

Torah Thoughts- Nasso, Numbers 4:21-7:89

“Celebrating One Hundred Years of Scouting in WNY”

As a child, I always hated packing up my sleeping bag. It was big and fluffy and somehow had to be shoved into a bag so small it could barely carry crackers. I would roll it and reroll it and then roll it again, all in the futile attempt of getting it to fit just right. After a while of struggling, I would call over an adult who would calmly do the exact same steps I had just done and manage to actually get it to fit. It was so stressful, I would actually have nightmares about it.

Because of this, I'm not sure if I would have made a very good Levite. Back in the wilderness, packing and unpacking the traveling Tabernacle, or mishkan, was their primary role. So complex was the setup of this ancient synagogue, it required not one, but three sets of families in charge of its various responsibilities. As we learn in this week's Torah portion, Nasso, the Kohathites were in charge of transporting the key ritual items - the Table of the Shewbread, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Menorah. The Gershonites were in charge of the soft furnishings like the curtains and the inner and outer coverings. And, the Merarites were in charge of the heavy equipment like the wooden frames and the tent pegs. This was hard work, holy work, and would have made my struggles to pack my sleeping bag look incidental.

Today, the skills of these ancient priestly families are best exemplified by our modern day scouts. The scouting movement is one of the few places in greater society to fully embrace the Jewish community. Starting one hundred years ago in 1926, the National Jewish Committee on Scouting was formed. At one of the peak times of antisemitism in American history - only a few years after huge quotas were placed on the ability of Jews to enter into our country - scouting welcomed us in. By the 1950s there were well over 1,000 active Jewish troops, including one in Western New York. At Congregation Shir Shalom, we have member families who have been involved in scouting for over three generations. In Israel, the Tzofim, or Hebrew scouts, there are over 100,000 Israeli youth involved in scouting. It is by far the largest youth activity in the entire country.

This Friday, our local Jewish Committee on Scouting will celebrate our annual Scout Shabbat. Dozens of Jewish troops will announce awards, give honors, and celebrate their accomplishments. We have been proud to host and are most proud that this long-standing tradition in our community continues on. I am grateful to Leah Romeo who has served as our Jewish chair the past few years and who helps organize our service. While we may no longer have the Mishkan, the dedication of our young people and their families to setting up and taking down their tents would have made our ancestors proud.

Shabbat Shalom, Rabbi Alex

In Memoriam

Shiva

Donald Brownstein
Ruth Dunphy
David Hoffman
Bruce Schreiber

Sheloshim

Gerald Koris
Kurt Kowalksi
Tina Meyers
Aaron Schneider
Michael Schreiber

Yahrzeits

Florence Antonoff
Jacob Baker
Mollie Bernhardt
Gerald Birzon
Martha Cantor
Mary Capone
Eva Mae Craden
Bruno Elkan
Trudy Elwood
Jacob Erlin
Arnold Z. Etelson
Jacob M. Feldman
Lance Alden Fertig
Jeffrey Gellin
Janet Glaser
Zalman Sam" Gordon"
Lorraine Heitner
Morris Herman
Robert L. Hersh
Dorothy Klein

Dorothy Kopstick
Claire Larke
Ida Mackler
Ruth Phillips
Rose Pikoff
Celia Pohl
Peter Poremski
Eliahu Puius
George Rubin
Mildred Saturen
Barbara A. Simon
Dr. Paul Slepian
William Slonim
Lilliam Cohn Snyder
Ralph B. Tufts
Cora Vizzi
George Weintraub
Morey Zeldis
Marjorie Brutman Zimmet

Erev Shabbat Scout Service
Friday, May 29, 2026 /14 Sivan, 5786

7:00pm



Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein
Cantor Arlene Frank
Executive Director Joanne Marquisee
B'COL Religious School Director Rabbi Einav Symons
President Joseph Glickman

Tonight's Oneg Shabbat is sponsored by the WNY Jewish Committee on Scouting.

Saturday, May 30th

9:00am Torah Study offsite and via [Zoom](#)

10:45am Shabbat Morning Service and Kiddush Luncheon-offsite

Monday, June 1st

Office closed

Tuesday, June 2nd

1:30pm Rabbi Alex and Rev. Bill Hennessey at The Amberleigh

7:00pm Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 4th

Talmud Study- canceled

Friday, June 5th

6:00pm Erev Shabbat Service and Bar Mitzvah of Ben Jones and via Boxcast, Facebook & YouTube

6:00pm Birthday Blessings

7:00pm Oneg Shabbat sponsored by Amanda and Joshua Jones in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of their son, Ben. It is co-sponsored by Pam DiBernardo in memory of her brother, Mark Gugino

UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming Events in June:

The American Red Cross will be holding a much-needed blood drive at Shir Shalom on Thursday, June 11th from 1:00pm-6:00pm. Please donate blood at this drive if you are able to do so.

The Marriage Reconsecration Ceremony will be Friday, June 12th at the Erev Shabbat Service at 7:00pm. Couples with marriages of any length are invited to renew their wedding vows at this ceremony. They will receive a special blessing, flowers and a group photo. Please RSVP with the number of anniversary years to joanne.marquisee@gmail.com.

The David Bunis and Family Annual Lecture Series will be the weekend of June 19th. There will be a special sermon and Oneg at the Erev Shabbat Service sponsored by David Bunis. On Saturday, June 20th at 10:45am there will be a lecture followed by a luncheon in conjunction with the Bunis Family Weekend.

The New York State Defensive Driving Class will be held on Sunday, June 28th from 9:30am-3:30pm in the Social Hall at Shir Shalom. Cost is \$35 for Temple members and \$40 for non-members. Register by calling or emailing the instructor, Bruce Corris at 716-636-8387 or corrisb@hotmail.com. Registration is due by June 22nd.

Save the date:

The first Erev Shabbat Service Under the Tent will be Friday, July 3rd at 6:00pm. It will also be our Hawaiian Shirt Shabbat and the Kickoff Summer Cookout.

Our Mission Statement, as a congregation, is to be a welcoming community and to enhance all aspects of Jewish Life.

The Board of Trustees of Congregation Shir Shalom

COMMITMENT STATEMENT

We, the Board of Trustees, pledge to unite and to enrich the lives of our congregation.

We will proceed in our commitment to Congregation Shir Shalom, to create an inclusive and open environment for the entire congregation.

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Cantor-Arlene Frank

Executive Director-Joanne Marquisee

Religious School Director-Rabbi Einav Symons

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Prayer for those who lead our congregation

O God, this congregation has honored us with the task of leading them and of serving You with them.

May we lead well and may we serve well.

May we hear the quiet as well as the active voices, and may we heed the call and follow the paths of what we, after honest searching, feel to be the right things to do.

May we listen to each other, and may we listen to You,

as all of us together make this synagogue a *kehillah kedusha*, a Holy place.

Congregation Shir Shalom is Affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism and Reconstructing Judaism