
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

DECEMBER, 2018

KISLEV/TEVET, 5779

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

THE RABBI'S MESSAGE

Good guys, bad guys — but who wins?

Immediately after the massacre in my former synagogue, Tree of Life, President Trump said, "If they had protection inside, the results would have been far better." That idea of armed guards, or armed teachers, as a solution to gun violence often comes up in the wake of mass shootings.

Is there merit to this claim? Fox News reported that a man with a permit to legally carry a concealed handgun saved countless lives when he shot a gunman who opened fire on a school event attended by 150 students at a park in Titusville, Florida. Fox further says that "responsible gun owners have stepped forward many times to save lives. In fact, concealed handgun permit holders have prevented dozens of mass public shootings just in recent years, while receiving only brief mentions in local news coverage." The Washington Times printed a story with the impressive

headline "11 times a good guy with a gun stopped a bad guy, saving lives." We all have heard stories of how gun owners successfully protected themselves against intruders.

In short, part of the debate about gun violence is the notion that "the only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is with a good guy with a gun."

But that's not the only point of view on the matter.

"It's a good slogan," said Dr. Liza Gold, a Georgetown psychiatry professor who examines mental illness and gun violence. "But I have yet to see the evidence for that claim," she told ABC News. John Donohue, a law professor at Stanford University, was a co-author of a National Bureau of Economic Research study that examined gun violence and the carrying of concealed weapons. The NBER study discredited the idea of the "good guy with a gun" as a possible solution to gun violence. In fact, Donohue reports that "allowing citizens to

carry handguns seems to increase violent crime 13 to 15 percent.”

Another takeaway from the NBER report is that the presence of a gun could turn a would-be good guy into an intentional or unintentional bad guy. Donohue cited the infamous 2012 case of George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch volunteer who got into a deadly confrontation with teenager Trayvon Martin. The assumption is that without a gun, Zimmerman would not have hassled Trayvon Martin in the first place. “The presence of the gun actually stimulates more provocative action and ends up getting people killed,” Professor Donohue said.

Dear friends, I knew that I would write my December column about the massacre of my congregants in Pittsburgh. But I’m not going to write about “thoughts and prayers” and other such platitudes. It’s been exactly six years since the murder of 27 people, mostly six- and seven-year olds, in Newtown, CT. From what I can tell, our country still hasn’t done anything at all to protect our fellow citizens from gun violence. How many massacres do we need? It’s time for action! I know what my solution would be. I would like to hear from you. Public opinion counts. I urge everyone to add to the public discussion about the mass murders that keep occurring in our country. If you’d like to exchange views with me, please email me at slistfield@aol.com, or call me at 404-549-8923, or talk with me December 14-16, which is the next time I’ll be at Etz Chayim. Until then, happy Chanukah!

Stephen Listfield

JEWISH PRIDE FROM PITTSBURGH

When I was rabbi at Tree of Life in Pittsburgh, I was very close with congregants named Alan and Paula Dunn. They remain dear friends to this day. Shortly after the massacre, the Dunns' son Brian made a video about growing up in Squirrel Hill and receiving his Jewish education at Tree of Life. I want you to feel my pride in knowing that this video has had 6.2 million hits so far. (That is not a typographical error!) The answer to anti-Semitism is found in our young people like Brian. Please watch the video:

https://mobile.twitter.com/nowthisnews/status/1058389017786347520/video/1?fbclid=IwAR2obyEOcBZ0suPEQMD_7LshRgW4RznqTJtTKT4KIJLg_EKbjKD6a5Q_IOA

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CHANUKAH, 2018 (5779)

From myjewishlearning.com

This year Chanukah begins at sundown on Sunday, Dec. 2 and lasts until sundown on Monday, Dec. 10.

The holiday commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrian Greek army, and the subsequent miracle of rededicating the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and restoring its menorah, or lamp. The miracle of Chanukah is that only one vial was found with just enough oil to illuminate the Temple lamp for one day, and yet it lasted for eight full days.

We celebrate Chanukah 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. Some people also sing holiday songs or exchange gifts after lighting the menorah, which is also called a chanukiah. It's a mitzvah to place your menorah by your front window, so that passersby will see the lights and be reminded of the miracle that occurred for our people so many centuries ago.

Blessings on lighting the candles --

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukkah.

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, she-asah nisim la'avoteinu bayamim hahem bazman hazeh.

