



The Shofar's Voice



Jordan Gerson, Rabbi
Brian Sontag, President

B'NAI ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE
P.O. Box 9002

December 2011
Kislev-Tevet 1- 5772

Pensacola, Florida, 32513-9002

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**DEADLINE FOR SHOFAR'S VOICE
ARTICLES NEXT ISSUE MONTH IS:**

December 20th, 2011

ISRAELI SOLDIERS OBSERVE HANUKKAH
CANDLE LIGHTING NEAR GAZA IN PAST YEARS.
TO REPEAT AGAIN IN 2011!



**HAPPY HANUKKAH TO THE
CONGREGATION AND JEWISH COMMUNITY!**



RABBI'S MESSAGE

TO THE CONGREGATION:

Moving from November to December and from the Hebrew month of *Cheshvan* to *Kislev* we notice a shift in our surroundings. With the changing of our clocks and the approach of winter, we are left with fewer and fewer hours of daylight. As we approach the darkest time of year we, as Jews celebrate the festival of light, rather than focus on the darkness.

Falling on the 25th of *Kislev*, *Chanukkah* arrives when the days are at their shortest and when the night lingers. But as we kindle the candles of the *Chanukkah* menorah, we take pleasure in the light it gives off and are commanded to share its beauty and luminescence with the world. It is important to remember however, the light we as Jews share with the world needn't only be the flicker of the candle from the *Chanukiyah*.

Our tradition offers many possibilities that give us the ability to bring light to the even the darkest of times. We recall the story of the Maccabees who opposed the Greek forces who sought to outlaw Judaism. Refusing to give up the study of Torah, these Jews ignored such prohibitions, hiding their scrolls and pretending to gamble over a game a *dreidel* when the Greek soldiers approached. Their commitment to Torah study was not just a light for the Jewish people during their time, but serves as a beacon to Jews of every age, encouraging us to remain faithful to our traditions no matter the circumstances. Each time we engage in Torah study, we honor their memory, their commitment and their sacrifice.

Here at B'nai Israel Synagogue, three exciting learning opportunities are set to be offered in order to provide you with the opportunity to

engage in Torah study. Weekly Hebrew classes are being planned and will take place on Tuesdays from 9-11 in the morning. Also, Lunch and Learns focusing on the *Siddur* and *Tefillah* (prayer) will begin in January. Finally, an evening Torah reading class will commence in the coming year to provide people the skills necessary to read from the Torah during services and perhaps even give congregants the opportunity for an adult Bar or Bat Mitzvah. If you are interested in any of these learning opportunities, I urge you to please call the office and express your interest so we can plan accordingly.

Another way we as Jews bring light into the world is through *Gimilut Chasadim*, acts of loving-kindness. These selfless gestures demonstrate the Jewish people's ability to be a shining beacon for all humanity. Two such examples of *Gimilut Chasadim* taking place in B'nai Israel Synagogue is the ongoing Manna Food Drive and the Senior Mitzvah Project. We are still collecting canned or packaged food items in the Bearman Building and would like to encourage you to bring a donation each time you attend a Family Shabbat function. I would also like to thank all those who contributed to the Senior Mitzvah project chaired by B'nai Israel's Marci Goodman and Temple Beth El's Linda Armacost. Thank-you both for your efforts.

The *Lubavitcher* Rebbe used to teach that even the smallest flame can dispel much darkness. I am proud to say that here at B'nai Israel Synagogue we have quite a fire going and even as the days grow shorter and darkness sets in a little earlier, the light from our congregation shines bright as ever. I wish you all a happy *Chanukah*!

RABBI JORDAN GERSON

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What is the Torah?

The Torah is the primary document of Judaism. Torah means “teaching;” it is G-d’s revealed instructions to us. It teaches us how to act, think and even feel about life and death. It contains 613 commandments (mitzvot). The Torah also contains stories that teach us about G-d’s relationship with us.

