

Shir Ami News

The Monthly Newsletter of Congregation Shir Ami
4529 Malabar Avenue, Castro Valley, CA 94546
(call (510) 537-1787 for a recording of upcoming events)

Please visit our website at

www.congshirami.org

Affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism Congregations
October, 2007



Oct 3	Adult Ed – 7 PM Led by Diana Zankowsky	Nov 2-4	School Shabbaton at Camp Newman
Oct 5	Simchat Torah Service – 7PM Led by Carla Fenves	Nov 9	Children’s Shabbat Service – 6 PM Potluck Dinner – 6:45 PM Shabbat Service – 8 PM Led by Carla Fenves
Oct 7	School – Preschool through Confirmation (see Sunday School column for start times)	Nov 10	Adult Ed – 2 PM Taste of Judaism – led by Carla Fenves
Oct 11	Rosh Chodesh – 7:30 PM	Nov 11	School – Preschool through Confirmation
Oct 14	No School	Nov 13	Rosh Chodesh – 7:30 PM
Oct 18	Board Meeting – 7 PM	Nov 15	Board Meeting – 7 PM
Oct 19	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Bekah Stern	Nov 16	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Bekah Stern
Oct 20	B’nai Mitzvah – 10:00 AM Michelle and Daniel Ross Temple Beth Sholom, San Leandro	Nov 17	Adult Ed – 2 PM Taste of Judaism – led by Bekah Stern
Oct 21	School – Preschool through Confirmation	Nov 18	School – Preschool through Confirmation
Oct 28	School – Kindergarten through Confirmation	Nov 25	No School

President's Message

Ruth Hartman

Dear Congregation Shir Ami Members and Friends,

In response to requests from our school families, we've initiated some changes that will make our Shabbat services more accessible to families with young children. Two of our most family-oriented holiday services will have a new, earlier start time. They are:

- **Simchat Torah:** *Friday, October 5 at 7 pm* with Rabbinic Intern Carla Fenves. Dance with our scrolls, collect sweets, and celebrate the joy of the Torah.
- **Purim:** *Friday, March 21 at 7 pm* with Rabbinic Intern Carla Fenves. Come in costume to retell the story of Queen Esther and the dastardly Haman with participation by our K-4th grade students!

In addition, we have added an early "**Children's Shabbat**" service *before* two of our potluck dinners. On **Friday, November 9** and **Friday, February 8**, the evening schedule will be as follows:

- 6:00: Children's Shabbat service
- 6:45: Potluck Dinner for all
- 8:00: Regular Shabbat service

Parents and grandparents can bring young children to the children's service, stay for supper, and then take the kids home to bed.

These upcoming family-focused services on October 5 and November 9 are a great time to invite Jewish friends and neighbors with children to experience the warmth and good energy of Shir Ami. There are a growing number of Jewish families in Castro Valley, but many of them have no idea that there's a synagogue in town. The best way for them to find out is for *us* to talk about Shir Ami, bring them to a service or event, and support them in connecting with the Shir Ami community. If you have young children, please give some thought to who in their school might be interested in a fun Shabbat experience.

I want to take a few lines to thank Religious Committee Chair, David Schulberg, and our service leaders, Bekah Stern, Carla Fenves, and Rachel Brott, for the beautiful and inspiring Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. Many hours of careful planning, practice, and spiritual preparation went into their worship leading, and the results were truly powerful.

I'd also like to thank Ruth and Larry Bercovich and Nancy and Art Liskewicz for their donations to replace our old chairs. What a pleasure the new furnishings are—on the eyes as well as the tush! We truly appreciate these two families for their generosity.

I wish you all a sweet year,

Ruth Hartman
510-582-3379, president@congshirami.org

Rabbis' Corner

Bekah Stern

Carla Fenves

Dear Congregation Shir Ami members and friends,

I am so excited to be joining Shir Ami this year as a rabbinic intern. The congregation could not have been more welcoming during the High Holy Days.

The Jewish calendar gives us little rest at this time of year. Seemingly moments after we have broken the fast of Yom Kippur, Sukkot has arrived. Upon returning home to Los Angeles this past weekend, families in my neighborhood were already constructing *sukkot* in their front yards.

Why does the Torah place this Feast of Booths so soon after the Days of Awe? Perhaps, after the intense work of reflection and repentance, there is recognition that we deserve a celebration. There is a specific commandment to enjoy oneself during Sukkot: "And you shall rejoice in your Festival" (Deuteronomy 16:14). After we have strived to do better in God's eyes, we now have earned all of the joys of Sukkot.

Another possible reason for placing the holidays so close to each other could have to do with the time of the year. Sukkot occurs during the harvest season, when the farmers would gather the bountiful produce from their land and bring it into their homes. Just as they are growing overly attached and even arrogant about these material possessions, Sukkot enjoins them to leave their homes and dwell in the impermanent structure of the *sukkah*. It prevents them from taking the harvest for granted. Judaism emphasizes a constant appreciation for what the earth provides for us. The Mishnah teaches us that even rotten and spoiled fruits deserve to be blessed before we eat them (Mishnah Berakhot 6:3).

