

# השופר haShofar

of DeKalb and Sycamore

Congregation Beth Shalom  
820 Russell Road  
DeKalb, IL 60115



## CALENDAR

Sunday, May 3	Torah Scribe in Geneva	2 p.m.
Friday, May 8	Shabbat Service	7:30 p.m.
Thursday, May 14	Book Group	7 p.m.
Monday, May 18	Annual Meeting	7 p.m.
Sunday, May 24	Shavuot Study Session & Ollie's	7 p.m.
Friday, June 5	Shabbat Potluck (dairy)	6:30 p.m.
Thursday, June 11	Book Group	7 p.m.
Saturday, June 20	Shabbat Service: Emma Goldman Bat Mitzvah	10 a.m.

**May-June 2015 Iyar-Sivan-Tammuz 5775**

*haShofar: Elizabeth Bass, editor Avi Bass, designer*

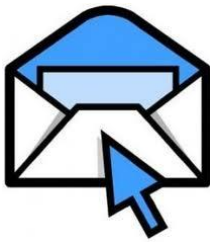
## FROM THE PRESIDENT: AN EXTENDED FAMILY

I begin this letter with good news. Thanks to the generous donations of the congregation, the repairs to our Torah are completed and it is back in our ark.

I want to offer special thanks to Harvey Blau and Koleynu for the music that accompanied our service on March 20. In addition to members of our congregation, we had over twenty-five members of Go Teacher, a group of teachers from Ecuador who are training at Northern Illinois University and its ELS Language Center for seven months. Congregation member James Cohen organized the Go Teacher program, and we were thrilled to have them as guests and add new experiences to their stay.

Additional thanks are due to Louis and Robin Schoenburg and their helpers for a wonderful community Seder. We had over thirty-five members and guests as we celebrated Passover together.

I always love these big gatherings as they remind me of the large Seders I used to enjoy with my family in St. Louis. It reinforces my idea of a congregation as an extended family of sorts. We gather to eat, talk, pray, study, rejoice, and mourn.



One more thing we do is to support each other through difficult times. Our congregation maintains a community fund that we use to help members experiencing major problems, such as home fires or funeral expenses. But this fund has been depleted by the needs of the community and is in need of replenishing. I am asking that those of you who wish to make charitable donations to consider donating to this fund with a check to Congregation Beth Shalom with a memo to “Community Fund.” This will allow us to continue to serve the needs of our extended family through bad times as well as good.

As the season of Purim and Passover yields slowly to the summer months, I invite you all to join us for several upcoming services and events:

On May 8, we have a Shabbat Service at 7:30 p.m.

Our book group meets at 7 p.m. on May 14.

On May 24, we will have a Shavuot Study Session and dessert starting at 7 p.m.

Our Annual Meeting is on May 18 at 7 p.m. All are invited to attend!!!

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

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

## **FROM THE RABBI: A SIMCHA – A JOYOUS EVENT!**

For most of our holidays, we wish each other a Chag Sameach, a joyous festival. Joy is a core value of Judaism, and we are encouraged to feel joy and happiness as much as we can. The Hasidic Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav, who suffered from depression, taught that one should confine one's sadness to one hour of the day and be joyful the other 23. If only it were that easy!

And joy is certainly a large component of lifecycle events such as weddings and bar/bat mitzvah celebrations. In fact, we refer to a wedding or a b/mitzvah as a "simcha." Recently Leo and I returned from the wedding of our youngest son, Benjamin, to Rachel Coppel of Melbourne, Australia. The wedding took place in Melbourne, where they live, and was a joyous celebration of their love and commitment to each other. It was made more joyful by family and friends gathering from around the world to celebrate with them.

Our son Jacob, his wife, Michal, and their two youngest (out of six) children came from Israel, giving us the chance to meet our granddaughter, Elisheva, who was born just five weeks before the wedding. Their two-year-old son, Noam, met his three-year-old cousin Noah (of Menlo Park, CA, son of our son Ari and daughter-in-law Nicole), and they had a good time together. Plus, I think they were both struck by the blond curls they have in common. That my brother and sister-in-law, who live in Denver, and my sister and brother-in-law, who live in the D.C. area, were in attendance meant that we had a week of precious, inter-generational family time together. Talk about a simcha!

I first noticed this phenomenon—call it joy-in-community—at Ari's bar mitzvah in 1989. We were seated in the front row, and when I turned around and glanced back, all the way back to the windows, at the 190 friends and family present, I was awe-struck that I knew every single person in the room, and that each individual, in very different ways from each other, was important to us as a family. Each family experiences this at their own simchas.