There are two parts of the Torah: written and oral. The written Torah is also called the Tanakh which stands for Torah (T), Nevi’im (N), and Ketuvim (K). It contains The Five Books of Moses (Chumash Torah), the Prophets (Nevi’im), and Writings (Ketuvim). The Five Books of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, were given to us at Mount Sinai approximately 3500 years ago. Nevi’im are direct prophecies of what G-d said to the prophets. Writings were written by the prophets with the guidance of G-d. The Oral Torah, explanations of the written Torah were originally passed on verbally. Now, the Talmud is a combination of Mishnah and Gemara together.

A sefer Torah is handwritten by a trained sofer on parchment using a quill dipped in ink. The Torah contains 304,805 letters, and each must be duplicated precisely. If only one letter is missing the entire Torah is Pasul (not kosher.) If any rips of the seams of the parchment is found, the Torah is not kosher. If letters are cracked or broken, the Torah is not kosher. If there is writing on the parchment that was not placed by the sofer, it is not kosher.

Why am I writing a lesson about the Torah? As most of you know, our Torah’s are not kosher for a number of reasons. We have borrowed, at an expense, Torah’s from USCJ. One, that is still in our possession, was just found not to be Pasul. If a Torah is not kosher, it cannot be used for services! We can still study Torah on Shabbat but we must use the Chumash.

We will have a sofer in the shul soon to assess what we need to do to make our Torah’s kosher again. This is an opportunity for B’nai Israel to commission a new Torah. The 613th commandment is for every Jew to write a sefer Torah in their lifetime. While this is probably not realistic in this day and age, it is possible to write a letter or even a word in a new Torah and thus perform this mitzvah. We will have more information in the near future and will be initiating a Torah fund. This endeavor will provide many with a once in a lifetime opportunity to fulfill this commandment and leave a lasting legacy.

Dr. Brian Sontag
President, B’nai Israel Synagogue

MEN'S CLUB MESSAGE

Shalom to everyone!

Let's start off by saying that the veteran's day dinner turned out great! We had terrific teamwork and a good time was had by all.

The national anthem was sung beautifully by Lindsey Allen and the Baruch (Kiddush) over the wine and bread was done by Rebecca Kauffman. Our guest speaker was MAJ David Allen (US Army); he was wonderful and very inspiring. I would like to say thanks to the setup crew, Gerry Gordon, Barry Ripps, Lori Ripps, Bill Allen, Al Shemaria, Scott Rickoff, and Charles. I would also like to thank Gerry Goldstein and Bill Allen for preparing the food. (Also, the hard working ladies Bill Allen hired). The food was great as usual. I would like to thank Jason Rubin for the outstanding job that he did on the flyer and the brochures. The one person whose name you will see throughout this message is that of Bill Allen. I would like to thank him for his tireless work on the veteran's day dinner. He did all the shopping, most of the cooking, setting up, hiring the staff, and making desert. Bill, we really appreciate everything you do for the Men's Club. If anyone has not paid the requested fees, please send your check to Bill Allen immediately.

The Men's Club is always looking for volunteers for the different programs we have, so if you want to help please email me: ashemaria1@gmail.com If you don't have email you can always call me at (850)-341-2158.

Thanks to all, and have a great Hanukkah!

ALAN SHEMARIA, PRESIDENT

ADDENDUM TO MEN'S CLUB MESSAGE (FROM BILL ALLEN)

Our annual Veterans Day Dinner and Service is now history and was well received. The auditorium was decorated in red, white and blue and special white covers were placed on the chairs. This truly added a degree of elegance to the event. A near capacity crowd prevailed and it all started with 10 year old Lindsay Allen, daughter of Maj. David Allen and granddaughter of Bill and Esther Allen, leading in the National Anthem. All veterans in attendance were then recognized for their service to our country. After dinner Major Allen gave an overview in his current capacity as Battalion Commander and the preparation of his battalion for deployment to Afghanistan in the Spring of 2012. The evening concluded with coffee and the famous Pineapple upside down cake. Thanks to my team mates for all their assistance in this important evolution!

