
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

MARCH, 2019

ADAR I/ADAR II, 5779

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

THE RABBI'S MESSAGE

Scrambled Huevos

Two Montana women are suing United States Customs and Border Protection for being wrongfully “singled out, detained, and interrogated.” What was the offense that occasioned the suspicions of a federal agent? The answer is, they were speaking Spanish with each other.

The event happened last year in a convenience store in Havre, MT. Martha Hernandez and Ana Suda were shopping for eggs and milk. The agent, Paul O’Neal, overheard their conversation and so he asked for their ID’s. The women — both of whom were born in the United States, by the way— were thoroughly surprised by the encounter. After showing their Montana driver’s licenses they asked Office O’Neal to explain what they were doing wrong. According to the lawsuit, he told them “I wanted to see your ID’s because speaking Spanish is very unheard-of up here.”

He added that Ms. Hernandez’s accent was “very strong.” The women said that they asked Officer O’Neal’s supervisor if they would have been stopped if they had been speaking French. “No,” he said, according to the lawsuit. “We don’t do that.”

Friends, what can we say? It happens that I was a French major in college, so I am safe from the CBP. However, I am a student of languages. I never hear an unfamiliar language without trying to learn a few words and get a rudimentary grasp of its syntax. In my life I have studied in academic settings French, German, Chinese, Japanese, Hebrew and Aramaic. I never studied Spanish, but I find pleasure in exchanging with Spanish-speaking people the words and phrases that I do know. In fact, I’m glad to tell you that I take extra pleasure when I have occasion to share some Arabic with people I meet from the Middle East. (It’s my own private Mid-East peace plan.) In short, I’ll talk to anybody in any language anytime.

But apparently that is a right that was called into question at least one time — and once is too many — for two friends in Montana. CBP policy states that agents cannot stop someone based solely on their race or ethnicity.

Do we need to add to that list: Agents cannot stop someone who is overheard wishing “mazel tov” to a friend who just remarked that they celebrated a “simchah.” That is basically what happened to the two women in Montana.

The glory of America is that we are a diverse people, drawn together from many lands and numerous ethnicities and bound together not by our color or religion or linguistic preference. No, we are bound together by an idea. America, dear friends, is an idea. Part of that grandeur is that every person is free to speak, to worship, and to assemble, in any way they wish and with whomever they please. You may even do so in Spanish.

We all want our borders to be secure. I am completely against illegal immigration. That is not what I am writing about. I’m writing, rather, partly as an exuberant student of language but mainly as a proud member of a minority group. My people represent two percent of the American population. But we few, we who are of not great statistical significance in this land, have the right to be who we are and to express that right in our own way. That’s why I am forever grateful that we live in this very, very great country. And that’s why, whenever we see narrowness, bigotry, or just plain ignorance, it is incumbent upon us, as much as on anybody, to speak up and to remind ourselves and each other of

e pluribus unum — our union is composed of multiple parts.

Next time I’m near a bodega, I might just stop in and ask to buy huevos and leche. It’s part of being an American.

Stephen Listfield

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings,

Last month was very full of fun activities—the Rabbi Weekend and a very successful Sisterhood Family Game Night. Our Men’s Club and Book Club are thriving.

Time for a little house cleaning. Our lost and found is overflowing. If anyone is missing one of the items listed below, please come by the synagogue on a Friday night or give me a call. I would be happy to meet you there so you can retrieve your items. At last count, we have two jackets, at least two bracelets, a small bread basket with towel and two pairs of glasses.

Purim and Passover are going to be upon us before we know it. Purim is March 20. As in the past, Brenda Liles will be doing her outstanding preparation of the Hot Dog Supper sponsored by the Sisterhood. If anyone would like to participate in a live, on-stage (almost) performance, please contact Michelle Lapidus.

Passover this year will be on Friday evening, April 19. Our Seder is always filled to capacity, so when reservations

open, please do not wait for the last minute to reserve a place for yourself and your family. Last year, due to limited seating, people who asked to add last minute visitors and family members were disappointed. Sisterhood makes every effort to accommodate everyone, but last-minute changes present the issues of pre-ordered meals and additional seating being unavailable. Thank you.

We welcome Rabbi Listfield back for a busy and fulfilling weekend on March 8-10. Note that on the 10th, the Rabbi will be at Nachas in the early morning, so our Brunch & Discussion will begin at 10:45 AM, rather than our usual time. You get to sleep in an extra hour that morning, then have a great time with fellowship and good food prepared by Lauren Goodman. Win win!

