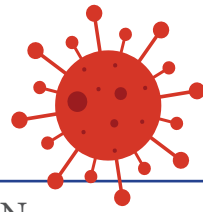


Sim Shalom



PLAGUE YEAR
Edition

THE NEWSLETTER OF TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL, HARLINGEN

WINTER 2020

Welcoming Temple Beth-El, Brownsville & Temple Beth El, Corsicana & Irving Havurah

Light it up



VIRTUAL
Chanukah Party
and Service
7 p.m. Friday Dec. 11

TUNE IN
Facebook Live
and Bluejeans

<https://bluejeans.com/711383774>

FROM THE GABBAI

Hanna's handiwork

Update on Temple repairs

Hello, everybody — 2020 has been an interesting and difficult year. We have been forced to learn to be patient and to value things differently.

The vaccine is on the horizon in 2021, and hopefully we will be able to get back together sharing holidays, services and joyous occasions sooner rather than later.

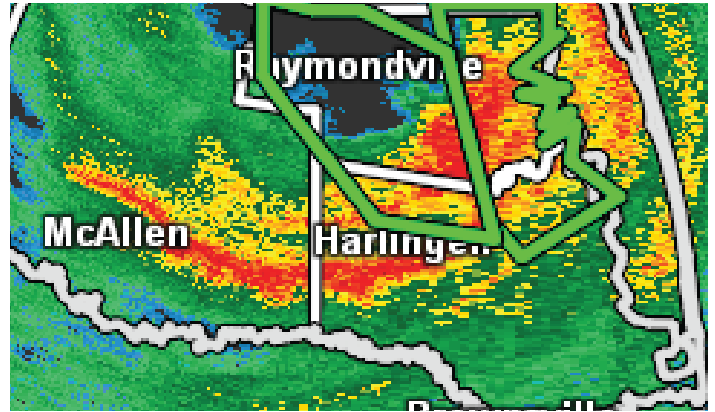
We will need to work on all aspects of our lives to adjust to our new reality, and this includes our Jewish community of Temple Beth Israel.

Early in the fall, as most of you are aware, the Temple buildings suffered damage when Hurricane Hanna came through the area.

We started fundraising for the \$60,000-plus dollars we may need to have a new roof installed on the Temple and Sunday school buildings, paint the exterior of both buildings and other needed repairs.

After some back-and-forth, we received a bit over \$9,000 from our insurance claim, and some of you have helped with donations.

The roof inspection by the windstorm engineer



showed that we needed a new roof on the Temple building even before the hurricane damage.

So we are on the process of installing a roof, painting the exterior and other needed repairs to the Sunday School building. Next, we will install a new roof and do the necessary repairs on the Temple building. We are trying to find additional funding for those repairs through a foundation grant.

All of this will give us our buildings in good shape for at least another 30 years, we hope, and we will be ready to celebrate the Temple's 70th anniversary.

In other news, we plan to start some virtual Sunday School classes in 2021. Look for more information in an upcoming email.

Thank you for all your help.

Happy Chanukah!

Fernando A. Russek

Just in time for Chanukah

Check out the Etsy store recently started by Brittni Greenfeld of the Harlingen congregation at <https://www.etsy.com/shop/ElvenResin>. She makes beautiful pendants and earrings, suitable, as they say, for all your gift-giving needs. Christmas-themed items available also.

Support your friends and congregants!



Online services



VIRTUAL Chanukah Party and Service

7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 11

Participate on Bluejeans
<https://bluejeans.com/711383774>

Watch on Facebook live
facebook.com/frank.joseph.9041

*Chanukah Festival Service,
Saturday 10 a.m. on Facebook*

WEEKLY SHABBAT SERVICES

Live at facebook.com/frank.joseph.9041.
Also available there for viewing later.

FRIDAYS Kabbalat Shabbat service, 7 p.m.

SATURDAYS Shabbat service, 10 a.m.

SUNDAYS Shacharit Service 10 a.m.

Gates of Prayer will be used for all the services. If you prefer a different prayer-book, previously recorded services available on YouTube use different books.

Please note: It's not unusual for the online services to break off because of technical difficulties such as the loss of our internet signal. When that happens, we will resume the service in a second Facebook post. We are sorry for the inconvenience.

