



The Menorah

Inside This Issue*

Shabbaton April 8-9	3
New Members	4
Purim Carnival Photos	5
TI Centennial	6
Sela Charter School	6
Environmental Webinar	7
Israel Comm. Brunch	7
Abramowitz Fund	7
Nayes un Mekhayes	8
Megillah Photos	9
Gevarim	10
Finding/Hosting Seder	10
Wear a Hat to Shul Day	10
Kol Nashim	11
KN Book Club	11
SHALEM Programs	11
Passover Schedule	12
April Highlights	13
TI Trip to Israel	13
Song Against Demons	14
Friday Night Minyan Assignments	15
Donations	16

* On-line readers can move directly to any page by clicking on the desired article title.



Notes from the Rabbi: Ethan Seidel The Banner Issue

A few months ago (*Parashat Yitro*, January 30) I gave a *drash* on Shabbat morning exhorting our community to action on behalf of our Muslim fellow-Americans. In particular, I felt we should consider putting up a banner outside the shul protesting anti-Muslim bigotry. In the months following I have heard from many on both sides of the issue, and we've had a congregation-wide survey. I wanted to use my column this month to tell you where the issue now stands.

It turns out, many in our community are opposed to such a banner, whatever it might say. Roughly 20% of those who filled out the survey, and about the same percentage who spoke to me privately, had serious objections. I think this is too large a portion of the community for us to display a banner that would (explicitly or implicitly)

claim that we, as a whole, held a particular view.

Therefore, I proposed to the board, and then in a more recent *drash* (on Shabbat Zachor, March 19), two alternative plans of action:

- Twinning with a local mosque, as we have done in years past. I have been in contact with the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding (who helped us

(Continued on page 2)



President's Column: John List Moons, Community and Tikkun Olam

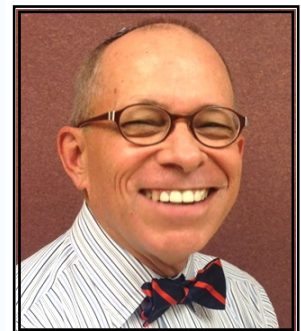
Thinking about the special New Moon of Nisan fast upon us, I began to appreciate that being a part of the TI community has given me the opportunity to discover my own special way toward spiritual growth and *tikkun olam* and to share some of that with others in the community. In my case, one of my small contributions to TI has been through organizing and participating in the Full Moon Hikes.

A few years ago, I asked Andrew Reamer if I could use Gevarim as a "sponsor" for organizing these hikes and add them to the TI Catalogue of activities. As you know from TI's calendar, his answer was yes and the hikes have grown in popularity with the publicity.

True, milder temperatures and drier weather bring out more hikers. However, even "iffy" weather has at least a few of us out there enjoying nature, the community of hikers and, of course, the chocolate treats.

I do hike with family and friends often. However, there is something special about a TI organized event that has the

(Continued on page 3)



Notes from the Rabbi (continued)

twin in years past), and a likely mosque has been approached. I'm waiting to hear if it's a match. I'm guessing that there will not be near as much resistance to twinning as there was to the banner. Also, I think we will have a chance to make personal connections that will be important both to our understanding of American Muslims, and their understanding of American Jews.

- I will try to write a letter to the *Washington Post* and/or the *Washington Jewish Week* protesting the anti-Muslim bigotry of the leading Republican Presidential candidates. Such a letter would not in any way imply the approval of our congregation. I'd hoped to get some Rabbis to sign on.

Now, some are concerned, understandably, that I have allowed a small minority to derail my initial idea. Have

we, in nixing the banner, set a precedent that without virtual unanimity nothing can be done at TI? I think not. The banner was a special case, both because it would have been presenting a false claim of unanimity, and also because it would force those against the banner to confront it each time they walked into shul. Though there may be some who object to the alternative two actions I suggest above, neither action would implicitly include those opposed to it.

I would also like to take a moment here to respond to several objections to the banner that were mentioned many times in the survey:

"When we see a mosque in the US posting a banner condemning Muslim (or any) anti-Semitism I'd consider posting a banner condemning anti-Muslim bigotry." I acknowledge that the Muslim world does not have a great track record when it comes to advocating for oppressed non-Muslims. But I don't think we need to wait for another group to make the first move when it comes to bridging cultural gaps.

I see this as analogous to personal interactions: when I am looking to heal a fracture between myself and another, I find it is often best to initiate an apology, even if I think the other is more – even much more -- culpable. My own experience is that the other often responds to such an initiative with their own apology. And what's more, if I do *not* initiate, often nothing happens. So too in this situation: better to swallow our indignation, and in so doing, bring peace between God's creatures.

"I support the fight against ALL religious bigotry. But I refuse to emphasize the fight against anti-Muslim bigotry. Anti-Semitism is globally as prevalent as anti-Muslim bigotry. Why would a synagogue single out anti-Muslim issues without making any statement regarding the persecution of our own?" We have a whole industry in America that fights anti-Semitism. And that's good. But it's way more powerful to protest unfair treatment to a group that is not your own, than to protest your own unfair treatment – the latter can seem like whining to those who are not part of your group.

Yes, anti-Jewish acts seem more prevalent right now in America than anti-Muslim acts. But I wonder if, as with anti-black racism, there are undercurrents not so likely to be picked up on a list of hate crimes, for instance, job discrimination for those with recognizably Muslim names.

