



The Shofar

May, 2015

Congregation House of Israel

12 Iyar - 13 Sivan, 5775

Shaliach Visit, May 1

On Friday, May 1, we will have the honor and privilege to welcome shaliach, Lior Ron, to our congregation for Friday night services. She will be accompanied by Marianne Tettlebaum of the Jewish Federation.

Lior is 27 years old and is from Natanya. Her goal is to connect as much as possible between Jewish people abroad as well as in Israel. She has strong beliefs that showing people Israel through her eyes will make them want to be involved.

With all that is going on in the world today, she is willing and eager to answer questions about the situation. She will be concentrating primarily on Israeli society and culture.

We hope that we will have a good representation of our membership and show her how much this small town in Arkansas cares about Israel.

Ruth and Saralee will be presenting the oneg that night. Please feel free to bring a 'nosh' to share.



Schedule of Events

Fri	May 1	6:00 pm	Erev Shabbat service with Rabbi Kleinman, and Shaliach visit.
Mon	May 4	7:00 pm	Author Dr. Nancy Hendricks
Fri	May 8	6:00 pm	Erev Shabbat service with Rabbi Chapin
Sat	May 9	9:30 am	Torah Study
Sun	May 10	9:30 am	Religious School
Fri	May 15	6:00 pm	Erev Shabbat service with Rabbi Chapin
Sat	May 16	9:30 am	Torah study
Sun	May 17	9:30 am	Religious school
Fri	May 22	6:00 pm	Erev Shabbat service with Rabbi Kleinman
Fri	May 29	6:00 pm	Erev Shabbat service with Rabbi Kleinman
Sun	May 31	9:30 am	Religious school

Thank You

We would like to thank the following donors (as of April 20, 2015)

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The Shofar

Published monthly by:

Congregation House of Israel

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Mazel Tov

To **Lenny Mendel** on the birth of his great grandson, Dean Frederick Hansen.

He was born on April 1 (no foolin!) at 3:14 p.m., weighing 6 lb, 13 oz and measuring 19 3/4" long. He must know he is the son of engineers, as he was born at Pi time, 3.14 p.m.



From the Rabbi



Another Passover season has passed, but we will always retain the joy of the holiday celebration at the temple. We pray that all of our congregational family will continue to share in the CHI Seders. The food was delicious, and those who toiled in the synagogue's kitchen, including our beloved James and Marie, should be congratulated for their efforts. I have always been slightly amazed and more than delighted by the community spirit that prevails in Hot Springs. May it continue to grow and prosper in the days and years to come.

And as the Israelites proceeded toward Sinai to receive Torah so do we continue our Jewish calendar year celebration. The holiday of Shavuot (May 23-24) brings the holiday season to a close. Thus the cycle continues.

As the summer months draw nigh, allow me to make some reading suggestions regarding the subjects of Jews and Muslims. Consider spending some time with the brilliant Somali-born American author, Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Ms. Ali, a scholar and women's rights advocate, has recently published *Heretic: Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now*. In her introduction, Ms. Ali makes a startling declaration: "My argument is that it is foolish to insist, as our leaders habitually do, that the violent acts of radical Islamists can be divorced from the religious ideals that inspire them. Instead we must acknowledge that they are driven by a political ideology...embedded in Islam itself, in the Qur'an as well as the life and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad...." Wow.

At the same time, and I have mentioned this author earlier, purchase Ari Shavit's *My Promised Land*. It's a masterful volume, depicting Israel in various forms and guises since the time of Theodore Herzl. Shavit is Senior Correspondent at the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, generally considered to be the New York Times of Israel.

I'd like to focus on these themes in discussion groups and reading sessions beginning in the fall.

With all good wishes from the Chapin Mishpocha.

Sisterhood



Today, April 20, Sisterhood had our last "official" meeting of the year and it was wonderful!

Plans were finalized for both the Shaliach program on May 1 and Dr. Nancy Hendricks on May 4.

Kathryn Eisenkramer presented a framed newspaper article from 1900 about the long journey taken by Bill's family (twelve years) and how they ended up in Pine Bluff. It is now hanging in the Pine Bluff Room so that everyone can read it and appreciate how far these people came. Below is a picture of Kathryn next to the article.

Once again, I want to thank everyone who helped make this another 'banner' year for Sisterhood. I especially want to thank Anita Williams who served as my Vice President and was always willing to help in whatever ways were asked of her.

Have a wonderful summer vacation, and I know we'll all see each other at CHI.



From the President



Millennia ago, before rabbis existed or conversion was invented, thousands who were not born Jewish became part of the Jewish community through a very simple act: They married a Jew.

