

השופר haShofar

of DeKalb and Sycamore

Congregation Beth Shalom
820 Russell Road
DeKalb, IL 60115



CALENDAR

Friday, Feb. 6	Shabbat Service	7:30 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 12	Geoffrey Baer, <i>Chicago: Birthplace of the Skyscraper</i> Skyroom, Holmes Student Center, NIU	7:30 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 15	PJC High Schoolers Meeting, Elgin	2-3:30 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 20	Shabbat Potluck (dairy)	6:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 1	Purim Carnival	3 p.m.
	Megillah Reading	4 p.m.
	Potluck (dairy)	5 p.m.
Thursday, March 19	Book Group: <i>The Unamericans</i>	6:30 p.m.
Friday, March 20	Shabbat Service with Koleynu choir	7:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 22	Adult Education	(TBD)
Friday, April 3	<i>Passover begins in the evening</i>	
Saturday, April 4	Community Second Seder	6 p.m.
Thursday, April 16	Book Group	7 p.m.

February-March 2015 Shevat-Adar-Nisan 5775

haShofar: Elizabeth Bass, editor Avi Bass, designer

FROM THE PRESIDENT: THANKS FOR YOUR GIFTS

Greeting to the members of Congregation Beth Shalom,

I hope this message finds you in good health and enjoying the season. I wanted to begin by expressing my deep gratitude to those in our congregation who donated generously for the repair and restoration of our Torah. Thanks to your gifts, we will be able to have it professionally cared for and returned to us for many more years of service.

As these cold months pass and hopefully turn towards the spring, I invite all of you to come join us for our Shabbat services on February 6 and March 20 and our Shabbat potluck on February 20. Indulge your literary side at our book group on March 19. I especially invite you to join others in the community on March 1 for our Festival of Purim triple-header: the carnival, the Megillah Reading, and our always delicious potluck (dairy). Come and join the fun. And come costumed if you dare!

As always feel free to contact me with questions or comments.

Shalom,

Rob Feldacker / 815-762-0204 / rfeldacker1@gmail.com

TORAH-REPAIR GOAL MET



On behalf of the congregation and of generations to come, the CBS board expresses its gratitude to the congregants who generously responded to its request for contributions to cover the \$3,000 cost of repairing our Torah.

The funds raised will more than cover that cost. A list of contributors is elsewhere in this issue.

After the Torah is returned by the scribe doing the repairs, our second Torah, owned by the Feldman family, will be sent out for needed repairs. The work will be done before the High Holidays, when we will need the Torah, and before that Torah is sent to be used for the bat mitzvah of a Feldman family member, whose family is covering the repair costs for this Torah.

FROM THE RABBI: WORKING AGAINST VIOLENCE

Inspired by the Jewish commitment to justice, American Jewish World Service (AJWS) is the leading Jewish human rights and development organization working to realize human rights and end poverty in the developing world. AJWS pursues lasting change by providing financial support to local grassroots and global human rights organizations working in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and by mobilizing American Jews and other supporters of human rights to advocate for policies that will improve the lives of people in the developing world.

AJWS takes on long-term projects in critical areas. For instance, in Haiti, five years after the devastating earthquake, one of its projects works to improve investigative journalism by reporting on the earthquake reconstruction process and disbursement of humanitarian aid.

Around the world, an estimated one-in-three women will be beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime.

AJWS has a current campaign to improve the lives of women, girls, and the LGBT community around the world. Here is how the organization describe the issues:

One-out-of-three women will be physically, sexually, or otherwise abused in her lifetime, with rates reaching 70 percent in some countries. This violence and abuse is devastating for the women and girls who have been violated, and it has far-reaching damaging effects on their families, communities and society as a whole. Political stability and economic growth have been difficult to achieve in countries where gender-based violence is condoned, institutionalized, or out of control.

Every year around the world, 10 million girls under the age of 18 enter into early and forced marriages. Girls who marry early are more likely to drop out of school, suffer health problems, live in poverty, and experience gender-based violence. These girls are more likely to either die in childbirth or lose their newborn infants.

In 77 countries around the world, homosexuality is illegal—punishable by imprisonment and, in some cases, by death.

Here is a letter you can sign to help pass the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA) in the U.S. Congress. Visit AJWS.org to sign the letter and to learn more about the concrete projects they assist around the world.