As we approach Sukkot this year, I hope that we can embrace the spirit of celebration and rejoicing while still appreciating our natural surroundings.

Hag Sameach,
Carla Fenves



The Israel Corner

Featured Location

The *Mitzpeh Ramon* Crater



The first stop on our Passover Israel trip in 2008 will be *Mitzpeh Ramon*, a huge Grand Canyon-like geographical wonder in the southern Negev desert. And, even though this canyon is most commonly referred to as a crater, it was formed the same way the Grand Canyon was. The high canyon walls were cut by the flow of seasonal rivers. The canyon is 25 miles long and 5 miles wide at its widest point.

In April we'll celebrate our first Shabbat in Israel overlooking the crater, have our Seder in a Bedouin tent nearby, meet some Alpaca that live on a ranch in the area, and take a nocturnal jeep ride in the heart of the crater.



Featured Writing

From *Homeland*, Reform Judaism Magazine Fall 2007

Spending time together driving through the countryside and walking the streets, we saw Israel as a real country...populated by real people trying to live their lives as normally as possible, from shopping in the crowded outdoor markets to participating in Shabbat services at the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem. Ordinary people such as these have accomplished amazing things. The Israeli economy is flourishing. Israel is home to some of the best educational and research institutions in the world, its scientists are discovering cures for diseases, the desert has been made to bloom, and Israel holds the second highest number of patents per capita in the world--all in only 60 years, and despite not having lived a day without the threat of a terrorist attack. This was the "real" Israel...

-Rabbi Robert Orkand of Temple Israel in Westport, CT reflecting on a February interfaith pilgrimage to Israel



Welcome to the Israel Corner!

In the interest of learning more about Israel this year--the Jewish year 5768--the year that the State of Israel celebrates its 60th birthday, we've created the Israel Corner. This new section in our monthly bulletin will feature some different writing about Israel, different Israeli authors, and some information and a photo about one of



the sites that we'll visit during our joint congregational Israel trip during Passover 2008.

For more information on the Israel trip click on www.congshirami.org/Pesach_Trip.html or contact Student Rabbi Rebekah Stern at rabbi.rebekah@congshirami.org.



October 7th Simchat Torah – Preschool through Confirmation

October 14th – No School

October 21st – Preschool through Confirmation

October 28th – Kindergarten through Confirmation

Before religious school classes began this year the staff met for a planning session. To start off the meeting each one of us was asked to speak about the skill we bring to the school that can be shared to benefit the entire staff. The responses were so interesting, inspiring and diverse that I decided share them here.

As our preschool teacher, **Karen Gelender** brings years of experience as a school teacher. Any one of our staff with questions is welcome to call on her expertise. Second and third grade religious school teacher, **Jan Dombrower**, brings to Shir Ami creativity, openmindedness, good listening skills, a love of expressing Judaism in many ways, and lots of fun. **Irene Gilchriese** teaches Hebrew Bet and 4/5 religious school. Her skill is a desire and ability to really focus on each child as an individual. Gimel Hebrew and K-1 religious school teacher **Stacey Zankowsky** attends the Jewish Community High School of the Bay where classes have provided her with a knowledge of Hebrew that can benefit students and teachers alike. **Todd Finlay** teaches Hebrew Alef. He brings to our school the expertise gained as a teacher spending his weekdays working with special needs kids. **Diana Zankowsky** is joining the rabbinic interns in teaching the confirmation class. The gift she brings to our school is a great love of Jewish texts, and a willingness to share what she learns from her studies. **Leah Hartman**, teaching the B'nai Mitzvah class this year, spent the entire summer being trained as a counselor at Camp Newman. She learned lots of skills to help make Judaism fun for kids. **Lexi Skelly**, a teacher's aide in the 2/3 class, loves to implement new craft projects for the students to enjoy and learn from. She can also sub for the Hebrew teachers which is a big help to the school. **Michelle Ross** who is working as a teacher's aide this year also spent the summer with kids. She was a counselor at Camp Kadima. She brings the ideas and skills gained there to Shir Ami. **Sophia Blum** is also working as a teacher's aide this year. Since she is splitting her time between being a teacher's aide and attending the confirmation class, she provides the teaching staff a connection to the confirmation class and the enhancement they bring to our programs. **Ruth Hartman** is acting as our curriculum advisor this year, and she brings us a strong capability for making decisions. She is our go to person when it is time for the final analysis. As a research scientist/religious school director I, **Jodi Blum**, have realized that the skills I've gained coordinating all the aspects that go into running a scientific experiment somehow seem to translate into coordinating all of the aspects required to have a religious school running on Sunday mornings.

