



Upcoming Events

**4/4 7:00 pm Friday
Night Services at our
Chavurah House**

**4/5 Dessert Potluck &
GAME NIGHT at
7:00 pm at our
Chavurah House**

**4/13 5:30 Community
Passover Seder on
the patio of our
Chavurah House**

**4/18 Friday Night
6:30 pm Kosher for
Passover Potluck
7:30 pm Lay Led
Services at our
Chavurah House**

**4/1 5:30 pm Board
Meeting at Carol
Friedman's home**

The Maggid

C O N G R E G A T I O N E T Z C H A I M

P O B O X 3752 MERCED CA 95344

A P R I L 2025

President's Notes

Hello, Etz Chaim friends and family!

First, let me say thanks to the nearly 30 people who joined in last month's Purim on *Gilligan's Island* event. It was wacky and fun! I've never seen Haman trip and fall so many times as when performed by "Gilligan" (Henry). All those tropical decorations we used have inspired a summer luau event, so be on the lookout for a notification in a few months!

Just as the weather is inconsistent, hot one day and rainy the next, April is also a month of ups and downs in the Jewish world. We start a month of happy-somber-happy events with formal services on 4th, followed by **Game Night** on Saturday, April 5th, at 7pm. Bring a dessert if you can and your favorite board game or two. We will have plenty to choose from, including Jackbox Games. Be warned – a few of us get pretty competitive!

Our biggest event of the month is naturally this year's Passover Community Seder on Sunday, April 13 – the second night of Passover. Our Community Seder will be on the patio of our Chavurah House and led by our very own Professor of Anthropology, Linda-Anne Rebhun, who presents Jewish history as you've never heard it before. This celebratory event will be followed the following Friday with a kosher-for-Passover potluck dinner and lay-led services. We won't be together as a congregation for Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) on the 23rd, Yom HaZikaron (Israel's Memorial Day) on the 30th, or Yom HaAtzmaut (Israel's Independence Day) on May 1st– events somber then joyous – so we encourage everyone to observe them with your own families.

The Passover Seder flier that appears in this Maggid was also emailed to you on March 25th, so you might feel some déjà vu.

Please RSVP by April 5th if you plan to participate.

B'shalom,
Belinda Braunstein

Pesach, Yom HaShoah, Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzmaut

Pesach - Passover (April 12-20, 2025)

- Passover commemorates the story of the Exodus, in which the ancient Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt.
- Pesach begins on the 15th day of Nisan and is commemorated for 8 days (in the US)

Yom HaShoah - Holocaust Remembrance Day (April 24, 2025)

- The 1st Holocaust Remembrance Day took place in Israel in December, 1949; the 1st official commemoration took place in 1951, and in 1959 it became a national Day of Remembrance
- Holocaust Remembrance Day takes place the week after Passover/ the week before Israel Independence Day
- At 10:00 AM Air Raid Sirens are sounded and everyone throughout the Country stops what they are doing, stands solemnly and reflects in silence, for two minutes.

Yom HaZikaron - Memorial Day (April 29/30, 2025)

- Yom HaZikaron was established to pay tribute to the soldiers who fell in Israel's War of Independence.
- Yom HaZikaron is now a memorial day for all fallen soldiers as well as victims of terrorist attacks
- At 8:00 PM the evening of Yom HaZikaron Air Raid Sirens are sounded and everyone throughout the Country stops what they are doing, stands solemnly and reflect in silence, for one minute.
- At 11:00 AM Air Raid Sirens are sounded and everyone throughout the Country stops what they are doing, stands solemnly and reflects in silence, for two minutes.

Yom HaAtzmaut - Independence Day (May 1st, 2025)

- Yom HaAtzmaut marks the establishment of the modern state of Israel
- The day that precedes Yom HaAtzmaut was established as Yom HaZikaron
- Yom HaAtzmaut celebrations begin as the sun sets at the end of Yom HaZikaron (April 30th.)
- 1st we remember those who have fallen, and then we pay tribute in celebration of our gratitude.

