HADASSAH NEWS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19, 7:30 PM CKI COMMUNITY BUILDING. After a short business meeting, Merv Rosenbaum will present a program "Israel/Ireland Similarities and Differences". The recently purchased video and VCR will be used for part of the presentation. This is BLUE BOX MONTH. Please bring it or a check for Hadassah Charity. Hostesses for the meeting are Ruth Johnson and Jean Rosenbaum. If you desire a child sitter during the meeting, inform Jean Rosenbaum (424-8765).

COMMUNITY NEWS


Congratulations to Jean and Merv Rosenbaum on the birth of their granddaughter, Elizabeth Eva Rosenbaum and to her parents, Hae-Soon and Steven Rosenbaum of Washington DC.

Thanks to Merv Rosenbaum and Ruben Linares for building the excellent storage cabinet for the Video equipment and other items, and to Don Teter for the paint job.

The community expresses its condolences to the family of Dora Weiner, a long-time former resident of Baytown, who passed away in Austin this past week.

Quotation of the week

In trying to find answers why so many Jews, affiliated and not affiliated with synagogues do not find it imperative or inspiring to attend prayer services, I have been told many times that the services are boring. I have given this answer much thought and have attempted to solve the situation by instituting creative and innovative prayer services. Still, the number of participants have not increased at services.

The conclusion that I reach is that it is not really boredom that lies at the root of one’s estrangement from prayer and thus the synagogue.

The prayers that are found in the prayerbook and form the tradition of our worship services have been a part of Jewish life for thousands of years. It has been woven into the fabric of the Jewish soul. Jewish prayer is as familiar to the Jew in Brazil as it is to the Jew in France; to the Jew in Canada as to the Jew in Hawaii. Jews in every community have made the same age old prayers a part of their identity and culture.

Here in America, it doesn’t matter to a great many Jews whether the prayers have a long tradition or are newly written. Our American Jews have it so good that prayer is not a necessity. If they were, what should we do? Get rid of some of the prayer and hold shorter services? One Jewish expression has done this and they too, have participation problems. Eliminate some of the laws and traditions, making it easier to live as a Jew? That too has been done, and it has not attracted more involved Jews. Chan some of the old songs for new ones and some of the old melodies to snappier more up-to-date ones? That too has been tried, after the first few times, people stayed away. Do away with the Rabbi’s sermon. In synagogues where that has been done a study session has been substituted, there was no noticeable change in attendance or participation.

I don’t think the boredom lies within the synagogue. It starts before one enters the synagogue. It starts in the home where Judaism is not a priority. It lies in the fact that most Jews are strangers to prayer and come expecting instant uplift and immediate inspiration.

One has to learn how to pray and then pray frequently and become familiar with prayer so that it becomes like a friend or a companion.

For those who know how to pray, and there are some, pray in the synagogue does not seem boring.—Rabbi Jacob S. Fries, Temple Beth Torah, Ocean, NJ.