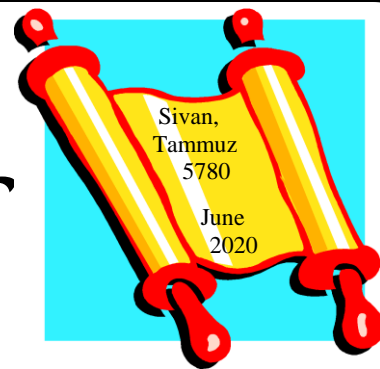




CONGREGATION AGUDAS ACHIM *NEWS*



Issue # 125
Monthly

5614 North University Street
Peoria, IL 61614

Phone # (309) 692-4848

Web - www.agudasachim.wordpress.com

E-mail - congaa@sbcglobal.net

Michael Arsers – Rabbi

LaDona Fishkin – President

Sheldon Katz - Executive Vice President Financial

Linda Schwabacher – Treasurer

Edwin Kach – Secretary

Candle Lighting Times

June

June 5 – 8:09 p.m.

June 12 – 8:12 p.m.

June 19 – 8:15 p.m.

June 26 – 8:16 p.m.



Candle Lighting Times

July

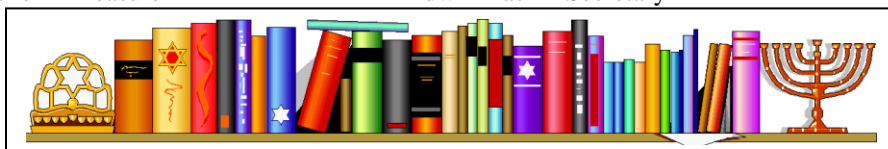
July 3 – 8:15 p.m.

July 10 – 8:13 p.m.

July 17 – 8:09 p.m.

July 24 – 8:03 p.m.

July 31 – 7:56 p.m.



June

Paul Small
Sheldon Katz
Carolyn Weinstein
Dina Lunken
Susan Katz
Marci Steinberg
Jack Heller



June

Diane and Ed Kach
Jenny and Joel Schwartz
Gail and Sanford Gordon
Naomi and Ralph Fishman
Irene and Ira Pritzker
Stella and Larry Griminger
Jennifer and Ben Dolin

Calendar of Events

Saturday, June 6
Parsha: Naso

Saturday, June 13
Parsha: Beha'alotecha

Saturday, June 20
Parsha: Shelach

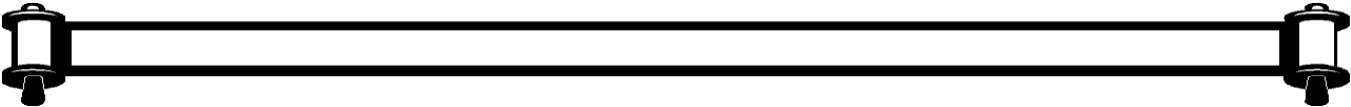
Saturday, June 27
Parsha: Korach

Sunday, June 28
10 a.m. – Board meeting



To Ilan Lunken for being accepted to IMSA Illinois Math and Science Academy. Congratulations to the parents, Dina and Yona Lunken.

Speedy Recovery to
Leonard Kaufman



From our Rabbi, Michael Arsers

Now that Shavuot is over, I thought it would be worth taking one more look at all that has transpired on the Jewish calendar.

We started way back in February. There were four special Torah readings which begin the season that leads to Passover. Shabbat *Shekalim* is the first and coincides with Rosh Chodesh Adar. Shabbat *Zachor* precedes Purim. Shabbat *Parah* prepares us for Passover. Shabbat *HaChodesh* marks the beginning of the month of Nissan.

We celebrated Purim at the beginning of March. This happiest of all Jewish holidays really is a precursor to Passover. It commemorates our salvation from annihilation at the hands of the Persians. It is a time for eating, drinking, giving gifts to our friends and giving charity to the poor. Purim is a physical celebration with almost unrestrained frivolity. This holiday reminds us that our physical nature can serve G-d just as well as our spiritual. Eating and drinking are religious actions perhaps even more than fasting and praying. However, Purim is a story of a limited salvation. Only the Jewish community of Persia was affected and the end result was that even after their victory, the Jews were still in Persia.