Dear Congress,

American Jewish World Service stands with women and girls worldwide in calling for the U.S. Congress to pass the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA), a law that would ensure that the U.S. government puts the full weight of its foreign aid and international diplomacy behind global efforts to end violence against women and girls.

* IVAWA supports women and girls working to combat violence in their communities with innovative, cost-effective programs that we know decrease acts of violence.

* IVAWA helps stop violence so that women and girls can do things we so often take for granted: go to school, earn an income to sustain their families, collect food or water without fear of rape or harassment, and bring perpetrators of abuse to justice.

* IVAWA ensures that women and girls remain a top priority of U.S. foreign policy.

As global citizens who are committed to justice, we must not stand idly by when millions of women need us to act. It is our responsibility to speak out about the violence and abuse experienced by hundreds of millions of women and girls worldwide.

--Rabbi Maralee Gordon

WITH LOVE & GRATITUDE

Our Dear Fellow Congregants—

We have been saying for a long time that often we make our own family. Thanks so much to our congregational family for your support, kind words, calls, sweet treats, and donations during the passing of our mothers, Eve Jacobson and Carole Garman. Everything you did is greatly appreciated.

Fondly,
Dave and Missy

ENJOY THE WARMTH OF SHABBAT SERVICES

Come join other members of the congregation at these Shabbat services:



-- Friday, February 6, at 7:30 p.m.

-- Friday, March 20, at 7:30 p.m.; a musical Shabbat with singing by our Koleynu choir.

Each service will be followed by an oneg with dessert and conversation.

In addition, all are also welcome as we celebrate Shabbat on Friday, February 20, with a dairy potluck at 6:30 p.m.

ADULT ED FOCUSES ON CHICAGO & SHORT STORIES

Want to learn more about Chicago? Then join our congregation book group as we attend a lecture rather than read a book. *Chicago: Birthplace of the Skyscraper*, a talk by WTTW's Geoffrey Baer, will be on Thursday, February 12, at 7:30 p.m. in the Clara Sperling Sky Room in the Holmes Student Center. In his talk, Baer gives a capsule history of Chicago's astonishing rapid rise from tiny trading post on the American frontier to a teeming metropolis. As a bonus, Geoffrey will also engage the audience in an interactive quiz about Chicago history. While this program is not specifically on a Jewish theme, the book group decided it would be fun to attend. The talk is sponsored by the Friends of the NIU Libraries.

Our next book group discussion will be on March 19. We'll be discussing *The Unamericans* by Molly Antopol. Huffington Post describes the book as a short story collection that "covers a broad range of topics, from religion to the collapse of Communism. The one topic that most of the stories deal with in some capacity is the intimate human relationship, both familial and non. She manages to capture these bonds in extremely heart wrenching ways." The stories take place in the United States, Israel, and the Soviet Union in the late 20th century. Antopol teaches writing at Stanford University and in 2013 was selection by the National Book Foundation as a 5-Under-35 honoree.

Our congregation book group unanimously recommends its January selection, *The Family* by David Laskin, which traces three branches of his family from their roots in Europe to those who remained in Europe and those who immigrated to the United States and to then Palestine. It's a good read!

Even if you haven't attended until now, feel free to join us at the February program and/or the March discussion.

--Carol Zar, adult education chair

PRAIRIE JEWISH COALITION HIGH SCHOOL CLUB

Open to High Schoolers only. Come to this FIRST EVER information meeting with Jewish Student Connection and explore club options for Jewish teens in our region. If you know any teens that would be interested, please help spread the word and invite them. The more the merrier!

We'll get-together on Sunday, February 15, from 2-3:30 p.m., at the home of Megan Placko in Elgin. Please RSVP for the meeting to Megan Placko at mplacko1297@gmail.com or online at <http://prairiejewishyouth.weebly.com/calendar-of-programs.html>. This web site also has information on other programs, organized by the Prairie Jewish Coalition, for Jewish teens of all ages in our area.

GREAT DEBUT FOR NEW LATKE CREW



There was a new crew in our kitchen making latkes for our Hanukkah party this year. James and Lady Cohen led the group consisting of William Dial, Judith Dial, Stacy Goldman, Steven Greenfield, and Marilyn Stromborg, who prepped the potatoes. They were assisted by Liz Blau and Missy Garman who organized set-up and clean-up. The latkes were eaten by close to 50 people who declared them a tasty success. Harvey Blau and Koleynu led singing after the meal. The party itself was preceded by an hour of children's activities led by Rabbi Gordon.