I've written enough. Let's talk! On some of these issues, we may have to agree to disagree. But I'm sure we will be strengthened by the continued conversation as we move forward.

Rabbi Seidel

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President's Column (continued)

opportunity to enrich an experience for me.

To me the full moon is one of the markers in our religious calendar which I appreciate as opportunities to give thanks, express joy, and focus more closely on the world around me. I have enjoyed sharing this spiritual experience with others. For me, appreciation and thanks lead to a desire for action and a search for how I can participate in *tikkun olam*.

This special month with its unique obligations to prepare for Pesah highlights some of the many ways others in the TI community have organized activities in which I and the entire community can participate in *tikkun olam* together. Once Nisan begins, as a community we collect *ma'oz hittin* intended to help the poor buy matzah, and by extension help them meet other needs.

At TI we have volunteers who organize and manage our role in the

area-wide distribution of Pesah food packages. We also have volunteers who set up and publicize our monthly *tzedakah* projects in the Juniper Street lobby. At this time, we are collecting clothing for the less fortunate. In addition, the sale of *hametz* to the Rabbi gives us the opportunity to make donations that are used to help others.

These are occasions for joining together in *tikkun olam* for the "freedom" of others as we prepare for and then celebrate our freedom from bondage on the special Full Moon of the first seder.

Tot Shabbat Schedule

11:10 a.m.

April 16

May 21

June 18

Mark your calendar today!

Shabbaton, Tzedakah Dinner April 8-9

While the major focus in April is on the celebration of Pesah, which comes in the last week of the month, a big weekend is planned for April 8 and 9.

USY will hold its annual Tzedakah Dinner on **Friday night, April 8**, and a full-day in-house Shabbaton (which also includes a dinner) begins **Friday night, April 8** and ends **Saturday night, April 9**.

USY's Tzedakah Dinner is at 6:30 p.m., following Kabbalat Shabbat services. Take the night off and let TI's teens serve you dinner! Call the office or go to the TI website (or direct links in the weekly newsletter) to sign up.

All tips and pledges that evening go to USY's Tikkun Olam Tzedakah Fund. USY'ers and other volunteers will prepare food for the dinner **Wednesday evening, April 6**, at 6:30 p.m.

On **Thursday, April 7**, at 7 p.m., volunteers are needed to cook for the monthly Birthday/Anniversary Kid-dush, scheduled for **April 9**, the day of the Shabbaton.

The Shabbaton is entitled "A Celebration of Freedom," asking What Does Freedom Mean to You? The program will feature a number of speakers at four different sessions.

Our distinguished TI faculty includes Stan Dorn, Rabbi Chuck Feinberg, Lynn Golub-Rofrano, Eitan Gutin, Iris Lav, Ari Ne'eman, Joelle Novey, Rabbi Ethan Seidel and Allan Tulchin.

The opening talk will be at 8:30 p.m. on Friday evening, following the Tzedakah Dinner. Other sessions are scheduled for 2 and 4 p.m. on Saturday afternoon (following Rabbi Seidel's Talmud class at 1 p.m.), and for 7 p.m. Saturday evening.

The Saturday program concludes with Minhah services at 5 p.m., a dinner at 6 p.m., and Ma'ariv services and *Havdallah* at 8 p.m. Special children's activities will run simultaneously with the adult programs.

Come for the whole day of stimulating intellectual and spiritual activities.

Sign up now!

Juniper St. Collection

Tifereth Israel is now collecting **nonperishable food** for the **Manna Food Center**.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- canned fruits and vegetables
- peanut butter, nuts
- dried beans and lentils
- pasta and sauce
- low-sugar cereals
- brown rice and other whole grains

No items may be opened or past their expiration date.

Collection ends **Sunday, April 20**.

New Members

Jared Garelick

Ari Ne'eman and Ruti Regan

Ari, an East Brunswick, New Jersey native, has lived in Silver Spring for the last several years. Continuing a career in public policy within the disability rights movement, he is the President and co-founder of the Autistic Self Advocacy Network, an advocacy organization run by and for autistic adults seeking to increase the representation of autistic people across society.

Ruti, originally from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is a fourth-year rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary. She also runs Anachnu, a non-profit organization she founded to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Jewish life. Ruti found her way to rabbinical school after setting out to study science but was drawn into Jewish studies and Jewish history.

Recognizing their common interests, Ari and Ruti were introduced by mutual friends. They found TI after Ruti did some searching for a conservative synagogue near Ari. In addition to public policy, Ari is a big superhero fan. Ruti likes Jewish liturgy, and is sharing her learning by teaching Ari some Talmud.

Debbie Quint Shelef and Noam Shelef

Debbie and Noam have lived in Washington for many years after coming to the area as students. Debbie, originally from the Boston area, works in clinical programs devoted to asthma care and asthma disparities at Children's National Health System. She has a Master's degree in public health from Johns Hopkins University.



Noam, who grew up in Israel until he was eight and then in Florida, has pursued a career dedicated to advancing Israel peace and progressive politics. He is Director of Digital Strategies for the New Israel Fund. He first came to Washington to study at the George Washington University.

