

SYNAGOGUE

VOLUME XVIII, NUMBER 6 WWW.SHALOMPCS.COM FEBRUARY 2013

THE RABBI'S COLUMN: BAD NEWS/GOOD NEWS: MORE GUN DEATHS... BUT A SMART AND HOPEFUL NEW BOOK

By Mark Sameth

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PLEASANTVILLE

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First the Bad News:

ALBUQUERQUE, NM, January 21: Five Dead; Teen Accused in Killing Spree.

LAS VEGAS, NV: January 21: Las Vegas Officer, Wife and Son Dead in Murder-Suicide

HOUSTON, TX, January 22: Gunfire at Texas College Sparks Lockdown, Evacuation, Fears of Another Campus Massacre: 3 Hurt

And these just over the few days leading up to my writing this column.

And Now Some Good News:

A collection of essays on how to reduce gun violence, written by some of our best and brightest, will be released as a book next week. In the Foreward to *Reducing Gun Violence in America: Informing Policy with Evidence and Analysis*, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg writes: "The rate of firearms homicides in America is twenty times higher than it is in other economically advanced nations. We have got to change that."

The Johns Hopkins University convened more than 20 of the world's leading experts on gun violence and policy to summarize relevant research and recommend policies that are both constitutional and have broad public support. Collected for the first time in one volume, this reliable, empirical research and legal analysis will help lawmakers, opinion leaders, and concerned citizens identify policy changes to address mass shootings, along with the less-publicized gun violence that takes an average of 80 lives every day. Reducing Gun Violence in America: Informing Policy with Evidence and Analysis, by Daniel W. Webster, Editor, Jon S. Vernick, Editor, Michael R. Bloomberg, Foreward. You can pre-order this book - due out next week - from The Village Bookstore, 10 Washington Avenue, Pleasantville, NY, (914) 769-8322. Support your local bookstore.

Please contact the White House to express your support for the new gun control measures. Here's the link: http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/prevent-ing-gun-violence#share. Please sign the petitions at Demand A Plan, Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, One Million Moms for Gun Control, We The People, and Americans for Responsible Solutions.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Webster defines 'Community' as, "A body of people living in one place or district and considered as a whole; a group with common interests or origins; fellowship, being alike in some way."

The love, care, devotion, dedication and loyalty of our particular very special community that is PCS, is demonstrated so well in three very special upcoming events. These are the PCS Progressive Dinner on February 2nd, the Purim Shpiel on March 2nd, and PCS' Palooza Week in mid-March.

Camaraderie, similarities, diversity, warmth and sincerity, are the backdrop and underpinnings of the Progressive Dinner (starting out in one home for appetizers, moving to another host for dinner, and finally everyone reconvening at another home for dessert).

While the aforementioned qualities are the backdrop as well for the Purim Shpiel, this PCS centerpiece event has become our annual signature evening with respect to a night of food, comedy, a show and dancing. Thanks to so many of our own dedicated people who comprise the Purim Shpiel Committee, this event gets bigger, better, more elaborate, enjoyable and elegant every single year.

PCS Palooza Week is a week's compilation of events, ranging from films, to yoga, to lectures, to music, etc., with a diverse variety of aggregate events and activities geared for the entire family. Somewhere in the week's schedule and plans there is literally something for everyone. Take a look and pick an activity.

If you've attended any of these three events in the past you

know exactly what I'm describing and how special each of them is. If you haven't experienced them, I would encourage you to attend for a most enjoyable night out with fellow members of the community.

- Jerry Neuburger

COMING SOON! GREAT PCS EVENTS!

Pleasantville Community Synagogue Mission Statement

Pleasantville Community Synagogue is a transdenominational, inclusive community, a spiritual home deeply rooted in Torah (study), Avodah (prayer), and Gemilut Chasadim (deeds of loving-kindness). We seek to facilitate lifelong spiritual growth by engaging each member wherever that member may be on life's journey, embracing all generations. We encourage Tikkun Middot (repair of the self) and Tikkun Olam (repair of the world) through Jewish education for all ages, social action, Ahavat Yisrael (love of Israel), and a commitment to the understanding and fulfillment of mitzvot. We are a highly participatory community which relies on the commitment of time and energy from all members and which aspires to become an integral part of each member's life and their family's lives.

