
the Shofar



Etz Chayim Conservative Synagogue's Monthly Newsletter

JANUARY, 2022

TEVET/SHEVAT, 5782

For information on joining
virtual services and events, please see our website:

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

FROM THE RABBI

The Metallurgist Told It as It Is

A biography has just been published about a 19th-century miner whose tenacity and genius made him one of the richest men in the American West. The book is "George Hearst: Silver King of the Gilded Age." No, I never heard of him either. But he and his wife, 22 years his junior by the way, produced one child, William Randolph Hearst. We heard of him.

Back to George. When it came to finding precious metals this man was unstoppable. He struck gold in California, mined millions of dollars worth of silver ore in Utah, and then it was on to Montana, where he made the greatest copper strike in the world. And then as an old man he discovered a choice coal mine in West Virginia.

For all his peripatetic ambition and uncanny brilliance, Hearst was mostly a likable man. One of his Gold Rush

comrades admired Hearst's "strong common sense that inspired confidence and made him a leader of men." He apparently had a great sense of humor and could relate to anybody.

Now, my message about Hearst is not about metallurgy. Rather, he said something that I commend to our attention: "When I was young I had very strong religious views...but after leaving home my ideas got broader, and on studying these things for myself, without any influence from parents or ministers, I came to the conclusion that I knew just about as much about religion as anybody, and I knew nothing."

Make of that what you will. As for me, I think that George struck a vein. Trained clergypersons know more about theology than the old miner did. But in the end, it's healthy to admit that even the most learned among us might actually know nothing about the ultimate mysteries of life.

Welcome to 2022. Uncertainties of every sort are swirling around us. Not only we

mere mortals, but even our highest leaders, are confounded by matters here on earth. What do we know of the Heavens? But I say the important thing is to keep digging!

Stephen Listfield

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I join with our Etz Chayim family and friends in welcoming in a Happy and Healthy New Year 2022. Our Jewish calendar will welcome the year 5782 a bit later on September 25-27. We recognize the special symbolism that the New Year brings. Happy New Year messages should speak to new beginnings and fresh starts, as well as a time of reflection. The Board meets in early January to make a decision on fully reopening to services and Onegs in person. Last month we decided to wait until after the end of year celebration gatherings before we made the call due to the emergence of the omicron Covid variant that is now sweeping across the country. Stay tuned. We share in your frustration and want to reopen as soon as it is prudent to do so. Until we are back in the Sanctuary and Rabbi Listfield is again able to spend face-to-face time with us, we asked the Rabbi to participate in a Friday, Saturday and 2 weekday gatherings a month via Google Meets.

Best wishes for the new year,

Steve Goodman



Etz Chayim Men's Club

Annual Hockey Outing

Join us as we watch the Huntsville Havoc play the Birmingham Bulls!

SUNDAY, FEB. 20, 2022
5 P.M.
PROPST ARENA
DOWNTOWN HUNTSVILLE

Cost is \$16 per ticket.

Payment can be made via Venmo, Zelle, PayPal, checks OR cash.

Contact Jonathan Persons at jmpersons@yahoo.com or (719) 237-6694 to reserve your spots!

Everyone Welcome

WELCOME!

Etz Chayim Congregation is happy to announce that we have two new members of our "family".

This month we welcome Leah Cassorla and also Julie Lindy.

Hopefully, we'll get to meet both new members in person and give them a warm welcome soon!

BOOK CLUB

Etz Chayim's Book Club is reading "Abraham," by Bruce Feiler and will discuss the book on Thursday, January 20, at 11:30.

DONATIONS

Rabbi Fund

From: Millie & Max Rosenthal
To: Susan Levitt & Family - In Memory of Susan's mother, Margaret Albin. Our thoughts are with you at this very difficult time.

General Fund

From: Robin & Bruce Slomka
In Memory of Robin's parents, Gertrude & Perry Schlein

From: Natha & Scott Hancock
In Memory of Natha's parents. Gertrude & Perry Schlein

From: Dr. Kenneth Wool
In Honor of Steven & Leslie Listfield

From: The Estate of Joe & Harriet Sacks
A large Final Bequest to the synagogue.

From: Roslyn Honan
In honor of Lydia Honan participating in the Synagogue Services.

From: Elenor Meyer and Gregory Joseph

A THANK YOU MESSAGE FROM RABBI STEPHEN & LESLIE LISTFIELD

Dear Etz Chayim,

Thank you so much for the lovely shabbat dinner you sent to us. The food was delicious and very welcome. We so appreciate your kind wishes and offers of help. We miss seeing you in person. We are hoping that one day soon we will be able to be with you in person and give each of you a big hug.

Sending best wishes for the new year to you and your families.

Leslie and Stephen

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Jan 08 Virtual Shabbat Morning with Rabbi Stephen Listfield, 9:45 AM
- Jan 13 Virtual Rabbi Stephen Listfield Meeting, 6:45 PM
- Jan 20 Book Club at 11:30 AM
- Jan 21 Virtual Erev Shabbat at 7:15 PM with Rabbi Stephen Listfield
- Jan 27 Virtual Rabbi Stephen Listfield Meeting, 6:45 PM
- Feb 20 Annual Hockey Outing, 5 PM, All are Welcome! See flyer.