SHUL IMPROVEMENTS:

**A new door bell is being installed on the kitchen and auditorium doors. This security measure WILL alert the Rabbi or secretary whenever entrance doors are locked and either is present alone in the office.
(Thank you Bill Allen for overseeing this evolution)**

SISTERHOOD MESSAGE

Sisterhood had a great meeting on Sunday, November 13, 2011. Dawn Dean, a representative of Lia Sophia, was at our meeting showing Lia Sophia jewelry. It is excellent costume jewelry, with a lifetime guarantee. For every jewelry order, she donated a piece of jewelry to the Council on Aging's Senior Mitzvah Project. It is not too late to place orders as you can go to Dawn's website:

<https://sites.liasophia.com/sites/dawndean/catalog-intro>. After clicking the link to this site, just click on any category on the left and it will allow you to place an order and credit goes to the Sisterhood Show after you check out. There is currently a sale: Buy 2 items at regular price and the next up to 4 items are half off. The two most inexpensive items are always the regular price items.

Also at the meeting, Debra Simms agreed to take on the task of running the Gift Shop. Sisterhood is indeed very grateful! The Gift Shop will open regularly on Sunday mornings once Yachad School moves to B'Nai Israel in January. Thank you, thank you Debra!

Becky Gerson, the Rabbi's wife, and Shannon Rubin have volunteered to be programming chairs – so look forward to some exciting ideas for meetings and get togethers! In addition, plans are being made for the Sisterhood Shabbat, Hamentashen Fundraiser, and the Torah Fund Luncheon. Look forward to calls asking you to be on these committees from the committee chairs.



This year's Torah Pins are incredibly beautiful, as shown to the left. This year's theme is: **Hiddur Mitzvah**. The concept of hiddur mitzvah – beautifying or embellishing a mitzvah – is considered by many to be the inspiration for Jewish aesthetics. One possible source for the mitzvah derives from a verse in the Song of the Sea: “This is my God and I will glorify Him” (Exodus 15:2). With adornment, sacred objects become more precious.

This year's Torah Fund theme is one that particularly resonates with women who have always been involved in Jewish artistic activities. Whether in the stitching guilds in 16th-century Venetian synagogues or needlepoint crafters in 20th-century women's groups, women are committed to this most ancient of Jewish values.

The pomegranate imagery of the 5772 Torah Fund pin has a multi-layered meaning. Pomegranates (rimmonim) are associated with the land of Israel as one of its bountiful fruits, and rimmonim is also the term for the finial adornments on the atzei chayyim, or staves, of a Torah scroll. Look forward to more information on Torah fund! Hoping all of you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and wishing all of you a very Happy Hanukkah and looking forward to a great year for Sisterhood in 2012!

**ROSEMARY LIEBERMAN AND MARCI SHEMARIA,
SISTERHOOD CO-PRESIDENTS**

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL NEWS

Hanukkah is the Hebrew word for “dedication,” and the celebration of Hanukkah is often called the Festival of Dedication. It is an exciting holiday, with special foods, songs, games and gift giving. Hanukkah is a joyful time that is not meant to interrupt work or other parts of life. It is a holiday that mainly focuses on celebration rather than religious prayer. It is a time for people to come together to have a good time and to retell the Hanukkah story. This year, Hanukkah starts on December 20 and ends on December 28. Since it falls during winter break for most families, we will have time to slow down a little and truly enjoy time together and the Festival of Lights.

Yachad will perform the play “Greeced” on December 11 at 11:00 am at Temple Beth El. I hope

everyone will attend this fun musical and listen to our version of a Hanukkah story this year. After the show, we will have lunch and latkes! You will not want to miss the latkes lovingly fried by our Men’s Club and the Temple Beth El Brotherhood. It should be a fun day and a terrific way to gear up for Hanukkah. I will see you there!

Mark Your Calendars...

December 4 Religious School 9 AM
December 7 Hebrew 4-6 pm
December 11 Religious School 9 AM
Greeced 11 AM
December 14 Hebrew 4-6 PM
December 18 No School Winter
Break
December 25 No School Winter
Break
January 8 Back to School at
B’Nai Israel

PEARL HARBOR INITIATIVE!

