

AZOY

"Is that so?"

MARCH
2017

PURIM EDITION



The Monthly Newsletter of Temple B'nai Israel
The Reform Jewish Congregation of Bay County
Mailing Address: PO Box 16556, Panama City, FL 32406
Located at: 1910 Frankford Avenue, Panama City, Florida
850-522-8685 / www.bnaiisraelpc.org

PURIM PARTY! SUNDAY MARCH 5TH AT 10:00 AM

Wear Costumes . . . Queen Esther, Mordecai, the King, Haman or any other character you wish to be. Bring an unopened box of pasta or other noisy food to shake at the mention of Haman's name. Then we'll donate the food to the Food Shelf! Megilla Reading! Hamantashen, drinks and other goodies to satisfy your hunger and thirst. See page 2 for more information!

Adult Hebrew Class Available

In February we began to provide Adult Hebrew classes to anyone in our congregation who wants to learn. We've started with the basics – the Aleph Bet and how to sound out the letters and vowels. We're focusing on the kind of Hebrew found in the siddur so folks can join in on Shabbat and holidays. As we progress we can add more conversational Hebrew if desired. There's still time to join the class. We meet most Sundays at 10:00 am until 11:30. Check the calendar on page 5 for exact times. It's free to members, \$10 per class for non-members. *Shalom and l'hitra'ot.*



This past Super Bowl Sunday, February 5, Mike Starkman, spoke to our Religious School students about tefillin, as seen in the photo above. For more information, please see page 6 for Georgie Hartzog's "Sunday Shul Report."

The Corned Beef Sandwich Fundraiser, originally planned for March 17, has been postponed until later in the year.



OUR ANNUAL COMMUNITY SEDER
with ISJL RABBI MATT DREFFIN
THURSDAY ♦ APRIL 13, 2017 ♦ 6:00 pm



See page 8 for Reservation Form

❧ The President's Message ❧

It seems that every day we hear of another threat against a Jewish institution: bomb threats at dozens of Jewish Community Centers across the nation, at the ADL, and vandalism at Jewish cemeteries. The rise in anti-semitic threats and violence is real. It's frightening and it's all too familiar. As Jews we must strongly object to these hateful acts.

There are non-violent ways to respond. Write to your legislative representatives, call them to protest. Write letters to the editor of the local regional and national newspapers. Talk to folks in your neighborhoods. Make sure they know what's happening and what your feelings are. Check on-line at URJ sites and others to get more ideas.

What about the safety of our congregation, shul and ritual objects? Should we increase security? As president, I am very concerned and want to do what's best for all of us. Our Temple Board will be discussing this very issue at our next meeting on March 8th. Please contact any or all Board members with your thoughts and feelings. We want and need to hear from you. There is strength in numbers, knowledge and hope.

L'shalom - Sarah

Is Purim the Jewish Mardi Gras?

Purim is the time for Jews the world over to drink and be merry! Dressing in costume is encouraged. Drinking is encouraged! Getting a little *shicker* is more than OK! Making noise partying and having a great time is essential to the celebration. Even though we don't throw beads, we do engage in much merriment.

For Christians Mardi Gras is a raucous bacchanalia signifying the beginning of Lent and sacrifice. For Jews, Purim is when we recount the story of Esther and Mordecai as Haman convinces the King to rid the empire of the Jewish people. But – as has been our mantra for millennia, “*They tried to kill us.... we won.... let's eat!*” And so we do! We celebrate the victory of good over evil as we read the *Megillah*.

The story goes something like this.... Esther, cousin of Mordecai, was made Queen of Persia by King Ahasuerus, who favored her over all the other women in his harem but did not know that she was a Jew. Haman, a high level advisor to the king, hated Mordecai

because he refused to bow down to Haman. And so, Haman decided to exterminate all of the Jews in the kingdom. Esther, risking her own life, went to the King, revealing her true self as a Jewess, and Haman's plot. The King then arrested Haman and had him and ten of his followers hung. Thus, the Jews were saved. In a nutshell, this is the Story of Esther read in the scroll called the *Megillah* every year on the 14th of the month of Adar. We'll boo and hiss at the sound of Haman's name by activating noisy graggers. This year we ask that you



bring unopened boxes of pasta (or other food items that make noise when shaken). We'll make lots of noise with them at the sound of Haman's name. Then we'll donate those items to Bay County Family Services. We'll rejoice by drinking alcohol (in moderation), dressing in costumes and giving gifts, if not to each other, then giving to charity. We eat *hamantaschen*, traditional Purim cookies in the shape of Haman's tri-cornered hat in a variety of flavors.

