



January, 2018

Congregation House of Israel

14 Tevet - 15 Shevat, 5778



Shemot

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The following donations were received in loving memory of Barbara Schlesinger

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The Shofar

Published monthly by:

Congregation House of Israel

PO Box 20802

300 Quapaw

Hot Springs, AR 71903

(501) 623-5821

Website: <http://hschi.org>

Editor: Shelly Kleinman

Webmaster: Shelly Kleinman

Editorial Assistance: Anita Williams

Email to: info@hschi.org

Submissions due the 15th of the prior month. Distributed free to members, prospective members, local clergy and other interested parties.

Steven and Clarissa Kirsch

In beloved memory of Lynn Kirsch

Fred Korngut

In beloved memory of his aunt, Katie Fielschmidt

Michael and Sharon Waxler

In beloved memory of Michael's mother, Bernice Waxler

Shep and Myrna Taxer

In beloved memory of Shep's mother, Dora Taxer

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In beloved memory of her husband, Warner Kass

Anonymous

A donation was received in honor of Ruth Sedler in gratitude for her services to the congregation

Sisterhood Fund

Jerry Tanenbaum

In beloved memory of Lila Chapin

Larry Levi

In beloved memory of his mother, Louise Levi

Davar - A matter for discussion



I have always found the Winter Solstice somewhat depressing. That probably came from growing up in Buffalo, where you could count on another four months of wind, cold and snow after December 21. As late as April, we often had to clear snow off the tennis courts in order to play high school matches.

Later, I began to see my discontent through a Jewish lens. As many of you know, I adore studying the book of Genesis, which focuses on the personalities of Judaism, and the eternal lessons about human behavior they continue to afford us. The remaining four books of the Bible are more legalistic in content and, being a loyal Reform Jew, I consider them secondary to the awe I continue to experience in the pages of BEREISHIT. Aviva Zornberg, a commentator nonpareil who hails from England, has written commentaries on three books of the Bible. She calls her commentary on Genesis "The Beginning of Desire." What a wonderful title. It speaks to the story of Adam and Eve, but also to the convolutions, manipulations, the good and evil perpetrated by our early ancestors. Inevitably, we turn to the pages of Exodus in early January.

Thank God, then, for the celebration of our Festival of Lights, Hannukah. Gathering as a community to light the candles, enjoy a religious school skit, to laugh and socialize, all brighten our commemoration of the historic victory of the Maccabees over our enemies. Whether one understands the miracle of the single cruse of oil that burned for eight days as literal or figurative is secondary to recognizing that the upholding of this tradition outweighs scholarly and rational exposition. It simply is a joy to come together as a community and celebrate what we share together. The commitment to Judaism is the basis of it all.

With inclusive holiday wishes to our entire community,

Richard and Jeanne

Life and Legacy Plan

For Jews, our religion is more than Shabbat services and holiday celebrations. Being Jewish is a way of life, handed down from generation to generation. It is a legacy.

The Life and Legacy Plan is a partnership among CHI, JFAR (Jewish Federation of Arkansas), and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, established to promote a legacy that "ensures Jewish tomorrows". It is an opportunity for each of us to make an after-life commitment to CHI and/or our Central Arkansas Jewish Congregations and organizations. There are no minimums and no contracts to sign. Each and every commitment, no matter how small, gets us closer to our goal.

Participating in L & L is simple. By signing a "Letter of Intent" - a pledge- you can make a commitment to leave a future gift to CHI in your Will, Trust, or by beneficiary designation on an IRA, Annuity, life insurance policy, or any other form of after-life gifting. **No money is requested now.**

A monetary incentive grant from JFAR is underway until March, 2018. If L & L receives 18 new, additional "Letters of Intent," CHI will receive a \$5,000 gift, to be used in any manner CHI chooses. Recently, CHI received our first \$5,000 check, as L & L had obtained 18 Letters in our first year. The L & L team is so close to securing the second, and final, incentive grant, but the deadline is fast approaching.

Please contact an L & L team member (Karen Baim Reagler, Sherrill Nicolosi, Stuart Fleischner, and Rabbi Chapin) to learn more about how you, too, can leave a Jewish legacy for the future generations of our community's Jews.

“Dear Diaspora”

What would a letter from Israel to the Diaspora include this past Hanukkah season?

The celebration of Hanukkah as we know it today is comprised of traditions that have shifted with the changing circumstances, ideologies and priorities of the Jewish people. The Talmud (*Shabbat 21b*) first teaches us about the miraculous oil miracle that lasted 8 times its expectancy, and then serves as a manual for candle lighting in the home. Years later, the Zionist movement reinvented the holiday to be one of freedom, heroism and a staunch rejection of divine intervention.

The Hanukkah story took place before either Talmudic times or modern Zionism. The original text is found in the Apocryphal Books of Maccabees.

Written in Greek, the beginning of the 2nd book is actually a letter from those in Jerusalem to the largest Jewish community outside of Israel in Alexandria, Egypt describing the feast day after the rededication of the Temple. Even in ancient times, the connection between Jews in Israel and those outside the land was central to our national narrative.