Debbie and Noam have two children, **Eitan**, who is about to turn six, and **Maya**, who is two. The family, living in Takoma Park, came to TI for the past few years for High Holiday services. On their first visit, Debbie was pleased to run into TI Director of Lifelong Learning Eitan Gutin, whom she first met on a youth trip to Israel a few decades earlier. The family was seeking a synagogue with a good Hebrew school for their children and found it in TI.

Welcome to this month's featured new members!

Funeral Practices Committee **Always On-Call**

Haverim of the Funeral Practices Committee are on call to provide counsel and services to synagogue members and their dependents.

In the event of a death, prior to contacting the funeral home, please contact one of the following haverim, Rabbi Seidel, or the TI office (202-882-1605).

Shelly Heller h: 301-942-1836
w: 202-242-6698

David Cohen h: 301-652-2872

Marcia Goggin h: 301-593-8480
w: 301-754-1963

Bruce Heppen h: 301-299-3255
c: 202-997-1890
w: 703-417-8983

Ann Kline h: 301-946-2693
c: 301-346-9862

Robert Rovinsky h: 202 237 1036
c: 202 815 8707

Purim Carnival, March 20 (photos by Jeff Peterman)



TI Centennial, 1916–2016

Cynthia Peterman

In my March column I wrote that Tifereth Israel's early history is emerging from the documents in the TI archive. Invaluable among these is the translation of our 1916-1918 Yiddish board meeting minutes. This translation was funded by a grant we received from the DC Preservation League.

Thanks to Diana Zurer and Sarah Shapiro, we have a complete translation of the records our founders left behind. In addition, research at the Washingtoniana collection of the DC Public Library and at the Historical Society of Washington, DC, has helped to piece together the events of 1916-1921. Here is what we know.

When a group of Jewish immigrants met in 1916 to found a congregation, they came from remarkably similar backgrounds. Most had immigrated to the US in the early years of the 20th century, were tailors, grocers and shopkeepers, and lived in the Mt. Pleasant/Columbia Heights area, quite a distance from the Jewish congregations on the I Street corridor.

They shared an interest in educating their children, and they quickly went about the task of identifying a worship site with room for a *cheder* (religious school). In October, 1916, they held a meeting to form a congregation under the name "Tiferes Israel or Mt. Pleasant congregation." They named officers, set a schedule of meetings, and charged dues of \$.25/month, putting the money aside until they were able to purchase a *sefer torah*.

The men who held these early meetings were: Benjamin Dinkin (elected president); Abraham Bleicher (vice president); Louis Mentsh (treasurer); and Samuel Goodman, Samuel Rod, and Frank Langsam (trustees).

The first meetings took place in members' homes, initially at the home of Louis Mentsh. Large gatherings such as holiday services took place in rented halls, including above the United States Savings Bank at 14th and U Streets, NW.

By 1918 they had grown large enough to purchase their first



building, the former Gunton Temple Memorial Presbyterian Church building at 14th and R Streets, NW., where they stayed for three years.

In 1921 the *Washington Times* reported that Tifereth Israel, "better known as the Fourteenth Street Congregation," had purchased the former home of Supreme Court Justice John Marshall Harlan at 1401 Euclid St., NW.

Adding an extension onto the building, the *Times* reported, enabled the congregation of 150 (male) members to accommodate up to 600 people. TI would stay at this location for 35 years.

Constitution of Tifereth Israel Congregation

Sela: Hebrew Charter School

Dan Liebman

Come to an open house on **April 3**, 2:00-4:00 p.m., to learn about Sela Public Charter School from current parents, a current board member, and a school founder!

The meeting will be held at the home of **Dan Liebman** and **Lis Davis** (both sons, 2nd grade and Pre-K, are at Sela and older son is in Kitah Bet at Himmelfarb). Ask questions, hear first-hand from a parent of a child at Sela this year, and find out if Sela is right for your family.

Sela is a Hebrew-language charter school founded on five pillars:

academic excellence, diversity, language immersion, innovation and 21st century skills. We also have a robust STEM program, one-to-one iPads for students, and small class sizes.

For the fall of 2016, Sela plans to offer Pre K through third grade and the enrollment process is already underway!

Rsvp at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1mXvVGJ1n_aX04Z0OPRo4_hxsQdZWcJCSvvqQfzTdl_yg/viewform?c=0&w=1. More information on Sela can be found at www.selapcs.org.



Environmental Committee Hosting Webinar

Devorah (Diana) Lynn

You may have seen a few of us bent over the TI rain garden recently, cutting back last year's growth gone brown. Spring is here and we look forward to seeing an even more beautiful bloom than last year from the rain garden flanking the Juniper Street entrance.

I was amazed at how quickly our plants filled in the space. The plantings not only look beautiful, but catch water runoff from downpours and roof gutters, and, with the stone drainage, prevent water from transporting oils and chemicals from the alleyway and sending them into the storm drains and off to the Potomac and Chesapeake watershed.

As part of our mandate from DC's generous RiverSmart program grant the TI Environmental Committee is planning a webinar entitled "Gathering the Waters: How Your Congregation Can Help Restore the

Bay." Our goal is to reach out to leaders from DC houses of worship of all faiths and show them how they too can green their landscapes, make them friendly to wildlife, and reduce storm-water runoff.