Rabbi Wasserman will read from the Story of Esther which is not in the Torah. It is its own book and the only story that does not mention G-d. There is an allusion to “someone else” saving the Jewish people which ancient scholars have interpreted to mean G-d. Esther's story is the story of the triumph of good over evil, an age-old moral tale that we as Jews recount many times during the year.

So join in the fun on Sunday, March 5th at 10:00 am. Come in costume (kids and adults). We'll party hearty at the *shul*.

Leah Wittenberg - ISJL Education Fellow



Purim Costumes: Then and Now

One of my favorite parts of Purim is having the chance to dress up as someone or something totally different than yourself. When I was younger, I thought that you were only allowed to dress up for Purim as characters from Esther's megillah. So throughout my pre-school and elementary school years I transformed into Queen Esther, King Achashverosh, and Mordechai; I even became Vashti and Haman! My younger brother and I would alternate costumes each year.

I remember one year we went to

the fabric store and bought large pieces of dark sparkly fabric that my mom turned into capes so we would look like royalty when we dressed up as King or Queen. We made crowns out of craft foam and glued rhinestones onto our makeshift crowns.

When I dressed up as Haman in elementary school, to make his hat, we bought a black "pirate" hat and my mom used a glue gun to pin the sides together to give it three points. I dressed all in black (as I imagined the evil villain did), my mom used black eyeliner to draw a mustache on me, and the look was complete.

It wasn't until I was in high school that I learned that Purim was similar to Halloween in that you can dress up in any costume you want – it doesn't have to be Purim-themed. My senior year of high school when I was a teacher's assistant for a fourth grade religious school class, I dressed up in my silliest costume – a banana suit.

In college, I hosted and attended many Purim celebrations for Hillel. We always had fun carnival games and even got a gorilla costume one year that came in handy for a Star Wars themed Shabbat a few years later. (Someone dressed up as Chewbacca.)

When I studied abroad in Jerusalem during the spring semester of my junior year in college, I learned that Purim in Israel is not merely a one-day party; the celebration goes on for almost a week! During this time, my costumes varied from 80s-themed: leg warmers, high side pony, and neon colors, to a "flower child," to my best work by far: Princess Leia. I also had the incredible opportunity to travel to different IDF bases and give out mish'lo-ach manot to soldiers.

This year, I am helping to coordinate Beth Israel Congregation in Jackson's Purim spiel. While I'm not sure which character I'll be portraying yet, the spiel is Hamilton themed and it should be exciting.

I hope my list of crazy costumes give you some inspiration for this year; I can't wait to see what everyone chooses to wear!



Sisterhood Snippets by Lisa Rahn, President

February found the Sisterhood members busy supporting the shul, interfaith understanding and our local community. We had another meaningful breakfast meeting with our Muslim sisters, look forward to providing our first gift card for our adopted senior through the Family Services Agency next month, and have formed a committee to plan our congregational Passover Seder in April. (We will be seeking volunteers and donations for the latter soon.) Please see the Seder reservation form on page 8 for more information.

Several Sisterhood members are participating in the Adult Hebrew class, and we are ready to assist with a fundraiser for Temple B'nai Israel once those plans have been settled. In addition, we've had two members of the greater community express interest in possibly joining the Sisterhood, and we warmly welcome them to our ranks.

For more information, please contact Lisa at larahn@gmail.com or (503) 338-0449.



Take a break from the hectic work week and mark the Day of Rest with lighting of the candles.

