

January/February 2010 Tevet/Shevat/Adar I 5770

Morgantown, West Virginia

It is a Tree of Life to those that hold fast to it.

RABBI

David Feder

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Adult Purim Party

7:00 pm Saturday, February 27th

Feast on Persian delicacies and foods from elsewhere within the Persian Empire.

Enjoy fine wines and punch.

Join our belly dancers in Purim celebration.

The cost will be \$12 for individuals and \$20 for couples.

Please bring a bottle of wine.

If you can help prepare food or assist with the party, please contact Karen Feder (KarenGFe@gmail.com)







TOL Annual Meeting: Sunday, January 31, 2010 7:00 pm—Plan to Attend—more information will be posted on TOL's new web site: **etzhaim.org**



Rabbi David Feder

As we prepare to celebrate the New Year for the Tree or Tu B'Shevat on January 30, I have been working on my own tree, my family tree. On and off for much of the past year, I have been looking into my family history. I started the project almost by accident. While observing shiva for my mother, one of my cousins mentioned to me that she had been working on the Walter (my paternal grandfather) family tree and offered to send me the link. I added some of the basic information about my immediate family and then began to try to piece together what I knew or could find out about the Feders, Walters, Ernsteins, Muravchicks, and others.

I found out that many things that I had been told from childhood onward wasn't necessarily true. Sigmond Feder was born in Hungary, not Germany. My grandfather Leo didn't shorten his name from Leopold during the First World War, but had carried the name Leo from birth.

I found the grave locations for my great-great grandparents in Chicago and found distant relatives on the internet. Other ancestors have at this point seemed to disappear with no records of death or whether they left any descendants.

Why do I search and research? Why do I want to fill in all of these blanks? I want Ari and Orli to have a much better sense of who came before them, than I ever did. I want them to be able to celebrate their heritage and their roots in a world in which what happened last month might as well have happened in the last decade. In a world so consumed with fads and trends and what is hot and popular right now, I want them to know some of the little things upon which their own lives are

built.

Just as Judaism is built on Torah and the understanding of each previous generation is the building block for the next generation, so too within our families, we build upon the lives and stories of those who came before us. As we celebrate Tu B'Shevat, let us not think merely of the trees which provide us with food and fruit, nor of our Jewish traditions, both legal and mystical, but of our family trees, rooted in our past and which we hope and pray will blossom and bear fruit long into the future.

Rabbi David Feder

BOOK NIGHTS

On Sunday night, January 10, Rabbi Feder will lead a discussion of Richard Zimler's The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon. The novel is set amid the anti-Jewish riots that swept Lisbon in 1506, killing 2,000 "New Christians." The central figure is Berekiah Zarco, a 20-year-old New Christian who has learned manuscript illumination and Kabbalah from his beloved Uncle Abraham. In the midst of the massacre. Berekiah discovers his uncle, murdered in the hidden cellar of their home, which serves both as their workshop to create illustrated manuscripts, their sanctuary to pray, and the meeting place for Abraham's clandestine activities as a smuggler of Jewish books. Enjoy solving the mystery of who murdered Abraham and learn a little bit about the Jewish mystical tradition of Kabbalah in preparation for our celebration of Tu B'Shevat.

On Sunday night, February 7, join Rabbi Feder in discussing Rebecca Kohn's <u>The Gilded Chamber</u>, a historical novel based on the story of Esther. The character of Esther, her conflicts, desires and the intrigues of the Persian royal court are brought to life in Kohn's telling of the story. We read this novel in preparation for our celebration of Purim.

COOKING NIGHTS

On Sunday evening, January 24, at 7:00 pm join us in preparation for Tu B'Shevat as we prepare some vegetarian treats for Tu B'Shevat from the Syrian Jewish tradition.

Jews have lived in Syria perhaps since Biblical times, but clearly since Roman times. The older part of the Syrian Jewish community, the Musta'arabi, or Arabized Jews have been in Syria since ancient times. Other Jews came to Syria following the expulsion from Spain and the two communities have become indistinguishable.