Harlingen Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

12/4	Ivan Shirazi
12/7	Liliana Cohen
12/10	Lori Suissa
12/17	David Goldstein
12/20	Jose Cohen
12/21	Jacquelyn Goldstein
1/9	Rosalie Berg
1/13	Sarah Barrios
1/18	Zendaya Newman
2/4	Fernando A. Russek
2/7	William C. Stewart
2/10	Laurie Joseph
2/20	Bill Berg
2/24	Ada Berenice Barrios
3/14	Gerald Sondock
4/5	Alma Russek
4/6	Dagan Wise-Herring
4/11	Andre Suissa
4/15	Jonathan Berg
4/16	Brittni Elise Greenfeld
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
6/3	Benjamin Newman

ANNIVERSARIES

12/16	Fernando & Alma Russek
1/1	Ronald & Dyan Banks
2/6	Christine & Richard Newman
2/7	Jose & Liliana Cohen
5/29	Bill & Monica Stewart
5/30	Bill Berg & Laurel Steinberg
6/29	Harry & Elizabeth Holzman

FROM RICHARD FOURZAN
Temple President, Harlingen



Chag Sameach!! I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving, and may you have an even better Chanukah. It is time to start polishing those chanukiahs and getting your candles or oil for the holiday. Please make sure you join in our online service; the details are elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter. Please stay safe, do not expose yourselves to any harm.

On another note, the board of directors has met several times to make sure our building will be in tip-top shape soon. We were tying all the loose ends to move forward. See Fernando's piece telling us about the repairs.

Sunday school students (or parents), if you want to continue your studies with Mr. Berg or Mr. Russek, please contact them to see what can be arranged for online classes. A quick text message is a good way to start. We want to further your studies and plans are being made, you can be sure of that.

I want to thank the board of directors for a great job in this time of quarantine. Our online meetings have become more dynamic, and group chat communication has been productive. Also, a great big thanks to Rabbi Frank and Laurie Joseph for always being attentive and available via phone or video when needed. Thank you, Laurie, for the newsletter that keeps us together and for setting up all the video services on the different platforms.

I want to close now with a great desire and hope to see you all again in a calm and friendly setting in the Temple. Soon, I hope.

Richard Fourzan

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

<https://www.djcf.org/collegescholarships>

Dallas Jewish Community Foundation and Southwest Community Foundation provide a variety of scholarships to students from Dallas, Denton and Collin Counties. While the majority of scholarships are for students from the tri-county area, there are many exceptions. There are also scholarships for students at the University of Oklahoma, Texas A&M and Southern Methodist University, plus a variety of graduate school scholarships.

To be eligible for a scholarship, you must be both:

1. A full-time student attending Fall 2021 until Spring 2022
2. An American Citizen or an individual who has achieved legal status to reside in the U.S.

AND you can say YES to at least ONE statement below:

- I have resided in Collin, Dallas, or Denton Counties within the last 12 months
- I will be attending The University of Oklahoma next school year
- I am a Jewish student (sophomore or higher) who will be attending SMU next school year
- I am a Jewish student who will attend Texas A&M next year
- I am a Jewish student residing in Smith County
- **I am a Jewish student residing in a small Texas town (small is defined as two or less congregations)**
- I am a Jewish veterinary student
- I am a doctoral or masters student conducting extensive research on special education for children and studying within Texas.

Other criteria are detailed in the application. High school seniors, undergraduate and graduate students of any and all faiths are encouraged to apply.

Although there are many scholarships, only one application is needed per student. The questions are designed to allow each applicant to be considered for every scholarship for which they are eligible. To be considered for review by the large scholarship committee, all official documents, and the application itself, **must be received by the February due date** that will be posted once the process is live. Applications are to be filled out by the student, not the parent or teacher as this can affect the scoring process.

This year, there is the opportunity to award over 60 college scholarships based on financial need, academic merit, involvement in extracurricular activities, and/or community service for the 2021-22 school year. Scholarships range from \$500-5,400, with most allowing study at the college or university of the recipient's choice.

Applications can only be submitted online. All applications and electronic or mailed transcripts must be submitted or received by February 11, 2021. If you are mailing transcripts, mail or hand deliver to: DJCF/SWCF 12700 Hillcrest Rd., Suite 201 Dallas, Texas 75230

Thank You

Donations to the Harlingen Temple

FOR READING YIZKOR NAMES

William Berg & Laurel Steinberg

Ron & Dyan Banks

David and Lois A. Day

Sheila Greenfeld

Charlene Moskal

Bryan and Shirley Hewitt

Alma and Fernando Russek

TO THE BUILDING FUND

Paulette Gindler-Bishop

Jessie Duran

Dr. Stan Fisch

Richard Fourzan

Larry Holtzman

Ron & Serena Levine

Stella Lozano

Fernando, Alma, Deborah, Rachel,
Rebekah and Yafah Russek

Sheila Greenfeld, *in honor Britny's new
Etsy shop*

Sandra Castro, *in blessed memory of her
father Adolfo Baltazar*

Alma Russek *in blessed memory of my
father Abel Figueroa on his second yahr-
zeit, December 2020*

