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# the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

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JANUARY, 2019

TEVET/SHVAT, 5779

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

## **RABBI'S MESSAGE**

### OBEYING THE LAW IS OLD FASHIONED?

I had to do a double-take when I read the "Quote of the Day" in the New York Times, Thursday, December 13. It seems there are strong signs of fraud in a Congressional race in North Carolina. The winner may have been awarded fraudulent votes both in the Republican primary (where he defeated the incumbent Congressman) and then in the general election against the Democratic candidate.

Now here's the quote. Carter Wrenn, a Republican strategist in North Carolina, says, "I'm old fashioned, but anytime somebody may have broken the law, it's appropriate for the state to look into it." Maybe Mr. Wrenn is being ironic. Or rhetorical. Or something of that sort. But, really, why is it old fashioned to believe that a seat in Congress should be won in a fair election? Of course the state should look into an election that may have been fraudulent! (If you are

interested in following the issue for yourself, google Mark Harris, the winner of the election, or L. McCrae Dowless Jr., the ex-convict who is accused of manipulating the vote count.)

My friends, it is sad that trust in our Government keeps going down. Can you remember a time when people seemed so cynical about Congress, about the Supreme Court, and about the President? Mention "Congress" and the first word that comes to mind is 'gridlock.' Mention the Court, and what comes to mind is the lurid circus involving Brett Kavanaugh. Mention the President and...oy vey, the responses of our fellow Americans are so divided and so contentious.

I am not the only person who finds the near-adoration of the late John McCain and George H. W. Bush as being animated, in large part, by nostalgia for the time, not very long ago, when American politicians believed in bi-partisan cooperation and cordial relationships. The funerals of both those

men seemed to be a farewell not just to two American leaders; many people saw the funerals as a wistful farewell to decency, moderation, and restraint, at least in the sphere of politics. Those are old-fashioned values. We seem to see less and less of those values today.

Back to the questionable election: Mr. Wrenn is a Republican strategist, and a Republican won the election. He could easily keep quiet. But apparently, he is old fashioned when it comes to the truth. Well then, just like Carter Wrenn of North Carolina, we're old fashioned too. At the heart of our religion is the fact that we stand for honesty, integrity and truthfulness. It's good to be a winner but it's essential to win by obeying the law and doing what is right. It is said that honesty pays. Trouble is, dishonesty pays better. We see lies and hypocrisy almost everywhere we look. But that doesn't mean that we adopt any of it. We know as Jews what our values and virtues are. In the most basic ways — like expecting the truth from ourselves and from others — we are quite content to be old fashioned!

Looking forward to seeing you January 11-14 weekend. And a happy 2019 to all.

Stephen Listfield

### **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Greetings,

My new year's present to you is the shortest article ever!

Here is a bit of end of the year housekeeping (pun intended). Cooks Pest Control has brought it to our attention that we are leaving crumbs on the counters, floor and tables. If you have a Friday night oneg, Saturday morning service, Rabbi's Luncheon, Brunch or get together during the week it is your responsibility to police the area and make sure everything is clean and picked up before you leave. Cooks said the cold will drive bugs and rodents into the warmth. We will have less chance of them staying if we make an extra effort to clean up. Thank you.

Have a happy and healthy new year.

Sandra

### **HANUKAH PARTY**

We wish to thank everyone who worked on making the Hanukah Latke Party the success that it was. It was great fun, well attended and delicious.

Also, thanks to Lydia Honan for the gift to the synagogue of a lovely griddle.

### **BOOK CLUB WILL READ ABOUT THE CONTRAST BETWEEN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY**

The book club enjoyed a spirited discussion of "Einstein and the Rabbi" on Thursday, December 20. Everybody came away having learned something about how our souls affect our lives.

The next book we read will be "Judaism and Christianity: A Contrast" by Rabbi Stuart Federow. Many people focus on the similarities between Judaism and Christianity, but the religions are really quite different. This book, published in 2012, will help us understand these differences from the Jewish perspective. Rabbi Federow has been the Rabbi at Shaar Hashalom, a conservative congregation in Houston, TX, since 1995.

