
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

MARCH, 2021

ADAR/NISAN, 5781

Due to Covid, services are not being held in the Synagogue. For information on joining virtual services and events, please see our website.

<http://www.etzchayim-hsv.org>

FROM THE RABBI

A Brilliant and Honorable Man, a True and Sincere Friend

When George Shultz was appointed secretary of state, I was a rabbi at Adas Israel Synagogue in Washington, DC. That was 38 years ago, but I clearly remember the anxiety among Jewish insiders in DC at that time. Shultz was president of the Bechtel Group, an engineering and construction company that had an especially close relationship with Saudi Arabia. The reaction in my Jewish circles was that making this man the secretary of state was going to be a horror.

Boy, were those Jewish pundits wrong!

George Shultz, who died last month, will be remembered as a great servant of the American people. He was a major force in ending the Cold War. He helped eliminate an entire class of missiles that threatened Europe. He may have been the most consequential Secretary of State of the turbulent 20th century.

It would be reason enough to write about him if he was merely (merely!) responsible for so many strides toward international peace and security. But I write at Etz Chayim about Secretary Shultz because he was a friend of

human rights. He was a powerful enemy of terrorism. He fought for Soviet Jewry. Though an Episcopalian, he said that a highlight of his career was the surprise Passover seder he convened in 1987 at the U.S. embassy in Moscow, to which he invited Jewish dissidents who were seeking permission to emigrate to Israel.

An important Jewish concept is *hakarat hatov*. It means, to express gratitude. Let us express the fullest measure of *hakarat hatov* to George Shultz. I say this especially because so many friends of Israel were wary of what this man would do in his position of power. What this man did in his position of power — then, and still resonating within me to this very day -- brings uplift to my spirit and the blessings of *hakarat hatov* from my heart.

RIP, George Pratt Shultz (1920-2021). Would that there were more people like you!

Stephen Listfield

SISTERHOOD

Hi all,

I hope you all are able to have a happy and safe Passover Seder with your families and friends, either together in person or virtually. My family recently asked me how things at the Synagogue are going, and upon reflection I realized how important our sense of community is to me, how I sorely miss face-to-face gatherings and services, and how the pandemic has made it so difficult for all of us. I have raised my 1 year old son, Beau, without any of his Jewish Bubbles for fear of spreading illness to you all. Deciding to live in Huntsville, away from my family, was an easier decision knowing I had my Jewish family here, and I am so eager to spread the love and sense of community with him and with you all again. Until then, Chag Pesach Sameach and Happy Spring, and keep happy and healthy.

Sincerely,

Amy

DONATIONS

General Fund

From: Donna Lyonnais

From: Ann Green, Cristine Green, & Morgan Green

In Memory of the Yahrtzeit of Mae Green

Rabbi Fund

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal

To: Karen Feigenblatt - Thinking about you, get well soon so we can all get together again.

Outdoor Lighting Fund

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Mar 04 | EC Men's Club presents film, <i>About Face, 7 PM, All Welcome!</i> |
| Mar 05 | Friday evening services with Rabbi Listfield, 7:15 PM |
| Mar 05-26 | Jewish Film Festival, see www.jfhna.org/filmfestival for information |
| Mar 13 | Virtual Havdalah with Rabbi Listfield, 7:15 PM |
| Mar 18 | EC Book Club read "Fritz Bauer," by Ronen Steinke. Virtual discussion at 11:30 AM |
| Mar 20 | Virtual Shabbat morning service with Rabbi Listfield, 9:45 AM |
| Mar 23 | Tuesday Gathering with Rabbi Listfield, 6:45 PM |
| Mar 27 | Erev Pesach, First Seder |
| Mar 28 | Second Seder |

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 |

Etz Chayim Men's Club Presents:

ABOUT FACE

THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 2021 @ 7 P.M.

The untold WWII story of young Jewish men who escaped danger at the hands of the Nazis, returning to fight them in Europe and North Africa. The film chronicles the journey from Nazi victim to refugee and, finally, to Allied soldier.

ALL ARE INVITED!!!!!!

Zoom details will follow.



Mar 29 Nisan 16 Marvin M. Schreiber*
Mar 29 Nisan 16 Lilian Jaffee
Apr 02 Nisan 20 Henry Sevin

*Plaque

**Light Memorial candle at sunset of the previous evening

ELIJAH IN MANHATTAN

By TED ROBERTS, (1930-2020),
the **SCRIBBLER ON THE ROOF**



Her name was Rachel – his was Nathan. And even though separated by two bar stools, they struggled through twenty minutes of awkward conversation

before their last names appeared. Greenberg went with Rachel; Cohen with Nathan.

“Hey, you must be Jewish,” blurted out Nathan, a lonely bachelor whose only other date was Channel 15 on a cold, rainy night in April.

