I have a December riddle for you. What Jewish practice is determined by a secular date and not a Hebrew date and why? The answer is found during this month of December. If one looks in the Siddur, it says in a prayer in the Amidah that one changes part of the wording of that blessing “from December 5th until Pesach.” This is found in the Sim Shalom Siddur which we use at Congregation B’nai Zion, on page 5 in the last paragraph. The words in English are as follows, “Hashem, our God, make this a blessed year. May its varied produce bring us happiness.” It then says, “from December 5th to Pesach add the words, ‘grant dew and rain for blessing,’ and “from Pesach to December 4th we say instead, ‘grant blessing.’” It continues “upon the earth, satisfy us with its abundance and bless our year as the best of years. Praised are You, Hashem, who blesses the years.”

Before I continue, I want to thank my colleague, Joel Hoffman, for a good deal of this information. A long debate ensued in the Talmud regarding the appropriate time to switch the prayers from including to excluding the word “rain.” The disagreement was also effected by the location of the rabbis participating in the decision. Since some lived in Jerusalem where the Palestinian Talmud was edited, and some lived in Babylonia, where the Babylonian Talmud was published, geography played a part in determining the decision. It was determined to start adding the words for “rain” 60 days after the beginning of Fall, and the Fall Equinox was either September 22nd or 23rd.

Rabbi Shmuel calculated that because the seasons are based on the solar calendar (the secular calendar) and not the lunar calendar (the Hebrew calendar), each season was 91 days and 7½ hours. From his perspective, the Jewish Equinox is based on the sun and not the moon and his year was 364 days and 30 hours, or 365 and ¼ days. Since the Jewish calendar is 11 days and 14 seconds shorter than the solar calendar, we add a leap year, (the 2nd month of Adar) 7 times every 19 years. Because of this discrepancy, the Jewish calendar has slightly moved forward in comparison to the Solar Equinox one day every 128 years. The Catholic Church which is really responsible for the solar calendar, hence the terms “B.C.” and “A.D.” even on civil not religious events such as legal documents like a civil marriage license, realized in 1582 that the
solar calendar was out of sync by 10 days which would have effected the springtime holiday of Easter. Pope Gregory fixed that calendar by dropping 10 days in October 1582 and also dropping 3 leap years every 400 years, which meant that years divisible by 100 would no longer be leap years unless they were also divisible by 400. From that time, the Gregorian Calendar was in use as it is in America today.

We the Jewish people were in conflict over the decision and yet were obliged to use the solar calendar for establishing the definition of seasons determined by the sun and not the moon. Unlike the Church, we calculated the seasons according to Rabbi Shmuel of the Talmud and moved ahead 10 days to October 3 based on his reference to September 23rd being the Fall Equinox as mentioned above. Since then, 1700, 1800 and 1900 have been leap years according to Rabbi Shmuel, not Pope Gregory. So now Rabbi Shmuel’s Talmudically calculated Equinox is October 6th. Sixty days after October 6th is December 5th. That is why we add or delete words about “Geshem” or “rain” in our prayer books using a secular or solar or “Shmuelian” date and not a Gregorian date.

If you recall, last year Chanukah and Thanksgiving coincided for the first time in several hundred years and this year on the day that Chanukah ends at sundown, our non-Jewish neighbors will begin Christmas Eve. We can thank both Rabbi Shmuel and the Maccabees for our gift of making each and every day count.

Stephen A. Leon
Rabbi
With Ancestral roots in Spain and Macedonia, American-born Sarah Aroeste works to reinvent Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) and Sephardic music for a new audience. Her style combines traditional Mediterranean Sephardic sounds with contemporary influences such as rock, funk, pop and blues. One of few Ladino artists today who writes her own music, Aroeste performs songs of such universal themes as family dynamics, unrequited love, loss, searching for home, going off to war, and much more.

In the last decade, Aroeste has toured internationally and amassed a loyal following across the globe. She has released three recordings, A la Una: In the Beginning (2003), Puertas (2007), and most recently, Gracia (2012). Bringing a fresh and inspiring modern sound to Sephardic music, Sarah Aroeste’s Ladino Rock style has helped transform and revitalize a tradition.