First night only:

Baruch atah adonai elohenu melech ha'olam, shehecheyanu, v'kiyimanu, v'higiyanu lazman hazeh.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings,

There are a number of reasons why each of us has chosen to make Huntsville home. For some it was education, others it was their career, and some came for family. Regardless of the reasons, we as Jews want and need a spiritual home: a gathering place to celebrate, worship, learn and mourn. Jewish ritual helps us move through the dark times as well as

the bright times because as humans we experience the gamut of sorrow and joy throughout our lives. We seek and value Jewish community.

The specialness of our community hit home when I have been sick in the past, watched my children grow in our synagogue and when I lost my husband. Many friends from Etz Chayim cooked for me, picked up prescriptions, visited, and even walked my dogs while providing healing support in the hospital as well as at home. I felt surrounded by caring mishpachah. I know of other members who also received support at times of sorrow or illness.

We have built an amazing community spirit. Our board members and volunteers provide direction, support and energy to keep our community vibrant and strong. They are always there to welcome new members and nurture long standing congregants, celebrate Shabbat, holidays and simchas. Our community is able to be inclusive and listen to diverse voices. It is something to be treasured. Each of us has the responsibility to keep this community thriving and growing for future generations and wandering Jews who will make Huntsville their home.

As winter brings shorter days and increased darkness, we light the candles of Chanukkah to remind us of the light that we can create. Chanukkah means dedication, and the name of the holiday honors our ancient ancestors who took the time and the care to rededicate the ancient Temple after its desecration. Today, Chanukkah is a time to show our dedication to the institutions that are meaningful to us. Please consider a

year-end gift. This Chanukkah season, please join me in making a donation to Etz Chayim to maintain our vibrant, caring community.

Sandra Wiederecht, 256-797-4013

EDITOR'S MISTAKE!

My apologies for leaving the following message out of the **October** Shofar! I was given this long ago (right after the concert!), and I unfortunately did not include it when it was given to me. My mistake!

THANKS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CONCERT FOOD BANK FUNDRAISER

The Succot concert food bank fundraiser was both fun and successful. The donations filled a complete car trunk-load plus a backseat. The total weight was about 320 pounds! The food bank was very appreciative, as they said the shelves were low on food.

I would like to thank Jon Berger for collecting and handling food drop off, the musicians who played, Michal Hall and Natha Hancock for food, Bill Goldberg for leading the service, everyone who helped build the sukkah, and the audience for their attendance and donating food. I love it when we all pull together for the good of the community.

Lynne Edmondson

"We will always remember Pearl Harbor,"
December 7, 1941

Contributed by Howard Polin

ONEG INFO

Hi Etz Chayim Members-

As many of you know, we ask each family unit of Etz Chayim to volunteer to provide one oneg every 6 months. That includes some type of dairy and/or parve snack/dessert, possibly a challah, drink, and paper goods needed (cups, small plates). Usually plan on about 16-20 people, unless it is a Rabbi weekend when it could be double that number.

If you have a yartzeit date to commemorate, that may be a good date to do your oneg. Or you may choose a date to celebrate your birthday with your synagogue family. Some of the dates are snatched up quickly, so let me know as soon as you can what works for you.

Lynne Edmondson

DECEMBER BOOK CLUB MEETING

The next meeting of the Etz Chayim Book Club will be on **Thursday, December 20, at 11:30 am** at the synagogue. We'll discuss "Einstein and the Rabbi: Searching for the Soul" by Naomi Levi. This exploration of the meaning and purpose of the soul was inspired by the famous correspondence between Albert Einstein and a grieving rabbi. This book was the winner of the 2017 Nautilus

Award in the category of religion/spirituality of western thought.

It's surprising that more people aren't participating in our club. In addition to reading some fascinating books that take us into areas we've never explored before, the discussions go off in exciting areas we don't expect. Come with us for some exciting fun.

For more information, contact Jon Berger at 256-457-0277 (phone or text) or jonaberger@gmail.com .

SISTERHOOD

Happy Holidays Ladies,

I hate to tell those that missed our Craft Night this year, but we had a wonderful time. Amy provided some nice Hanukkah themed cards that we painted using pointillism techniques. We had a great group of ladies and really enjoyed ourselves. Thank you, Amy, for a great evening. We also voted to replace the carpeting in the foyer and sanctuary, so sometime in 2019 we will get to enjoy our "newly appointed building."

