

Rabbi's Column

It is a nice slow week this week. In the Torah portion we are ending the wilderness journeying by reviewing a few things that had not yet been covered, and doing the ever present slideshow of the journey. While the Sisterhood had their monthly meeting, i was able to go through an entire stack of papers which have been on my desk since the Seder (they were all Passover related pages that had been shlepped up and down the stairs, some of them since 2011.)

I do want to remind you about the Jim McKinnon Food Drive. Please bring breakfast related foods (as mentioned in a previous newsletter) to the Synagogue by July 22nd. Now that special events are over for a while, there will be a table set up in the usual place in the Social Hall where these donations can be placed.

I recently looked over the notes I made after last year's High Holidays, based on a meeting I held with Jason and Jeff. One item that was mentioned was no longer holding services on the Second day of Rosh HaShanah. On the Second Day, I had gone back to the way services were held traditionally, before the Roman Occupation changed the nature of the service.(The Talmud informs us that the reason the Shofar blowing was moved into the Musaf service was because when they heard the Shofar blown in the morning, the Roman Legionnaires would arrive, ready to quell the rebellion. When the Shofar was blown later in the day, they ignored it as no army would start gathering for an attack in the middle of the day. I do not think we need to worry about Roman Legionnaires any more.) I anticipate moving this change into the services on the First Day.

One of the things discussed in this week's Torah Portion is vows. One subset of vows made are those made by women. The Torah makes it clear that the menfolk surrounding a woman could free her from fulfilling any particular vow, if they declared that freedom upon hearing the vow from her. On most of the glances I have taken at this, it appears to be very patriarchal in nature, and not much concerned with women's desires. However, the text also states that if the menfolk do not free the woman from the vow when they hear it, she is obligated to fulfill the vow she made. This year I sort of see that this means the menfolk must listen to the women around them, hearing what they have to say. What the women say matters.

We should try to avoid putting our listening ears onto autopilot, anticipating what people are going to say before they have had the chance to say it.