Website: saraharoeste.com
CONGREGATION B’NAI ZION SISTERHOOD
and
THE EL PASO JEWISH ACADEMY

INVITE YOU TO EXPERIENCE A

HANUKKAH CELEBRATION

Wednesday, December 17
6:15 pm
at B'nai Zion

Community Candle Lighting
followed by an
Evening of Song and Celebration
Starring our Talmud Torah and EPJA Students
Festive Dinner to Follow

There is no charge, however please RSVP to the synagogue office
833-2222 by noon, Dec. 12

Thank you to B’nai Zion Sisterhood and Elliot & Kelly Berg
for sponsoring dinner for this event.
When I was a young girl, my favorite song during Chanukah was "Mi Yimalel" or "Who Can Retell." I can see myself playing this song on the piano and singing as if the whole world could hear me. I also loved "In the Window" and "I Have a Little Dreidel." But the words to "Mi Yimalel" are still alive, and still there is no peace. "But now all Israel must as one arise, redeem itself through deed and sacrifice."

I shake my head sadly yearning for all the good things yet to be in Israel.

Yes, Chanukah is upon us. Get out your dreidels, menorahs and gelt and get ready to spin, light and eat! Sisterhood joins the El Paso Jewish Academy once again with a delicious dinner and exciting musical program. Last year was amazing...let's do it again! There is no charge for dinner as it is amazingly sponsored by a generous family. We can sing songs and rejoice as a community. It is like a shot in the arm, so let us join at our round tables and enjoy a lovely spirited evening. Please bring your candles, menorah and foil/platter to protect the tablecloth from wax drippings.

We truly need this evening as a community to put some spark in our Jewishness and togetherness.

I would like to wish all of you a very Happy Hanukah and Happy 2015.

Sandy Dula
Sisterhood President

The Sisterhood Gift Shop will offer a sale on many items in time for Chanukah. This is a great time to buy that new menorah, Chanukah dishes, or some children's books. We also have wedding, bar mitzvah, baby gifts, and other Judaica.

The Gift Shop will be open Sunday and Friday mornings from 9:00 am - noon

Support your Sisterhood Gift Shop!

Happy Chanukah from Sisterhood

On November 6th, the B'nai Zion Sisterhood, Temple Mt. Sinai WRJ and Hadassah enjoyed an enlightening book discussion of If You Awaken Love by Emuna Elon, led by Judy Weiser.
WITH
RABBI LEON

SYNAGOGUE SKILLS
Learn how to lead services, chant Haftorah, and read Torah. This class is recommended for students young and old - especially post Bar and Bat Mitzvah students.
Sunday mornings: 9:30 – 10:20 am
Dates: December 7, 14

TEA AND TORAH
Book of Job:
Who was Job and what did he teach us?
Wednesday mornings: 11:00 am till noon
Dates: December 3, 10

READING HEBREW AND THE BOOK OF GENESIS
Wednesday evenings: 6:45 – 7:45 pm
Dates: December 3, 10
Join us for Minyan first at 6:30 pm

HEBREW HIGH SCHOOL
Classes for post bar and bat mitzvah students will begin in November at Congregation B’nai Zion in the Memorabilia Room.

“YOU BE THE JUDGE”
based on the book, You Be the Judge, a collection of ethical and Jewish answers by Joel Lurie Grishaver
Teacher: Sherry Grinsteiner
Monday evenings: 6:30 pm
Dates: December 1, 8, 15
Come to minyan first and stay for class.
Light refreshments will be served.

SYNAGOGUE SKILLS
Learn how to lead services, chant Haftorah, and read Torah.
Teacher: Rabbi Leon
Sunday mornings: 9:30 – 10:20 am
Dates: December 7, 14
Come to minyan first if you can at 8:30 am and stay for breakfast.

BZUSY News

Food and Book Drive
BZUSY has decided to help out the Kelly Memorial Food Pantry and is asking you to help. The food pantry is running low on proteins, so we will be collecting pinto beans and jars of peanut butter. They are also starting a loaner library so we will therefore be collecting slightly used books.