Please remember to attend the Latke Party on December 9th at 11. If you can help in anyway, please contact Shirley (for the latkes) and Millie (for the salad bar). We have lots of new items for the gift shop, including some beautiful candles. The prices are incredibly low for some of the items, so please shop as soon as you can. We have so many items that there isn't room for the latke party, so the gift shop will have to be moved! Remember, proceeds from the

yearbook, dues, and the gift shop help to pay for things like the new carpet.

Natha

ONEGS

Dec 07 Fuerst (Chanukah)
Dec 14 Levitt (Rabbi Weekend)
Dec 21 Polin
Dec 28 Fuerst

DONATIONS

Sisterhood

From: Linda Maier Kolchin

Prayer Book

From: Diana & Howard Polin
To: The Sacks Family – A Prayer Book in Memory of our long-time dear friend, Harriet Sacks.

General Fund

From: Lois & Barry Jacobs
In Honor of the High Holidays

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal
To: Dave Barrows – Wishing you a Complete and Speedy recovery.

Outdoor Lighting Fund

From: Robin Slomka

From: Natha Hancock & Robin Slomka and their families
In Memory of Gertrude & Perry Schlein

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Dec 01 Hadassah "Historic Huntsville Trivia Night," 7 PM, details by mail
- Dec 02-
Dec 10 Chanukah
- Dec 02 Chabad Public Chanukah Menorah Lighting, Bridge Street, 4 PM, music & latkes
- Dec 06 Chabad Car Menorah Parade, register at office@jewishhuntsville.com
- Dec 07 "We will always remember Pearl Harbor."
- Dec 08 BBYO Skate at Big Spring Park, bring \$20, 7 PM
- Dec 09 Etz Chayim NACHAS Hanukah Latke Party with games (Bingo & Dreidel), Latke & Salad Bar Lunch at EC, 11 AM
- Dec 09 TBS Community Chanukah Menorah Lighting at Big Spring Park, 5 PM
- Dec 13 BBYO elections & Takeout Food at 231 Eastside Square in downtown Huntsville, 6:30 PM
- Dec 14-
- Dec 16 Rabbi Stephen Listfield Etz Chayim Shabbaton
- Dec 20 EC Book Club Meeting, "Einstein & the Rabbi: Searching for the Soul," 11:30 AM at EC

BIRTHDAYS

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

- Dec 16 Sue Paddock
- Dec 23 Ira Leitner
- Dec 25 Holly Kent
- Dec 27 Kaitlin Polin
- Dec 30 Tia Smith
- Dec 31 Joshua Dixon

ANNIVERSARIES

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

Yahrzeits**

- Dec 03 Kislev 25 Katherine Harris
- Dec 05 Kislev 27 Moe Post
- Dec 06 Kislev 28 David Amiel Wertheim*
- Dec 06 Kislev 28 Morris Freeman
- Dec 07 Kislev 29 Rita Goldstein*
- Dec 09 Tevet 01 Meyer Rodkin*
- Dec 09 Tevet 01 Murray Golub
- Dec 10 Tevet 02 Dr. David Sidel
- Dec 11 Tevet 03 Max Theodor Hoehne*
- Dec 12 Tevet 04 Freida Makower*
- Dec 14 Tevet 06 Fannie Ginsburg
- Dec 14 Tevet 06 Estelle Okeon
- Dec 16 Tevet 08 Dan Polin*
- Dec 17 Tevet 09 Florence Goldstein*
- Dec 17 Tevet 09 Rose Kahn*
- Dec 20 Tevet 12 Gilbert Brodkin
- Dec 20 Tevet 12 Lou Herbin*
- Dec 20 Tevet 12 Bea Smolker*
- Dec 22 Tevet 14 Betty K. Greenberg
- Dec 24 Tevet 16 Bertha P. Smolker*
- Dec 24 Tevet 16 Walter Delengowski
- Dec 25 Tevet 17 Joseph Cohen*
- Dec 26 Tevet 18 Howard S. McCall
- Dec 27 Tevet 19 Bruce Roberts*
- Dec 28 Tevet 20 Abigail Michaela Sawyer*
- Dec 28 Tevet 20 Alex Harris
- Dec 31 Tevet 23 Anna Rodkin

* Plaque

**Light Memorial candle sunset of previous evening