



Synagogue of the Hills - 417 North 40th Street - Rapid City, SD
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Tu B'Shevat

Sounds of silence- not

It is dark when I awake in the morning and just as dark when I go to bed – it is dark when I feed my horses and yes, you guessed it, it is dark when I do my barn chores at night. The winter doldrums have clearly caught me in a vise grip, eagerly awaiting that first blade of new grass which is still, many months away. The seasonal agricultural calendar here in western South Dakota is taking its toll – the cows are no longer grazing, they are being fed by their keepers, the tractors, along with the haying equipment, lie dormant in the barns awaiting the call of spring, and winter chores, including breaking ice in the water troughs, become a daily ritual. But off in the seasonal distance we sense a stirring, ever so subtle at first, but present, nonetheless – the first sounds of winter silence are disturbed as the first footsteps of spring are heard off in the distance. A shadow is created by the first light of a lengthening day, there is a buzz in town created by the upcoming Stock Show, and it won't be long, generally by the middle to end of February, when the bawling of newborn calves will be heard on the ranches across this country – can the first blades of new grass be far off?

So too, the Jewish calendar is marked by seasonal mile markers – *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, followed then by *Simchat Torah* and *Shemini Azsertz*, our descent into the wintry darkness and gloom seems to accelerate at a maddening pace. The onslaught of darkness is interrupted by the festive lights of the *Channukiah* during the eight days of *Hanukkah*, but darkness prevails. Like that first shadow created by the

light of the lengthening day, the holiday of *Tu B'Shevat* heralds that first glimmer of hope for new life – new agricultural life.

We Jews are complicated people – we *kvetch* and whine and argue over the smallest and sometimes silliest of things – in synagogue do you stand or sit when reciting the *Shema*; how much Hebrew should a *Shabbat* service contain, does one wear a black *kippah* or colored one, what should be the texture of the *matzah* balls and should one follow the Ashkenazic or Sephardic tradition of eating beans and rice on *Pesach* – the debate continues....and will continue as long as there are Jews. In that spirit, the question is posed: how many new year celebrations should there be? A simple question you say, deserving of an equally simple answer. In the secular world, yes, simplicity reigns – one new year celebration. For us Jews, simplicity, well, not so much. You see, we learn from the *Mishnah*, tractate *Rosh HaShanah* 1:1, that there are four, yes, count them, four new years. The first is the first of *Nisan*, the new year for kings and festivals. The second new year is celebrated on the first of *Elul*, the new year for animal tithes. The third new year, the first of *Tishrei*, the date from which we calculate the sabbatical year and jubilee. Finally, the fourth new year, the first of *Shevat* (according to the school of Shamai), the date for calculating the beginning of the agricultural cycle for the purpose of the biblical tithe – which was argued by the school of Hillel, to be the fifteenth of *Shevat* – thus, *Tu B'Shevat*. The rabbis decided in favor of the school of Hillel formalizing the fourth new year as *TuB'Shevat* (the Hebrew letter *tet* which has a numerical value of 9 and letter *vav* which has the numerical value of 6 thus creating the festival of *Tu B'Shevat* ($9 + 6 = 15$) which is celebrated on the fifteenth of the month of *Shevat*.

The festival of *Tu B'Shevat* is the day that marks the beginning of a “new year” for trees. This is the season in which the earliest-blooming trees in the Land of Israel emerge from their winter sleep and begin a new fruit-bearing cycle. We mark the day of *Tu B'Shevat* by eating fruit, particularly from the kinds that are singled out by the Torah in its praise of the bounty of the Holy Land: grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. On this day we remember that “man is a tree of the field” ([Deuteronomy 20:19](#)), and reflect on the lessons we can derive from our cyclical agricultural heritage.