CONTINUING TO CARE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Many thanks to the dedicated Beth Shalom volunteers who contributed their time and efforts at DeKalb's Hope Haven Shelter and the Salvation Army Food Pantry. They are very much appreciated.

Hope Haven volunteers included Carol Zar, Rivka Baker, Roberta Maxfield, Michelle Silverstein, Linda Schwarz, Sandy Splansky, and Abby Chemers.

Recent Food Pantry volunteers were Michelle Silverstein, Rivka Baker, Linda Schwarz, Carol Zar, Elizabeth Bass, Steven Greenfield, Julie Dubicz, and Liz Blau.

There are still open dates for the Pantry on Thursdays, from 9 a.m. to noon, on March 19, April 16, May 21, and July 16. Please consider helping to fill these dates. If you can help, contact Liz Blau at 815-758-1143 or liz@lizblau.com.

--Liz Blau, social action chair

A TIME CAPSULE OF SORTS

When Linda Schwarz opened a Chumash (the book version of the Torah with commentaries) at a Saturday morning service in January, a piece of paper fell out that had been in the book for years. It was a notice of a meeting of the "DeKalb-Sycamore Hebrew Study Group" on Sunday, February 26, at 8 p.m. at Harry Brody's home on 340 Miller Avenue in DeKalb. Co-hostesses were Clara Sperling and Elizabeth Lane. The subject that night was to be the story of Noah and the tower of Babel passages in Genesis.

Harry Brody was one of the founders of our congregation. The Sky Room in the NIU student center, where we often hold High Holiday services, is named after Clara Sperling. The recent improvements to our synagogue were possible because of a legacy from Liz Lane.

A little sleuthing, based on February 26 being a Sunday, leads us to believe that the notice was from 1960 or 1966. The notice is now in our archives.

THANKS FOR GIVING AT THANKSGIVING

This past Thanksgiving, 867 families registered for assistance with the Salvation Army. Some 200 of these families received a basket (actually a bag) of food for a complete turkey dinner, thanks to the generosity of CBS members.

The reason we provided more bags than ever before, reports Adam Sinason, who again ably coordinated the project, was that this year the official shopping list that the Salvation Army supplied contained fewer items; for example, pancake mix and syrup for breakfast the next day were dropped.

Fortunately, with more bags to pack, more congregants showed up this year to work the assembly line.



Performing this true mitzvah were Adam Sinason; David Sinason; the entire Kruskol family: Bryan, Julie, Kelsie, Kyle, and Cameron; David Gorman; Liz Blau; Meryl Domina; Harvey Blau; Karen Sinason; Linda Schwarz; and Avi Bass. Photo by Elizabeth Bass.

FYI...

Our annual **Community Seder**, on the second night of Passover, will be on Saturday, April 4, at 6 p.m at the synagogue. Reservation forms and more information in the next haShofar and via email.

From January 20 to 28, **Rabbi Gordon** will be in Morocco with a group of Chicago-area rabbis visiting Jewish communities in Casablanca, Rabat, Fez, and Marrakech. From February 15 to March 12, she will be in New Zealand and Australia for travel and for the wedding of her son. While she is gone, contact the appropriate board member with any questions.

For the remainder of this year's **Saturday services**, there will be a kiddush, rather than a potluck lunch, following the services.

Carol Zar and Elizabeth Bass spoke to a seventh grade class at the **Cornerstone Christian Academy** about Passover and Hanukkah. The teacher reported that, on the next day, the students got very involved in playing with the dreidels that were given out.

The **DeKalb Public Library**, as it has done every year, had a program for children about Hanukkah, again complete with dreidels.

For future reference...If you don't make it to our congregational store, the Sycamore Road **Target** has had a good supply of Hanukkah wrapping paper, candles, and even menorahs. And the **DeKalb Confectionary** has had Hanukkah candy.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Torah Repair Fund



Carol & Jerry Zar
Karen & David Sinason
Linda Schwarz
Irene & Herbert Rubin
Shulamit Ran & Abraham Lotan
Linda & Eric Mogren
Jane & Steven Lux
Anna & Robert Lastick

Robert Fleisher & Darsha Primich
Abby Chemers
Jay Burstein
Derryl Block & Steven Greenfield
Liz & Harvey Blau
Elizabeth & Avi Bass
Rivka & William Baker

High Holiday Prayer Books

The Garman Family: In loving memory of Carole Garman
M. Nadine Zimmerman: In memory of Elizabeth C. Lane