We will partner with The Anacostia Watershed Society, Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake, Interfaith Power and Light and the District Department of the Environment to present our experience with the TI rain garden, outline steps to plan projects at other congregations, and answer questions to help community leaders get started.

Houses of worship can make the connection for their members between sacred teachings, *tikkun olam*, and the current climate crisis. We hope the TI garden project is like a stone thrown in a lake that ripples out from the center. Just imagine if every DC congregation adopts a

green project, funded by city grants. They can inspire their members by example to implement green landscaping at home. A groundswell (pun intended) of this magnitude could help make former Mayor Grey's goal of making DC the greenest city in America a reality.

Abramowitz Fund

The Rabbi A. Nathan Abramowitz Fund was established in 1980 to celebrate the Rabbi's 20 years of service to TI and was enlarged in 1996 when Rabbi Abramowitz completed 36 years of service. The Fund depends on your support and welcomes contributions in any amount.

Part of the Fund's mission is to honor youth who spend their summer or part of a school year in a program to enhance their Jewish education. To qualify, the youngster may attend a camp recognized for its Jewish educational component (such as Camp Ramah, Capital Camps, and Moshava), participate in an educational program in Israel (such as USY Pilgrimage or Ramah Seminar), or take part in a United Synagogue Youth Wheels Trip.

Awards are made each spring. Applications for 2016 are due by **Friday, April 15**. If you have a child participating in one of these programs, please fill out the online form at <http://tinyurl.com/2016ANA>. The Fund also awards scholarships based on financial need to facilitate participation in qualifying programs. Families who would like information about scholarships should contact Rabbi Abramowitz.

An additional application is required for the scholarship program. All such applications and inquiries are kept strictly confidential. To apply for the award program, please print the online form at <http://tinyurl.com/2016ANA> Scholar and return it to the TI office.

Israel Committee Brunch Discussion

On **Sunday, April 17**, at 10 a.m., the TI Israel Committee will hold its inaugural event: a brunch and discussion with **Dr. Rafi Danziger**, "Israel and its Relationships with its Muslim Neighbors: Syria, Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia." Dr. Danziger is the Director of Research and Information for AIPAC, and is the editor of AIPAC's biweekly newsletter, *Near East Report*. During the 1980s he was a foreign policy analyst at the American Jewish Congress.

Previously, he taught modern Middle Eastern history at the University of Haifa in Israel, and at the University of Washington in Seattle. He also was a visiting fellow at Princeton University and a consultant on Middle Eastern affairs at the Hudson Institute. Dr. Danziger holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies from

Princeton, an M.A. from the University of Washington, and a B.A. from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has published a book and many articles on the Middle East and North Africa, and his op-eds have appeared in the *New York Times* and other leading newspapers. He has lectured extensively on the Middle East, and was interviewed on the PBS *NewsHour* and other news programs.

There will be no charge for the brunch discussion, but contributions towards the cost of the food will be greatly appreciated. Please sign up for the event online at <https://tiferethdc.shulcloud.com/israel2016>.

If you are interested in joining the TI Israel Committee or have any questions about this event, please contact **Ray Natter** at rntr@verizon.net.

Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers

Barbara Raimondo

Walkin' the Walk

Rodney Brooks, former band leader of Shir Delite, has taken on a new project. On May 13, 14, and 15, he will be directing a concert for the Fun and Fancy theater group at Leisure World, titled "A Walk on Jewish Broadway." It will come as no surprise that 67% of all Tony Awards for musicals were given to Jewish composers and lyricists.

The performances will feature 24 voices performing songs that we know and love, accompanied by a four-piece band made up of former members of Shir Delite, including virtuoso violinist Vladimir Gamarnik.

The concert will include two of Rodney's special medleys: "A Tribute to Jewish Broadway" and "Fiddler and His Roots," which shows how the music of *Fiddler on the Roof* was inspired by traditional Jewish music. Tickets for "A Walk on Jewish Broadway" are \$10 each. To order tickets contact Rodney at 301-598-3534 or e-mail karod@brooks2.com.

Rodney is also pleased to report that his book *Fields of Color; the Theory That Escaped Einstein* has received 74 five-star reviews on amazon.com, and 8000 copies have been sold. Not bad for a book on quantum field theory!

Stoppin' to Gawk

Laurie and **Bruce Berger** are delighted to announce the birth of their first grandchild, **Cole Ronin Haim**, on March 5. Mom, **Jean**, and Dad, **Eyal**, are holding up and the baby is doing fine.

In other daughter news, **Carl Bergman** and **Margie Odle** are excited to announce that their progeny, **Hannah**, will be completing her PhD in clinical psychology at Case Western Reserve University, with her clinical internship placement

at the VA hospital in Seattle, Washington. She and her husband, **Mitch Hergett**, will be moving to Seattle this summer.

Claudine Schweber has been elected Chair of the Emergency Preparedness Committee in Takoma Park, MD. She's very excited to now embark on her fourth, count it, fourth career. (Previous three were butcher, baker, candle stick maker.)

This fits with her recent training by the Montgomery County Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), where she learned about safety, CPR, how to tie bandages properly, 100 uses for baking soda, and more. Now when she walks into a building she's not ignoring you, she's just checking to make sure the exits aren't blocked.

