

Local synagogue plans to restore antique Torah

Scroll confiscated by Nazis during war

By James Redebaugh
staff writer

An 18th Century Torah that survived World War II mouldering on the floor of a Czechoslovak synagogue is now in the hands of Temple Shir Shalom in West Bloomfield.

The congregation plans to restore the battered scroll, which Rabbi Dannel Schwartz said he hopes will serve as a functional link between his congregation and the victims of the Holocaust.

"What we want to do is restore it so that it can be used, and so that it relates us back . . . to the people who read from it, who no longer survive," he said.

"I envision that every child that is bar mitzvahed in our temple will be reading from this Torah. It's like a museum piece; if it's not used, it rots."

The Torah, which dates back to 1740, was one of more than 1,500 that were collected from Czechoslovak temples by the Nazis and

dumped on the floor of Prague's vacant synagogues. As were other religious artifacts stolen from the Czech countryside, the Torahs were to be placed in a Nazi museum called the "The Central Museum of the Extinct Jewish Race."

AFTER THE war, the Torahs and other artifacts remained in heaps in the Prague synagogues until efforts by western Jews to reclaim them proved successful. In 1964, 1,564 scrolls began arriving at Westminster Synagogue in London; from there, they were distributed to synagogues around the world. Scroll number 1,156, taken from the synagogue in the small town of Kolin,

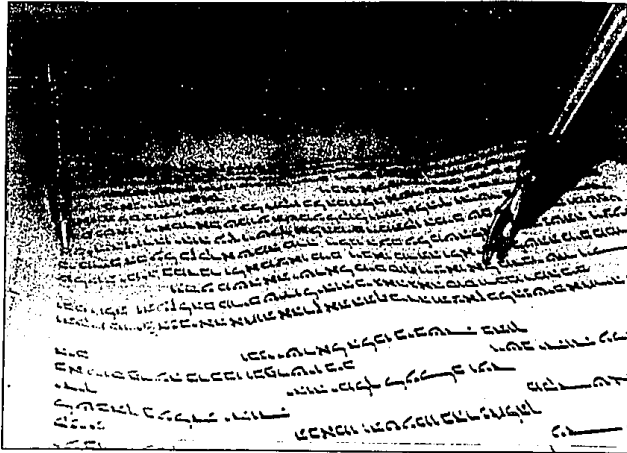
was destined for Temple Shir Shalom.

Kolin, 30 miles east of Prague, served the Nazis as a central collection point for Jews prior to their shipment to the concentration camps. In all, 2,202 Jews passed through Kolin, and 2,098, including 475 from Kolin, died in the camps, according to Shir Shalom.

By the middle of 1942 there were no Jews left in Kolin. A history that dated to 1347 had been destroyed.

It is as a link to those people and their fate that Rabbi Schwartz said he wants to preserve the Kolin Torah. Its condition is fair; parts of the parchment are missing and the ink is flaking away, he said. But after the restoration, members of the congregation will be able to hold the scroll and read from it just as Jews in Kolin did centuries ago.

It won't be an easy process, according to Schwartz, who said a scribe will have to be hired to trace over nearly every letter. The restoration will cost about \$15,000 to \$20,000, as much as the cost of scribbling a new Torah, he said.



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Members of Temple Shir Shalom in West Bloomfield plan to restore an 18th Century Torah from Kolin, Czechoslovakia. Some of the script is faded. After the restoration, the entire scroll will be as clear as the script on the right.

Local news you can use © Local news you can use ©

ALL ART POSTERS

50% OFF
with custom framing order
Not valid with other offers.
One per order. Expires 5-12-90

CHET STREET GALLERY
1400 BERRY SQUARE
1/2 MILE S. HIGGERTY
624-3557

- Limited Editions
- Creative Custom Framing
- Custom Paper Art
- Art Posters

14K GOLD 14K GOLD 14K GOLD 14K GOLD

GOLD

NOT JUST A SELECT FEW BUT ALL 14K CHAINS AND BRACELETS

\$12.80 Per Gram

HUNDREDS TO CHOOSE FROM
(Prices Starting \$14.00)
DIAMOND AND PRECIOUS STONE JEWELRY

SALE PRICED TO SELL -
EXPERT JEWELRY REPAIR DONE ON PREMISES

REDFORD COIN & JEWELRY
2800 W. 94th St. (at West of Redwood)
924-1119 FREE LAYAWAY
HOURS: MON-SAT. 10-6

14K GOLD 14K GOLD 14K GOLD 14K GOLD

FREE FUEL OIL!

5 GALLONS FREE
with 150 Gallon order

Checking Account Call Us!

FISHER FUEL
FUEL OIL #2
.89⁹

624-4449

Coupon expires 4-19-90

TOLL FREE DIAL 1-800-878-FUEL
(FOR OUR LONG DISTANCE PHONE CUSTOMERS)

Citizens Salutes Award Winning Agency

The City-Suburban Agency, Inc. in Farmington Hills received the Outstanding Agency Award for its excellent performance in 1989 from Citizens Insurance Company.

The City-Suburban Agency was one of only 13 agencies from among over 500 independent agents that represent Citizens in Michigan to receive this award for its 1989 results.

The agency also achieved membership on the **Key Agents Club** for 1990 with its efforts.

Congratulations to The City-Suburban Agency and its employees upon winning this award.

CITIZENS
INSURANCE COMPANY OF AMERICA
MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN INSURANCE EXCHANGE

The Company of Choice for property & casualty insurance through independent agents in Indiana and Michigan

Words can hit a child as hard as a fist.

Get the picture?

What you say to children can determine how they feel about themselves. And how they feel about you. When you're upset, get hold of yourself. Stop and think about what you're saying. Stop using words that hurt. Start using words that help.

Stop using words that hurt.

For helpful information, write: National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse, Box 2866E, Chicago, IL 60690.

Ad Council