Sarah was the first, followed in turn by Rebecca, Leah and Rachel. Thousands more followed — both biblical characters and many more whose lives as Jews were never explicitly recorded in the Bible. In effect, our ancestors said to them, “If you marry us, you’re one of us.”

Centuries later, at a time when the number of American Jews marrying non-Jews has reached an all-time high - 80 percent of Reform-raised Jews who married in 2000-2013 married non-Jews - thousands are again choosing to join the Jewish people, but nowhere near as many as we would like.

Unbeknownst to even keen observers of Jewish life, about half of those who identify as Jews but were not born Jewish never underwent formal rabbinic conversion. The 2013 Pew survey of American Jews found 79,000 adult Jewish converts, but another 83,000 who identify as Jews even though they reported no Jewish parents and had not undergone conversion.

How did they become Jewish? Many married Jews. Others have Jewish grandparents or more distant Jewish ancestry and are reclaiming their roots. Some do call themselves fully Jewish, but many say they are “partially Jewish,” a newly burgeoning group first documented in the Jewish Community Study of New York: 2011.

To take a real example: One of us is good friends with a well-known scholar in Jewish life. She (a born-Jew) and her husband, born Protestant, raised their children as Jews. He never converted, but he did learn to read Hebrew, say Kiddush on Friday nights, and fully participate in all the Jewish holiday preparations and ceremonies. According to his wife, if asked if he is Jewish, partially Jewish or non-Jewish, he’d answer, “Jewish!”

This seemingly novel phenomenon of joining the Jewish people without rabbinic formalities should not be surprising. In today’s America, more and more social identities are personally chosen and socially constructed. Religious identities have become among the most fluid, with more intermarriage and more people changing their religious identities than ever before.

Here’s an added appeal to newcomers: Jews have become the most admired religious group in America, a Pew center study reported last year, having risen from the least socially desirable ethnic group in the early 1960s, according to a study at the time. Or as Matthew 20:16 puts it so well, “Those who are last now will be first.”

Even more significant may be those who marry Jews who think of themselves not as Jewish but as “fellow travelers,” like the biblical category of “ger toshav,” or “resident supporter.” Some become part of our community because they sense an opportunity to feel part of something important and meaningful. And they often do this despite the fact that we don’t exactly put out the welcome mat for them.

We know that where both parents identify as Jews, nearly all their children identify as Jews as well. And when only one parent sees himself/herself as Jewish, only a minority of their children grow up as Jews. Aside from raising the inmarriage rate, how can we create more households where both partners see themselves as part of the Jewish people?

One answer is for all of us to change the way we think of, and treat, those who love and marry our children, family members and friends. Basically we should agree and fully internalize the idea: If you marry a Jew, you’re fully part of our community until proven otherwise. The default option is that you’re in. If you don’t want to be seen as part of the community, you need to opt out, or “unsubscribe.” (And if you do, unlike those pesky email lists, we’ll respect your choice.)

In other words, born Jews would undergo a subtle but critical shift in the way they relate to family members and friends not born Jewish. It would mean fully including them in holiday practices,

Continued on page 7

ARZA - World Union

Did you know --

- There are buses in Israel that relegate women to the back?
- Women are forbidden from praying with a Torah at the Western Wall?
- There are some neighborhoods in Israel where a woman can be physically assaulted for not dressing modestly enough? (This can even apply to a woman showing her arms or wearing pants.)

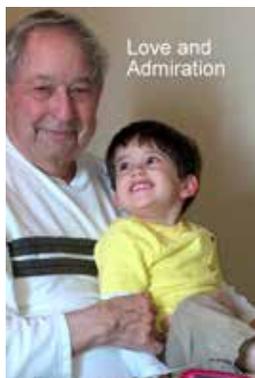
Israel pays the salary of 260 rabbis; 257 of them are men.

The Orthodox control marriage, divorce, and conversion in Israel, and they do not ordain women rabbis. This means that in Israel, female rabbis cannot conduct marriages of their own constituents.

The World Zionist Congress elections offer the Reform Movement a unique opportunity to create real change in Israel. We support full gender equality for Israel.

I hope that you voted for ARZA. We will know the results on July 31

The Future of Judaism



Jerry Tanenbaum with his 3-1/2 year old great grandson, Jackson Cierny

Author brings Civil War story to Congregation House of Israel



Mark your calendars for Monday, May 4, for a wine and cheese reception at 7 pm at CHI for acclaimed author, Dr. Nancy Hendrix.

Most recently, Dr. Hendrix was honored with the “Women in American History” award from the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. This award recognizes women who serve as an example and inspiration for their contributions in an area of educational or cultural endeavor.

The event is free and open to the public. However, donations will be accepted with the proceeds going to the Garland Historical Society.