Join us to learn more about the Syrian community and to taste some of their cuisine. On Sunday evening, February 21, at 7:00 pm, we will be exploring the Jewish food and culture of Persia in preparation for Purim. Some of the dishes that we prepare will be used for the Purim Party. So please join us in cooking, eating, and learning more about this ancient Jewish community.

ISLAMIC –JEWISH DIALOGUE

Members of the Jewish and Islamic communities have been meeting to talk about common interests and means by which we can both support the greater community.

There is now a great desire to expand the conversation by holding a potluck meal on a Sunday, sometime in the near future to allow members of the two communities to get to know each other better and to create an agenda for future programs.

Stay tuned for an announcement on the date and time of this program. If you are interested in helping to organize it, please contact Rabbi Feder.

SPECIAL ONEG

In honor of my mother's yahrzeit, Karen, Ari, Orli and I will be providing the Oneg Shabbat on Friday night, January 8, following the 7:30 pm service. Please join us that evening.

President's Message



Linda Herbst

I hope you had a wonderful holiday with the flickering lights on the menorah, spinning dreidels, and the smell of frying latkes.

It's been 4 months since my holiday appeal. At that time I told you why it is so important to support the Tree of Life. We all have our different reasons for coming to the TOL. The Tree of Life needs to remain a viable presence here in WV. We can only do so by your support both financially and physically.

We on the board have been searching for ways to offer you activities and services that will make you want to come and be a part of the TOL community. We are looking for your input on what you would like to happen. I am challenging you by giving you all an assignment. Please drop me a paragraph or call me as to what you would like to see happen at the TOL, what we can do as a group and how we ALL can help make this happen. New ideas and volunteers are always welcome.

On an administrative note: I would like to remind you any programming or activity issues at the TOL should be addressed to the board and not the Rabbi. He is our religious leader, not our program coordinator. You can contact me or any other board member about your concerns.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy 2010.

Linda leherbst@gmail.com

TREASURER'S REPORT

As the lights of Hanukkah fade away and we are faced with the long winter, I hope that you will take advantage of the warmth of a Friday night service and oneg or a hot discussion about Torah at Tree of Life on a Shabbat morning. These are the times that strengthen our Jewish tradition and build our Tree of Life family. For all of you who attend and who support Tree of Life generously, thank you. We rely on each of our members to contribute in all ways. If you have not yet pledged, please do so as generously as . you can. If you would like to honor or memorialize a friend or family member, a gift to one of the Tree of Life funds is a great way to do it. Please consider the following funds: Prayer Book, Religious School, Rabbi Discretionary, Library, Holocaust Education, Social Service, Torah Scroll Repair, and General Fund. Leafs and stones on our SimchaTree are also available. Please give me a call (304-■ 292-6767) or email me at mpstolzen@yahoo.com if you have any questions about dues or making a donation. Merle Stolzenberg

Donna Bolyard-Gerson's Killer Chocolate Fudge Cake

Cake:

2/3 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips 1/2 cup butter or margarine 1 ounce unsweetened chocolate 1 cup orange marmalade 1/2 cup sugar 2 large eggs 1 tsp vanilla 1/4 cup flour 1/2 tsp baking powder

Glaze:

1/2 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

1/4 cup whipping cream

For cake: Preheat oven to 325. Line 8 inch round cake pan with parchment. Coat with cooking spray and flour.

Microwave 2/3 cup chocolate chips, butter and unsweetened chocolate in large microwave safe bowl on high for 1 minute.

Stir until smooth. Microwave 30 more seconds if necessary.

Add marmalade and sugar and mix well.

Add eggs, vanilla, flour and baking powder and mix well.

Pour into prepared pan and bake for 40 minutes or until center is set and toothpick comes out clean.

Cool in pan 30 minutes, then refrigerate for 1 hour.

For Glaze:

Microwave 1/2 cup chocolate chips and cream together in microwave safe bowl for 1 minute on high. Stir until smooth. Turn cake onto serving plate and remove parchment. Spread glaze on top allowing some to drip down sides. Chill at least 1 hour.