Our Fiscal Year is July - June

\$500.00 per Year per Family Unit

Please mail your 2024/ 2025 Dues payment to:

Congregation Etz Chaim

P O Box 3752

Merced CA 95344

For those who prefer, we do accept monthly Dues payments year round

Weekly Shabbat Challah Deliveries

September - Passover

Contact Rachel Hadley (rhadleyfam@gmail.com) for more information,

or to be added to or removed from the deliveries list

(Merced area deliveries only)

Purim



Our Gilligan's Island Purim Party was a terrific Success!

Rich Kleitman and Belinda Braunstein created a festive theme by decorating the house with leis, palm trees, string hammocks, and other 'island themed' wall and table décor.

So many people came, we overflowed our Chavurah House and had to set up the food tables outside, and still had a couple of people eating at the table in the kitchen.

Everyone outdid themselves with their potluck contributions!

We had lots of salads, including a taco salad, a fruit salad, a Chinese chicken salad and a couple of green salads, spinach dip with sourdough, as well as a wide variety of dinner choices including teriyaki chicken, latkes, rigatoni, corned beef, chicken pot pie, chicken gyoza... I don't recall it all, but there was LOTS of great food!

Dinner was followed by our short but well received Gilligan's Island themed Purim Spiel.

Big thanks to our GREAT Cast (in order of appearance):

Ruth Wax - who kept us on track as our Narrator

(Skipper) **Rich Kleitman - as the very agreeable, happily partying, mildly drunken, King Ahasuerus**

(Maryann) **Carol Madruga - as the beautiful and pragmatic women's rights activist Queen Vashti**

(Professor) **Belinda Braunstein - as the bushy eyebrowed and staunchly Jewish activist Mordechai**

(Ginger) **Linda Anne Rebhun - as the gorgeous but timid until she boldly stepped up, Queen Esther**

(Gilligan) **Henry Fultz - as the bumbling bad guy, Haman**

(Mr and Mrs Howell) **Carol Davis and Rachel Hadley - as the greedy guards who plotted to overthrow the King, Bigthan and Teresh**

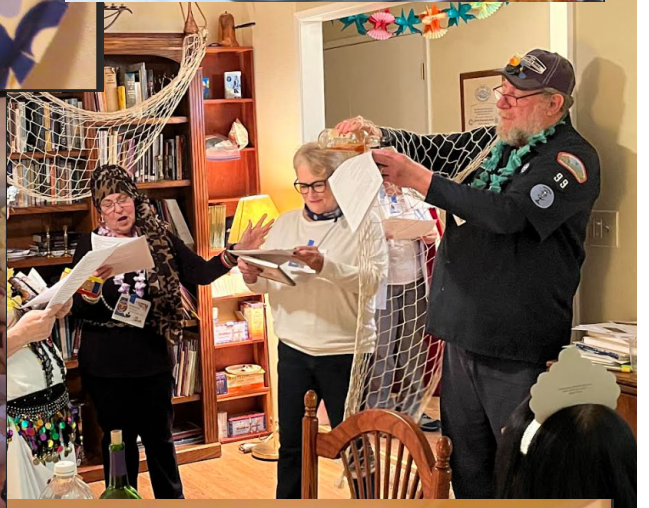
We ended our meal with lots and lots of Hamantaschen and an outstanding eclair cake for dessert!

Rich emceed a 'Guess Who I Am' game, which Henry won on his very 1st guess!!!

It was a very fun evening, and sparked interest in congregating again for a Pool Party Luau this summer.