BIRTHDAYS

- Jan 01 Ron Goldberg
- Jan 01 Keith Lyonnais
- Jan 05 McKenzie Rosenthal Sanders
- Jan 10 Sarah Isabell Sainker
- Jan 12 Michael Rosenthal
- Jan 21 Samuel Fuerst
- Jan 23 Alicia Hall Beasley
- Jan 23 Sam Sainker
- Jan 24 Alan Sacks

Jan 25 Richard Shepard
 Jan 26 Steve Goodman
 Jan 28 Elizabeth Persons
 Jan 29 Mary Ann Meyer
 Jan 30 Eliza Roberts Itzkowitz
 Jan 31 Eileen Dorit Jackson
 Jan 31 Adam Zelickson

Feb 04 Adar 3 Phillip Smolker
 Feb 05 Adar 4 Gladys Moiseev
 Feb 06 Adar 5 Stanley B. Brown
 Feb 06 Adar 5 Benjamin Bierstein

*Memorial Plaque

ANNIVERSARIES

Jan 01 Diana & Howard Polin
 Jan 15 BJ & Bill Brigadier

Yahrzeits

Light the Memorial candle at sunset of the previous evening

Dec 27 Tevet 23 Anna Rodkin
 Dec 29 Tevet 25 Martin Klazmer
 Jan 03 Shevat 01 Harry Warshaw
 Jan 04 Shevat 02 Harry Zeruld*
 Jan 05 Shevat 03 Hannah Rosen bat Schmuel
 Jan 06 Shevat 04 Sylvia Kalachman*
 Jan 07 Shevat 05 Royal Milton Jacobs*
 Jan 11 Shevat 09 Ida Bernstein Sidel
 Jan 11 Shevat 09 Alice Levine Yalowitz
 Jan 12 Shevat 10 Selma Levitt
 Jan 13 Shevat 11 William Flank*
 Jan 13 Shevat 11 Hersh Schindler
 Jan 14 Shevat 12 Henry Fleishman
 Jan 16 Shevat 14 Rabbi Jeffrey Ballon
 Jan 18 Shevat 16 Jerome L. Richard
 Jan 19 Shevat 17 Esther Goldberg*
 Jan 20 Shevat 18 Helen Flank Baum*
 Jan 21 Shevat 19 Morris Samuel Vitoulis
 Jan 22 Shevat 20 Mildred Freedman*
 Jan 22 Shevat 20 Jennie Greenbaum
 Jan 23 Shevat 21 Bertha Flank*
 Jan 25 Shevat 23 Richard Irwin Kolchin*
 Jan 26 Shevat 24 Rebecca Treister*
 Jan 28 Shevat 26 Rose Belsky*
 Jan 30 Shevat 28 Joseph Goodman
 Feb 02 Adar 1 Lotta Chester
 Feb 02 Adar 1 Mae Green*
 Feb 04 Adar 3 Carolyn Greenbaum

OBSERVATIONS ON A WACKY WORLD By Ted Roberts, (1930-2020), the *Scribbler on the Roof*



Isn't it strange that out of the millions of words on TV ranting about the Russian move into Syria – the pro Assad airstrikes – not one dealt with the greater peril, the obvious danger posed to an

Israeli strike at the Iranian Nuke centers of activity?

It is no longer the slam-dunk of yesterday. When the move of Russian aircraft, missiles, and radar is completed, it will constitute a formidable barrier to penetration of Iranian airspace. An Iran that is the godfather of world-wide terrorism. I have no explanation as to why the foreign affairs pundits never mention this threat. But I guarantee you that the Israel Air Force (IAF) ponders it hourly.

Disregarding this oversight, however, it looks like Mr. Putin is no smarter than Mr. Obama, both of whom would fail a high school exam on politics, geography, and Islamic rivalries in the Middle East. Putin has stepped into deep quicksand. (We often overrate our adversaries –it's an American habit.) Who can discriminate between freedom fighters (so-called), Assad supporters, and the cluster of thugs dubbed ISIS?

They don't wear uniforms, you know. Russia has little to gain from establishing supremacy into his neighborhood that makes an American slum look like the Garden of Eden. Is he suffering political dementia? Has he forgotten that oil is no longer at platinum prices? A basic question: What's in it for him, except a few raggedy, tattered communities (no cohesive nations) that will laugh at his jokes, inflate his ego and then line up at Bank of Russia, hands outstretched for loans or gifts? And not to be forgotten – but infrequently mentioned – is the presence of two to three million Islamic Chechens within Russian boundaries who have waged an ongoing war for independence going back to the 19th Century.

No need to inflame their hostility by killing more Muslims on Middle East battlefields, and who cares whether they're pro- or anti-Assad? Definitely not a smart move by a fragmented (and broke) Russia that begins to look more and more like the Austria-Hungary of pre-World War I fame, the Hapsburg empire of too many races jammed together in an ill-fitting puzzle that finally resolved itself into a homogenous but shrunken Austria.

And while we are talking about Russian occupation of the Syrian madhouse, consider the refugee problem. Hundreds of thousands of possessionless refugees swarming out of Syria and other Islamic states from Yemen to Libya looking for a home. And where is their target? Not Saudi Arabia or Egypt. But overwhelmingly, Germany. The country that killed six million non-Aryan Jews. The goal? A "Judenfrei" Germany. A pure German state. Irony of ironies. They murder millions of Jews who made immense contributions to their culture and

they awake from their bloody dreams to find hordes of impoverished, ill-educated refugees pounding on the door demanding entry. And not an Aryan in the bunch.

And then there's the further mystery – Why Germany? I suppose it's the health of the economy, the availability of jobs. But they don't appreciate their luck. If it were 1938, they would have been welcomed by the Gestapo and bedded down into hotel chains like Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen and Dachau.