your own funds!) copying and arranging them in the beautiful scrapbooks Diana has made for us for so many years. In case you're new to EC or just didn't know about them, they are something special to see! Check them out next time you're at the shul. I'm sure all of us at EC want to thank Diana for the wonderful job she's done keeping a lovely record of so much of EC's history.

If anyone would like the title of EC Photographer, let me know. That would be great! You might choose to make a digital scrapbook or just a collection—it's up to you. Otherwise, if you (any of you) are at EC events why not take some pics (not on Shabbat, please!), and send them to my email? Some of them might make the website front page or I may collect them and publish them to an EC Board approved venue.

Thanks to Diana, we have some great memories photographed and displayed in those amazing scrapbooks. Hopefully, we will continue to keep the memories coming.

Brenda Liles

BIRTHDAYS

Jan 26 Steve Goodman
Jan 28 Elizabeth Persons
Jan 30 Eliza Roberts
Jan 31 Adam Zelickson
Feb 03 Gordon Sacks
Feb 05 Jan Sainker Reed
Feb 08 Ezra Roberts
Feb 10 Ashley Bostick
Feb 12 Steve Edmondson
Feb 12 Daniel Yalowitz
Feb 14 Aryeh Roberts
Feb 17 Cliff Liles
Feb 18 Sarah Drake
Feb 25 Andrew Edmondson
Feb 28 Michelle Lapidus

ANNIVERSARIES

Feb 04 Shirley & Ted Roberts
Feb 14 Lynne & Steve Edmondson

Yahrzeits**

Jan 28 Shevat 12 Henry Fleishman
Jan 30 Shevat 14 Rabbi Jeffrey Ballon
Feb 01 Shevat 16 Jerome L. Richard
Feb 02 Shevat 17 Esther Goldberg*
Feb 02 Shevat 17 Richard Irwin Kolchin
Feb 03 Shevat 18 Helen Flank Baum*
Feb 05 Shevat 20 Mildred Freedman*
Feb 05 Shevat 20 Jennie Greenbaum
Feb 06 Shevat 21 Bertha Flank*
Feb 09 Shevat 24 Rebecca Treister*
Feb 11 Shevat 26 Rose Belsky*
Feb 13 Shevat 28 Joseph Goodman
Feb 16 Adar 1 Lotta Chester
Feb 16 Adar 1 Mae Green*
Feb 17 Adar 2 Charles Kopman
Feb 18 Adar 3 Carolyn Greenbaum
Feb 18 Adar 3 Phillip Smolker
Feb 19 Adar 4 Gladys Moiseev
Feb 20 Adar 5 Stanley B. Brown
Feb 20 Adar 5 Benjamin Bierstein

Feb 22 Adar 7 Helena D'Acosta Weingarden*
Feb 22 Adar 7 Philip Aronowitz*
Feb 22 Adar 7 Mary Hoffman Baker*
Feb 22 Adar 7 Rose Leites*
Feb 25 Adar 10 Sarah Rachel Schindler
Feb 28 Adar 13 Lou Harrison*
Feb 28 Adar 13 Max Moiseev*
Feb 28 Adar 13 Sam Okeon
Feb 28 Adar 13 Joseph Sacks
Mar 01 Adar 14 Hannah Rosen
Mar 02 Adar 15 Jeffrey Tillman*

* Plaque

**Light Memorial candle sunset of previous evening

LIZZIE'S PURIM PLAN

By Ted Roberts

(A Little-Known Purim Mitzvah)

She was a 12-year-old Jewish girl whose parents, in wild abandon, had fled from her and each other to some anonymous diaspora. Their absence was complete. Beyond the range of sight or sound. They had abdicated their parenthood. That's why Lizzie lived with Uncle Max.

The child they left in their wake checked out a bleak world where all her playmates had at least one parent. And the lucky ones owned two. Well, she had Uncle Max, who without any parental qualities except inattention taught his ward that if you wanted a can of chicken noodle soup for supper, you better heat it up yourself. And before you sat down you should put the box of soda crackers on the table. That is, if you wanted soda crackers.

These lessons reminded Lizzie, as Purim drew near, that the true spirit of the holiday was self-reliance, not dependence on divine intervention – as we learn later the name of the Creator is unmentioned. His name comes up, not once.