The drive will take place from now until December 19. There will be drop off points inside the foyer and front office of B’nai Zion every day, and if you need me to pick it up, please call Robin at (915) 588-1096 to arrange the pickup.

Thank you for your help feeding the minds and stomachs of the less fortunate in our community.

Zach Krasne
Social Action/Tikkun Olam
Vice President of BZUSY

BZUSY did an amazing mitzvah by making menorahs and delivering them to our members at MonteVista, Royal Estates and those that are home bound to make Chanukah special for them.

Check out BZUSY’S NEW WEBSITE: bnaizionusy.weebly.com

Upcoming ...
Dec. 6: Services and Chanukah Party meet at shul 4:40 PM
Nov. 7: USY Board Meeting 10:30 AM
Nov. 14: SATO Scavenger Hunt at Walmart 2-4:00 PM
Details to follow
December Birthdays

01 Manon Daugherty
02 Joyce Gronich
Irvin Nadler
03 Gayle Belford
Jay Spetalnick
07 Hal Ettinger
Linda Fruthandler
Aviva Kotkowski
08 Rita Slusser
09 Bernadine Belkin
11 Ori Rosen
Gerald Rubin
12 Marlene Levine
Phillip Rothstein
13 John Garcia
Jacklyn Ochoa
14 Joyce Lieb
15 Warren Pulner
16 Joan Korn
Dr. Richard Novick
Felicia Rubin
17 Annette Goldberg
Dorothy Grodin
18 Dr. Idelle Greenberg
19 Robin Gold
22 Miriam Goldfarb
23 Allan Goldfarb
24 Norman Gordon
Joel Yellin
26 Miriam Spitz-Domnitz
27 Beth Kurland
28 Natalie Scoggin
30 Martha Benattia
Jeannette Fenenbock
Saul Frank
Esther Ruiloba

December Anniversaries

07 Dr. Leonardo & Sylvia Svarzbein
09 Ignacio & Guadalupe Ramos
11 Mario & Maria Luisa Escobar
Daniel & Elinor Siegelman
13 Cesar & Debra Pazos
14 Dr. Melvin & Ronnie Fox
15 Thomas & Sandra Dula
17 John & Elaine Garcia
26 Milton & Joan Cherno
28 Adam Rosenfield & Dr. Lauren Eisenberg

The Simcha page this month is sponsored by the Mt. Franklin Insurance Agency. If you would like information on how they can meet your needs, please call Shane Lipson or Bill Carvajal at 915-599-2900.

A leaf on The Tree of Life has been dedicated in honor of Helen Berman on her special birthday by Robin Gold & Family

Bar Mitzvah
Conner Fraker
December 13, 2014

My name is Conner Fraker and I am in seventh grade at the El Paso Jewish Academy. My parents are Liz and Trey Fraker. I have two brothers, Andrew and Zachery.

I enjoy spending time with my family, friends and playing football. When I grow up, I would like to be a football player.

My Bar Mitzvah will be on December 13, 2014 at Congregation B’nai Zion. I think the date, 12-13-14, is pretty cool because there will not be another consecutive date until the next century.

This day means a lot to me because I can now be part of a minyan. I can now put on tefillin and a tallit. I look forward to growing up in the Jewish community and being a contributing member of our congregation.

I have chosen the Animal Rescue League for my mitzvah project. I am fortunate to have adopted our dogs from there and would like to make our community aware of how much they depend on donations and volunteers.

I’m grateful to my parents, my brothers and Rabbi Leon for helping me prepare for this special day.

Honor a Loved One or Acknowledge a Special Occasion

Add a leaf to B’nai Zion’s “Tree of Life”

$200 per leaf
$1000 per plaque
We are saddened by the passing of our beloved member

Eleanor Carroll

and extend our heartfelt condolences to her family and friends.

May her memory forever be a blessing.