HEBREW SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Ronni Metzger, Principal

January was a very busy month. Bet and Zayin classes enjoyed making challah; Hey and Vav had great fun making ceramic Havdallah plates and yads. The Hey class participated in a Saturday morning shabbaton and then led a beautiful Havdallah ceremony on Saturday evening at the end of the month, where they presented creative midrashim and recycled projects. All classes enjoyed learning about Tu B'shvat and tasting the various fruit and grain species! It was 'ta'im'(delicious!).

February starts off with the Dalet Shabbaton, where Mattea Schor will accompany the class on her harp in their performance of Oseh Shalom. It promises to be a very special Shabbat. The upcoming month is full of great activities, including challah making with the Gimel and Dalet classes and a pottery program with the Dalet class. Purim is February 23, 2013! Don't forget the megillah reading on the 23rd.

I am also very proud of the Vav class. They created a quilt blanket that they are raffling off. The proceeds of the raffle will go to Hurricane Sandy relief. If you want to buy a raffle, all checks are to be made payable to: UJA Federation of New York Hurricane Sandy Relief Fund. Contact me for more information. Yasher Koach to the Vav class on their generous community service project.

Please remember to hand in your Passover candy sales orders! The Seders are early this year!



ASK THE RABBI:Jewish History, Speed Bumps, and Nubby Kippot

On January 9 Rabbi Mark met with our 6th grade (Kitah Vav) class. Once again they really kept him on his toes! Here's a brief excerpt from that wide-ranging conversation:

JULIETTE FREEDMAN: What's the earliest Jewish history?

RABBI MARK: The earliest recorded history of the Jews dates back to a people called the Hapiru, or Habiru. Say it fast. What does it sound like?

LILY ROSENBAUM: Hebrew!

RABBI MARK: Yes. The Hapiru or Habiru were the earliest Hebrews, almost 4,000 years ago! We know about them because of stone inscriptions (called the Armana Letters). The name Hebrew means "the people who cross over" because the ancient Hebrews were nomads.

JULIETTE: When were the stones found?

RABBI MARK: I'll have to get back to you on that (answer: 1887).

ISAAC GORDIN: What language was it in?

RABBI MARK: One of the ancient Semitic languages, but again I'll have to get back to you! (answer: even though found in Egypt, the language of the stones is Akkadian).

ISAAC: Is the Muslim lineage through Esau?

RABBI MARK: Well, the line diverges after Abraham: Abraham and Sarah's son Isaac is the Jewish lineage; Abraham and Hagar's son Ishmael is the Muslim lineage. But Esau married Ishmael's daughter, and so there is also connection between Esau and Muslims. Still, in Jewish tradition Esau is also considered the forefather of the Romans. So it gets complicated! Abraham and Sarah were the first Jews; but Jews, Christians, and Muslims all trace themselves back to Abraham.

JULIETTE: So Adam and Eve were not Jewish?

RABBI MARK: Right. Adam and Eve were not Jewish; Noah was not Jewish.

LILY: But Noah talked to God!

RABBI MARK: Right. The Torah does not say you have to be Jewish to talk to God. That's one of the things I love about Judaism!

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK THE RABBI, CONTINUED

JULIETTE: Were Adam and Eve really the first humans?

RABBI MARK: Well, those are the names that the Torah gives to the first humans. We know from science that there was a first human male and a first human female. Scientists call the first human female "Mitochondrial Eve," and the first human male "Chromosomal Adam." But scientists also teach us that these first humans descended from, were evolved from apes. The story in the Torah doesn't tell us that. But the early rabbis used to say that the Torah is not here to teach us science; rather it's here to teach us values.

JULIETTE: So if the humans descended from the apes, who were the apes descended from?

RABBI MARK: The lemurs.

JULIETTE: And the lemurs?

RABBI MARK: From the amphibians, and before that from the fish, and before that from flagellated eukaryotes. The creation story in the Torah - of man and woman being created at the same time - comes to teach us a value: that boys and girls, men and women are equal.

ROSA HAHN: So you believe in both the Adam and Eve and the Big Bang?

RABBI MARK: That's a good way to put it, Rosa!