“I bet you’re Jewish, too,” she responded.

Well, things were looking up. Nathan now sat beside her and she responded with a smile at his aggressive move. He’s Jewish, no stranger, she thought.

“What a night for two Jewish buckaroos to be sitting in a western bar in the middle of Manhattan,” said Rachel. “It’s the first night of Passover, you know.”

“Yeah. I’m afraid I’ve neglected ‘my heritage’ as my father puts it. He lives here in the city – only a few blocks down 57th. My family has a Seder every year. They sit around the table – sing childish songs – stuff themselves on a 5-course meal and wait for Elijah, the heavenly

YAHREZEITS**

Feb 28	Adar 16	Bernard Flank*
Feb 28	Adar 16 II	Goldie Merzon Ludmer*
Mar 01	Adar 17	Joe Brown
Mar 01	Adar 17	Anna Fleishman
Mar 02	Adar 18	B. H. Ledbetter*
Mar 04	Adar 20	Cynthia Kopman
Mar 05	Adar 21	Melvin Harris Kirsch*
Mar 09	Adar 25	Rebecca Sacks*
Mar 10	Adar 26	Diana Sidel
Mar 11	Adar 27	Rose Freeman
Mar 11	Adar 27	Phillip Makower*
Mar 15	Nisan 02	Hersh Tzvi Bayers
Mar 16	Nisan 03	Robert Lukin*
Mar 20	Nisan 07	Paul Schlein*
Mar 20	Nisan 07	Gertrud Schlein*
Mar 21	Nisan 08	Morris Wittenstein*
Mar 22	Nisan 09	Cecile Hollenberg*
Mar 23	Nisan 10	Irwin Goldstein*
Mar 24	Nisan 11	Norman Greenbaum
Mar 28	Nisan 15	Yakov Cszerny Drake
Mar 28	Nisan 15	Yolanda Cszerny Drake
Mar 29	Nisan 16	Millie Goldstein

visitor to drop by. I go to a bar. Usually the one over on 8th and 52nd. This year my mood took me here. Don't know why. It's a heck of a coincidence that I'm sitting next to you."

"Well, I'm alone in the city. My family is back home in Louisville, Kentucky. Like yours, about now they're sitting down to a huge meal with a week's supply of calories and cholesterol. Kosher, but still deadly. And I'm sure they're singing silly songs, as you put it. Wish I was there."

"How seriously do they play out the Elijah game? You know the legend. His visit to every Jewish home on Seder night. I remember my old man. He'd put down his wine glass, get all serious and open the front door. 'Hey Pop,' the eight-year-old who was then me, would shout, 'If the ubiquitous Elijah can pop up at six million Jewish homes in a single night, he can get through that wood-paneled front door without your help. A decent burglar can do it in a few minutes. Why not challenge the prophet?' My old man hated it."

An old gentleman at the end of the bar looked up with a pained expression.

"I guess so," remarked Rachel. "Sure I know the Elijah story – our Rabbi calls it a Midrash – a Rabbinic parable – which elevates it a level or two above a legend. It's one of those unifying articles of faith that every Jew – even the lost ones – enjoys believing. A sweet story, you know. In fact, my Rabbi believes that besides visiting many millions of Seders on the first night of Pesach, he's there – on Passover night – wherever two or more Jews are together."

She had been a little loud. She noticed the old gentleman at the end of the bar had looked up from his drink, a dark purple wine in an ornate silver wine glass. Wonder what they called that drink? Wonder if you got to keep the glass?

Nathan, his arms folded loosely across his chest, had fixed his eyes on her as she talked. She's got some spirit, he reflected. How his father's eyes would gleam with passion to hear her declarations of faith.

Rachel brushed her hair back from her face. "Sorry, I got a little carried away – I didn't mean to preach to you. Let's talk about something else."

"No, no, I understand. That first night of Pesach is magic, my old man used to say. Makes you remember who you are.

Every Jew, he used to say, had a progenitor – an ancestor – in his direct line who walked dry shod on the bed of the Red Sea. If he had perished under Egyptian whips or drowned beneath the waves – I, for example, wouldn't be sitting at this glitzy bar in 21st Century America talking to a young Jewish lady who believes in a resuscitated prophet who makes a million house calls on one Spring night."

"You know what?" she said suddenly. "I'd love to go to a Seder tonight. And there's no lamb shank, haroseth, parsley or bitter herb at your place or mine – but there is at your father's place. Why don't we surprise him? We'll be just in time to greet Elijah."

Nathan blinked. And nodded. With her, he had a chance. So, linking his arm in hers, he set out on the longest journey any man can undertake. A journey home.

And at the end of the bar, the dignified, but poorly dressed patron held up his wine goblet. "There are no coincidences," he whispered to the goblet. He glanced hurriedly at his watch and left. He had many calls to make.