Please join us for the unveiling of the monument of our beloved member

Joel Kleinfeld

at the B’nai Zion Cemetery on

Monday, December 22

1:00 pm
Building Fund
yahrzeit for father, Emil Reisel
Holli Berry
Cantor David Leon

Biblical Gardens
in memory of Duffy Stanley
Sam and Lenore Kobren & family
yahrzeit for father, Emil Reisel
Jay and Dr. Mimi Gladstein
yahrzeit for father, Jake Kobren
Sam Kobren
in memory of Mimi Lait
Sam and Lenore Kobren

Dorothy Eisenberg
Garden of the Living

happy birthday to Amy Goldfarb
Susan Eisen
speedy recovery to Ann Schaechnor
Susan Eisen
speedy recovery to Barbara Ettinger
Susan Eisen
Bernie and Selma Chasens on their 70th anniversary
Susan Eisen
yahrzeit for grandmother,
Diane Friedman
Cindy Cohen
Rick and Leslie Otis
yahrzeit for mother-in-law,
Diane Friedman
Jack Eisenberg
in memory of Dr. Irvin Goldfarb
Susan Eisen
in memory of Eileen Licht
Susan Eisen
in memory of Henry Kellen
Susan Eisen
in honor of Jack Eisenberg on his 65 years of working and building American Finance Co.
Susan Eisen
best wishes to Milton Cherno on his 90th birthday
Susan Eisen
in memory of Mimi Lait
Susan Eisen

in memory of Rabbi Ken Weiss
Susan Eisen
in memory of Sally Gulbas
Susan Eisen

General Donation Fund
mazel tov to Alia Ureste on her appointment as commissioner to the Texas Genocide and Holocaust Center
Dr. Neil and Joyce Gronich
Lisa Mitchell
condolences to Amy Marcus on the loss of her mother, Mimi Lait
Adam and Dana Frank

Hymer and Vicki Rosen
Memorial Fund
yahrzeit for mother, Anna Butcher
Victor and Lynn Butcher
in memory of Hymer Rosen
David, Cheryl and JoAn Rosen
Victor and Lynn Butcher

Marvin Nadler
USY Room Fund
in memory of Eileen Licht
Gary and Lisa Nadler and family
condolences to Steve Lauterbach on the loss of his mother,
Judy Lauterbach
Gary and Lisa Nadler and family
mazel tov to Jack and Sandy Peitzer on the birth of their granddaughter
Gary & Lisa Nadler and family
mazel tov to Rabbi Stephen Leon on his special birthday
Gary and Lisa Nadler and family
in memory of Sam Kimmelman
Gary and Lisa Nadler and family

Rabbi's Fund
congratulations to Alia Ureste on her appointment to The Texas Holocaust & Genocide Commission
Mark and Patty Hutman
congratulations to Herb and Brenda Ehrlich on their granddaughter’s bat mitzvah
Marc and Ruthlee Rose
in memory of Leonard Krugman
Dina Braun and family
yahrzeit for father, Louis Greenberg
Amy Wilson
in memory of Mimi Lait
Felicia Rubin
Jay and Carolyn Kaplan
yahrzeit for husband, Moses Holland
Rose Holland
congratulations to Jack and Sandy Peitzer on the birth of their granddaughter
Jay and Roni Spetalnick
yahrzeit for grandmother,
Rachel Evans
Dr. Harvey Greenberg
in memory of our mother,
Sallye Engman
Scott Feldt
Shari Delaney
Staci Engman

Ruth and Ted Carr
Cemetery Fund
condolences to Barry Karch on the loss of his mother, Brenda Karch
Dorene Naparstek and family
yahrzeit for mother, Ida Cinofsky
Dorene Naparstek
in memory of Isaac Gniazdowitz
Dorene Naparstek and family
yahrzeits for father, Isadore B. Goodman, mother, Fan S. Goodman, and brother-in-law, Haim Ettinger
Barbara Ettinger
in memory of Mimi Lait
Kenneth and Joan Korn
condolences to Scott Feldt on the loss of his mother, Sallye Engman
Lester and Cherryl Lieberman
Dorene Naparstek
condolences to Carl and Natalie Scoggin on the loss of their son
Lester and Cherryl Lieberman