Droppin' the Chalk

Following two years of volunteering at the National Archives in College Park, **Cynthia Peterman** has been named an Education Fellow. She is responsible for helping to develop teacher institutes on the theme of National History Day, as well as activities that use archival materials for posting on the Archives' DocsTeach website. She's also had an article, on an interesting event in 1940's China, accepted for publication in *Prologue*, the National Archives' magazine.

Runner extraordinaire **Alan Landay** did the Shamrock Half-Marathon in Virginia Beach a few weeks ago. Sounds like he needed a little luck, what with 15 mph gusts of wind, rain, and low temps. But he got a strong tail-wind for the last half mile and ended up running a negative split. Oh come on, everyone knows what that is! It's when you run the second half of the race faster than the first! Runners think it's just plain dreamy when that happens.

Three weeks ago Alan went on a ski trip, a rainy one, to Lake Placid, NY with Columbia Ski Club. He skied in the morning, despite the fact that many years ago he swore he would never again ski in the rain. He went in for lunch and for some reason never made it back out. He had some wine and beer instead, aptly illustrating the old adage "When the going gets tough the tough kick off their ski boots and order a brewski." Sounds like good advice.

Sad News

Howard Bram, father of TI member **Larry (Lise) Bram** and grandfather of **Sarah**, died in March. He was 90. The funeral was in Ohio.

Harriet Brooks, mother of TI member **Renana Brooks (Robert Rovinsky)** and grandfather of **Neshama** and **Neilah**, died in March after a short illness. She was 93.

And **Sheila Leifer**, wife of TI member **Elihu Leifer**, mother of **Eric Leifer (Valerie Ezrin)**, **Joshua Leifer (Liz Brenner-Leifer)**, and **Andrea (Harry) Travis**, and grandmother of **Mimi, Matthew, Sasha, and Rebecca**, passed away after a short illness.

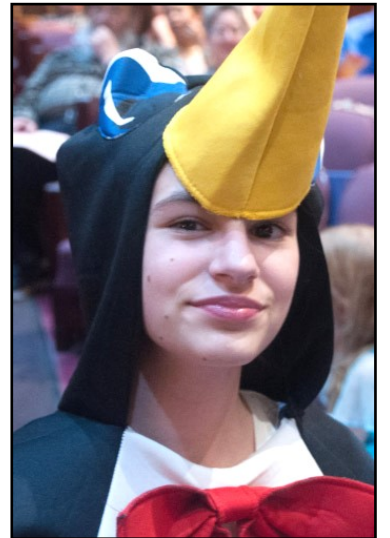
May family and loved ones find strength in their memories.

And now for the meaning of last month's word, *posse*: "a large group often with a common interest" (Merriam-Webster Online).

Thanks to all who sent me news, sent me to others who sent me news, or otherwise helped sniff it out. Use your eidetic memory to send items for next time to baraimondo@gmail.com, with "Nayes un Mekhayes" in the heading, or to P.O. Box 466, Washington Grove, MD 20880.

This brings to a close this edition of Nayes un Mekhayes for TI'ers.

Megillah Reading, March 23 (photos by Oren and Julie Steinberg)



Gevarim

Andrew Reamer

גברים

Sunday Brunch: Food for Thought

April 10. "Planning for the Long Run," a conversation with TI members **Morris Klein** and **Howard Gleckman** on estate planning and long-term care insurance.

May 22. "The Evolution of Ghetto: From Venice to Warsaw and DC," with Professor **Daniel Schwartz**, Department of Judaic Studies, George Washington University.

June 5. "Who Do We Think We Are?: Revising Federal Categories for Race, Ethnicity, and Gender," with **Jennifer Park** and **Nora Wiseman**, Office of Management and Budget, White House.

Cost is \$10 for Gevarim and Kol Nashim members, \$12 for others.

Movie Nite@TI

Through May, Movie Nite@TI continues to present "Nazis, Jews, and Hollywood: The Early 1940s."

April 10. *Casablanca* (1942, 102 mins). An American expatriate (Humphrey Bogart) must choose between his love for a woman (Ingrid Bergman) and helping her Czech

resistance leader husband (Paul Henreid) escape the Vichy-controlled French Moroccan city of Casablanca to continue his fight against the Nazis. [*Casablanca* has only three U.S.-born actors--can you name them?]

May 8. *Hangmen Also Die!* (1943, 134 mins). A noir war film directed by Fritz Lang and based on a story by Bertolt Brecht and Lang. The film is loosely based on the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, the Nazi Reich Protector of German-occupied Prague, number-two man in the SS, and a chief architect of the Holocaust, who was known as "The Hangman of Prague."

Each movie is free, at 7:30 p.m. Nosh is \$4.

Shabbat Talmud Study

Tractate *Brakhot* is the first tractate of the Talmud, and also one of the most accessible. In addition to the normal talmudic discussions of *halakhah*, there are also many enchanting stories and fables.

Even if you've never studied Talmud before — especially if you've never studied Talmud before — you might

enjoy dropping in on our ongoing reading of the last chapter of *Brakhot*. We read the text in English (photocopies are provided, although folks are encouraged to buy the book, an English translation published by Koren), and discuss.

Shabbat afternoons, 1:00–1:45 p.m. **April 9, May 7 and 14, June 4 and 25.**

Finding or Hosting a Seder

Will you be alone on Passover and need a seder to go to? Do you have room at your seder for some guests? In either case, please contact Rabbi Seidel, either by phone or email.

