
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

APRIL, 2018

NISAN/IYYAR, 5778

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

FROM THE RABBI

HAPPY PESACH AND HAPPY YOM HA-ATZMA-UT: A CELEBRATION OF HISTORY, MEMORY AND FREEDOM

Israel Independence Day, Yom ha-Atzma'ut, falls this year on Thursday, April 19. Israel is one of the most productive countries in the world. Israel is one of the most democratic countries in the world. And Israel, I maintain, is a unique country in the world.

Here are the words of David ben-Gurion two years before the creation of the state, testifying before the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry:

Three hundred years ago, a ship sailed to the new world. Its name was the Mayflower. This sailing was a great event in the historic annals of England and America. I am anxious to know if there is a single Englishman, outside of a historian, who recalls the date on which the ship departed. How many Americans, whose history was profoundly affected by this event, recall the day of

their leaving? How many people know the number of passengers on that ship? Or what kind of bread they ate on their voyage.

Yet more than 3,300 years ago, the Jews left Egypt. Every Jew in the world knows exactly when they departed — the 15th of Nisan. Every Jew knows exactly what bread they ate — matzah. Until this day Jews eat matzah in all parts of the world on the 15th day of Nisan. They relate the story of the Exodus from Egypt and of the trials which our people suffered from the day that they left.

Each year at Passover the Jew opens his account of this experience with two statements: This year we are slaves, next year we will be free. This year we are here, next year we will be in Jerusalem, in Zion, in the Land of Israel.

Gentlemen, this is the nature of the Jews.

Need I add anything more to the words of ben-Gurion? We are a people of history, a people of memory. We are the first

people who taught that all men and women deserve to be free (as we re-affirm at the beginning of this month of April with our Pesach celebration); and we celebrate our own people's freedom and sovereignty later this month, as Israel becomes 70 years old. Am Yisrael chai!

Stephen Listfield

FROM THE PRESIDENT

During the first week of April, we celebrate our freedom from slavery in Egypt and our start toward becoming a true nation unto ourselves as we began that long and lengthy journey to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As we look forward to our next year, we seek new officers and board members to serve our Congregation. If you are interested and haven't been called by the committee, please let me know at President@EtzChayim-hvs.org. We are also looking for a representative to the Interfaith Mission Service, striving to meet the following goals:

1. Poverty, hunger, and homelessness are not tolerated because standards of human decency do not allow them.
2. Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry, and prejudice are replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood.
3. Disputes will be resolved by peaceful conflict-resolution and reconciliation of adversaries, instead of force.
4. Alleviation of economic inequality and the achievement of economic justice.

Please let me know if you are interested in a role in service to our community.

שלום

Barry Meyer

SYNAGOGUE CONNECT

We are now listed at SYNAGOGUE CONNECT, a service of Alpha Epsilon Pi

From the mission statement as posted: Alpha Epsilon Pi was founded to provide opportunities for the Jewish college man seeking the best possible college and fraternity experience. We have maintained the integrity of our purpose by strengthening our ties to the Jewish community and serving as a link between high school and career.

FREE COMPUTER

I have a computer I no longer need. It's free of charge to any congregant who could use it. It's a Del Inspiron desktop. I think the model number is an Inspiron 660. It has a 24" LCD screen, keyboard, mouse, and speakers. It works fine but needs someone who knows which wires go where. I don't know much else about it. I'm not too knowledgeable about computers. I used this one until two weeks ago when I converted to my first laptop.

First come, first served.

Email me at jonaberger@gmail.com. Call or text me at 256-457-0277

SISTERHOOD

Hi All,

Since I'm writing this in March, before the EC Seder, I'm ahead of the actual event, but lots of people have already done lots of work to make our Seder "happen."

Many, many thanks go out to all of you who have -and those who will- help out with the Seder on March 30. The

following list includes some of you:

-Shirley Roberts & Millie Rosenthal--table settings, shopping (some in Atlanta!) and all manner of things

-Harriet Sacks & Janet Schindler--shopping for supplies

-Nannette Schwartz--expediting (which means working during the Seder instead of enjoying it)

-Lauren Goodman--consulting, setting tables, Seder plate making

-Holly Kent--kashering the kitchen

-Shirley Roberts, Max & Millie Rosenthal, Fred & Linda Kolchin, Howard & Diana Polin, Jon Berger, Larry Levitt, Gary Hall & Ethan, Barry Meyer & Ellie--moving chairs, putting up and arranging tables and then setting them (whew)!

We're glad to say we have a full sanctuary of attendees, as well—thank you all!