As for me, the festival of *Tu B'Shevat* signals the beginning of the end of the winter doldrums, a time during which we throw off the shackles of the wintry cold and gloom – a time when the wintry sounds of silence will be heard no more – at least for this year. ✨

Chag Sameach

Services and Events

Calendar for Services and Events

February

February 6, 2015 - Shabbat
Services 7:30 with Rabbi Sara

February 7th - Torah Study 10:00,
Adult Education 1:30

*Check your email for upcoming
services and events



*Kindle the taper like the steadfast star
Ablaze on evening's forehead o'er the earth,
And add each night a lustre till afar
An eightfold splendor shine above thy hearth.*

*Emma Lazarus
The Feast of Lights.*

The Shofar is how the members of the Synagogue of the Hills communicate with each other. That is, *The Shofar* is a monthly forum for matters of interest that is a bit more formal than a remark over a cup of coffee, but a bit less formal than a written statement to the Board of Director. It could be a birth announcement, a press release, a photograph, a public service blurb, a letter to the editor (that's me, Leonard Running), a joke, a cartoon, an opinion, anything that YOU think might be important or entertaining to our family.

Your contributions are welcome . . . no, critical to the well-being of the synagogue.

You can send emails to bhshul1@gmail.com or anything in paper form to the address on page 1.

Let *The Shofar* be heard!

The Rabbi's Corner



Greetings from Rabbi Sara Eiser

It's difficult to imagine here in Cincinnati and very likely also in Rapid City, but Wednesday officially begins the season of spring in Israel. With the blooming of the almond blossom, *Tu B'Shevat* signals to us that the cold darkness we banished at *Chanukah* is gone for another year.

This holiday, often forgotten or glossed over because of our different seasonal markers, is one that can help to refresh us in what is often seen as the dead of winter. Even as we continue to get snow, we know that in Israel this winter is fading and new life is sprouting.

This is the beginning of our raucous celebrations of spring. Next is *Adar*, the month where we increase our joy daily until our liberation from certain death with the courage of Esther. After that, the *Pesach* rush begins, and we begin to truly feel the coming of spring here in America.

At our adult education session on February 7th at 1:30pm, we will explore the new ritual of a *Tu B'Shevat* seder. Please come and enjoy this ritual created since the birth of the state of Israel to celebrate the bounty of the Promised Land and connect us to the joy of the upcoming spring.



Until we meet again,

Sara Eiser

Chanukah 2014



The Chanukah party was held for the first time on the grounds of Synagogue of the Hills- December 21, 2014

There was a great turn out from the community with good food eaten by the lights of the members' menorahs.

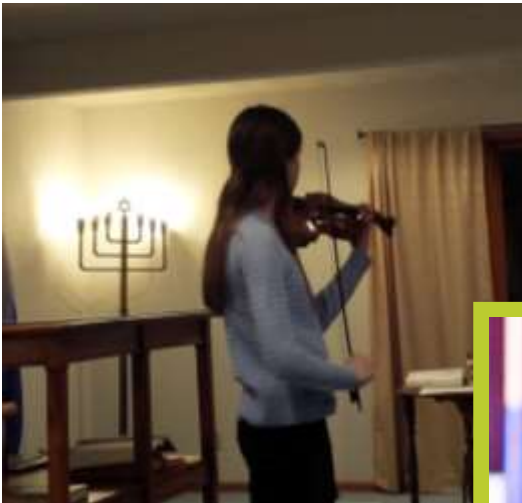


Our synagogue president lights the menorah as his wife looks on with our newest member, baby Draven.



Community News

Barb set up a *Havdalah* Service and reception at the Synagogue on Saturday, January 17th. It featured ‘*Nigun*,’ a violin solo composed by Ernest Bloch, a 20th century Jewish composer and was performed by Ingrid Anderson, a freshman at Stevens and competitor for a place in the Black Hills Symphony’s Young Performers Concert in March. It was not only an artistic experience; it was a cultural experience.



Ingrid Anderson performed the “Improvisation No. 2 from Baal Shem” by Ernest Bloch on January 24thand won!