But still, Esther's triumph marked a holiday

that Lizzie hated because it keenly reminded her of her absent parents. Purim was the worst. There was that Purim Ball. How could she compete with her rich friends whose mamas could afford seamstresses or ready-made costumes that Esther herself would have envied? How humiliating to be draped in a tie-dyed sheet with holes. That was the best her uncle could do. That's why she was a laughing stock every Purim night – unless the Purim skit was unusually inept.

But the essence of the illusionist's art is to hide the hand of the illusionists. So, HE who spun the Purim plot in the mind of Mordecai and Esther – Haman and Ahasueros – put a stratagem in the mind of Lizzie. This year would be different, she thought, because she had a plan – a plan she revealed to her new friend, Freida. They had only met two weeks before the holiday and there was the unspoken understanding – that only exists among the young and innocent – that they would be sisters. Sharers of all secrets. Lizzie told her of Uncle Max's shortcomings as a surrogate parent and her annual Purim mortification. "But this year you just watch," she said.

All this, Lizzie told her friend. And even more. She told her the details of her strategy for the Purim that was fast approaching. How she would use an age-old tradition about Tzedaka, charity, to capture a glitzy gown that would grab the prize. No one, say the sages, can refuse a Purim wish.

Freida listened sympathetically. "A great plan," she agreed, when she heard the details.

So this year there was hope, Lizzie whispered to the pillow that night before she dozed off. She dreamed that uncle Max was Mordecai and she was Queen Esther in a gown so stiff with jewels and brocade that it walked over to her from the other side of the

ballroom and introduced itself.

The Raggedy Ann of the Purim Ball had a plan. From her Sunday School studies, she knew the time-honored Purim custom; a pious Jew on Purim could not refuse a reasonable request for charity. And Lizzie knew that Bernie Shapiro was a pious Jew. He was also a wealthy Jew who owned more department stores than the dresses that hung in the supplicant's closet. Not only had she identified her man, but the costume as well. It was in the Junior Department of Shapiro's own store; a dazzling gown with a bouffant skirt and puff sleeves to embellish the arms of a queen. It was a party dress fit for a Jr. High School prom or a Bar Mitzvah dance. Or a coronation in Shushan! This was a creation in ecru and gold lame that could illuminate the royal ballroom of Ahasueros. Only one hundred dollars.

On Purim morning Lizzie activated Plan A. (Plan B was to sign up at a nunnery where they never heard of Purim.) She bicycled to the 2.3-million-dollar home of Bernie Shapiro. Up the long driveway, all uphill, she pedaled. She leaned her bike on the middle pillar of the colonnade and gently, with aching calves and weak knees, touched the pearl-colored door in an oval gold frame. Esther must have felt this way when she approached the king and revealed her origins, thought Lizzie.

The man, himself, swung open the door. But even before it completely opened, the supplicant began her spiel; one hundred dollars of Tzedaka! That's what she needed. Nor did she forget, even in her nervousness, to cite the moral imperative of Purim charity.

Bernie Shapiro; an ardent capitalist, as acquisition and merger specialist, a Wharton School of Business MBA and even more, a shrewd merchant, listened attentively to this three-part presentation. Then he suggested an ethical and economic compromise. In the

interest of simplification (and embellishment of his Mitzvah) he would send someone to fetch this dress and deliver it to her home. It would be his Purim pleasure, his mitzvah. And he reflected that his contribution to Lizzie's happiness would be discounted to \$37.85 – his cost of the garment under discussion – with no diminution of his celestial reward. A deal was struck. The 12-year-old mounted her bike and was home in just under an hour.

Well, you know how such stories end. How could it be otherwise; a young girl's dream, a holiday of high happiness involving a plucky Jewish girl not much younger than Esther. And of course, she won the first prize.

She couldn't wait to get home and call Freida Shapiro, whose last name she had never learned in their short weeks of friendship. Yes, she had obtained the dress, she had wowed the judges. "Purim, what a holiday," she gushed.

"Yes, and I have a strong feeling that next year your scheme will work again," said Freida with a grin and a wink at her father, an entrepreneur who knew a discounted Purim mitzvah when he saw one.

Ted Roberts, "The Scribbler on the Roof," is a syndicated Jewish columnist and longtime member of our Synagogue. Buy Ted's collected works at Amazon.com or the Sisterhood Gift Shop. Ted welcomes your comment and/or critique and can be emailed at: shirlr@hiwaay.net