

A Conversation with Ambassador Judith Varnai Shorer, Consul General of Israel to the Southeastern United States

The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte welcomes: **Ambassador Judith Varnai Shorer, Consul General of Israel to the Southeastern United States on Tuesday, February 23 at 7 PM in Sam Lerner Center for Cultural Arts.**

Ambassador Varnai Shorer will

address the Charlotte Jewish community for the first time in her new role, since she was appointed this past summer. Please join us as we hear her provide an update about current events in the Middle East from the perspective of the Israeli government as well as discuss her experiences as Consul General.

Ambassador Varnai Shorer is a

nearly 40-year veteran of the Israeli diplomatic corps. She is a former ambassador to both Hungary and Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as a former minister of congressional affairs at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, DC. Her most recent post was desk director at the Center for Policy Research.

Ambassador Varnai Shorer has substantial experience in the U.S.

and the Middle East. She speaks Hebrew, French, English and Hungarian and was born in Beer Sheva, Israel.

Space is limited. To RSVP please call or email Tal Stein, Director of Community Relations and Israel Affairs at tal.stein@jewishcharlotte.org or 704-944-6751. ☆



Judith Varnai Shorer

Tu B'Shevat

By Inbal Ozeri, Community Shlichah

First, in Hebrew it is: tet/vav which is tet=9 + vav=6 so it's the 15th of Shevat, which this year happened on Monday, January 25. Let's talk about the real meaning behind this holiday.

Tu B'Shevat is a post-Biblical holiday. The first reference to it appears in the Mishnah which lists four new years:

On the first of Nisan, the new year for the ancient reign of the Jewish kings and for the festivals;

On the first of Elul, the new year for the tithing of the animals;

On the first of Tishrei, the new year for the Sabbatical years and for the Jubilee years and for the planting of the vegetables;

On Tu B'Shevat, the new year for the trees.

(Mishnah, Tractate Rosh Hashanah, Chapter 1)

It is also called "Rosh HaShanah La'Ilanot" which means: new years for the trees.



Inbal Ozeri

And here is how it was observed:

In 1890, on Tu B'Shevat, Rabbi Ze'ev Yavetz took his students to plant trees in the agricultural colony of Zichron Yaakov. In 1908, the Jewish Teachers Union adopted this custom. Later on, in the early 20th century, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) devoted the day to planting eucalyptus trees. Today JNF schedules major tree-planting events in large forests every Tu B'Shevat.

Every year over a million Is-

raelis take part in the JNF's Tu B'Shevat tree-planting activities.

I hope you learned a little bit more about this wonderful green Jewish holiday.

As a reminder our monthly Café Ivrit takes place every month. You're more than welcome to look it up on Facebook under the name "Café Ivrit - Hebrew Coffee."

Also I am still looking for people to help me plan our annual community Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut event. I'm looking for a few volunteers that may want to help me plan the most interesting, creative and entertaining community event that Charlotte has ever seen. Please feel free to contact me Shaliach@jewishcharlotte.org 704-944-6784 if you are interested.

I would love to get know all of you better, so feel free to email me at Shaliach@jewishcharlotte.org and I would be happy to meet up, grab coffee and chat (no Hebrew necessary).

I look forward to hearing from you. ☆

Partnership2Gether: Educators Delegation

This past Chanukah, the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte proudly hosted host three educators from our Partnership 2Gether Sister City, Hadera Eiron.

The teacher exchange is part of an ongoing educational bridge that connects Israeli and American cities through joint education projects and programs forging cooperative relationships between teachers and students and strengthening American and Israeli ties. Educators had the opportunity to speak to students about Israel and enhance cross-cultural educational experiences.

They all had a chance to enjoy the Chanukah lighting at South Park Mall as well as visit Temple



Michael Wizman visits Providence High School

Beth El Religious School, Consolidated Hebrew High and Charlotte Jewish Day School while also visiting secular schools such as Charlotte Country Day School, Charlotte Latin School, and Providence Day School as well as Providence High School.

This year, we welcomed Michael Wizman, 7th grade science teacher, Merav Ben-Amos, 4th grade math teacher, and Yaffa Mamon, another 4th grade teacher. We thank Tammy Seigel, Corine Bockenek, and our local P2G Chair, Sheila Spitz for home hosting our guests and helping with all aspects of their visit, showing them real "Southern" hospitality. As Sheila explains, hosting Michael had special meaning. "For me," she says, "it

was a reunion and a way to pay back the hospitality that Michael and his wife and daughter showed me when I was a guest in their home on the Charlotte educator delegation in Israel last winter. The cultural exchange and the bonds we create with our Israeli 'family' is indescribable in words, it has to be felt in 'person.' My daughter recently visited Israel on Taglit Birthright Israel and Michael and his wife made a point of visiting her while she was in

(Continued on page 4)



The delegation visited Temple Beth El Religious School.

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For more information, please contact Tair Giudice, Director of Outreach and Engagement. 704.944.6759 tair.giudice@jewishcharlotte.org

Guest Speaker JENNIFER TEEGE

Author of the internationally bestselling memoir "My Grandfather Would Have Shot Me: A Black Woman Discovers Her Family's Nazi Past"