Today, this holiday affords us an opportunity to rededicate our relationship with Israel. It also allows us to imagine what we would want to read in a modern letter from Israel to the Diaspora, a creative rewriting of the 2nd book:

Dear Jews of the Diaspora,

By now, I'm sure you've heard the news of our triumph in Jerusalem, and that you are celebrating our victory. Here's the thing. We want more than for you to celebrate with us. We also want you to mourn with us when we experience loss. We want you to read our news, speak

our language, and for us to be one united people.

We also know that it's not always about us. We need to be sensitive to your needs and understand what it's like to be a Jew outside of Israel. We need to understand your challenges, and to know that you are working hard to maintain your institutions and provide for the next generation. We know that it might be time to rethink the Israel-Diaspora relationship, to focus less on your dispersion and more on our connections. Israel is now the largest Jewish community in the world, and there are pressures from some of our leaders to write you off as irrelevant. These leaders are both shortsighted and wrong.



We need to realize that we too have what to learn from you. We have come to the conclusion that having a Jewish State doesn't necessarily mean having a Jewish community, and you have built so many thriving and

caring communities – without government support, we might add.

After 70 years it is time that we take some of the criticism to heart, to be introspective and acknowledge when there is legitimacy to these challenges.

So, on this festival of Hanukkah let us renew our relationship. Let us find common ground and join together to fight close-mindedness and be a light unto our own nation,

In friendship and appreciation,

Israelis

From the Board

Rabbi Chapin to Retire

At a recent meeting of the Board of Directors, Rabbi Chapin announced that after seven years of service he has decided to retire at the end of this season and spend more time with his wife Jeanne at their home in Florida.

Accordingly, his final day as rabbi of Congregation House of Israel will be June 30, 2018. He will be sorely missed, and on behalf of our entire congregation we wish him and his family the best.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

January Anniversaries

Hal and Sue Koppel	Jan 12
Carli and Chris Baker	Jan 23

January Birthdays

Carol Levi	Jan 5
Ross Sedler	Jan 8
Sharon Ball	Jan 16
Kay Fleischner	Jan 27



It's Hanukkah Every Day Of The Year In This Picture-Postcard Italian Town



It's always Hanukkah in this picturesque town in northern Italy's Piedmont region.

Jews have lived in Casale Monferrato for more than 500 years, with the community reaching its peak of 850 members at about the time Jews here were granted civil rights in 1848. The town still boasts one of Italy's most ornate synagogues, a rococo gem that dates to the 16th century.

These days, only two Jewish families live in Casale. The synagogue, which is part of a larger museum complex, is now a major tourist attraction – and not only because of its opulent sanctuary with huge chandeliers, colorfully painted walls and lots of gilding.

Hanukkah here is commemorated nonstop with a year-round exhibit featuring dozens of menorahs, or hanukkiyot, created by international contemporary artists. The collection has some 185 menorahs, according to Adriana Ottolenghi, whose husband, Giorgio, has been president of Casale's Jewish community since the 1950s.

"We receive more every year, and each year at Hanukkah there is a public ceremony, where we light menorahs and welcome the new pieces," she said.

Only 30 to 40 can be displayed at a time in the vaulted underground chambers.

Many resemble traditional menorahs: a straight line of candles or a candelabra with eight branches, with a ninth branch for the "shamash" candle used to kindle them. Some of the menorahs can be lighted and used on the holiday.

Congregation House of Israel Board of Directors

Rabbi Richard Chapin
501-623-5821
info@hschi.org

Dennis Williams, President
870-230-3529
jwmenschl@gmail.com

Hal Koppel, Treasurer
501-525-3238
hjkkrew@yahoo.com

Barbara Morgan
501- 767-1459
barbara.morgan@mygait.com

Millie Baron, Sisterhood
501-538-6619
millie487@hotmail.com

Ira Kleinman
501-520-1323
irakleinman@hotmail.com

Ruth Sedler
806-789-9362
sedlerlbk@aol.com

David D. Reagler
870-208-4495
david@arkansasrecords.com

Patti Fleischner
501-262-1198
fleischnerp@gmail.com

David Kirsch
281-458-2655
dayno90@hotmail.com

Jerry Tanenbaum, ARZA-World Union
501-262-9770
jerryhotsprings@usa.net

Stuart Fleischner, Immediate Past President
501-617-1761
toothshucker@hotmail.com



Thank you to the following
for sponsoring an Oneg
during the month of January:

Jan 5	Sharon Ball Jerry Tanenbaum
Jan 12	Mark and Patti Fleischner Louis and Betty Kleinman
Jan 19	David and Karen Reagler Anthony and Sherrill Nicolosi
Jan 26	Jerry and Fran Rephan Cynthia Rephan

Reminder: If you are scheduled for an upcoming Oneg and need to change dates, please find someone to switch with and then let Ruth Sedler know so the information printed in the bulletin will be correct.

Refuah Shelemah

The following people are in our thoughts and prayers:

- Angie Tollefson
- Louis Kleinman
- JoAnne Reagler
- Ken Baim
- Rabbi Mark Miller
- Imy Marcus
- Robert Burns
- Sherrill Nicolosi

Please offer prayers that they all have a full and speedy recovery.