As usual, if you need to contact me, please text or call me at 256-797-4013.

Thank you,

Sandra Wiederecht

SISTERHOOD

Ladies,

Family Game Night was a big success with almost 20 people in attendance. I learned a new game that I really enjoyed called Sequence. Scott and I might just get our own copy (Thanks Lauren and Steve for bringing it). Thank you to Amy for all her hard work getting everything together.

Sisterhood is having a big sale in the Gift Shop. Nearly everything is on sale. Also, there is a table in the Oneg room (for a couple of weeks) where everything is only 1 dollar! Most all of the dollar items are for Hanukah, but not all. Please find something you can use, and leave the funds in an envelope for Brenda.

Sisterhood will be providing a Hot Dog Supper (free) for Purim, so come in costume and enjoy dinner and the Purim program. The date is March 20, supper is at 6 PM and the Purim program will begin at 6:45 PM.

The Synagogue Seder will be on 19 April. Nannette Schwartz is in charge of the meal, and she and her committee are busy making plans. Once again, Brenda will be taking the money, and she and Nannette will be taking the reservations. I don't have any more information yet, but just wanted to give everyone a heads up on the date.

I hope everyone likes our new entry foyer floor and the wonderful carpet in the Sanctuary. Thanks to Millie and Shirley for doing all the leg work, and thanks to Max for "monitoring" the installation. I want to thank Max Rosenthal for taking care of the fallen tree so quickly. I know that isn't a Sisterhood function, but thanks Max for everything you do for the Synagogue and for the Sisterhood. We know we can always depend on you.

Natha

BOOK CLUB WILL EXAMINE SHIMON PEREZ' AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The Etz Chayim Book Club had a fascinating discussion of "Judaism and Christianity: A Contrast" by Rabbi Stuart Federow. One of the things that made it so interesting is that Rabbi Federow participated in the discussion by speakerphone from Houston, TX. Every club member learned a huge amount.

Our next book, "No Room for Small Dreams: Courage, Imagination, and the Making of Modern Israel" by Shimon Peres, published in September, 2017, is already being considered one of the great autobiographies ever written. Finished just weeks before he died, this book cements Peres as one of the towering figures of the 20th century. It examines the crucial turning points in Israeli history through the eyes of this key decisionmaker and eyewitness.

We'll discuss "No Room for Small Dreams" at 11:30 on Thursday, April 11, at the synagogue. Join us.

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

ONEGS

Mar 01 Lapidus
Mar 08 Persons
Mar 15 Paddock
Mar 22 Camenker/Smith
Mar 29 Liles
Apr 05 Goodman

ALL SYNAGOGUE PAYMENTS

Please send all synagogue payments to:

Huntsville conservative Synagogue
P.O. Box 4924
Huntsville, AL 35815

Don't send them to our mailbox. It's a security recommendation.

WELCOME!

Many of us already know Arlene Polin White, and we welcome her as the newest member of our Synagogue family. For those of you who do not know Arlene, she is the daughter of our long-time and valued members, Diana and Howard Polin. It's like a good friend coming home! We hope to see you often, Arlene.

FROM HOWARD POLIN

On Friday night of Rabbi Listfield's February weekend visit at EC, I was honored for my service as a Huntsville Jewish War Veteran in WWII. The Hon. Moe Brooks, Huntsville's member of Congress, presented me with a flag that was flown over the Capital.

The room was so full. I was overwhelmed by a standing ovation that included members of our Jewish War Veterans from EC and TBS led by Cdr. Joe Paddock.

Thank you to Millie and Max and helpers for that incredible Oneg.

Thank you to Ira Leitner for arranging this heartwarming memorable event.

Thanks to all United States Veterans past and present.

Diana and I and our kids have been members of EC and the Huntsville community for 60 blessed years. We are forever grateful.

Howard Polin

DONATIONS

General Fund

From: Elizabeth Kessler & Dennis Gilbride

To: Etz Chayim Synagogue – Thank you for hosting us during Rabbi Listfield's monthly visit. You welcomed us with warmth and friendliness.

From: Natha & Scott Hancock

From: Sandra & Marvin Kalachman
In loving Memory of Sylvia Kalachman, mother of Marvin Kalachman.