MICHELLE SIEGEL: Why is there no mention of Pharaoh's name in the Torah?

RABBI MARK: Michelle, you're very observant. Pharaoh is not a name; it's a title, like king. But did you know that Moses is not a name either?! Moses means "son of" as in the Pharaoh whose name was Tutmosis – meaning "Son of Tut."

MORAH ANNE: It also means "drawn from" as Moses was "drawn from" the water.

RABBI MARK: Thank you! Morah Anne is right. In Egyptian, "drawn from" and "son of" meant the same thing. You know who else is not named in the Torah? God! We have many names for God, but in Jewish tradition we never really pronounce the "true" name. Sometimes we say "HaShem" which means "The Name." That's because when we name something – like Adam was allowed to name the animals – it symbolizes that we have control.

MICHELLE: Why does Egyptian history not mention the Jews?

RABBI MARK: Ah, it does! An Egyptian stone mentioning Israel was found [note: the stone is called the Merneptah Stele, ca. 1210 BCE, and was discovered in 1896]. But listen to what the stone says: "Israel has been laid to waste; its seed is no more." Well we know that wasn't true, because here we are! But that's how it was - and is - sometimes. Nations make up stories of victory, even when there was no victory. It's a form of what's called propaganda.

ASK THE RABBI, CONTINUED

JODI ZIZMOR: Some people say that God is in the sky, and some people say that God is everywhere. What do you think?

RABBI MARK: I actually think both. Really. Here's what I mean. Since God made the spark that made the Big Bang, and since we're all literally made from the matter and energy of that spark, we're all made from nothing but God. But I also believe that there is more to God than even everything on Earth and in the Universe put together. God is the Universe, but more than the Universe too. Right here in each of us; and way, way beyond the sky, past the edge of the Universe. [Note to interested parents: this is called panentheism.]

JACOB FREIHEIT: So where is God?

RABBI MARK: I could say everywhere, I could say in the sky. Actually, my favorite answer comes from the Chassidic Master Reb Nachman of Bratzlov. "Where is God?" he asked. "Wherever you let God in!" Whenever we're kind and thoughtful and loving and forgiving, there's God.

JACOB: How old is God?

RABBI MARK: I used to say that God is infinitely old. But as I study science, I have come to believe that God actually has no age. How can I say that? Well, time was created when the Universe was created in the Big Bang. "Before" the Big Bang there was no time, but there had to be something to give birth to the Universe, and we call that God. Since all of us mark our age with time, and since there was no time before the Universe was created, God has no age!

LILY: What's in a mezuzah?

RABBI MARK: Inside a mezuzah is a piece of parchment with the words of the "Shema" (the Declaration of God's Unity) and two of the three paragraphs that make up the long Shema (including the Ve'ahavta). A mezuzah is like a spiritual speed bump. (By the way, when you are old enough to drive, and you get to a speed bump, promise me that you'll slow down!) OK, so the idea of the mezuzah is that every time we see one we slow down and think about what's next. When I was growing up we had one mezuzah, on the front door. But my wife grew up in a more traditional home, and so in our house today we have a mezuzah on every doorpost (expect for closets and the bathroom; not supposed to put them there). And so every time I walk from one room into another I have a chance to think about what comes next. May I be kind and attentive to my guests as I enter the living room. May I remember to be helpful when I come into the kitchen. May I be able to let go of my anger or irritation when I walk into the dining room. Spiritual speed bumps!

JODI: Why do we add candles each night of on Channukah? Shouldn't we be taking them away?

RABBI MARK: Did you ever have a friend but you disagreed with them about almost everything?! Well Hillel and Shammai were two great rabbis, but they disagreed all the time. Shammai said that we should take away one candle each night, to represent the oil burning down over the eight days. Makes sense! But Hillel said that even though that was true, Jews would never want to be about decreasing light in the world, but rather about increasing it. So even though Shammai was right about how it really looked, Hillel's view was accepted and followed because he was right about what it really means!

LILY: Why do we have a shamash and what does it stand for?

RABBI MARK: We need a light from which to light each of the eight lights which stand for the eight days. As for what the shamash stands for, what do you think?

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK THE RABBI, CONTINUED

LILY: Maybe it stands for God, who starts it all.