If you are aware of anyone needing spiritual or any sort of assistance, please let Barbara Morgan know. Our Caring Committee is here to help all of our members in any way we possibly can.

January Yahrzeits

Kaddish Recited January 5

David Wigderson

*Father of Ellen Eubanks
Father of Sue Koppel*

Percy Creim

Uncle of Joanne Reagler

Ruth Gerber

Mother of Elaine Gartenberg

Sam Karnofsky

Uncle of Joanne Reagler

Mona Goltz

*Grandfather of Diane Goltz
Grandfather of Susan Siegel*

Bernard J. Tanenbaum, Sr.

Father of Jerry Tanenbaum

Walter Kleinman

Father of Louis Kleinman

Jason Kandel

Cousin of Mary Klompus

Katie Fielschmidt

Aunt of Fred Korngut

Kaddish Recited January 12

Harry Sedler

Father of Ross Sedler

Martin Fleischner

*Father of Mark Fleischner
Father of Stuart Fleischner*

Condolences

Our heartfelt condolences are offered to the family of Barbara Schlesinger, who passed away in December. May her memory be for a blessing.

Kaddish Recited January 19

David Reagler

*Husband of Joanne Reagler
Father of David D. Reagler
Father of Rachel Schulman*

Dorothy Savel

Grandmother of David Cohen

Eric B. Wolken

Brother of Brad Wolken

Ida Cooper Ruskin

Mother of Phyllis Hearn

Pauline Brown

Aunt of Betty Forshberg

Ellen Rabinowitz Bettis

Grandmother of Betty Feir

Lois Ginsburg

Mother of Millie Baron

Norma Mendel

Wife of Lenny Mendel

Kaddish Recited January 26

Beatrice Zibrack

Mother of Sharon Ball

Fanny Fielschmidt

Grandmother of Fred Korngut

Elsa Greenwald

Mother of Jodi Chalmers

William Holtzmann

Father-in-law of Fred Korngut

Paul Forshberg

Husband of Betty Forshberg

Caroline Suhl

Grandmother of Michael Waxler

George Z. Ginsburg

Grandfather of Millie Baron

Leslie Leviton

Brother-in-law of Joanne Reagler

Sarah S. Levine

Grandmother of Cynthia Rephan

Weekly Parshah

January

Sh'mot

January 6, 2018

The Children of Israel multiply in Egypt. Threatened by their growing numbers, Pharaoh enslaves them and orders the Hebrew midwives, Shifrah and Puah, to kill all male babies at birth. When they do not comply, he commands his people to cast the Hebrew babies into the Nile.

A child is born to Jocheved, the daughter of Levi, and her husband, Amram, and placed in a basket on the river, while the baby's sister, Miriam, stands watch from afar. Pharaoh's daughter discovers the boy, raises him as her son, and names him Moses.

G-d appears to Moses in a burning bush at the foot of Mount Sinai and instructs him to go to Pharaoh and demand: "Let My people go, so that they may serve Me." Moses' brother, Aaron, is appointed to serve as his spokesman.

Va-eira

January 13, 2018

G-d reveals Himself to Moses. He promises to take out the Children of Israel from Egypt, deliver them from their enslavement, redeem them and acquire them as His own chosen people at Mount Sinai; He will then bring them to the Land He promised to the Patriarchs as their eternal heritage.

Moses and Aaron repeatedly come before Pharaoh to demand "Let My people go," Pharaoh repeatedly refuses. G-d then sends a series of plagues upon the Egyptians.

The waters of the Nile turn to blood; swarms of frogs overrun the land; lice infest all men and beasts. Hordes of wild animals invade the cities, a pestilence kills the domestic animals, painful boils afflict the Egyptians. For the seventh plague, fire

and ice combine to descend from the skies as a devastating hail.

Bo

January 20, 2018

The last three of the Ten Plagues are visited on Egypt: a swarm of locusts devours all the crops and greenery; a thick, palpable darkness envelops the land; and all the firstborn of Egypt are killed at the stroke of midnight of the 15th of the month of Nissan. The death of the firstborn finally breaks Pharaoh's resistance and he literally drives the Children of Israel from his land. Before they go, they ask their Egyptian neighbors for gold, silver and garments, draining Egypt of its wealth.



The Children of Israel are commanded to observe the anniversary of the Exodus each year by removing all leaven from their possession for seven days, eating matzah, and telling the story of their redemption to their children.

B'shalach

January 27, 2018

Soon after allowing the Children of Israel to depart from Egypt, Pharaoh chases after them to force their return, and the Israelites find themselves trapped between Pharaoh's armies and the sea. G-d tells Moses to raise his staff over the water; the sea splits to allow the Israelites to pass through, and

then closes over the pursuing Egyptians.

In the desert, the people suffer thirst and hunger and repeatedly complain to Moses and Aaron. G-d miraculously sweetens the bitter waters of Marah, and later has Moses bring forth water from a rock by striking it with his staff; He causes manna to rain down from the heavens before dawn each morning, and quails to appear in the Israelite camp each evening.

To read more complete descriptions of the weekly parsha, visit the CHI Website at http://hschi.org/Parsha_lp.html