Sheila Greenfeld, *in honor of Brittini's New Etsy shop*

Robert I & Anne B. Weiss, *for a good and sweet New Year*

Barrie and Suggie Guterman, *in blessed memory of Dena Fai Mayers Levine on Rosh Hashanah, for the fourth yahrzeit of her death*

Michael Silguero, Angela and Jesus Silguero *in honor Michael's Bar Mitzvah*

Barbara Green, *in honor of the wonderful Rabbi Frank Joseph*

TO THE GENERAL FUND

Suggie, Barry, Marisa & Travis Guterman, *in blessed memory of Lewis Milton Levine on his 3rd Yahrzeit, December 19, 2020*

Charles & Helen Feldman, *a pew for the Feldman Family*

Fourzan Richard, *multiple donations for honors*

William Berg & Laurel Steinberg, *mazal tov to the Newman family on the birth of their daughter and to the Lansdman-Gaytan family for the marriage of their daughter*

Charles & Helen Feldman, *a plaque for Charles B. Feldman March 19, 1932-April 17, 2017*



SPECIAL DONATION TO THE BREAKFAST FUND

From Alma Russek for our wedding anniversary on Dec. 16,
in gratitude to Fernando Russek for our 28 years together

Food for thought

In the throes of another wave of COVID-19, on the brink of Chanukah, Jews have still not come to grips with one of the worst effects of this pandemic: no buffets.

The enormity of the problem occurred to me shortly after the first lockdown lifted. We had three families over to our backyard for a birthday celebration. Reflexively, I used one table to set out all the food — a huge paella I had just made over oak logs, a Spanish potato-and-egg tortilla the size of a DISH antenna, a tapas plate of olives, fried almonds, roasted peppers and home-pickled vegetables. To be able to cook and serve food I love to people I love felt like a healing.

“You can’t do that,” one of my friends said. “What are you thinking?”

What *was* I thinking? I brought out some paper plates, put on gloves, and dished out portions to each table. It wasn’t the celebratory communal feast I imagined; it was a socially-distanced boxed lunch.

The buffet, it turns out, is one of those underappreciated cornerstones of American Jewish life. It’s mocked plenty. Think of the Fellini-esque relatives gorging on a chopped liver sculpture in “Goodbye Columbus.” Think of “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel,” when the shofar blast signals the end of the Yom Kippur fast and the congregants break for the buffet en masse. “God, I would kill for the hole of the bagel right about now!” says one.

There’s nothing wrong with table service, but there’s something very haimish about waiting in that line, whether at the kiddush, or the bat mitzvah, the shiva, or the backyard. You talk, you inspect, you help yourself — remember helping yourself? — you walk back to your table like you just won a prize. You sneak seconds.

At least until this week’s spike, modified buffets were making a comeback at clubs and restaurants, the food behind plexiglass, masked and shielded servers dishing out portions as you point your finger, turning a celebration into a school cafeteria. The days of digging into a nice spread with your own two tongs may be a long way off, likely to make a comeback sometime after restaurants reopen but before, say, your local shvitz does.

I don’t know where all of this leads us. I do know that eating from a common table has always been a marker of common faith. The communal Passover table gave rise to the Catholic mass. “Before it was a service, mass was a meal,” writes Alain de Botton in “Religion for Atheists.” We applied the power of the common table to our life cycle celebrations, not to mention to our fundraisers. To steal from Ahad Ha’am, as much as Jews have kept the buffet, buffets have kept the Jews. Did we eat together because we are a community, or are we a community because we eat together?

In the meantime, we don’t even have the buffet’s kid brother, which is dining family-style. People who aren’t in your bubble can’t share from the same platter, period. The holidays require vigilance, planning and disposables.

May you have a happy holiday, just the same. Next year, may we all be together, in line.

Adapted from Rob Eshman, national editor for The Forward

Did we eat together because we are a community, or are we a community because we eat together?

Honor your loved ones and support the temple

MEMORIAL PLAQUES and PEWS

THE COST OF A PLAQUE on our memorial wall is \$350; two for \$600.

HONOR A LOVED ONE OR A SPECIAL OCCASION with an engraved plaque on a pew. The cost is \$1,250.

Please contact any board member to purchase a plaque.