ROSA: Or for life in general.

MICHELLE: Or maybe the shamash is God, and we're the candles.

ISAAC: Or the shamash is the Torah, because the Torah teaches us.

RABBI MARK: Wow. I think all of you are right. What you just did is called "Midrash." That's a story, an interpretation, meant to "search out" meaning. They're never right or wrong, they just give us different ways of understanding and deepening our appreciation. Guys, that was great!

HANNAH KLEIN: So this is sort of a comment. I have cousins, and they're Orthodox, and there's a type of kippa that they wear, it's nubby; do you know what I mean? Is that a popular kippa for the Orthodox?

RABBI MARK: I know that style of kippa very well; I wear a white "nubby" kippah on Rosh Hashanna and Yom Kippur. Yes, I think that style is very popular with some of the Orthodox, such as the Breslovers. But anyone can wear them.

GRIFFEN RAKOWER: (AND JULIETTE): Why do boys wear kippot, but girls don't?

RABBI MARK: It's not true that only boys wear kippot. Many girls wear them on the day of their Bat Mitzvah; some girls wear them all the time. Cantor Isabel wears one all the time. There are all sorts of kippot today, with sports teams, with decorations. Girls who want to wear kippot absolutely should wear them!





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WHOSE ETERNAL CITY?

JERUSALEM: PAST AND PRESENT



An exciting evening of lecture and discussion with

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Professor of Jewish
Education at the Jewish
Theological Seminary

Wednesday, Feb. 27: From Roman Imperialism to Ottoman Sovereignty Thursday, March 14: From European Imperialism to Israeli Sovereignty

Prof. Tauber's past lecture series, "Visions of Modern Israel" and "Battle Lines: Great Schisms in Jewish History" has garnered her an enthusiastic following. We invite the PCS community and anyone interested to join us for this lively educational series and discussion. Light refreshments will be served.

Pleasantville Community Synagogue, 219 Bedford Road, Pleasantville, NY 10570 Contact: Ofri Felder at ofelder@optonline.net or call PCS at 769-2672.

Sponsored by the PCS Israel Action Committee

And please join us for another very special PCS event:

THE FUTURE OF JERUSALEM

THURSDAY, FEB. 14

AT THE HOME OF EVE-MARIE AND PETER SCHAFFER

Special guest presenter, Prof. Menachem Klein from Bar-Ilan University in Israel, will discuss the impact of Jewish-Arab relations in Jerusalem on past negotiations with the Palestinian Authority and future peace talks. Come hear a first-hand and thought-provoking perspective from a direct participant in the talks. Space is limited. For further details and to RSVP, please contact Ofri Felder at ofelder@optonline.net.

PROJECT EZRA

PCS will once again be collecting Passover food for Project Ezra, an organization that provides services to the frail elderly on the Lower East Side.



In many cases, this food is the only source of Passover food for Ezra's Elderly.

The following list comprises a Passover package. You can contribute any or all of them. Please pay close attention to the **foods in bold** that are most often missing from the packages. Project Ezra would appreciate your paying extra attention to obtaining them:

2 BOXES MATZO

1 CAN OR JAR OF SOUP (low sodium if possible)

1 JAR BORSCHT

1 JAR OR CAN OF GEFILTE FISH

JAM OR JELLY

1 DESSERT ITEM (CAKE, COOKIES, MACAROONS...)

2 CANS OF TUNA, SALMON OR SARDINES

1 BOTTLE GRAPE JUICE

1 BOTTLE VEGETABLE OIL

1 BOX MATZO FARFEL

INSTANT COFFEE OR TEA

1 SMALL JAR OF HONEY

2 CANNED FRUITS

2 CANNED VEGETABLES

All food must be current, marked **KOSHER FOR PASSOVER** (e.g., UP) and 2013. The kosher sign only is not acceptable for Passover use. Items must be brought to **PCS** by **noon on March 10** and placed in the boxes in the last row of pews that are marked for this purpose. **If you are interested in helping to make deliveries to Project Ezra recipients on the Lower East Side on Sunday, March 17, please e-mail Dalia Abott at daliakabott@gmail.com. Thank you for responding generously.**

NUTS OR DRIED FRUIT (Or anything special you'd like to add)