Six Pearl Harbor survivors and their caretakers will be going to Hawaii to visit the site of the USS Arizona and participate in the commemorative ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack. They will leave on December 4th, 2011 and return on December 10th. Contributors are needed to help defray travel costs for these individuals. Please use website pearlharborinitiative.com to help move this program along or phone Billie and Robert Nicholson at 850-433-4087 to donate. This will be one last goodbye!



Can you believe that Hadassah is celebrating its 100 birthday?

HADASSAH, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, was founded in 1912 by an American woman named Henrietta Szold. Since its inception, Hadassah has not wavered in its devotion to Judaism, Zionism, and American ideals. Its success stories are legendary and remarkable.

As the largest volunteer organization and the largest women's organization in America, Hadassah is committed to strengthening the unity of the Jewish people. In Israel, we accomplish this through progressive healthcare, education, youth institutions, volunteerism, and land reclamation. In the U.S. we reach our goals through Jewish and Zionist education programs, Zionist Youth programs, and health awareness programs, as well as by advocating for issues of importance to women and to the American Jewish community.

In honor of the Centennial Celebration, Life memberships are available for just \$100 (regularly \$360) until December 31, 2011. Go to Hadassah.org for more information and an application for membership. This could be a perfect gift for yourself or a special person in your life (daughter, granddaughter, friend, and mentor). We know you will not want to miss out on the Centennial bargain!

In February or March, representatives from the Southern Region of Hadassah plan to visit our area to throw a 100th Birthday party and conduct a program to bring us up to date on Hadassah's good works. They do not wish to compete with any other organization here, but want to bring information to the 50 life and associate members who live in the vicinity. The entire community will be invited to attend. We'll keep you posted on the event.

Pat Braunstien, past Southern Region Area Vice President

FINAL NOTICE TO ALL CONGREGANTS!

PJ LIBRARY CELEBRATES HANUKKAH!!

Don't miss this special event!! PJ Library will be celebrating Hanukkah a little early at Barnes and Nobles on Sat. Dec. 10th at 5:30 p.m. We will share a story ,do a craft and visit with friends as we talk about our special holiday. Please join us in the children's area. Also, if you could let me know if you are coming it would be helpful to make sure we have enough for everyone. Contact me, Deborah

Buchalter at 525-6657 or DebRBuch@aol.com.

Happy Hanukkah everyone, hope to see you there!!!

DONATIONS

A special thank you to Faye & Joe Rosenbaum for their generous donation.

Thank you to Michael Bubis for his generous donation in honor of Faye & Joe Rosenbaum.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

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In Memory of: Jan Lefkowitz, Nettie Busch, Mrs.Haller-Richard Haller's Mother, by Faye & Scott Rickoff

In Memory of: Jan Lefkowitz by Frances E. Singerman

DEEPEST GRATITUDE TO THE CONGREGANTS OF B'NAI ISRAEL!
My family joins me in thanking all of you for your calls and cards concerning our recent loss. We do appreciate your thoughtfulness very much! CARLA WILLENZIK

YAHRTZEITS

	<u>Kislev</u>	<u>November/ December</u>
1 st	Ellen Mary Hanreck	Nov. 27 th
	Fannie Bernstein	Nov. 27 th
	Marc J. Aaronson	Nov. 27 th
2 nd	Walter Gibian	Nov. 28 th
3 rd	David J. Rosenberg	Nov. 29 th
	Celia S. Yesnes	Nov. 29 th
6 th	Harry Lefkowitz	Dec. 2 nd
7 th	Burton Simons	Dec. 3 rd
9 th	Isidore Feigenbaum	Dec. 5 th
	Seymour Rothman	Dec. 5 th
	Natalie Ann Davis	Dec. 5 th
	Charles Kapner	Dec. 5 th
10 th	Rebecca Ruth Silverman	Dec. 6 th
	Harold Yesnes	Dec. 6 th
	Freda Stone	Dec. 6 th
	Betty Weiss	Dec. 6 th
	Max Levin	Dec. 9 th
13 th	E. Greenblatt	Dec. 9 th
14 th	Bailey Goldfarb	Dec. 10 th
15 th	Harry Abrams	Dec. 11 th
	Edward Chorney	Dec. 11 th