Photo courtesy of the Rapid City Journal

...more news



As our synagogue President, Steve Benn, mentioned in a previous email, the Associated Press ran a story about our little group. I was given a clipping of that story on a recent trip to Arizona. While the reason for the trip was sad it was still comforting to me to have a reminder like this that our world truly is very small and we are all blessed for the connections that we share.

*This clipping, which came from the Long Island, NY paper, Newsday, can be seen on the bulletin board at the synagogue.



The Eisers at Bear Butte (Sara, Keith, Tobias, Naomi, and Ramona). Rabbi Sara and her family were able to enjoy some of the sights in the Black Hills during the MLK Jr. Holiday.

Book Group

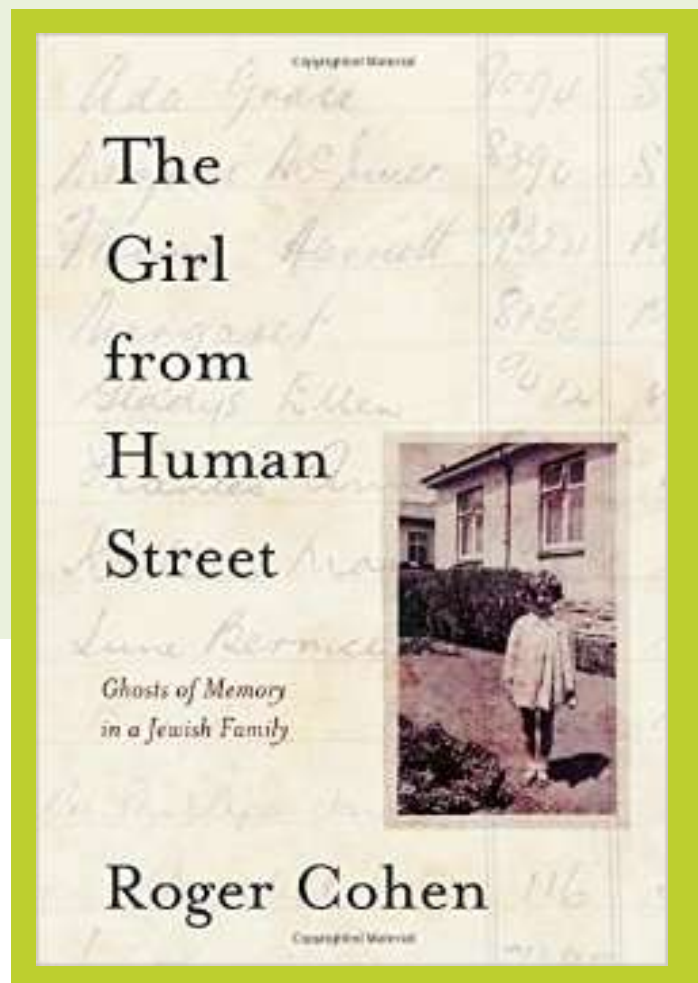
There was a prior suggestion to start a book group which I would like to revisit. Anyone interested in participating is welcome to attend the first meet-up for this group.

**Sunday, February 15 at 2pm
at Books-A-Million**

The book suggested is *The Girl from Human Street*, a memoir written by Roger Cohen. If anyone would like to also suggest a fiction book please feel free to do so. The time frame to read the book/books will be discussed at the meet-up.

I can be reached at
mychel.fish@gmail.com
for any more information.

-Michelle Fish



“A religious man is a person who holds God and man in one thought at one time, at all times, who suffers harm done to others, whose greatest passion is compassion, whose greatest strength is love and defiance of despair.”

— Abraham Joshua Heschel

Member Profile



Stan and Lynda Adelstein

“Nothing,” said Stan Adelstein; “nothing,” he said again; “nothing,” he said one more time in case there might be some misunderstanding, “was done alone,” describing his long career of service in the business and political community in the Black Hills of

South Dakota. He said it is also true of his life as a member of the Synagogue of the Hills.

