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PURIM PARTY & MEGILLAH READING

Saturday,
March 26
6:30 p.m.



FROM THE RABBI

Shalom,

On Wednesday evening, March 23, Jewish people all over the world will celebrate the holiday of Purim. (Temple Beth Israel's celebration will occur Saturday, March 26.) The reading of the Scroll of Esther is certainly a central feature of the Purim holiday. We all know the story of how the Jews of the ancient Persian Empire were threatened with destruction and how they were saved through the efforts of Mordechai and Esther.

However, as our rabbis have pointed out,

there are a number of troubling questions that need to be addressed.

One, Mordechai is described as a strongly identified Jew, yet he asks Esther to conceal her Jewishness when going to the king's palace. Why?

Two, why did Esther agree to marry a non-Jewish king?

Three, why didn't anyone in the king's employ recognize that Esther was Jewish?

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

We did it! We came together as a community along with the Boy Scouts and we built our pergola. It was a great effort by all involved, and I want to say thanks. Of course, our first act was to use the pergola in order to give back. On February 21, we had our second annual cookout and blood drive. Thanks to Alma Russek for organizing it, and to Fernando Russek for his burger-turning skills! We were able to get donations from 24 eligible donors, which is a lot of life saving. Tikkun olam!

■
We now have a really nice website at harlingen-

temple.com due to Richard Fourzan's effort. Thank you Richard! Please go check out the website.

■
Spring is fast approaching which means a buzz of activities. The confirmation class will be taking their trip to Houston on March 18. Thank you, Bill Berg. On the weekend of March 25, the Rabbi will be with us to celebrate Purim. Start planning your costumes. April 3 will be the Sunday school model Seder. April 10 is our annual meeting. Please try to attend. April 22 is our community Seder.

■
CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

USE PAYPAL FOR YOUR TEMPLE DUES AND DONATIONS



Where? <http://harlingentemple.com>

How? Click the Donate button

Easy and Fast!

Questions? Please email TempleBethIsraelHarlingenTexas@gmail.com

Calendar

MARCH

- 18-20 Confirmation Class trip
to Houston
24 *Purim*
25-27 *Rabbi in town*
25 Shabbat service 7:30 p.m.
26 Shabbat service 9 a.m.
26 Havdallah 6:30 p.m./Purim
Party, Megillah reading

APRIL

- 1 Shabbat service 7:30 p.m.
3 Annual Congregational
Meeting and pot-luck lunch
10 Temple Clean Up/Work Day
17 Model Seder
22-24 *Rabbi in town*
22 Temple Community Seder,
Erev Passover (SEE PAGE 3)
23-30 *Passover*
23 Festival Shabbat service 9 a.m.
23 Havdallah 6:30 p.m.

Yarhzeits

Warshowsky, Philip	13 Adar 5735
Fisch, Eva Rotner	March 26, 2008
Gonzalez M., Luis A.	March 22, 2012
Levin, Ida K.	March 22, 1960
Yudesis. Miriam F.	March 21, 1998
Baum, Abe	April 5, 1969
Braunstein, Bella	April 19, 1978
Braunstein, Joseph	April 7, 1955
Happ, Marjorie Watt	April 23, 1993
Lieberman, Sylvia A.	April 11, 1965
Mayers, Jake	April 28, 1995

Thank You

DONATIONS

FOR THE GENERAL FUND

Dr. Stan & Nivia Fisch *in memory of*
Kathy Koppel

Dr. Stan & Nivia Fisch *in memory of*
Albert Wolf

Alma & Fernando Russek Jr. *a do-*
nation for Sam's Club Membership

Gerald & Shirley Sondock *in*
memory of Albert Wolf

Abby Warshowsky, *for the blood*
drive

Lewis & Dena Levine, Suggie &
Barry Guterman *in memory of*
Kathy Koppel

Lewis & Dena Levine, Suggie &
Barry Guterman *in memory of*
Albert Wolf

FOR THE BUILDING FUND/

SUKKAH PROJECT

Dr. Stan & Nivia Fisch

David & Elizabeth Goldstein

Javier & Sharon Huerta

Bert & Jamie Wolf

FOR THE RELIGION SCHOOL

David & Elizabeth Goldstein

FOR THE TORAH FUND

Charles & Helen Feldman *in*
memory of Kathy Koppel



Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

2/24	Ada Berenice Barrios
3/14	Gerald Sondock
3/22	Dan Simha
3/31	Gilbert Weisberg
4/5	Alma Russek
4/6	Dagan Wise-Herring
4/11	Andre Suissa
4/15	Jonathan Berg
4/16	Brittni Elise Greenfeld
4/17	Sophia Simha
4/20	Harry Holzman
5/2	Susan Ander

5/4 Patty Gaytan

5/14 Marisa L. Kahn

5/15 Benjamin Gonzalez

5/30 Andrew Newman

ANNIVERSARIES

3/20 Paul & Sofia Shirazi

5/29 Bill & Monica Stewart

5/30 Bill Berg & Laurel Steinberg

6/29 Harry & Elizabeth Holzman

*Please send changes and updates
to laurie.b.joseph@gmail.com.*

GIFT CARDS AVAILABLE!

DO YOU BUY GROCERIES?
DRINK COFFEE?
SEE MOVIES?

Help Temple Beth Israel at no additional cost while you do the things you always do. Buy gift cards for HEB, Wal-Mart, Cinemark, Starbucks, Target etc. before you go, and the Temple will receive a percentage.

Please support our scrip card program!

See Alma Russek or call her at 970-7722.