TU B'SHEVAT

The 15th Day of the Hebrew month of Shevat is one of four new years in the Hebrew calendar. The most famous of these new year celebrations is Rosh Hashanah on the 1st of Tishri, but the 1st of Nisan marks the beginning of the festival calendar and the new year for vegetation and the 1st of Elul marks the new year for cattle. The 15th of Shevat marks the new year for trees, when, according to tradition, sap begins to flow once more, and the date used for determining when to begin tithing the tree's fruit. Because the Mishnah (Rosh Hashanah 1:1) refers to this as Rosh Hashanah L'ilan - the New Year of the Tree, our mystics have taught that the Tree refers to the Tree of Life. The significance of trees and the natural world have made this a celebration of Jewish environmental ethics And the founding of Israel has made this a natural means of strengthening our ties with Israel.

Traditional observances for Tu B'Shevat include making a special effort to eat fruit, some eating seven Biblical species (wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates), others eating fifteen fruits. Many attend a Seder Tu B'Shevat, a mystical observance having its origins in the early sixteenth century, and others see Tu B'Shevat as a special time to purchase trees for the land of Israel.

This year our observance of Tu B'Shevat will occur in two parts. On Saturday, January 30, we will have a Tu B'Shevat Seder for the congregation beginning at 11:00 am, following a brief Shabbat morning service. This Seder will focus on the mystical dimensions of Tu B'Shevat.

On Sunday morning, January 31, the Religious School will sponsor a Seder beginning at 11:15 am focusing on our connections to both nature and the land of Israel. Please join us in celebrating Tu B'Shevat.

PURIM

Purim is celebrated on the 13th day of the Hebrew month of Adar, which this year corresponds to Saturday, February 27th and Sunday, the 28th. Purim celebrates the events found within the Biblical book of Esther. Contemporary observance consists of four mitzyot

- ◆ Mikra Megillah hearing the reading of Megillat Esther (the scroll of Esther)
- ◆ Se'udat Purim celebrating the holiday with a festive meal
- ♦ Mishloach Manot sending parcels of food and goodies to friends
- ♦ Mattanot L'evyonim giving gifts to the poor.

Our celebration will begin on Saturday evening, February 27, as we are transported to the palace of Ahasuerus, as we sample the foods from his realm (from India to Ethiopia), enjoy fine wines and an evening of entertainment, beginning at 7:00 pm.

Our merriment continues on Sunday morning February 28, with our Megillah reading at 10:00 am. Once again we will be holding our costume and gragger contests. Prizes will be awarded for the most creative costumes and the loudest and most creative noisemakers, Once again, as a reminder, graggers must be inanimate objects. Use of younger siblings or family pets is expressly prohibited.

Our Purim carnival will follow immediately after the reading of the Megillah with fun for children of all ages.

Games and activities will abound and lunch will also be available.

Our annual hamantaschen baking contest will take place during the Purim carnival. Make sure that a dozen of your finest hamantaschen will be at Tree of Life by 9:30 am on Sunday, March 7th. Everyone wants to know who makes the tastiest, the prettiest and the most creative hamantaschen in the land

As part of our carnival, you will also have the opportunity to assemble Shalach Manot, gift bags of goodies for friends and family, which you may deliver later that day. The giving and receiving of these simple presents reminds us of the warmth and support of friends and family. The gratitude evoked by the celebration of Purim compels us to send these tokens of affection to those for whom we continue to be grateful.

During the Purim Carnival, each class within our Religious School will be advertising a particular cause or charity. Please contribute generously in order to fulfill the mitzvah of matanot l'evyonim.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

The Religious School spent November and December focused on Jewish Book Month and on Chanukah. While promoting Jewish reading, we also looked into our past. Boys got the chance to read "Boys of Steel" about the creators of Superman and learned about the Jewish origins of Superman, as well as the Jewish identities of other superheroes and their creators. Girls read "Rebecca Rubin American Girl" about immigrant Jewish life in the United States in the early twentieth century. Laurie Brager created opportunities for all of our students to learn and share about the immigrant experiences and countries of origin of their families and to revisit the world of Rebecca Rubin throughout the year.

