



Carnegie Shul Chatter

February 14, 2018



Candle lighting: 5:39 pm

Sabbath services: 9:20am

Isn't Purim Special Enough?

I usually write nice things about Chabad.

Their outreach programs have done a great job in getting Jews to come to the synagogue, and they do a tremendous job in Jewish education, especially their JLI (Jewish Learning Institute) classes.

They have dedicated rabbis (and rebbitzens), they have spread the Jewish message world-wide, and they have presented Orthodox Judaism in a way that has appealed to the young and old alike.

But today I am going to pick on Chabad just a bit.

Why?

Because in trying to make Purim as exciting as possible for the youngsters, they have gone, in my humble opinion, just a bit too far.



Pittsburgh Connections

I always love listening to Rabbi Danny Schiff.

Last week, Rabbi Schiff, the Foundation Scholar of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, spoke as the Freund Scholar in Residence at Sarasota's Temple Beth Shalom.

Rabbi Schiff spoke several times over the course of the weekend, and Ellen and I attended his lecture on Friday night as part of the Sabbath services.

And although Rabbi Schiff's talk was indeed excellent, what made the evening extra special was all of the Pittsburgh connections.

The Rabbi at Temple Beth Shalom in Sarasota is Rabbi Michael Werbow, who before coming to Sarasota was Rabbi at Congregation Beth Shalom in Squirrel Hill.

Also representing Pittsburgh, and in the area for the Federation's Snowbird event in Sarasota were Federation President Jeff Finkelstein, Senior Vice President & Chief Development Officer Brian Eglash, Dan Brandeis, Director, Foundation Resource Development, and Sharon Perelman, Associate Director/Director of Planned Giving.

Several other friends of ours from Pittsburgh and the South Hills were also in attendance.

It is great being here in Florida where baseball is getting underway and temperatures have been in the eighties. We certainly don't miss the snow, but we do miss our friends in Carnegie at Ahavath Achim.

This year, Chabad of the South Hills is having Purim in the Jungle (done previously here in Bradenton), including an exotic bird encounter, African drum circle, delicious African themed dinner, and African hair braiding. Really?

In Sarasota, the Chabad is having Purim in Italy including all sorts of Italian foods and Italian wine.

In Bradenton, the Chabad is doing Purim in Outer Space.

Really? Isn't the reading of the Megillah with groggers to spin when Haman's name is mentioned, enough? Is Purim becoming like Bar Mitzvahs, where everyone has to make his Bar Mitzvah bigger, more extravagant, and more expensive than the next guy's?

Now, all of these Chabads are also having a Megillah reading separate from the Purim extravaganzas, but I have to tell you that it is hard to find the details for the basic Megillah reading on their web pages.

And, to be honest, it's not just the Chabads. We went to the Conservative shul in Sarasota for a Megillah reading a couple of years ago. At least we thought we did. Part of the Megillah was read in between congregation members being arrested and held for ransom by the congregation's kids. Then we found out that if we wanted to hear the entire Megillah, an important mitzvah, we would have to come back the following morning.

And don't even get me started about the one time we went to a reform shul, thinking it was conservative, and they read and enacted part of something *similar* to the Megillah, but we still aren't sure of exactly what it was.

Now, I am not a totally "old fuddy-duddy." I don't object to making Purim fun – it should be. But let's not lose the message amongst all of the nonsense.

Purim is about the heroic actions of Mordechai and Esther that saved the Jews from destruction by Haman. All of the rest should be secondary.

Yahrzeit Plaques

Commemorate a loved one by dedicating a yahrzeit plaque in his or her memory at the Carnegie Shul. These beautiful plaques, mounted on the sanctuary walls, are lit on the loved one's yahrzeit, Yom Kippur, and days when Yizkor is recited. The names are also read aloud from the Bimah during services on the Sabbath of the yahrzeit and on Yom Kippur. To purchase a plaque, for only \$175, please email Mike Roteman at mrmike7777@yahoo.com.



Please consider sponsoring a Kiddush in honor or in memory of a loved one, for only \$36. Your sponsorship will be announced from the bimah and in the weekly Chatter. To sponsor a Kiddush, email mrmike7777@yahoo.com.



SOUTH HILLS Town Hall Meeting

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21 - 7:00 PM
SOUTH HILLS JCC
345 KANE BLVD., 15243

Join South Hills Jewish Pittsburgh, JCC of Greater Pittsburgh, Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh and Brandeis University's Cohen Center of Modern Jewish Studies as we reveal a demographic snapshot of Jewish Pittsburgh, from a suburban perspective, as well as reviewing current patterns of Jewish engagement.

* The study was funded by the Jewish Federation's Community Foundation and was overseen by the Federation's Jewish Community Scorecard

**FREE AND OPEN TO THE ENTIRE
JEWISH COMMUNITY**

Snacks and refreshments provided.

RSVP: southhillsjewishpittsburgh.org/townhall



SOUTH HILLS
JEWISH PITTSBURGH



SOUTH HILLS JEWISH COMMUNITY

PURIM CARNIVAL

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25 • 12:15-2:30 PM
SOUTH HILLS JCC
345 KANE BLVD., 15243

- Carnival Games & Prizes
 - DJ & Music
- Inflatable Obstacle Course
 - Moon Bounce
 - Airbrush Tattoos
- Balloon artist
- Face Painting
- Pizza, Hamantaschen, Veggies, Snacks, & Drinks

Food and Admission are FREE. Games and activities at additional cost.

Unlimited Game Bracelets (\$10) can be purchased in advance at Beth El Congregation, Temple Emanuel and the South Hills JCC. Bracelets also on sale at the Carnival.

Register in advance and be entered for a chance to win gift cards and other prizes courtesy of South Hills Jewish Pittsburgh.

southhillsjewishpittsburgh.org/purimcarnival



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