YAHRTZEITS (CONTINUED)

17 th	Arthur Braver	Dec. 13 th
18 th	Leah Greenburg	Dec. 14 th
19 th	Clara Goldstein	Dec. 15 th
20 th	Paul Sloan Cohane	Dec. 16 th
	Paul Bochner	Dec. 16 th
21 st	Sidney Kaiman	Dec. 17 th
	Harry Rickoff	Dec. 17 th
	Pearl Eskin	Dec. 17 th
23 rd	Max Gelfand	Dec. 19 th
	Dr. Maris Slavin	Dec. 19 th
24 th	Ida Levine	Dec. 20 th
	Sarah Pearlman Maybloom	Dec. 20 th
26 th	Jennie Goldman	Dec. 22 nd
28 th	Joyce Levin	Dec. 24 th
29 th	Ethel Cohen	Dec. 25 th
30 th	Maymie Silverman	Dec. 26 th

GET WELL WISHES TO OUR CONGREGATIONAL FAMILY!

- 1. JEAN GORDON**
- 2. NORMAN ROBERTS**
- 3. CARLA WILLENZIK**

December Birthdays

2nd Leah Annie Davies
Avi Baurberg

3rd Janet Himan
Rebecca Elisha Marie Davies

8th Joel Beck

10th Dee Shemaria

12th Evelyn Goodman

13th Alexander Charcas

14th Doreen Swartz
Morris Davies

15th Betty Davies
Esther Allen

19th Gene Rosenbaum

20th Jami Alise Harris

22nd Diane Lefkowitz
Philip Isaac Shemaria

24th Robert Lefkowitz

29th Azean Robinette

30th Daniel Zirkin

December Anniversaries

6th Frank & Joan Kay

7th Nathan & Myra Kahn

26th Joel & Jacqueline Beck

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December 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 6pm Family Shabbat 7pm services	3 9:30am Services
4 Religious School 9am	5	6	7 No Hebrew School Hanukkah Play Practice	8 Yahrzeit Soloman Schechter	9 7pm Services	10 9:30am Services
11 9am Religious School Yachad Hanukkah Play & Party	12	13 Board Meeting 5:30	14 Hebrew School	15	16 7pm Services	17 9:30am Services 6:30 pm Havdallah Havurah Jason & Shannon Rubin's Home
18	19	20 First Hanukkah Candle	21 First Day Hanukkah Second Hanukkah Candle	22 Third Hanukkah Candle	23 Fourth Hanukkah Candle	24 9:30 am Services Fifth Hanukkah Candle
25 Sixth Hanukkah Candle	26 Rosh Hodesh Tevet- Seventh Hanukkah Candle	27 Rosh Hodesh Tevet -Eighth Hanukkah Candle	28 Eighth Day Hanukkah No Hebrew School	29	30 7pm Services	3 1 9:30 am Services

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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Jordan Gerson, Rabbi

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Vice-President... Sam Bearman
Secretary..... Vikki Goldstein
Treasurer..... Jerry Gordon

Immediate Past President
Marci Goodman



Visit us at: bnaiisraelpensacola.org



Men’s Club Pres. Alan Shemaria
Sisterhood Pres. Marci Shemaria & Rosemary Lieberman
USY President: Pending

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B’Nai Israel Synagogue, P.O. Box 9002,
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Religious School: Melissa Sontag
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- General Fund Library Fund
- Harry Fish Memorial Fund
- Abe Levin Memorial Fund

- Religious School Fund
- Youth Scholarship Fund
- L’Dor V’Dor Fund
- Prayer Book Fund
- Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund

Sisterhood Donations

Please make checks
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Mail to: B’Nai Israel
1829 N. 9th Avenue
Pensacola, FL 32513

Men’s Club Donations

Mail to:
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4701 Shell Road
Milton, FL 32583

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