Shabbat Candle Lighting Times for March 2017

03/03 | 5:25 pm

03/10 | 5:30 pm

03/17 | 6:34 pm

03/24 | 6:39 pm

03/31 | 6:43 pm

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MARCH JOYS & REMEMBRANCES

Y A H R Z E I T S - THEIR MEMORIES ARE FOR US A BLESSING

03/03	ARNOLD KLATSKY - FATHER OF ELIZABETH BERMAN
03/03	ALICE NAGLER - MOTHER OF ED NAGLER
03/06	BOB KRASELSKY - HUSBAND OF MARSHA KRASELSKY
03/14	ARTHUR PELL - FATHER OF BOB PELL
03/19	BEVERLY JOAN ROTMAN - COUSIN OF STEPHEN SICKERMAN
03/22	EUDANEL DEJOHN - MOTHER OF ANNE MILLER
03/30	ANN SILVER - MOTHER OF ANITA SKOULA



BIRTHDAYS

03/04	JACKIE & LIZZIE STERNLICHT
03/04	SONNY GLASS
03/09	PAM SUTTON
03/18	MIKE STONE
03/19	BENJAMIN ZIPES
03/23	ED NAGLER
03/25	PAMELA SOSTHEIM

ANNIVERSARIES

03/10	ED & DIANNA NAGLER
03/24	MIKE & MARY STARKMAN

If your Joy or Remembrance is missing or incorrect please e-mail your friendly neighborhood Editors at *The AZOY*:
theazoy@gmail.com



Purim Trivia by Rabbi Alana Wasserman

1. What was the name of King Ahasuerus' first wife?
2. Whose name do we make noise for when reading the Megillah? Why?
3. How many times does God's name appear in the book of Esther?
4. How many sons does Haman have?
5. The name Purim comes from the Hebrew word "Pur" which means what?
6. Was Haman married?
7. Who wanted to be paraded through Shushan in the "Emperor's Clothes?"
Who got to be paraded through Shushan in the "Emperor's Clothes?"
8. According to Haman what did Mordechai refuse to do?
9. How did Mordechai save the king's life?
10. What are the 4 mitzvot of Purim?

Since we will be celebrating the holiday of Purim this month, I thought that instead of doing a regular article for the AZOY, I would make it a little more fun! After all, Purim is a fun, silly holiday!

The following is a list of trivia questions about the holiday of Purim. Make it a game, and see how many you can answer!

> See page 7 for the answers!

Sunday Shul Report

by Georgie Hartzog

In January 2017 we met our students, eager and ready to learn. Due to an unforeseen incident between Mr. Daniel, a set of twins and a basketball court, our first day back to Shul had to be cancelled. We continue to rub that occasion in his very tall face.

On her January visit to Temple B'nai Israel, our Rabbi taught our students on the topic of *tzedakah*. According to our "roving reporter," Pearl, this is a topic that none

of us can get too little of. Our students practice *tzedakah* every Sunday Shul meeting and are quick to remind each other about it's importance.

On SUPER BOWL SUNDAY, Mike Starkman, spoke to our students about the concept of *tefillin*. Jewish men throughout the US have made a tradition of utilizing *tefillin* on Super Bowl Sunday. Mr. Mike was kind enough to allow students to try on the Tefillian as well as reference its use back to our Prayer Book. Well done Sir Mike! (See front page for class photo!)

Rabbi Wasserman's visit on Sunday, February 12, included the planting of parsley for passover. Temple B'nai Israel is truly blessed with a Rabbi who is so delightful with our students....and they love her.

February 26, my first Sunday back was met by a group of students, my kids, who were ready to "jump back into the pool." WOW....I just thought I knew so little Hebrew. (None of the kids want me on their team when Mr. Daniel conducts his Hebrew games.) Daniel continues to teach them and they continue to soak it up.



The lesson on the 26th was the beginning of a series, Heroes of the Bible. This week we learn about David and Goliath. Our reference, the Bible, was both fact based and a little frightening. We concluded the lesson with a traditional Jewish tale about a "Kind hearted Spider." If you don't know this delightful story, ask a kid.