Talmud Torah Fund
happy anniversary to Abe and Annette Goldberg
Louis and Miriam Rosenbaum
happy birthday to Amit Toren
Louis and Miriam Rosenbaum
in memory of Brenda Karch
Herb and Brenda Ehrlich
in memory of Eileen Licht
Louise Rice
in memory of Eric Rose,
father of Linda Corral
Louis and Miriam Rosenbaum
happy birthday to Ina Kurland
Louis and Miriam Rosenbaum
mazel tov to Harold Peitzer on the birth of his great-granddaughter
Louis and Miriam Rosenbaum
Our synagogue thanks you so much for your donations and support.

Donations

condolences to Fe Moskovic (NJ) on the loss of her mother
  Louis and Miriam Rosenbaum
happy anniversary to Sam and Lenore Kobren
  Louis and Miriam Rosenbaum
condolences to Scott Feldt and family on the loss of his mother,
  Sallye Engman
  Maurice Kurland
happy anniversary to Stanley and Elena Goldman
  Louis and Miriam Rosenbaum

Teens to Israel Fund
congratulations to Richie and Leslie Grodin on the birth of their grandchild
  Dana Maranz
in memory of the parents of Tova Herman
  David and Tita Kaplan
wishing a speedy recovery to Marvin Roth
  Sam and Gayle Belford
in memory of Mimi Lait
  David and Tita Kaplan
  Sam and Gayle Belford
  Don and Lynette Brown

USY Fund
in memory of Eileen Licht
  Helen Eiland
condolences to Scott Feldt on the loss of his mother, Sallye Engman
  Bernie and Selman Chasens
  Dr. Jerry and Marcia Schwartz

*Donations made after November 15 will appear in the next Messenger

Our synagogue thanks you so much for your donations and support.

Thank You

for sponsoring the Kiddush Lunch during this past month:
  ~ Linda & Art Corral in memory of Linda's grandparents, Gizela & Julius Rosenzweig and Beatrice & B.J. Baker
  ~ Robin Gold for sponsoring the Kiddush lunch in honor of the special birthday of her mother, Helen Berman
  ~ Laura and Manny Corral for sponsoring the Kiddush Lunch in memory of their granddaughter, Savanah Valdez

for sponsoring the bagel breakfast during this past month:
  ~ Linda and Art Corral in memory of Linda's father, Eric Rose

If you are interested in sponsoring a Friday evening Oneg Shabbat, Saturday morning Kiddush Lunch, Saturday afternoon Seudah Shlesheet, or Sunday morning Bagel Breakfast in honor or in memory of a loved one, please call the Synagogue office for more information or to make arrangements.

We appreciate your support!

Merrill Lynch
Walter Chayes
Vice President
Senior Financial Consultant
4669 North Mesa
534-3110

Chaplain’s Catering
Gerry Chaplain
3950 Doniphan, Suite P
El Paso, TX 79922
(915) 585-0595
chaplainscatering@att.net
First Adult B’not Mitzvah Class

In 1981, these ladies comprised the first adult b’not mitzvah class at B’nai Zion. They studied for a year with Rabbi Stanley Herman, Cantor Edwin Gerber and Education Director Eli Amar. They are:
Front row: Sallie Gulbas, Alma Goldfarb, Bertha Davidoff, Rachel Frank
Middle row: Mary Freed, Shari Daniels, Mary Scheiner, Bea Farb, Ana Brown, Beth Lipson
Back row: Vivian Siegel, Eileen Licht, Ruth Coppersmith

Congregation B’nai Zion, B’nai Zion Sisterhood and B’nai Zion USY are all beneficiaries of

THE Jewish Federation OF EL PASO building community

It’s time to place your order for the 2015 Mah Jongg cards

Please make checks out to Marcia Schwartz (cash is also accepted).
$8.00 standard size, $9.00 for large
The rebate from the sales will be donated to the El Paso Chapter of Hadassah.

Deadline is January 16, 2015
Contact Marcia Schwartz for more information
### December 2014

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