From: Michal & Gary Hall

Sisterhood

From: Sandra Wiederecht

Outdoor Lighting Fund

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mar 8-10 Rabbi Listfield Shabbaton
Mar 10 Note the time! 10:45 Brunch &

Discussion with the Rabbi
Mar 20 Fast of Esther
Mar 20 Hot Dog Supper at 6 PM &
Purim Program at 6:45 PM

BIRTHDAYS

Mar 01 Jonathan Ralston
Mar 02 Claudia Cerezo
Mar 02 Michal Hall
Mar 03 Myles Johnson
Mar 08 Millie Rosenthal
Mar 09 Ginger Nelson
Mar 20 Maryn Liles
Mar 25 Sharon Roberts
Mar 25 Harrison Sacks
Mar 27 Stephanie Hancock Gerlak
Mar 27 Lucy Fisher
Mar 28 Seth Spraggins

YAHREZEITS**

Mar 01	Adar 1	Lotta Chester
Mar 01	Adar 1	Mae Green*
Mar 09	Adar 2 II	Charles Kopman
Mar 10	Adar 3	Carolyn Greenbaum
Mar 10	Adar 3	Phillip Smolker
Mar 11	Adar 4	Gladys Moiseev
Mar 12	Adar 5	Stanley B. Brown
Mar 12	Adar 5	Benjamin Bierstein
Mar 14	Adar 7	Helena D'Acosta Weingarden
Mar 14	Adar 7	Philip Aronowitz*
Mar 14	Adar 7	Mary Hoffman Baker*
Mar 14	Adar 7	Rose Leites*
Mar 17	Adar 10	Sarah Rachel Schindler
Mar 20	Adar 13	Lou Harrison*
Mar 20	Adar 13	Max Moiseev*
Mar 20	Adar 13	Sam Okeon
Mar 20	Adar 13 II	Joseph Sacks
Mar 21	Adar 14	Hannah Rosen
Mar 22	Adar 15	Jeffrey Tillman*
Mar 23	Adar 16	Bernard Flank*

Mar 23	Adar 16 II	Goldie Merzon Ludmer*
Mar 24	Adar 17	Joe Brown
Mar 24	Adar 17	Anna Fleishman
Mar 25	Adar 18	B. H. Ledbetter*
Mar 27	Adar 20	Cynthia Kopman
Mar 28	Adar 21	Melvin Harris Kirsch*
Apr 01	Adar 25	Rebecca Sacks*
Apr 02	Adar 26	Diana Sidel
Apr 03	Adar 27	Rose Freeman
Apr 03	Adar 27	Phillip Makower*

* Plaque

**Light Memorial candle sunset of previous evening

NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN

By Ted Roberts

Solomon, the reputed author of Ecclesiastes, was no dummy and certainly not lazy. He must have assigned himself an hour or so a day (“Sollie, where are you going? Back to that book?”) away from his 1000 voluptuous wives to write his book wherein he stated, “There is nothing new under the sun”. Purim brings that to mind. Consider Iran – formerly Persia. They wanted to kill us THEN and they want to kill us NOW. Once more, “There is nothing new under the sun”. Nothing changes except that the new Persia, Iran, has Hezbollah, Hamas, and other gangster allies who would delight in our murder. Solomon should have lived to see this second Persia – it would have verified his hypothesis.

We all know the scroll of Esther in our Tanach – how a young Jewish girl, probably still a teenager, saved us. How she disguised her Judaism, which begs the question of how she kept kosher and Shabbos in the king’s goyishke court. Then one fateful day, propelled by Mordecai, she burst into the throne room

wearing her “Jerusalem, My Hometown” T-shirt. The king, not nearly as bloodthirsty as his current successor, President Hassan Rouhan, yields to the young girl’s blandishments. We’re saved. She even gets to keep her T-shirt.

Strangely enough, the current version of The Book of Esther in our Tanach ignores our great deliverer and the invisible role He plays in the whirlwind of the world’s affair. Gratitude to the “outstretched hand and a mighty arm” of He who dubbed us his Chosen People is ignored. In fact, the name of G-d is omitted from the entire book. Compare this to the rest of our Bible where G-d stands guard, beginning with the Exodus, to every threat to our national existence. A conundrum. Especially since the original Septuagint version of Esther – the mother of our current book – contains prayers to He who made both Esther and Haman. In the conversion from Hebrew to Greek (most of the Egyptian Jews couldn’t read Hebrew) one of the 72 scholars did some red-penciling. Why? Ask your Rabbi – I’m only a scribbler.

But Persia/Iran is still our threat. Only now they enjoy killing Christians as well as Jews. As I’ve said before, it’s unbelievable that the Pope welcomed the President of Iran, also known as financier and inspirer of terrorism, at the Vatican with a hug and full State ceremony. I don’t think even Solomon would figure that out.

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:
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