MARCH 2017 CALENDAR

FRI	03/03	6:00 pm 7:00 pm	Shabbat Dinner - <i>bring a dish to share</i> Shabbat Service with Rabbi Wasserman
SAT	03/04	12:00 pm 2:00 pm 5:15 pm	Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Wasserman: <i>"Vashti and Esther"</i> Salaam Shalom Sisters High Tea at Willows British Tea Room, downtown PC Havdalah at Oaks by the Bay Park, St Andrews - <i>followed by dinner out</i>
SUN	03/05	9:30 am 10:00 am	No Religious School / No Adult Hebrew Class PURIM PARTY! Wear costumes! Nosh on hamantaschen! Bring unopened boxes of pasta to use as noisemakers (gragers) at the sound of Haman's name!
WED	03/08	6:30 pm	Monthly Temple Board of Directors Meeting
SUN	03/12	2:00 am 9:30 am 10:00 am	Daylight Savings Time begins: Spring Forward 1 Hour Religious School Adult Hebrew Class
WED	03/15	6:30 pm	Sisterhood Meeting
SUN	03/19	9:30 am 10:00 am	No Religious School Adult Hebrew Class
FRI	03/24	7:00 pm	Shabbat Service led by Mary Starkman
SUN	03/26	9:30 am	No Religious School / No Adult Hebrew Class



Answers to Rabbi Wasserman's Purim Trivia Questions - from p. 5

1. Vashti
2. Haman, so that we may blot out his memory from our history.
3. God's name does not appear at all in the book of Esther! Instead, this story reminds us that we are all created in the image of God, and when we do the right thing, like (Esther and Mordechai) God is still there.
4. 10
5. "Lot." When Haman got the approval of the king to kill all the Jews, he cast lots to determine what day to execute his plan.
6. Yes, to a woman named Zeresh, which tried to help him kill the Jews.
7. Haman wanted. Mordechai got to!
8. Mordechai refused to bow down to Haman because the Jewish people don't bow to anyone but God.
9. Mordechai overheard two men plotting to kill the king, so he told Esther, and the two men were caught.
10. Listen the the Megillah, enjoy a festive meal, send gifts of food to friends and relatives, and give gifts to the poor.

TBI member Hodalee Scott Sewell is a Native American and an author.

Under the pen name Christopher Scott Sewell, he has written several books about Native American history and ancestry of families from the Florida panhandle, including *"The Indians of North Florida," "Belles of the Creek Nation," "The Cherokee Paradox,"* and *"The Redbone Chronicles."*

Scott will be speaking about Native Americans in North Florida and signing books at the Jimmy Weaver Memorial Library in Hosford, FL, on March 18th - - and at the Corinne Costin Gibson Memorial Public Library in Port St Joe, FL on April 8th. Both begin at 10 am Eastern Time. Please come to these free events.

For more information, contact Scott at cssewell71@gmail.com or 850-257-6107.

PASSOVER SEDER

Our Community Seder Service will be conducted by ISJL Rabbi Matt Dreffin

In order to give everyone plenty of time to make reservations please review the details and use the RSVP Form below.

For more information, call: **Alma Glass** at 850-747-1015 or e-mail her at rosenglas@comcast.net



DATE: Thursday, April 13, 2017
TIME: 6:00 PM
PLACE: Temple B'nai Israel, 1910 Frankford Ave
SEATING: Limited to 110

Please note that **TICKET** prices are greater if you are not a member of Temple B'nai Israel

MEMBERS	Adults: \$35.00	Children under <i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i> : \$10.00	MEMBERS
NON-MEMBERS	Adults: \$45.00	Children under <i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i> : \$15.00	NON-MEMBERS

RSVP Deadline : Payment with form must be received by **April 3, 2017**

Printed Name: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____ e-mail: _____

Address: _____

MEMBERS _____ # of Adults @ \$35.00 _____ # of Children @ \$10.00 _____ TOTAL

NON-MEMBERS _____ # of Adults @ \$45.00 _____ # of Children @ \$15.00 _____ TOTAL

Form of payment: _____ Cash _____ Check - payable to: Temple B'nai Israel

Additional donation: _____ **AMOUNT ENCLOSED:** _____

Please complete and photocopy or cut out this RSVP form and mail with payment to:

ALMA GLASS
 2962 HARRISON AVE UNIT F
 PANAMA CITY FL 32405-8036