August 4 - 9, 2013

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TRYOUT SCHEDULE FOR JCC MACCABI GAMES:

Boys U14 Basketball (must be 13, but not 15 by July 31)

■ Sunday, Feb. 10, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

■ Sunday, Mar. 3, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Girls U16 Soccer (must be 13, but not 17 by July 31)

■ Sunday, Feb. 10, 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

■ Sunday, Mar. 3, 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Boys Soccer, Boys or Girls Tennis, Swimming, Table Tennis,
Bowling, Track and Field, or Dance (must be 13, but not 17 by July 31)

By appointment, call for information

*** Tryouts are at the Rosenthal JCC, 600 Bear Ridge Rd., Pleasantville. Please arrive 15 minutes early to register. Attendance at multiple tryout dates is strongly encouraged!

*** Parent information meetings will take place during tryouts.

AUDITIONS FOR JCC MACCABI ARTSFEST:

- Acting/Musical Theater Rock/Jazz Bands Dance
 - Visual arts Vocal Music Sports Broadcasting
 - By appointment, call for information

The JCC Maccabi Games is an Olympic-style sporting event that offers Jewish teens (13 – 16 years) the opportunity to compete in one of14 team/individual sports. The JCC Maccabi ArtsFest brings together Jewish teens to create, perform, immerse themselves in the arts, and learn from professional artists-in-residence. Teens in both events have the opportunity to participate in Days of Caring & Sharing community service projects, enjoy fun evening social events, make friends and create memories that will last a lifetime.

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7:15pm-9:15pm	7:30pm-9:00pm	7:30pm-9:30pm	7:30pm-9:30pm	7:30pm-9:30pm
Begins: October 18 th	Begins: October 10 th	Begins: October 25th	Begins: October 18 th	Begins: October 18 th

To register or for further information, contact WAJE Director Nina Luban waje@wjcouncil.org 914-328-7001









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FEBRUARY 2013 YAHR ZEITS

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Benjamin Jablow, Son of Andrea and Robert Jablow,	j
Brother of Terry Jablow	February 16
Ida Cohen, Mother of Hirsh Cohen	February 19
Sidney Dulberg, Grandfather of Lisa Lipkin	February 20
Ervin Golod, Father of Gaby Golod Greenwald	February 23
Sarah Havazelet, Mother of Tali Havazelet	February 26
Anthony Pistone, Father of Lillian Levine	February 26
Charlie Lubelsky, Father of Janice Sandbank	February 28
Barney Etkin, Uncle of Rhea Wolfthal	February 28



To All PCS Members:

If you or another member suffer personal tragedy or loss or are otherwise in need of help, please immediately call Rabbi Mark at 769-2672, and Michael Gold at 238-9219.

NEWSLETTER ACCEPTS ADS!

The PCS Newsletter is published monthly, online, from September through June, and it is emailed to every member family as well as to prospective members and some Jewish organizations.

If you provide professional or business services in the area, the PCS newsletter might provide some extra, valuable visibility. To arrange for your ad to appear in the newsletter, here's what you need to know:

* Deadlines:

Ads should be submitted by the 15th of the month. They can be emailed to Judy Chinitz at judyhope@ optonline.net or cristina@lightbodymusic.com.

* Ad Specifications:

Ads will be published in one size only: one-quarter page, which is approximately 3 $1/2 \times 4 3/4$ inches. The artwork should be provided by the advertiser.

*Advertising Rates:

The cost per ad (for 10 issues - no bulletin published in July and August) is \$100 for 1/4 page. Note: Checks preferred. Can be mailed to Pleasantville Community Synagogue, PO Box 148, Pleasantville, NY 10570 with "newsletter ad" in the memo section. To pay by credit card, please call the synagogue office at 914-769-2672.

SAVE THE DATE!



for Pleasantville Community Synagogue's

CELEBRATION 2013!

Saturday, March 2, 7-11 p.m.

~

A Sweet 16 Celebration

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PCS COMMITTEE CHAIRS

All the Committees of The Pleasantville Community Synagogue are eager for your participation and suggestions. If you'd like to get more involved in the life of the PCS community, this is the way to begin! Below are the names of the committees, their chairs, and contact information.