Combining family with old and new friends and current community members brings so many facets of our lives together. That each person present is there to celebrate with us increases and deepens our joy. On June 20, we will celebrate with the Goldman family, as Emma becomes a bat mitzvah, sharing their joy at her accomplishments and growth.

Holidays are times of joy when we celebrate with family and friends, as we recently experienced at Passover. Our next simcha opportunity is Shavuot, when we celebrate our ancestors' receiving of the Ten Commandments in community at Mt. Sinai. On Sunday, May 24, we will come together to find joy in the Ten Commandments through presentations on individual commandments by members of our CBS community. In addition to the joy of learning, since we traditionally eat dairy foods at Shavuot, our learning will be accompanied by the joy of Ollie's frozen custard. Please consider being one of our presenters, and let me know which commandment you will speak about (for 10 minutes or so), and I will share materials on that commandment with you.

May we continue to have many opportunities to celebrate a simcha together!

--Rabbi Maralee Gordon



## RABBI GORDON RETIRING IN 2016

Rabbi Maralee Gordon has told the CBS board that she will be retiring as of July 1, 2016, both from CBS and from the McHenry County Jewish Congregation where she also has an appointment. She first came to our congregation in 1999 as a student rabbi. The board has started the search for her replacement.

## HASHOFAR GOING DIGITAL

After discussing it periodically for several years, the board has decided that it is time to distribute our bulletin, haShofar, electronically. Email distribution provides a significant budget savings. It also enables us to provide you with links to more detailed information.

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Beginning in August, haShofar will be sent via email to all the email addresses that we have for your household. If you wish to add or change an email address OR if you prefer to continue to get a paper copy of haShofar, please notify Elizabeth Bass at [ebass@niu.edu](mailto:ebass@niu.edu) or 815-756-1227 by July 1. You can change your preference at any time.

Also note that Carol Zar will take over as haShofar editor after that date, trading portfolios with Elizabeth who will become adult education chair.



## SAYING KADDISH IN THE SUMMER

If you would like to say Kaddish during the summer when we do not generally have services, contact Jackie Gorman, ritual chair, at 815-756-3222 or [jgorman7@juno.com](mailto:jgorman7@juno.com) and we will arrange a service for you.

## LEARN ABOUT TORAH CALLIGRAPHY

Since our congregation is a member of the Prairie Jewish Coalition, all of our members are welcome to attend a demonstration by a scribe of how a Torah is created and written. Yochanan Nathan, Chicago's outstanding sofer (scribe), also will share the rituals and laws that govern the calligraphy of a Torah.

The event, sponsored by Fox Valley Jewish Neighbors, will be on Sunday, May 3, at 2 p.m., at the Geneva Public Library, 127 James St., Geneva. Tickets are \$8 a person in advance and may be ordered online with a credit card at [www.fvjn.org/writing-a-torah-presentation/](http://www.fvjn.org/writing-a-torah-presentation/).

## JOIN US AT SHABBAT SERVICES

Services will be held on Friday, May 8, at 7:30 p.m. As always, a festive oneg will follow the service.

## LET US BREAK BREAD TOGETHER

Our last Shabbat potluck of the year will be held Friday, June 5, at 6:30 p.m. This will be a dairy meal so we can relish the wonderful salads, main dishes, and desserts our members bring. We always start and end with Shabbat rituals. The evening is full of friendship and interesting conversation. We look forward to sharing this lovely start of Shabbat with you.

--Meryl Domina, social programs chair



### WELCOME A BAT MITZVAH

At Shabbat services on Saturday, June 20, Emma Goldman will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah. All members of Beth Shalom are invited to attend to welcome Emma as a full adult member of our congregation. The service will be held at the synagogue at 10 a.m.

A lunch will follow the service. If you are planning to stay for lunch, please contact Steve Goldman by June 6 at [stephengoldman19@gmail.com](mailto:stephengoldman19@gmail.com).

## ECUADORIAN TEACHERS WELCOMED AT SERVICE

I would like to thank each one of you who attended the Friday night service on Friday, March 20. I was invited by the rabbi to bring my Ecuadorian scholars to the synagogue for Friday night services to give them a Jewish experience. Twenty-five of the 37 came with me, Lady and Emma, along with my assistant director and two grad students. They were introduced to the service and the congregation and had an opportunity to see the Torah

Afterwards, we all went downstairs to share in the Oneg Shabbat prepared by Jackie Gorman and Elizabeth Bass. Not only was the food plentiful, but was displayed beautifully. At one point, I looked around the room and each table had a number of my scholars sitting with at least one member of the congregation in deep discussion. It was a beautiful experience for the scholars, and I am sincerely thankful for the wonderful welcome you all gave to them.