Purim





2025 PASSOVER SEDER

WHEN: Sunday, April 13, 5:30 PM

Where: Our Chavurah House on Parsons Ave

What: **A traditional Seder Service and meal
led by our own Linda Anne Rebhun, including:**

Matzah, Gefilte Fish, Charoset, Chazeret, Egg, Maror, Parsley
Wine and Grape juice,
Chicken Soup with Matzah Balls
Brisket, Salmon,
Potatoes, Vegetables
Dessert



Cost: \$36.00 for adults
\$10.00 for children 12 and under



SEDER RESERVATION FORM

Return this form with your check by **April 5th** to reserve your place
(we need an accurate count to prepare the food)

Name: _____

Email/Phone: _____

Please let us know how many:

Specify number of:

____ Adults Brisket ____ Salmon ____ Vegetarian ____

____ Children under 12 Brisket ____ Salmon ____ Vegetarian ____

Deadline for reservations: **April 5th**



Mail check to:
Congregation Etz Chaim
PO Box 3752
Merced CA 95344





Please RSVP to Belinda at
bbraunstein@ucmerced.edu
to give us some idea
of how many people to expect

**Please join us on
Sunday, May 4th at 10:30 AM
on the Patio of our Chavurah House
for our
Annual Membership Meeting Brunch
And Vote (welcome) the 2025/ 2026 Board**

Etz Chaim 2025-2026

Proposed slate of officers

President – Belinda Braunstein (2nd of 2 year term) **V.P.** – Rich Kleitman

Secretary – Cathy Hofmann **Treasurer** – Rachel Hadley

Members at large - (each serves for two years)

John Kiriara – 1st year

Carol Friedman – 2nd year

Ardene Shaeffer - 1st year

John Hofmann – 2nd year

Sheryl Wight – 1st year

Linda-Anne Rebhun – 2nd year

Please RSVP to Rachel to ensure we have enough tables set.

Welcome to our Puzzle Page
Sudoku

4		2		6				
	6		1		3			
		1		9		6		
			8	1	6	2	3	
	3	9	2	5	7			
		8		4		3		
			9		5		1	
				7		8		5

Tributes

Anytime you are celebrating a special event, let us share in your joy.
We welcome tributes in honor or in memory of loved ones, births,
weddings, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, and honoring special events.

Send your Tributes to PO Box 3752 Merced CA 95344

Rachel Hadley - In loving memory of her sailing friend Tom Cooke
SaraJane Victor - In loving memory of her husband Marty
SaraJane Victor - In loving memory of her son Philip

May their memories be a blessing

זכרונם לברכה

SaraJane Victor - In Celebration of Passover

Other Planned Community Events

May 4 - Annual Membership Meeting and 2025/ 2026 Board Elections

June 6 -8 - Weekend at the Cabin with Rich Kleitman, in Sierra Village

October - April

1st Fridays: 7:00 Formal Lay Led Services with Torah Reading

3rd Fridays: 6:30 Potluck and 7:30 Lay Led Kabbalat Shabbat Services
at our Chavurah House on Parsons Ave

April Yahrtzeits

Eta Bauman
Herman Berger
Dina Braunstein
Abraham Braunstein
Vince Campi
Sol Drucker
Jacob Goodstein
Bill Hofmann
Saul Matlin
Eric Pollak
Fanny Rosenbaum
Diane Russell
Dulce Spangler
Hilda Strangarity
Abe Tenenbaum

Birthdays

Lyra Hofmann-Mook	4/18
Sebastien Csapo	4/20
John Kiriara	4/21
Greg Ambrosini	4/22
Ruth Wax	4/27

Campership

Please try to use it!
Amazon.com donates to our
Campership Fund when we
make purchases by accessing
them through the Amazon link
on our webpage
(www.jewishmerced.org)



*Those we remember in the
year of their passing:*

Wolf Rosenberg 06/2024
Marcia Rosenbaum 08/2024
Honora Helene Falk 12/2024
Stefanie Lotker 01/2025

זכרונם לברכה

May their memories be a blessing



John Hofmann and Greg Friedman have donated gallons of blood in the Congregation's name.
Any Congregant can access blood via the credit accumulated under the Congregation's name.