Let Rabbi Seidel know:

- For which nights you need a seder or can host additional guests.
- How many people you can host
- Any dietary or other issues which your host or guest(s) should know about.

Wear a Hat to Shul Day

Susan Catler

April 9 will be the Sixth Somewhat Annual Wear a Hat to Shul Day (There will also be a Shabbaton and a Birthday/Anniversary Kiddush).

Why? Wearing a hat is fun and this is a good opportunity for more TI'ers - - both men and women -- to do it. Also, it is Bella Abzug's *yahrzeit*. Whatever you thought of Bella, you had to admire her hats.

So try it. You may like it.



Passover Guide

For guidance on permissible and prohibited foods, and preparations, for Passover, please go to the following Rabbinical Assembly website: <http://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/jewish-law/holidays/pesah/pesah-guide-5776.pdf>

Kol Nashim

Debbie Pomerance



March Presentation

KN's March program, "What is the Meaning of Religious Experience," by University of Maryland professor Maxine Grossman, was a grand success. She addressed our perception of religion -- do we experience religion through spirituality, a cognitive process, or embodiment? Thank you, Maxine, for a masterful talk.

April Class on Passover

Starting **Sunday, April 3**, and ending **Sunday, April 10**, at 10:15 a.m., **Rabbi Avis Miller** will conduct a two-part class, "Being the Wise Child at your Seder." Please join us to learn about the origins of the seder and the text of the *Haggadah*. Come away with tips for creating a lively seder in your home to keep the kids involved and the grown-ups engaged. How

did previous generations celebrate Pesah and what are the parallels to Easter? The cost is \$15 per session for members, \$18 for non-members. Register at <https://tiferethdc.shulcloud.com/seder2016>.

Book Club

The KN Book Club meets on **April 12** at **Cyndy Weitz's** home to discuss *Snow in August* by Pete Hamill. See the article below for details.

KN Book Club

Jessica Weissman

At our March session, the Kol Nashim Book Club discussed *Countrymen*, an account of how the Danes saved nearly their entire Jewish population by smuggling them across the water to Sweden. Most surprising bit of information: the only other nation to save its Jews from the Holocaust was Bulgaria. We agreed that the standard meeting date of April 19 falls too close to the first Seder. Therefore we decided to pick a short book, and move up the date by one week.

So...we meet at the home of **Cyndy** and **Alan Weitz** on **Tuesday, April 12** to read a short novel by Pete Hamill called *Snow in August*. It is about the friendship between an 11-year-old Catholic boy and a lonely rabbi from Prague -- set in working class 1947 Brooklyn, where Jackie Robinson is about to join the Dodgers. Much of the novel concerns how the neighborhood reacts to this friendship.

The book is easily available at the libraries and in paperback. I look forward to seeing lots of you at the meeting. Remember you'll still have nine more days to prepare for Pesah, and a brief visit to 1947 could be just the thing to distract you from kitniot and such.

As always we are looking for more books, especially non-fiction beyond memoir and Holocaust. Not that there's anything wrong with memoirs or reading about the Holocaust. But we could probably fill five years' worth of slots with such books, and variety is good. So if you've got a biography, history, ethnology or anything nonfictional you think would support discussion, please let me know.

Pesah Food Delivery

You can help brighten a family's Pesah by helping us deliver bags of holiday groceries to Jewish seniors, immigrants and others in need in the greater Washington Jewish community as identified by the Jewish Social Service Agency.

TI has participated in this important mitzvah for many years. Packages will be ready for pick up on the steps of the TI Juniper Street entrance from 9 a.m. on **Sunday, April 17**. Contact Larry Baizer at (503) 516-8636 with questions. And please sign up at <http://tinyurl.com/Pesach16DeliverFood>

SHALEM Programs

Jessica Weissman

In March TI's own Ann Kline presented "No Baloney -- Being a Caregiver in the Sandwich Generation." She was a delightful speaker, and helped us to fresh perspectives on how to cope with caregiving, and with receiving care.

April 16. Alan Ronkin, Director, of AJC's Washington Regional Office will deliver a talk on "Challenges to World Jewry." This program was postponed due to the January blizzard, but has become even more timely. Ronkin will discuss anti-Semitism in Europe and challenges to Israel in the international arena. He will include some survey data and thoughts about how European governments can have a positive impact.

May 21. Cynthia Peterman will present "100 Years of TI in 45 Minutes," an overview of just how we got to the centennial we are preparing to celebrate. Bring your questions.

If you would like to present a SHALEM talk, or suggest a speaker or topic, including Jewish history, social issues, scholarship, or the arts, please contact me.

Passover at Tifereth Israel



Passover Announcements

Read all about what one can (or cannot) eat in this year's **TI Rabbinical Guide for Passover** at <http://tinyurl.com/PesachGuide2016>.

Contact Rabbi Seidel at eseidel@tifereth-israel.org as soon as you know that you need or can host a Seder.

If you have **extra unopened boxes of matzah**, please donate them to the TI kitchen. Drop off only unopened boxes of matzah at the TI office by April 26.