If you'd like to participate, there's plenty of time. We'll discuss this book at 11:30 AM on February 21, 2019 at the synagogue.

As a special offer to get 2019 off to a great start, for anyone joining the club for the first time we'll buy your first book for you. Just contact Jon Berger and we'll give you a copy of "Judaism and Christianity: A Contrast" by Rabbi Stuart Federow free of charge in time for you to read it and participate in the discussion on February 21. Come on and join us. You can't beat free.

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

### **MEN'S CLUB UPDATE**

Please join the Men's Club on Saturday, February 2, as we team up with the TBS Brotherhood to watch the Huntsville Havoc battle the Quad City Storm at the Von Braun Center. The game starts at 7:00 pm and tickets cost \$13 each (group rate includes a baseball cap). Tickets must be ordered and paid for no later than January 18. Checks made out to "Etz Chayim" can be dropped off

at the Synagogue or brought to our next Men's Club meeting on January 16. Contact Jon Persons for details.

Thanks,

Jon Persons

### **SISTERHOOD**

Ladies,

Soon everyone's holidays will be over and we can take a break! I was unable to attend the Latke party, but I heard that everyone had a wonderful time and lots of good food. Thanks to Shirley and Millie for being in charge, Michelle Persons for making and donating some of the desserts, Joe Paddock for peeling potatoes, Max Rosenthal for organizing the graters, all the people who grated, and thanks to all the volunteers who helped. Michelle Persons put some wonderful pictures of the party on Facebook, so even if we weren't there, we got to enjoy some of it.

Amy is working on either a program or a "lunch bunch" for January. Be on the lookout for a card in the mail (if you are a Sisterhood member). All women of the community are welcome.

Natha

### **ONEGS**

Jan 04	Thomason
Jan 11	Schindler/Reese
Jan 18	Kolchin

Jan 25 Zelickson  
Feb 01 Hancock

### **DONATIONS**

#### **General Fund**

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal  
To: Lynne Edmondson – We wish you a successful surgery and continued “good hips”.

From: Janet Schindler  
To: Lynne Edmondson – Speedy recovery and continued good health

From: Natha & Scott Hancock

From: Regina & Steve Rittenberg  
To: Sandra Wiederecht—Thank you, Sandra.

From: Sandra & Marvin Kalachman  
In Memory of Frieda Makower, the mother of Sandra Kalachman.

From: Sandra Wiederecht

#### **Rabbi Fund**

From: Shirley & Ted Roberts  
To: Lynne Edmondson—Wishing you a fast and easy recovery.

From: Diana & Howard Polin  
To: Lynne Edmondson—We are glad all went well with your surgery, wishing you a speedy recovery.  
To: Alyce & Paul Goldstein—“Lets Up & Out” be the magic password in 2019. Looking forward to happy days and good health.

#### **Sisterhood Fund**

From: Sandra Wiederecht  
To: Lynne Edmondson—Thinking of you and wishing you a speedy recovery.

#### **Outdoor Lighting Fund**

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

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Jan 11-13 Rabbi Listfield Shabbaton  
Jan 18 Deadline for payment (check made out to Etz Chayim) for tickets to the Men’s Club  
Huntsville Havoc Night on Feb 02  
Jan 21 Tu B’Shvat

### **BIRTHDAYS**

Jan 01 Ron Goldberg  
Jan 05 McKenzie Rosenthal Sanders  
Jan 10 Sarah Isabell Sainker  
Jan 12 Michael Rosenthal  
Jan 21 Samuel Fuerst  
Jan 23 Alicia Hall  
Jan 23 Sam Sainker  
Jan 24 Alan Sacks  
Jan 26 Steve Goodman  
Jan 28 Elizabeth Persons  
Jan 29 Mary Ann Meyer  
Jan 30 Eliza Roberts  
Jan 31 Eileen Dorit Jackson  
Jan 31 Adam Zelickson