Have a happy Pesach,

Brenda Liles

BOOK CLUB WILL MEET ON MAY 1

The Etz Chayim Book Club is rolling along.

Right now, we're reading "Gideon's Spies: The Secret History of the Mossad" by Gordon Thomas. Boy is it exciting. Reads like a thriller.

We'll discuss it on Tuesday, May 1, at 11:00 at the synagogue. The discussions are as exciting as reading the books.

The club is open to anyone who would like to read and learn from nonfiction books that are related in some way to Judaism. Give it a try. If you'd like to see one of our discussions, come on May 1st even if you haven't read this book. (We'll have another reminder in next month's Shofar.)

If you have any questions contact Jon Berger. Call or text at 256-457-0277 or email at jonaberger@gmail.com.

ONEGS

Mar 30 First Seder

Apr 06 Roberts

Apr 13 Edmondson

Apr 20 Sacks

Apr 27 Kalachman

May 04 Meyer/Persons/Wiederecht

NOTICE: FOOD BANK DONATIONS

Please check the expiration dates of food donations **before** putting them in our box for the Food Bank. Large amounts of expired food have had to be dealt with by

our volunteers. The Food Bank cannot use expired food.

DONATIONS

Rabbi Fund

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal
To: Sandy & Marvin Kalachman - Mazel Tov on the engagement of your son, Adam.

General Fund

From: Maxine Persons
High Holiday donation in Honor of the Persons family.

Sisterhood Fund

From: Sandra Wiederecht
To: Lucy Fisher - So sorry to hear about your car accident and am very glad that you are starting to feel better.

Outdoor Lighting Fund

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar 30 EC Seder at 6 PM,
reservations closed
Apr 5, 6, 7 Pesach service, 9:30 AM
Apr 7 9:45 AM, 8th day Pesach
services, including Yizkor
Apr 13-15 Rabbi Listfield Shabbaton
Apr 15 Community Yom HaShoah
observance at Rock Center
Apr 19 Yom ha-Atzma'ut
Apr 29 Israel Independence Day
Celebration, 2 PM at EC
May 1 Book Club, 11 AM at EC



Holocaust Remembrance Program

The Jewish Federation of Huntsville & North Alabama is presenting a Holocaust Memorial program on Sunday, April 15, at 4:00 pm at the new Rock Church at 3401 Holmes Avenue (the old Butler High School). The featured program speaker is Mr. Eli Pinhas, a Holocaust survivor. Please come and support our community observance so that none shall forget. The Rock Church is providing the refreshments. Contact Laura King or Max Rosenthal for further information.

ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

Please join us in celebrating the 70th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. Sunday, April 29 at 2:00 pm at the Synagogue. There will be Speakers, special Videos and Refreshments.

Israel Independence Day is April 19 by the Hebrew calendar, May 15 by the secular calendar, and we are celebrating on April 29, SO THERE.

BIRTHDAYS

Apr 02 Dr. Arthur Polin
 Apr 04 Diane Belsky
 Apr 04 Dorothy Goldberg
 Apr 06 Eli Sacks
 Apr 10 Tatjana Copeland
 Apr 15 Sandy Kalachman
 Apr 15 Howard Polin
 Apr 17 Lynne Edmondson
 Apr 18 Jacob Sacks
 Apr 19 Joshua Brigadier
 Apr 19 Gavin Hancock
 Apr 21 Blake Zelickson
 Apr 21 Megan Polin
 Apr 22 Lisa Roberts Harris
 Apr 23 Susan Levitt
 Apr 27 Gary Hall
 Apr 28 Louis Weiner

ANNIVERSARIES

Apr 03 Leigh & Randy Miller
 Apr 15 Helen & Robert Woodham
 Apr 17 Ginger Nelson & Howard Billions
 Apr 30 Sharon & Jeff Yalowitz

YAHARZEITS**

Apr 01 Nisan 16 Millie Goldstein
 Apr 01 Nisan 16 Marvin M. Schreiber*
 Apr 01 Nisan 16 Lilian Jaffee
 Apr 05 Nisan 20 Henry Sevin
 Apr 07 Nisan 22 Simon Blum*
 Apr 08 Nisan 23 Jeffrey Weinman*
 Apr 08 Nisan 23 Leo I. Goldberger