In December we also bid farewell to two of our teachers who will not be able to join us for the second semester, Blair Lord(1st Grade) and Naomi Gingold(2nd/3rd Grade). Their students and the school will miss their energy and their love of teaching.

In January we look forward to preparing for our celebration of Tu B'Shevat as we learn more about Israel and about caring for our environment.



SISTERHOOD

Barbara Jacowitz

The Tree of Life Sisterhood wishes everyone a Happy, Healthy and Successful New Year. Sisterhood supports the Tree of life congregation by providing support of the congregation's needs. In the New Year our resolutions are to purchase a defibrillator and new curtains with valence for the Holy Ark.

The joint Chanukah party with Hadassah was a great success at the home of Joan Addicks. Her home was beautifully decorated with Chanukah memorabilia. All who attended had an unforgettable time. The beautiful light of the Menorahs made for a warm delightful evening.

When the defibrillator arrives Sisterhood will host a Havdollah service and an educational seminar on the use of the machine. We will plan an Oneg when the curtains for the Ark arrive and are installed.

Sisterhood is planning a telephone tree. We need some volunteers to make five or six calls a year to inform the congregation of events.

We need help in planning a spring event. Sisterhood needs volunteers to chair committees and participate in our Spring Events. Please help us to help the Sisterhood support the Tree of Life Congregation.

Because we are a service organization we need helpers to organize our functions. Please join us in supporting the congregation and our activities. Make a New Year's resolution to send your dues to Eva Segert -Tauger at P.O. Box 4051, Morgantown WV 26504-4051. And resolve to participate in our many activities in 2010. A Happy New Year to everyone.

HADASSAH

Monique Gingold

We hope you enjoyed our annual Sisterhood-Hadassah Chanukah-Rosh Chodesh party December 17, 2010. Joan Addicks was a gracious hostess. The food was delicious, the latkes were crisp, the décor delightful

and the company good. Roz led us in a discussion of light, Deborah and Kabala ending with a fifteen minute meditation session during which we envisioned a healing light developing within ourselves.

In addition, we want to thank all who donated to the CARE committee in lieu of the usual gift exchange. This mitzvah raised more than \$100 for the committee's good work.

We plan on having another Rosh Chodesh meeting February 13, 2010. Stay tuned for details. Finally, on June 6, 2010, we will end the year with our traditional book meeting where we all share ideas for great books we have read. We look forward to seeing familiar faces and meeting new ones!!!

For information on dates, places, cards and certificates, Zionist and Hadassah news, you are invited to visit our web page at:

http://mysite.verizon.net/vzev6e7j.

JUDAICA SHOP

On December 17th, Joan Addicks had a gift for the Tree of Life. She handed our Treasurer, Merle Stolzenberg, a check for \$2,200, the profits to date from the TOL Judaica Shop.

That check, which is most welcome, represents many hours of work by Joan and generous support from our congregants.

Todah Rabah!

CLERGY HOSPITAL VISITATION

The law (HIPPA) prohibits The Temple and our clergy from obtaining clergy sheets and religious census information from hospitals.

We need your help!

Please notify Kathy Abate, xuaf@aol.com co-chair of the CARE Committee of any serious sickness in your family or hospital admissions.

Remember a loved one with a YAHRZEIT PLAQUE

\$300 DONATION

Contact: Bennett Millstone

etzhaim.org

Check out the new Tree of Life website. The address, **etzhaim.org**, remains the same, but inside is a completely new site constructed with the guidance and assistance of the *RJ Web-Builder* team in general and Daniel Stein in particular. Locally Stan Kanner provided much appreciated assistance.