After Purim we start the preparations for Passover. Clearing the leaven out of our homes is an important part of Passover. Passover is the holiday on which we experience the exodus from Egypt for ourselves. Transmitting this experience to the next generation is an essential aspect of the holiday. We mark Passover with the Seder at the beginning and another holiday at the end. The redemption of the Jewish People from Egypt is the central event of the Bible. More than any other historical event it shaped the Jewish character. The redemption

from Egypt also becomes the model for the future redemption for which we wait.

Already during Passover, we start counting the days of the *Omer* that will bring us to the holiday of Shavuot. These seven weeks contain a period of semi-mourning which is concluded with the 33rd day of the *Omer* or Lag B'omer. The only way we can know when to observe Shavuot – the holiday commemorating the giving of the Torah – is by counting the forty-nine days from the second day of Passover. Thus, our acceptance of the Torah with all of its commandments is intrinsically linked to our redemption from bondage. The freedom that we experienced after the exodus from Egypt is not a freedom to live a life of abandon. It is a freedom that allows us to choose to accept our obligation to G-d and to our fellows.

There is a statement in the Midrash that is based on a play on words. The Torah states that the words of the law were *charut* (engraved) on the tablets. The Midrash points to the similar word *cherut* which means freedom. Freedom can only truly exist where there is an idea of responsibility. Freedom is the condition in which we can live our lives in a meaningful way. We chose at Sinai to enter into the covenant with the Holy-One-Blessed-Be-He and committed ourselves to observe the *mitzvot*. We could only truly make this commitment in a condition of freedom after we were liberated from Egyptian bondage. The fact that Passover and Shavuot are linked together in the calendar and that it is impossible to know when Shavuot occurs without first knowing when Passover occurs is a confirmation of the linkage between freedom and responsibility.



From our President, LaDona Fishkin

Dear Members and Friends of Agudas Achim,

Chag Shavuot Sameach!! Flowers are blooming, restrictions are slowly lifting, the omer has been counted and we have the wonderful visual of receiving the Torah!! I thank G-d that our Congregation Community has remained safe during this time of Covid crisis. For many this time in quarantine has not been easy, but the realization that we have saved human lives, that we have not been in this alone and have shared this entire experience with the world is almost as mind blowing as receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai.

There are some important issues I would like to address:

First, while gathering for a minyan has temporarily been suspended in the building to protect human life, we are working on phases of reconnecting in person for a minyan. The first phase recommendation from the OU is to extend at least two weeks beyond the social distancing guidelines set by the Governor, which for Illinois is May 30, 2020. This allows us to observe and make decisions regarding any increase in Covid and risk to our community. As we approach the date in mid-June, we will be in contact with you to let you know how we proceed. I appreciate everyone's support as the board and I move forward in making decisions for community safety and pikuach nefesh. Do not forget, our office remains open, we continue outreach to membership and friends through phone calls and virtual meetings. A big Yasher Koach to Rabbi Arsen, who continues to make calls and writes and posts his drashes to our active website. Please visit the website of Agudas Achim Peoria, it is wonderful to see him present his drash under the tab of the Rabbi Corner. Thank you Andy Kravetz for assisting with the technology.

Second, by this time many of you have heard about the vandalism to the building. These are the facts: It was discovered by visiting day school parents, who immediately notified the Temple, Synagogue and community leadership. Rabbi Milkow, Sally Wecker, secretary from the