Passover Schedule

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Thursday, April 7 | Deadline – Passover Wine Orders
Order kosher-for-Passover wine at https://tiferethdc.shulcloud.com/wine16 . |
| Friday, April 15 | Deadline – Passover Carry-Out Food Orders
Order kosher-for-Passover food prepared in the TI kitchen at https://tiferethdc.shulcloud.com/PassoverFood16 . |
| Sunday, April 17 | 9:00 a.m. Deliver Passover groceries to seniors and others in need.
Sign up at http://tinyurl.com/Pesach16DeliverFood . |
| | 9:00 a.m. Morning Minyan , followed by Sale of Hametz
You can also sell your hametz at https://tiferethdc.shulcloud.com/chametz16 . |
| Friday, April 22 | 7:00 a.m. Service & Siyyum for First Born , followed immediately by final Sale of Hametz (no sales after 9 a.m.) |
| | 6:30 p.m. Shabbat and Holiday Service |
| | 7:35 p.m. Erev Pesah – First Seder (time for candle lighting) |
| Saturday, April 23 | 9:00 a.m. First Day of Passover – Morning Shabbat & Holiday Service , followed by simple Kiddush |
| | Evening Second Seder |
| Sunday, April 24 | 9:00 a.m. Second Day of Passover – Morning Holiday Service , followed by Kiddush luncheon sponsored by Mollie Berch z"l |
| Friday, April 29 | 9:00 a.m. Seventh Day of Passover – Morning Holiday Service , followed by simple Kiddush luncheon |
| | 6:30 p.m. Shabbat & Holiday Service , followed by Passover Dinner
Sign up at https://tiferethdc.shulcloud.com/april2016dinner .
Make your reservation by April 18 |
| Saturday, April 30 | 9:00 a.m. Eighth day of Passover – Morning Shabbat & Holiday Service |
| | 11:00 a.m. Yizkor Service (approximate time), followed by Kiddush luncheon |

April Highlights at Tifereth Israel

April 2	SHALEM: Daniel Vice, "Gun Violence Prevention," 1:15 p.m.
April 3, 10	Two-Session Class on the Seder, Rabbi Avis Miller, 10:15 a.m.
April 4, 11, 18, 25	Monday Lunch & Learn <i>Parashat HaShavuah</i> , 11 a.m.; Lunch, 12 noon
April 8-9	Kabbalat Shabbat Service & USY Tikkun Olam Tzedakah Dinner, Friday, 6:30 p.m.; Freedom Shabbaton, Friday, 8 p.m. through Saturday, 9 p.m. (See details on page 3).
April 10	Gevarim Brunch: "Retirement Planning and Long Term Care Insurance," 10 a.m. Movie Nite, <i>Casablanca</i> , 7:30 p.m.
April 12	KN Book Club, home of Cyndy & Alan Weitz, 7:30 p.m.
April 16	SHALEM: Alan Ronkin, "Challenges to World Jewry 2016," 1:15 p.m.
April 17	Israel Committee Brunch Discussion, "Israel and its Relationships with its Muslim Neighbors," 10 a.m.
April 22-30	Pesah (See detailed schedule, page 12)

TI Trip to Israel

Wylie Levone

In 2007 TI made a trip to Israel. Ehud Olmert was Prime Minister, Shimon Peres had just been chosen as President, Raleb Majadele was the first Israeli Arab Minister, and a social networking project called "Freemap Israel" was formally established as a small start-up company, later to be renamed Waze.

Is today's Israel the same as the Israel of 2007, or of 1187? There's only one way to find out!

The TI Trip to Israel is open to all TI members and their families, all ages and life configurations, first-timers and *vatikim!* We will tailor the timing

and content of the trip to the participants. Led by Rabbi Seidel, the program will be organized from *aleph* to *tav* to learn, grow, experience and enjoy Israel.

See the beaches of Tel Aviv, taste *fela fel* fresh from the *shuk*, see the incredible archaeological discoveries in Jerusalem. Touch history, and be touched by it. *Kadima!*

We will have a no-commitment informational meeting, to answer questions and gauge interest, on **Wednesday, May 18** at 6:30 p.m. Come and learn. As they say in Israel, it couldn't hurt!

Tot Shabbat Leaders

April 16

JT Taransky, set up
Elizabeth Handwerker,
service leader
Ellie Tiemann, storyteller

May 21

Rebecca Damari, service
leader
Sarah Goldberg, storyteller

The Song Against Demons

Simcha Kuritzky

If you arrive early for *shaharit* services on Shabbat or Yom Tov, you will hear Psalm 91, also known as the Song Against Demons. I've heard *sh'lihim tzibur* chant the entire psalm, but at TI we usually just sing the last verse beginning with *Orekh Yamim Asbiyahu* (I will satisfy him with long life). As one might expect from a psalm with that nickname, it contains a number of protective inscriptions that appear on amulets.

One of the most popular printed amulets (see below), often attributed to the Baal Shem Tov -- founder of Hassidism -- himself, shows a bird-headed angel. Above the head is *Eilekha Lo Yigash*, "It will not touch you," which is the end of Psalm 91:7.

A much more common amulet inscription appears in the circle near 5 o'clock *Yohakh Kalakh*, which consists of the last letters of the words in verse 11, "For He will command his angels to guard you in all your ways."