--James Cohen

## SERVING OUR COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

Hope Haven continues to serve daily evening meals for 50 people (adults and children) and depends upon our DeKalb community for help. Beth Shalom, along with area churches and other organizations, fill this need every month. Our designated day is the first Wednesday of each month. Many thanks to recent volunteers Rob Feldacker and Valerie Garver; Jeff, Leslie and Rachel Hecht; and Karen Sinason and Elizabeth Bass.



**FEED THE  
HUNGRY**

Area residents in need of basic groceries are served by the Salvation Army Food Pantry. Beth Shalom volunteers assist shoppers through the pantry aisles on the third Thursday morning (9-noon) of the month. Many thanks to recent volunteers Carol Zar, Meryl Domina, Brian Maxfield, and Liz Blau. Please consider saving a Thursday morning to help out. There are openings in May, June, and July.

Questions? Contact me at 815 758-1143 or [liz@lizblau.com](mailto:liz@lizblau.com)

--Liz Blau, social action chair

## OF FOOD AND FILM

Thanks to Jackie Gorman and Elizabeth Bass for providing a sumptuous and scrumptious oneg on March 20. With our guests from Ecuador, there were 65 of us at services! Thanks also to Karen Sinason who provide the refreshments for our more intimate group in February.

Shalom Aleichem provided a fascinating topic for our recent dinner and a movie evening. There were 19 folks partaking of a Thai dinner and then watching a very interesting and informative documentary about the life and times of this renowned Yiddish author. Both our minds and our stomachs were nourished.

--Carol Zar, adult ed chair & oneg coordinator

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES!



**Mara Kuchynka**, Sandi's daughter, graduated in December 2014 from Illinois State with a major in communications - mass media. She currently works part-time on the production crew for the Coliseum in Bloomington and plans to return to DeKalb in the near future.

**Matthew Larks**, Betty & David's son, graduated cum laude from the University of North Texas in jazz studies in December 2014. He has stayed in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, playing bass at a Baptist church and pursuing other musical opportunities.

**Hallie Lux**, Jane & Steve's daughter, earned her master's in curriculum and instruction from National Louis University in August 2014. She is in her sixth year of teaching and is a kindergarten/first grade dual language teacher at Oak Terrace Elementary School in Highwood.

**Rachel Lux**, Jane & Steve's daughter, graduates from Rush University this summer with a master's in occupational therapy. She plans to work as an OT in the Chicago area, but has not yet decided where.

**Leif Mogren**, Linda & Eric's son, graduates from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in May with a master's in public history. He will continue working at the Discovery Museum in Milwaukee.

**Eve Switzky**, granddaughter of long-time members Lynn & Harvey Switzky, who now live in Alabama, is graduating from Austin High School in Austin, Texas. She will attend Mills College in Oakland, California.



## FYI

The parking lot will be restriped this summer. A no-parking zone will be marked in the space directly in front of the back door.



NIU Hillel planned a Shabbat dinner on April 24 for teens from throughout the region who participate in the Prairie Jewish Youth Group. The publicity promised a chance to “hang out with college kids for Shabbat!”

## CHATTER

**Jason Hanna** was awarded a fellowship at Tulane University's Murphy Institute for Ethics and Public Affairs. He and his family will spend the next academic year in New Orleans, returning to DeKalb in summer 2016.



**Jane Lux** received the 2105 Outstanding Alumni Award for the NIU College of Health and Human Sciences. She has both a B.S. in nursing and a master's in public health from the college. Jane is the public health administrator of the DeKalb County Health Department.

Mazel tov to **Barbara Kaufmann** on the birth of her grandson, Logan Everett, on March 14 in Hoffman Estates, to her son Joseph and his wife Kelly. Big sister Lilly is almost 3 ½ years old.

...and **Barbara Kauffman** will have more time for her grandchildren since she officially retires from NIU's career planning and placement office on April 30.

Medieval historian **Valerie Garver** has been getting a lot of media attention for the NIU honors seminar she is teaching with Jeff Chown on *Game of Thrones, Television and Medieval History*.