Apr 14 Nisan 29 Joseph Goldstein*
 Apr 15 Nisan 30 Leo Ginsburg
 Apr 16 Iyyar 01 Frieda Margol Katz
 Apr 17 Iyyar 02 Goldie Fuerst
 Apr 18 Iyyar 03 Robert F. (Bob) May
 Apr 24 Iyyar 09 Mitchell Fuerst
 Apr 26 Iyyar 11 William Polin*
 Apr 26 Iyyar 11 Rose Harrison*
 Apr 27 Iyyar 12 Harriet Herbin
 Apr 27 Iyyar 12 Eidele Sainker
 Apr 29 Iyyar 14 Perry M. Schlein*
 Apr 30 Iyyar 15 Sarah Kauffman*
 May 01 Iyyar 16 Ruth Cohen*
 May 01 Iyyar 16 David Kopkin

* Plaque

**Light Memorial candle sunset of previous evening

THE MOSIACH'S PASSOVER PALACE

By Ted Roberts

On Passover everybody wanted the Prince to stay with them. He was coming. After years of anticipation, he announced his first visit to the district. Everyone from the mayor to the girl who swept out the bakery shop knew and admired his Highness - but only by reputation. No one had met him, but everyone had heard stories of his courage and his sense of justice; how he defended the people of the district from bandits, predators, and government tax collectors, how he would give a hearing to the poorest of his subjects if he suspected that wrong prevailed over right.

It had long been rumored that one day in early Spring, when the river was ice-free, when the apple trees bloomed like pink clover, when the young lambs skipped on the hillsides, that HE, the Prince, would come for the holidays.

"But where would he stay" chorused a hundred villagers.

"With me, of course," replied the mayor. "He wants luxurious surroundings, and rich well-cooked food and witty, intellectual conversation and where in this crummy town would you find such accommodations?" Several of the town's bankers and merchants were quick to answer the mayor's rhetorical questions. "IN MY PALACE," they all shouted at once. And it was true. Their homes on the outskirts of the village, high in the hills, were fit for royalty.

"A Prince needs a palace," they said. He would only be happy in a palace. "If we put him up with some peasant - sharing a bed with two aunts and a goat and three chickens, eating black bread and borscht three meals a day, he would never return to our village." Well, the mayor and the leading citizens of the town were not unreasonable. And everyone desired to please the Prince. So, finally they decided to show their royal guest the various accommodations and let him choose.

The very next day when the sky and the crocuses along the road blazed in a shade of blue rarely seen on the palettes of artists, the Prince strolled into town. A crocus was in his buttonhole.

After a welcoming speech of many words by the mayor (in which he unfairly lingered over the comforts of his home), the royal visitor was escorted to the home of the mayor. You should know that his wife - like all of our wives - had prepared for the inspection with scrubbing and soaping and sweeping and absolutely no

Chometz. They had not left a crumb on the floor or a dust mote floating in the air. The guest of honor inspected it thoroughly, as the mayor and his family nervously watched. After thirty minutes of poking in corners, inspecting his fingertips for dust and bouncing on the 100%, not rag, but cotton mattress, he wrinkled his brow. "No good," he stated softly, but clearly.

The merchants grinned with glee and steered the Prince, hastily, to their stately palaces. Chandeliers sparkled and the fireplaces perfumed the air with roasting oxen such as Abraham prepared for his angelic guests. Still, after a most careful examination the Prince rejected the palace. And the next ten, too. By way of explanation he announced that they were not clean.

But David, the Hochem, the wisest man in the district, had an inspiration - an idea. "Wait, my friends," - speaking to the townspeople as well as the Prince - "He hasn't seen the home of Yankel, the wood chopper who lives beside the road to Litovsk."

"He lives like an animal," shouted someone.

"My goats live in a barn cleaner than Yankel's hut."

"Yankel's shack is so overcrowded with poor relatives that last week three cousins fell out the windows."

But the Prince looks up and he indicates a desire to inspect the home of Yankel the woodchopper.

In fact, the crowd was correct. The woodchopper's home was terribly overcrowded because the soft-hearted Yankel could refuse a bed to no one; relatives, the homeless, itinerant holy men who traveled the road by his front door. He could not feed them meat cakes and gravy, but there was always a roaring fireplace and plenty of corn porridge and, in truth, only one cousin had ever fallen out of the bedroom window.

The Prince marched down the dusty road to the humble cottage. David, the hopeful wise man, led the way. Behind them hundreds of peasants muttering, "oy, oy, oy." The mayor's home and two palaces were not good enough and now we show him this home for roaches".

But the minute the Prince saw the cottage by the roadside he smiled for the first time. He entered and carefully inspected the dirt floor, the cobwebbed walls, the fleeing roaches as he entered the rooms.

"How clean, how pure. Here, I will stay."

David, who was as pious as he was wise, felt the hair on the back of his neck bristle and later he swore to friends that he could hear the singing of angels. He knew the Mesiach had come to visit this house by the side of the road.

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