

ANNE FRANK AT 80

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Anne Frank will be a young girl forever. The image we have of her is of a somewhat shy child, a half-smile playing on her face as she looks out at us from the cover of one of the many editions of the diary that she kept while in hiding from the Nazis. Recovered by her father, the sole survivor of the Frank family, and published after the Holocaust that diary has touched the hearts of millions. It is hard to fathom that had she survived the Holocaust, Anne Frank would soon be marking her eightieth birthday. Anne Frank died of typhus sometime in late February or early March of 1945 at the Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp. Had she been able to cling to life for only a few more weeks and survive until the liberation of Bergen-Belsen on April 12 1945, who would she be today? Would she have been the one to recover her diary from the now famous “Secret Annex” instead of her father? Would she have published that diary and gained renown as a writer or would she have hidden the pages away, embarrassed by the musings, rants and complaints of a pre-pubescent younger version of herself? Would she have returned to Amsterdam or emigrated – perhaps to the Land of Israel as her beloved older sister Margot had wanted to do? What would she look like? What would she be like? What would she have accomplished? Anne Frank was a real, living, breathing, thinking, dreaming, young girl who became an icon because of her diary and through her death a symbol of all the children who perished in the dark days of the Holocaust. But, she was real and so were all the 1.5 million children whose futures were taken from them. Not only from them, from us as well. Perhaps Anne Frank would have been a writer and her sister a nurse, as she dreamed. Others would have become doctors or scientists who would have healed the sick and discovered cures for illnesses that continue to claim so many lives. Who knows what insights and discoveries could have been had the Nazis not destroyed Six Million Jews and millions of other victims? That’s why the Holocaust is not only a crime against the Jewish People. It was a crime against humanity, for all of humanity has suffered the loss of what could have been. On Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day, observed this past Tuesday, April 21, we think of what could have been and mark the depths to which human beings can descend, but we must also take the lessons learned and restore our hope in a better future. As Anne Frank wrote in her diary, in one of her final entries, “...I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart...when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better...”

*Congregation Beth Emeth invites you to purchase tickets for our Mini-Cooper Car Raffle. Only 500 tickets are being sold. Each ticket is just \$100. The drawing will be held Saturday evening May 2 during our Evening of Festivities. Winner need not be present to win. For more information call 374-9220, come by the synagogue office or go to our updated website: www.rcbe.org
Have a question for Rabbi Skiddell or an issue you would like to have discussed? Please be in touch at rabbi@rcbe.org
Friday Evening Services at Congregation Beth Emeth, located at 36 Franklin Ave. in Hewlett, begin at 8:00 PM. Saturday morning services at 9:30 AM*