Some features: Upcoming Events on the home page; an interactive calendar; individual web pages for many Temple activities and organizations; this Newsletter as a PDF; a community Bulletin Board and, of course, lots of photos in living color

Enjoy and let me know how I can improve the format to better serve our community's needs.

Sylvia Cooper

MITZVAH DAY

Sandy Gutmann

I want to thank the volunteers who committed their time on December 25th at the Ronald McDonald House,

Mitzvah Day is really a very important gesture that is made by members of our Congregation. It is very much appreciated by the people who work at the Ronald McDonald House the rest of the year.

Thank you to: Bennett and Muriel Millstone and their friend Jim Bourgeois, Terry Schwartz, Margalit Persing, and Laurie Gutmann.

מצוה

MI SHEBEIRACH / WELLNESS PRAYERS

Please remember to consult with those who are in need of healing, before publicly adding their names to the Mi Shebeirach list. With their permission, we would like to add whatever support we can to their recovery and healing.

We note with joy the arrival of

Sidney Pearl

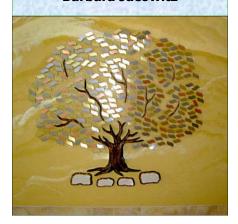
Mazel Tov to her parents

Mark and Ali Kohan

Share Your Simcha Buy a Leaf on

THE SIMCHA TREE

\$250/leaf \$2500/Small Stone \$5000/Large Stone Contact Merle Stolzenberg/ Barbara Jacowitz



DIASPORA

A Prose Poem

Erika Dreifus

Rain delays my flight an hour. Another. Other flights are canceled. Diverted. I wait for my plane to Columbus, Ohio, where the elder daughter of a second cousin will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah in the morning. I wait, despite the storms and the announcements and the overcrowded Delta terminal in New York and the additional holdup after boarding as thunder rattles the commuter jet on the tarmac, and in the end, I will arrive safely at the Columbus Airport Marriott at two-thirty in the morning.

Seven hours later, in the sanctuary of Congregation Tifereth Israel on East Broad Street, young Talia stands behind the Torah. Her maternal grandmother—my father's first cousin—recites a Hebrew prayer in the cadence of the *sabra* she is. The paternal grandparents chant together, with the Lusophone inflections of their family's adopted home in São Paulo, and the entire Brazilian contingent laughs when the rabbi attempts a few words in Portuguese.

And the rest of us—the aunts and uncles and cousins of varying degrees—have converged from Canada and California, from Memphis and Boston, from Raleigh and tiny Williamson, West Virginia, and in our blood and our bones we've reconstructed here the remnants of our common home, the birthplace of my father's parents, and the sabra's, *Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles*. The mid-October sun streams through stained glass into the sanctuary, joyful ancestral tears.

Prose poem from the New Vilna Review, an excellent magazine, which can be accessed on-line. All's well, if really busy. So far, though, no snow here in NE Ohio's snow belt. (I'm not complaining, mind you.) One little item of note for you: Ben is still living in Pgh., working for a non-profit, Youth Enrichment Services. His very first grant application -- he requested funding to bring street theatre to his at-risk kids -- was funded for \$12,000. He doesn't seem to understand that most grant applications aren't funded. Further, he doesn't understand how extraordinary it is that he's written a winning grant the first time out!

Cheers, Cheryl

CARE COMMITTEE

Kathy Abate

The CARE committee thanks Hadasshah and Sisterhood members for their contributions toward the committee's operating expenses. Their generosity makes the work of the committee possible.

The CARE committee sends gift bags and greetings to TOL members who are shut ins at the holidays. Upon request, the CARE committee will coordinate food for member families sitting Shiva and food and transportation for member families needing help due to illness or other emergencies.

If you know of a person in need of such assistance or who should be on our holiday greetings list, please contact the rabbi, Kathleen Abate at xuaf@aol.com or Susan Newfield.

If you are willing to be part of our "soup and challah" brigade or can volunteer to on occasion provide food for Jewish families in our community or want to share your thoughts and ideas about the committee, please contact Kathy Abate at xuaf@aol.com or Susan Newfield.