The entire seven words of the verse appear on a common amulet by the Bezalel School of Art, originally under the British Mandate. This piece, which I've found in sterling silver and base metal, dime- or quarter-sized, shows an angel figure with a radiate six-sided star for a head and bird-like wings around the verse.

At bottom is Jerusalem in Hebrew. This is paired with a few reverses, though the most common shows a physical map of the Holy Land with 1930s style auto, ship, and plane.



I also have one with a palm tree and stone buildings above Jerusalem in English.



Another version, which has a different radiant star at top, shows the signs of the 12 Israelite tribes on the reverse.



The auto, ship, and plane design is almost certainly based on Christopher's medals used by Catholics at the time. The medal I show below is probably from the 1930s; it has been updated over the years, and many just show a car.



Influence goes both ways; I recently found an English amulet likely produced by Christians who may have been inspired by the Bezalel design. An anthropomorphic angel on one side and Psalm 91:11 in English on the other.



Going back to Jewish sources, there are traditional amulets with these

inscriptions. The large Persian amulet below, probably 19th Century, has the initial letters (*notarikon*) of the entire psalm starting at the right corner and wrapping around the outside.



The somewhat octagonal Persian amulet on the left below, perhaps a century ago, includes on the third line both the initial and final letters, *K'mil L'vad*, of the words in verse 11. The Persian carnelian amulet on the right, probably mid-20th century, has the initial letters in the center of a circular inscription. Both use the quote-like mark to indicate an abbreviation.



Some more recent Jewish amulets I bought from Israel include the machine-struck piece from Or Hayim in Jerusalem, which says on one side that it is for healing, protection, and prosperity. The other side has the first half of verse 11 at top, and the last letters of those same words in the second line.



A handmade silver amulet which appears recent has a Magen David on one side and Psalm 121:8 "God will guard you going and coming from now forever more." The other side has the first letters of the words of

(Continued on page 15)

Upcoming Friday Night Minyan Assignments

April 15

Judi Berland
 Joe Berman & Marsha Gentner
 Ross & Shira Bettinger
 Dana Beyer
 Matthew Bigman & Kathleen
 Maile Baker
 Jackie Binogol
 Sheri Blonder
 Gideon & Lisa Blumenthal
 Ron & Dina Borzekowski
 Larry & Lise Bram
 Steven & Rachel Bressler
 Sharon Brown
 Stephen Burd & Laura Schiavo
 Harold Burgess & Shoshana
 Eisenberg
 Joel & Alice Burton
 Susan Chapin
 Steven Cheskin & Malia Hale
 Joel Cohen

May 6

Ann Cohen
 David & Judy Cohen
 David & Elana Cohen
 Hal Cohen & Katie Benton-
 Cohen
 Raymond & Rebecca Coleman
 Jeffrey Colman & Ellen
 Nissenbaum
 Bill & Karen Copeland
 Nataliya Chernyak Cowen
 Merry Danaceau
 Jeffrey & Miriam Davidson
 Joe Davidson
 Ronni Davis
 Helen Disenhaus
 Stan Dorn & Carla Ellern
 Earl Dotter & Deborah Stern
 Desirée Douglas
 Lisa Drazin

May 20

Pierre & Deena Dugan
 Ernie Englander
 Rabbi Charles & Krayna
 Feinberg
 Mark Feldman
 Miriam Feinsilver
 Gail & Roger Feldman
 Joshua & Mita Felman
 Bob Feron & Dione Pereira
 Jeff Feuer & Sherry Klein
 Eric Fingerhut & Karen Beiley
 Anna Fink & Alberto Fernandez
 Anita Finkelstein
 Jay & Rachel Finkelstein
 Matthew & Susan Finston
 David & Patricia Fisher
 Paula Flicker
 Judah Flum & Lisa Itkin
 Claude Fontheim & Orit Frenkel
 Lee & Brenda Footer
 Ira Forman & Caryn Pass

The Song Against Demons (continued)

Psalm 91:11 at top and last letters at bottom. Inside are *beit, yud, tet*, three letters based on the beginning of Psalm 91:14, "Because he has set his love upon me, I will save him."



Psalm 91:11 was also engraved on a silver Belgian 5 franc of 1873 I own, along with *Yohakh*.



Another sign of how this psalm was adopted by others are two coins engraved with amulets from the Judeo-Christian magic book *The Key of Solomon*. This medieval book was originally written in Latin by Christians but claimed to be written by King Solomon, and so almost all inscriptions are from the Hebrew Bible. The most common version is based on a 19th century translation by Mathers, who put the descriptions in English but the amulets back in the original Hebrew (or as close as he could get).

The left coin below shows the fifth pentacle of the Sun with Psalm 91:11 and the beginning of 12, "They shall carry you up in their hands," engraved on a 1792 bronze French 2 sols. The coin on the right, an 1833 silver French 5 francs, shows the fifth

pentacle of Mars with a scorpion in the center. Scorpio is ruled by Mars according to astrologers. Psalm 91:13, "You shall tread on the lion and on the adder; the young lion and the crocodile shall you trample under foot," is engraved around.



In our liturgy, Psalm 91 has a humble place buried in the middle of a service that is intended to prepare one for the main service that follows. However, some of its verses have inspired many over the centuries and were used as a protection for them and their loved ones.

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(Continued on page 17)

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