### **ANNIVERSARIES**

Jan 01 Diana & Howard Polin

Jan 15 BJ & Bill Brigadier  
Jan 17 Ana & Seth Spraggins

### Yahrzeits\*\*

Dec 28	Tevet 20	Abigail Michaela Sawyer*
Dec 28	Tevet 20	Alex Harris
Dec 31	Tevet 23	Anna Rodkin
Jan 02	Tevet 25	Martin Klazmer
Jan 07	Shevat 01	Harry Warshaw
Jan 08	Shevat 02	Harry Zeruld*
Jan 09	Shevat 03	Hannah Rosen bat Schmuel
Jan 10	Shevat 04	Sylvia Kalachman*
Jan 11	Shevat 05	Royal Milton Jacobs*
Jan 15	Shevat 09	Ida Bernstein Sidel
Jan 15	Shevat 09	Alice Levine Yalowitz
Jan 16	Shevat 10	Selma Levitt
Jan 17	Shevat 11	William Flank*
Jan 17	Shevat 11	Hersh Schindler
Jan 18	Shevat 12	Henry Fleishman
Jan 20	Shevat 14	Rabbi Jeffrey Ballon
Jan 22	Shevat 16	Jerome L. Richard
Jan 23	Shevat 17	Esther Goldberg*
Jan 24	Shevat 18	Helen Flank Baum*
Jan 26	Shevat 20	Mildred Freedman*
Jan 26	Shevat 20	Jennie Greenbaum
Jan 27	Shevat 21	Bertha Flank*
Jan 30	Shevat 24	Rebecca Treister*
Feb 01	Shevat 26	Rose Belsky*
Feb 02	Shevat 27	Richard Irwin Kolchin
Feb 03	Shevat 28	Joseph Goodman

\* Plaque

\*\*Light Memorial candle sunset of previous evening

### A FABLE, THE SUITOR'S SACRIFICE

By Ted Roberts

Once, long ago, there was a very observant Rabbi from Minsk. Mitzvah score – a perfect 613. For those Mitzvahs obliterated by the destruction of the Temple he made new ones relating to his fellow man. So observant, so holy that he commanded the peach trees in his backyard not to grow on Shabbos in Spring. And such was his authority that they didn't. And better yet, nobody slept through his enlightening lectures that highlighted his services. He led a perfect life except for one exception. He suffered from unrequited love. He longed with all of his heart for a maiden named Esther Arlov. So beautiful, so charming that the rose bushes bloomed when she walked by. But she showed no affection for her pursuer, the Rabbi, due to the strong objections of her parents.

Her parents – well to do members of the community objected fiercely. "You know how little we pay him? He lives in a hut, absolutely not – forget it." The lonely suitor lived in frustration.

Then everything changed. One night as he lay only half asleep as visions of Esther belabored his troubled brain, there was a noise, then a brightening in his room. There was an Angel writing in a book of gold there at the foot of his bed. The Rabbi sat up in bed. He had read about such things, but never before had he experienced them. Nor had he expected such a blessed event.

The heavenly messenger explained that he brought a bargain for the Rabbi to ponder. He could win the girl of his dreams – but only at a price – like everything on this earth. One of the two – Rabbi or bride must be

disfigured; yes, marriage was part of the bargain.

The object of this challenge hesitated not a second, “make it me” he shouted. “You really want her?” softly asked the angel. “Yes, yes I do” screamed the object of the angel’s visit, forgetting for a moment the celestial nature of his visitor, “Her beauty must not be clouded, make it me.” The angel waved his hand and held it to his head: the Rabbi immediately felt a pain in his left eye and the eye was gone.

The next night the same angel showed up in Esther’s room and explained to her the Rabbi’s sacrifice. She revealed the Angelic message to her parents who were overwhelmed by such devotion. They gave their approval, enthusiastically.

Above, the angels noted the scene below and made a note in their Golden Activity book to restore the Rabbi’s left eye the day after the wedding. Angels have a sense of humor too. And wasn’t his Mitzvah score a perfect 613?

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](mailto:shirlr@hiwaay.net)