JUDAISM: THE CLASSICS

On Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm, we will begin to explore the classic texts that form the foundation of Judaism and Jewish literature – Talmud, Midrash, Kabbalah, Biblical Commentary. On January 6, we will begin with a unit on the Talmud, exploring what the Talmud is, how it came to be written, its structure and style and its impact on subsequent Jewish life and literature. Please join us on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm for a greater understanding of Judaism beyond holidays and Bible stories.



Calendars

 $7.00 \, \mathrm{pm}$

4:30 pm

Time 7:30 pm

10:00 am

Shabbat Evening Service

JANUARY 2010

Event

Day

10:00 am 9:30 am

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday

Friday

January 8 January 9 Sunday

January 10

Religious School

Preschool

Shabbat Evening Service

Judaism: The Classics

No Religious School

Torah Study

Saturday

Friday

Sunday

January 3 January 2 January Date

Wed

January 6

Hebrew School

7:30 pm

7:00 pm

The Last Kabbalist of

Lisbon

10:30 am

4:30 pm 7:00 pm 7:30 pm

10:00 am 9:30 am 10:30 am 4:30 pm 6:00 pm

Shabbat Evening Service

Religious School

Torah Study

Saturday

January 16

Friday

January 15

Sunday

January 17

Hebrew School

Wed

January 20

Zumba

Preschool

Judaism: The Classics

Hebrew School

Wed

January 13

		FEBRUARY 2010	
Date	Day	Event	Time
February 3	pəM	Hebrew School	4:30 pm
		Zumba	6:00 pm
		Judaism: The Classics	7:00 pm
February 5	Friday	Tot Shabbat	5:45 pm
		Vegetarian Potluck Din-	6:30 pm
		Shabbat Evening Service	7:30 pm
February 6	Saturday	Torah Study	10:00 am
February 7	Sunday	Religious School	9:30 am
		Preschool	10:30 am
		The Gilded Chamber	7:00 pm
February 10	Med	Hebrew School	4:30 pm
		Zumba	6:00 pm
		Judaism: The Classics	7:00 pm
February 12	Friday	Shabbat Evening Service	7:30 pm
February 13	Saturday	Shabbat Morning Service	10:00 am
February 14	Cumpless	Religious School	9:30 am
	Sunday	Preschool	10:30 am
	Wed	Hebrew School	4:30 pm
February 17		Zumba	6:00 pm
		Judaism: The Classics	7:00 pm
February 19	Friday	Shabbat Evening Service	7:30 pm
February 20	Saturday	Torah Study	10:00 am
February 21		Religious School	9:30 am
	Sunday	Preschool	10:30 am
		Persian Food	7:00 pm
February 24	Wed	Hebrew School	4:30 pm
		Zumba	6:00 pm
		Judaism: The Classics	7:00 pm
February 26	Friday	Shabbat Evening Service	7:30 pm
February 27	Saturday	Shabbat Morning Service	10:00 am
		Purim Party	7:00 pm
February 28	Sunday	Megillah Reading and Carnival	10:00 am
		Cuttityat	

7:00 pm 7:30 pm 10:00 am 4:30 pm 6:00 pm 7:00 pm 7:30 pm

Hebrew School

Wed

January 27

Zumba

Syrian Food

Preschool

 $\overline{7}$:00 pm

9:30 am

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday

Friday

January 22 January 23 January 24

Sunday

Religious School

Shabbat Evening Service

Judaism: The Classics

10:30 am











11:15am

10:00 am 11:00 am 9:30 am 10:30 am

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday

Friday

January 29 January 30 Tu B'Shevat Seder

Religious School

Sunday

January 31

Preschool

Shabbat Evening Service

Judaism: The Classics











Tree of Life Congregation PO Box 791

Morgantown, WV 26507-0791 (304) 292-7029

http://etzhaim.org

FIRST CLASS MAIL





The Passing of the Spatula photo: Ed Gerson

Latke Brigade 2009

photo: Donna Gerson

