
President Joel M. Kaufman

Coming up in August . . .

As you look at the calendar, you may note that this month includes one of the “down” days of the year, the 9th of Av, in which we mourn the destruction of both Temples in Jerusalem. But here in White Oak, this August also promises to be a special “up” month.

Our calendar of events includes: a Kiddush luncheon in honor of Adina Schiff, who will have celebrated her Bat Mitzvah in Israel; the Bat Mitzvah of Morgan Willaman, who in our sanctuary will be called up to the Torah, to be followed by a gala Kiddush luncheon in her honor; and then the aufruf of Brian Valen, and yet another festive Kiddush. And if that isn’t enough, we will then be joining together to build a brand-new Sukkah and to spruce up our sanctuary in anticipation of the fall holidays. Let’s review the events.

Erecting a Sukkah – putting it “up” – comes from the Torah. And Sukkot itself is one of the most joyous times in our year. After all, Sukkot is called the “season of rejoicing,” isn’t it? Come build the new one and have a sweet foretaste of the happiness of Sukkot.

Aufruf is the much more recent custom of awarding the groom (or sometimes both bride and groom) an aliyah before the wedding. As I understand, the term is Yiddish for “calling up” or “coming up” or “aliyah.” Depending on location, it is also marked by singing or by the throwing of candy or other goodies for sweetness. Come and share the joy.

Bat Mitzvah – this is the new kid on the block. When Temple was founded in 1912, celebrating a Bat Mitzvah ritual during services as a coming of age observance for young women had not yet occurred in the United States. But from its New York origins in 1922, the tradition began its slow evolution into the beautiful and inspirational ceremony we now enjoy. *(So, when was the first Bat Mitzvah observed at Temple, and when were its major features added?)* Come celebrate as Morgan is called up and comes up to the Torah for her first aliyah, reads the portion, and leads our service, as Adina will earlier have accomplished in Jerusalem. And come as well for two wonderful celebrations, honoring each for her significant accomplishments.

So come, one and all, on the 9th, 16th, 23rd and 24th!