Dr. Hendrix will appear in period costume and character for a program spotlighting the role of Jewish people (among many others) during the Civil War. Questions are more than welcome.

After the program, books will be available for sale and signing.

Todah Rabah

Millie Baron, for the wonderful Passover desserts.

John and Phyllis Hearn, for inviting members from Texarkana to join us for the holidays.

Sharon Waxler, who found a new vacuum for the Temple which will be donated by Sisterhood. She even tried it out in the Sanctuary to make sure it worked.

Carol Kleinman, for having served as CHI Sisterhood President and Board member for the past two years.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

Rich Allen	May 2
Jodi Chalmers	May 13
Ira Kleinman	May 13
Mark Fleischner	May 14
Sharon Waxler	May 14
Elaine Wolken	May 16
Patti Fleischner	May 17

Anniversaries

David and Joanne Reagler	May 3
Jerry and Fran Rephan	May 3
Jerry and Jodi Chalmers	May 8
Dennis and Anita Williams	May 25
Larry and Carol Levi	May 27

Oneg Thanks

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

May 1	Ruth Sedler, Saralee Stark
May 8	Annette Baim, Nancy Unowsky
May 15	Sisterhood
May 22	Sharon Waxler, Anita Williams
May 29	Lynda Kass, Karen Reagler

Reminder: If you are scheduled for an upcoming Oneg and need to change dates, bear in mind that it is YOUR responsibility to find someone to switch with and to advise Carol Kleinman of the change.

Refuah Shelemah

The following people are in our thoughts and prayers:

- David Reagler
- John and Leslie Jamieson
- Barbara Diebel
- Louis Kleinman
- Louise Levy
- Sally Nicolosi
- Edith Reiter
- Imy Marcus

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

Condolences

We mourn the loss of CHI member Bill Eisenramer, who passed away on March 31. Our condolences to his wife Kathryn, as well as his children and grandchildren.

Condolences

We mourn the loss of Lonnie Pederson, cousin of Cheryl Cohen, who passed away on April 14.

May Yahrtzeits

Kaddish Recited May 1

Howard Schlesinger

Husband of Barbara Schlesinger

Robin Rans

Uncle of Fred Korngut

Jeannie Zibrack

Aunt of Sharon Ball

Kaddish Recited May 8

Samuel Kirsch

Grandfather of Mark Fleischner

Grandfather of Stuart Fleischner

Grandfather of Steven Kirsch

Serena Kirsch

Wife of Gene Kirsch

Mother of Steven Kirsch

Samuel Katchen

Father of Carole Katchen

Mark Cohen

Father of David Cohen

Kaddish Recited May 15

Helen Kleinman

Mother of Louis Kleinman

Grandmother of Ira Kleinman

Frances Koppel

Mother of Hal Koppel

Nathan Davis

Father of Joanne Reagler

Kaddish Recited May 22

Morris Reagler

Father of David Reagler

Grandfather of David D. Reagler

Kaddish Recited May 29

Shirley Sedler

Mother of Ross Sedler

George Thornton Ginsburg

Brother of Millie Baron

Joe Weisman

Father of Louise Levi

From The President

Continued from page 4

life-cycle ceremonies, and Jewishly centered social action and political activities. It would mean concretizing (if not promoting) the social reality that rabbinic conversion is not the only way to join the Jewish people or function Jewishly in a Jewish family. It would also mean that more intermarried couples would come to see themselves - and be seen by others - as inmarried.

The widespread presumption of Jewish-by-marriage will set many couples on upward Jewish journeys. Most critically, their children will see themselves far more often as Jewish, if for no other reason than both their parents see themselves as members of the Jewish people.

This is going to take some work. We have overdeveloped muscles of defense when it comes to who's in and who's out. These muscles have been strengthened by anti-Semitism, to be sure. For much of the 20th century, as the Jewish community in America both acculturated and tried to maintain deep connections to Jewish tradition and culture, there was an ongoing struggle about how and if it was possible to engage fully in American life and still preserve high inmarriage rates.

Jews today are facing an unprecedented opportunity to share our rich tradition with thousands who are searching for meaning and looking to raise healthy and happy children with a deep connection to community.

Certainly, some who marry us will decide to officially "join" the Jewish people through rabbinic conversion. Our arms should be wide open and encouraging to those on this path. Conversion classes and experiences need to be excellent, accessible and, frankly, more affordable in order to attract larger numbers. Our community needs to set this as a priority.

But for those who choose to be part of our community without formal conversion - who come to the Passover seder and drive their children to Hebrew school, who sit shiva with us, or who bring their sons into the community at a brit milah, who shep naches at their daughters' bat mitzvah and who go to Israel on vacation - we say welcome. It's a pleasure to know you. Come learn. You're one of us if you want to be.

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