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B'nei Mitzvah

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edsperling@gmail.com

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We appreciate the thoughtfulness of those who support the Pleasantville Community Synagogue by remembering and honoring their friends and loved ones through their generous contributions.

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ROBIN WINTER

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER.

The PCS Newsletter is published monthly, online, from September through June. Articles and photos should be submitted by the 24th of the month. They can be e-mailed to Judith Chinitz, Editor, at judyhope@optonline.net or dropped off at the newsletter box in the Synagogue office.

Pleasantville Community Synagogue * 219 Bedford Road * Pleasantville, NY 10570 phone (914) 769 - 2672 fax (914) 769 - 1795

FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR YOUR SUPPORT

General Fund

Finances any need of the synagogue considered necessary by the Board of Trustees. All unspecified gifts are credited to the General Fund.

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

Supports various individuals, organizations and/or programs at the discretion of the Rabbi.

Building Fund

To preserve the beauty and functionality of our physical plant, and to build reserves for future expansion.

Hebrew School Emergency Scholarship Fund

Provides scholarships to children who would like to attend our Hebrew School and may not currently have the financial resources to do so.

Kiddush Fund

Your donation provides lunch after services on Shabbat morning: salads, bagels and pastry.

Ed Sperling Fund

Pleasantville Community Synagogue is collecting funds for Ed Sperling to help pay for equipment necessary and vital for his continued recuperation and rehabilitation.

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PLEASE NOTE: To help our bookkeeper, please issue separate checks for dues or other special events. All donations should be made payable to Pleasantville Community Synagogue (please indicate which fund in the memo section of your check).

KISLEV - ADAR 5773

February 2013 - PCS Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Hebrew High School/Rabbi's Comparative Religion Class, 11:30 am	Yoga Class at PCS, 7:15 pm	29	30	31	Kita Dalet Shabbaton and Pajama Shabbat PCS House Band 4:53pm-5:11pm - Candle lighting	9:00am Morning Meditation, ; Shabbat Service, Progressive Dinner Parashat Yitro 6:24pm-6:25pm - Havdalah (72 min)
Ask the Rabbi, 1st-2nd grades, 9 am Kita Zayin, 11 am	Yoga Class at PCS, 7:15 pm	5	6	7	PCS House Band 5:02pm-5:20pm - Candle lighting	9:00am Morning Meditation, ; Shabbat Service, Parashat Mishpatim Shabbat Shekalim 6:33pm-6:34pm - Havdalah (72 min)
Kita Zayin, 11 am Rosh Chodesh Adar	Yoga Class at PCS, 7:15 pm	12	13	14	5:11pm-5:29pm - Candle lighting	9:00am Morning Meditation, ; Shabbat Service, Parashat Terumah 6:42pm-6:43pm - Havdalah (72 min)
No Hebrew School	Yoga Class at PCS, 7:15 pm	19	20	No Hebrew School Ta'anit Esther Fast of Esther	5:19pm-5:37pm - Candle lighting	9:00am Morning Meditation,; Shabbat Service, Purim Megillah reading Erev Purim Shabbat Zachor Parashat Tetzaveh 6:50pm-6:51pm - Havdalah (72 min)
No Hebrew School Purim	Yoga Class at PCS, 7:15 pm	26	Jerusalem Lecture Series with Dr. Sarah Tauber	Board meeting, 7:30 pm	Shabbat Across America 5:27pm-5:45pm - Candle lighting	9:00am Morning Meditation, ; Shabbat Service, Bar Mitzvah - Zachary Jacobus Oseroff Parashat Ki Tisa PURIM SHPIEL! 6:58pm-6:59pm - Havdalah (72 min)

Note: Times and dates of events may change after the newsletter has come out. To get the latest information on any possible changes, please check the calendar on our website: www.ShalomPCS.com. Future months are also on the website.

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SAVE THE DATES:

Friday night, February 1: Pajama Shabbat

Saturday night, February 2: Progressive Dinner

Saturday night, February 23: Family Purim Celebration

Saturday night, March 2: Adult Purim Shpiel

Sunday March 10 through Sunday March 17: PCS Palooza Week

Sunday morning March 17: Intermarried Forum, 11:30 am