Lynda Clark Adelstein works in the Black Hills’ arts community as an artist, arts entrepreneur and member of the South Dakota Arts Council (her picture, *Blight*, is featured on page 10). Lynda has been involved in the Jewish community for fifteen years and describes her experience of the Jewish congregation as being with “warm welcoming friends who think seriously and positively about religion.” And in the Hills, that also involves figuring out how to be accepted and, at the same time, to be true to the tenets of Judaism.

Stan admits that he enjoys giving speeches, being well-known and having influence. He is quick to point out, though, that there is no disconnect between these and being a leader who leads by allowing people to discover brilliant solutions for themselves and facilitating their accomplishment. (continued on the next page)

Gift Shop

Autographed copies of *Jewish Pioneers of the Black Hills Gold Rush* written by our talented member, Ann Stanton, are on sale for \$21.20, which includes tax. Part of your purchase is *tzedakah* - \$5.00 from each copy will go to the Synagogue. You are welcome to shop anytime you are in the building. Please remember to add 6% sales tax to your total (there is a tax chart on the wall in the gift shop). Payments may be left in the black payment box on the desk. Thank you!

Stan also admits to a time when, until recently, he felt uncomfortable working in the prevailing Christian culture. Then one day, one of his friends in the Protestant community spoke of Jesus as a *tzadik*, or righteous one— someone who approaches all aspects of his or her life with righteousness and justice. Since that time he has felt more freedom and acceptance in his business and personal life.

It is easy to tell that beyond devotion to their respective professional and philanthropic endeavors, Stan and Lynda are devoted to each other and find wonderment at the opportunity to work, live and worship in the Black Hills. ✡



Blight
Lynda Clark Adelstein

Yahrzeits

"to remember is to keep alive"

The following *yahrzeits* will be observed:
Attendance at services is encouraged so *Kaddish* may be recited.

In Memoriam:

Louis R. Fish, father of synagogue member, Irwin Fish
passed away Thursday, January 8th/ 17th Tevet 5775, at his home in Green Valley, Arizona

Bernice Klapkin 13 Shevat, 5770
Sister-in-law of Mary Ingram

Cecelia Haber 19 Shevat, 5745

Max Smurlofsky 24 Shevat, 5744
Father-in-law of Mary Ingram

William Carroll 25 Shevat, 5770
Brother-in-law of Mary Ingram

Paul Americus 28 Shevat
Father of Ilene Americus

Death is merely moving from one home to another. The wise man will spend his main efforts in trying to make his future home the more beautiful one."

-Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgenstern of Tomashov (the Kotzker Rebbe)



Remember:

Challah and the Oneg

The Colonial House has challah available on any Friday after 12:00 noon. It is very helpful for someone to volunteer to pick up the challah and prepare the oneg after services.

If you want to help out by picking up the two loaves and set up the oneg in our synagogue kitchen please notify Leonard at 348-0805. You could even bring your own homemade challah or specially purchased oneg snacks.

If you have something special to celebrate, commemorate, or just want to bring something for the joy of it, there is an oneg sign-up sheet on the bulletin board, or you can call or email by Wednesday, noon, of the week for which you wish to volunteer.

THANK YOU!



TREE OF LIFE DONATIONS

You may purchase a leaf in honor of, or in memory of a loved one or special occasion. Leaves cost \$100.00, each. Please provide the wording you would like inscribed on the leaf (29 characters and 4 lines maximum).

Please send acknowledgment to _____

All donations are tax deductible; please consult your tax expert for details.

Your continued support of Synagogue of the Hills is greatly appreciated!

I would like to make the following donation to Synagogue of the Hills:

My Name _____

In memory of _____ In honor of _____

anniversary ~ birth ~ graduation ~ appreciation ~ birthday ~ marriage ~ bar or bat mitzvah

Donation amount _____

Please make check payable to: Synagogue of the Hills and mail to 417 N 40th St, Rapid City, SD 57702

The following is a list of funds to which the donations can be made; Please circle your choice.

Building Fund ~ General Fund ~ High Holy Days Flower Fund ~ Oneg Fund ~

Endowment Fund ~ Tzedakah Fund ~ Other _____