Temple and I arrived and immediately checked on the sanctuaries. The sanctuaries were UNTOUCHED and the Torahs were safe. The police were notified. We walked the building with the Principal of the PHDS and a teacher while waiting for the police. The community security network quickly sent an email, but it was determined there was NO risk to human life, so the phone and messaging alert system was not activated. The only damages to the synagogue space were broken windows in the kosher kitchen. The other damage to the building: broken windows to the back stairwell, the back social hall, the men's room, two classrooms and the Youth Group room in the basement. In addition, the picnic tables were disturbed and plastic play buckets for the PHDS damaged. Although they could have entered easily through the broken basement windows there was NO sign of entry. Vandalism is a hateful act, but there was nothing that indicates that this event was an anti-semitic attack. There was no graffiti, no damage to Jewish signs, and no literature to support this. They used rocks and bricks from the garden near the day school entrance and it is being described as a crime of opportunity. Before we left the building that night, the windows were boarded, glass cleaned up and the building was secured. Unfortunately, some media and social reports have used this as an opportunity to exploit this vandalism for their own agenda.

Finally, thank you to my board members for meeting via phone calls and virtually for meetings. I appreciate and welcome any phone calls or emails with questions or suggestions as we move forward. Please call the office at 309-692-4848 and Gladys will share my contact information if you do not have it. The board has extended the nominations to the July board meeting, and we will announce the date for the Annual Meeting at a later time, perhaps August-September time frame. Thank you to the board members who have volunteered to help with safety policy for gathering in the building for minyan, Shabbat and upcoming High Holidays.

~ LaDona Fishkin, President



Kiddush Fund Donations

Honor of Raquel and Jeff Huberman on the birth of their grandson, Avi Ezra Huberman

Debbie and Harry Morgenstern

Honor of the recovery of Leonard Kaufman

CHAI – Diane and Ed Kach

2 X CHAI – LaDona and Paul Fishkin



Torah Fund Donations

Memory of the yahrzeit of my dear, beloved mother-in-law, Molly Kaplan

Bella Kaplan

Memory of the yahrzeit of my dear, beloved father, Harry Gaffin

Bella Kaplan

Memory of the yahrzeit of our dear, beloved mother, Sophie Bloomfield

CHAI – Ursula and Charles Moses

Memory of the yahrzeit of our dear, beloved father, Morris Bloomfield

CHAI – Ursula and Charles Moses

Memory of the yahrzeit of my dear, beloved husband, Steve Heckmyer

3 X CHAI – Gail Heckmyer

Memory of the yahrzeit of my dear, beloved father, Leo Propp

3 X CHAI – Gail Heckmyer

Memory of the yahrzeit of our dear, beloved uncle, David Oxenfeldt

CHAI – Marcia and Carl Inselberg and family

Memory of the yahrzeit of our dear, beloved grandmother, Sara Siegman

CHAI+ – Randy Schuster

Memory of the yahrzeit of our dear, beloved father, Julian Brown

Debbie and Lester Liby

Myrna and Richard Cohen



Freyda Fredman Hospitality Fund

Memory of the yahrzeit of our dear, beloved mother, Helen Morgenstern

CHAI – Debbie and Harry Morgenstern

Memory of the yahrzeit of our dear, beloved father, Israel Morgenstern

CHAI – Debbie and Harry Morgenstern

Memory of the yahrzeit of my dear, beloved sister, Shirley Zigman

CHAI – Marilyn Propp

Memory of the yahrzeit of my dear, beloved mother-in-law, Wanda Propp

CHAI – Marilyn Propp



Charity Fund Donations

Honor of Raquel and Jeff Huberman on the birth of their grandson, Avi Ezra Huberman

Joan and Tom Halperin

Honor of Adria Lunken's graduation from High School

Joan and Tom Halperin

Honor of Ilan Luken for being accepted to IMSA Illinois Math and Science Academy

Joan and Tom Halperin

June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5 Candles @ 8:09	6 Parsha: Naso
7	8	9	10	11	12 Candles @ 8:12	13 Parsha: Beha'alotecha
14	15	16	17	18	19 Candles @ 8:15	20 Parsha: Shelach
21 Father's Day	22 Rosh Chodesh	23 Rosh Chodesh	24	25	26 Candles @8:16	27 Parsha: Korach
28 10 am A.A. Bd. Mtg.	29	30	1	2	3 Candles @8:15	4 Parsha: Chukat- Balak



CONGREGATION
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