■ RATES FOR MEMORIAL

PLAQUES: Our rate for a memorial plaque on our memorial wall is \$350. Or you can buy two for \$600. Please contact any board member to purchase a memorial plaque.

■ **HONOR A LOVED ONE OR A SPECIAL OCCASION** with an engraved plaque on a Pew. The cost is \$1250. See any board member to make arrangements.

Oneg Shabbat

Each member household is asked to host one Shabbat oneg during the year. Remember hosting now involves setting up, cleaning up, and providing challah, Kosher wine, grape juice, paper/plastic goods, coffee and drinks. You can bring other treats you like, but the congregation will share the responsibility of bringing snacks and desserts. If you cannot be a host on the date assigned, please call Laurel Steinberg at 550-9530.

ONEG HOST FAMILIES

March 25: Spink, de Leon

May 20: Warshowsky/Gonzalez, Goldstein, Russek

June 10: Banks, Sondock



PASSOVER SEDER

7:30 p.m. April 22

\$35 — Adult

\$15 — 12 and under

Free — 4 and under

Your payment is your reservation (no exceptions!)
No later than April 15.
Thank you!

NEWS AND NOTES

NEW — WRITE A PURIM ESSAY FOR THE WEBSITE!

We now have a fully functional website at harlingentemple.com. Please go visit and leave a note in the Guestbook page. As with all websites, we plan to keep it dynamic and will change information as needed.

I am also requesting a short “essay” on Purim from any/all members to be made into a permanent, webpage contribution for a year; only one essay will be published with possible link to a runners-up sub-page. The essay will need to be an original, short, one-half (3/4 page max), typed, page with your own recounting of Purim (no cheating!). Any age member can participate. Make it fun or make it serious; make it a poem, or make it a mystery. Start getting ready to submit one for Pesach as well at a later date.

Submit your entry to Richard Fourzan at fourzan@gmail.com

Thank you!!

— Richard Fourzan

BUY SCRIP ECARDS! SAVE THE TEMPLE POSTAGE

You can also help our Temple at no extra cost to you using our scrip program. You can purchase Gift Cards or e-cards for many of the stores where you shop. When you buy the cards from the Temple, the Temple receives a small percentage of the cards you purchase, and you receive 100% of the cards’ value you pay for.

Example: You buy groceries from HEB. Instead of paying cash or using your credit card, you purchase a \$100 HEB card in advance from the Temple, and purchase your \$100 worth of groceries using the card. The Temple gets 2 percent of your purchase! It’s not much, but everything adds up.

It’s easy!!! Login on the page <https://www.shopwithscrip.com>

You can register on PrestoPay and pay directly to them. You can buy e-card at no cost for shipping. They will be delivered by email.

Contact Alma F. Russek at 956-970-7722 or email to TempleBethisraelharlingenTexas@gmail.com to get the enrollment code.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Coming up April 29 is the Relay for Life event in La Feria. The Stars of David team will be represented. Please make a donation for our team to the American Cancer Society. And come out to the event to show your support! More information will be in next month's Sim Shalom. Donations should be turned in by April 25 if at all possible.

I would also like to acknowledge a generous donation by Sharon Levine Huerta of Jewish books and Judaica in memory of her mother Betty Levine. We are still reviewing the items for the library and other uses. Thanks, Sharon!

I look forward to seeing everyone in the upcoming weeks at all of our events!

— Abby Warshowsky





Save the Date



*Brownsville Chapter of Hadassah
Invites you to save the date
Donor Luncheon
Honoring Dr. Todd Shenkenberg
Of Valley Cancer Associates
SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2015
1:00 PM
LA CANTERA
1800 N. EXPRESSWAY 77
BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS*



For more information, please call (956) 455-2442

FROM THE RABBI

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

As Rabbi Marc D. Angel writes in his book, *Angel for Shabbat*, it would seem that Mordechai and Esther are actually bad role models for the Jewish people. We teach pride in our identity. We oppose assimilation and intermarriage. Proper religious leaders would not condone their behavior. It would seem that Esther was indeed an assimilated Jewish woman. She blended in so perfectly with Persian society that not even the king had a clue that Esther was Jewish. Mordechai, although a proudly identified Jew, seems to have decided that it was best for Esther to pass herself off as a non-Jew and to marry the non-Jewish king. If Mordechai and Esther are so assimilated (even their names are Persian, not Hebrew), how is it that they are the heroes of Purim and that the Scroll of Esther is part of our Bible?

Here is a suggestion: The Book of Esther teaches us that even in the worst of circumstances when Jews lack appropriate leadership, almighty G-d finds ways to redeem our people. I concur wholeheartedly with Rabbi Angel.

No Jewish person, no matter how assimilated, no mat-

ter how far removed from Judaism and the Jewish people, should ever be counted out. On the contrary, every Jew could be the one to help his or her people in times of distress. The Scroll of Esther is included in our Bible to remind us that each and every Jew has the potential to play a significant role in the unfolding of our history and tradition. It is no wonder that Esther was a source of inspiration to crypto-Jews of all generations. Esther was a reminder that even Jews living in hiding could rise to greatness on behalf of the Jewish people.

As we celebrate Purim, let us reaffirm our commitment to all our fellow Jews, regardless of their levels of religiosity and Jewish identification. Let us sincerely treasure all, for both those who were born into the faith and those who came to it of their own free will enrich us all. Let us sincerely cherish and treasure all who enter our beloved Temple. Let us remember any one of us could ultimately be the Esther and Mordechai who brings greatness and redemption to the Jewish people.

Shalom U'V'racha,

Rabbi Frank Joseph

At the Judaica Shop