On top of all of these talents, I think the thing we all have in common as the staff of Shir Ami is that we all truly love and treasure this little school we have. We are glad for all of you who are a part of it. Sincerely,

Jodi Switzer Blum

2007-2008 Religious School Schedule

9:15 – 10:30 Hebrew for grades 3 to confirmation

10:30 – 10:50 songtime for all

10:50 – 12:45 Religious School for all

11:45-12:00 Oneg break

Adult Education *Diana Zankowsky*

In 5768, the adult education class, facilitated by Diana Zankowsky, will meet one weekday night each month. Our first meeting will be on October 3rd at 7pm, under the sukkah at Diana's home. We will be studying from Yearnings by Irwin Kula (Rabbi), published in 2006. This book is available in hardcover, paperback and audio.

The initial class will cover the Preface and the first section, called "Yearning for Truth". If you are interested in joining the class, or for address and directions, please contact Diana at dzankowsky@aol.com.



Youth Group News *Leah Hartman*



Hey Teens,

Sorry to say it, but we don't have any upcoming events yet because we couldn't find a time for board meeting before the bulletin went out. However, we do have a meeting planned and some great ideas for events, so keep your ears open.

Our Rosh HaShanah teen service was a success; thank you to those who came. This past Sunday four members of EDJY also did some volunteer work helping to move High Holy Day food donations into a storage site. Although not an official event, our presence was greatly appreciated by the community.

For those not attending the Ross Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the first NFTY Regional Event of the year is the weekend of October 19th at Camp Newman. Forms can be found online at nfty.org/cwr. Personally, I won't be joining the region until the second event, Fall-Inter, which will be November 30th-December 2nd. Fallinter is one of the most popular events and includes a formal dance along with standard NFTY programs, so please consider attending.

Your Religious and Cultural Vice President,
Leah Hartman

Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh Group

Jan Dombrower



Sisterhood:

Please join us for our first Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh gathering of the new year on Thursday, October 11 at 7:30 at Shir Ami.

We would like to invite all new women members and established women members of Shir Ami and Sisterhood to join us in a great year of bringing in the new months with a variety of activities and programs.

Our first program will begin as we bring in the new month of Cheshvan. This month is usually marked as the quiet or even "bitter" month because it is usually contrasted with the previous month full with so many holidays and festivals.

So, what can we do to liven up this "bitter"/quiet month..... Lets make it sweet with a collection of Jewish holiday confections to taste. Lets have a sampling of treats for the Jewish months / holidays to come.

Please bring a favorite Jewish / holiday / Shabbat / or family dessert and recipe to share.

Discussion will follow :

Why is that recipe meaningful to you and
How / why food plays a part in Jewish life.

We will also organize our year's calendar, review the origin of Rosh Chodesh and collect our annual Sisterhood dues.

Hope to see you there.

The Tzedakah Box

A Social Action Column

Sara Lamnin

Daryl Berman

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism notes: Ecclesiastes is the principal text often associated with Sukkot. One of its primary themes is the cycle and continuation of life. It reminds us, "a season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). The text, noting the vanity, struggle, and challenges that face humanity at different life stages, turns our attention towards matters that relate to age and the life-cycle. This awareness can motivate us to advocacy on issues facing older adults, children's issues, and age discrimination. "One generation goes, another comes. But the earth remains the same forever."
(Ecclesiastes 1:4)

One way to recognize part of the life cycle is to stand in witness to the passing of Shawn Kimbell, a 22 year old, shot in Hayward 1 year ago. South Hayward Parish (of which Shir Ami is a member) holds monthly Vigils of Caring. The next will be held October 5th, 2007, at 12 noon at the intersection of D St. and Grand in Hayward. Everyone is welcome to attend to help honor this victim of violence and to work towards more peaceful solutions. For more information contact Daryl Berman (see contacts page).

April Showers is another interfaith effort in San Leandro, which provides showers and food for local individuals who are homeless. This program has helped to improve self-esteem and self-sufficiency for men and women in our community. Toiletries and underwear are needed. Items can be left in the donation basket at Shir Ami. For more information, contact Sara Lamnin (see contacts page).

On the other side of the world, malaria affects millions of children and adults of all ages each year. The organization, Nothing But Nets, combats the spread of malaria in sub-Saharan Africa by distributing insecticide-treated mosquito bed nets to families and then training and monitoring their use. The cost is \$10 per net, and with the support of Reform Congregations and their members throughout the world, the Union for Reform Judaism hopes to provide 50,000 mosquito nets for this project. For more information, visit urj.org/nets or call Naomi Abelson, Manager of Congregational Relations for the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism 212.650.4160 nabelson@urj.org

SHIR AMI BULLETIN BOARD



New Israel Fund

NIForum 2007: Towards A Progressive Vision for Israel's Future
Sunday, October 28, 2007 9:30am to 1:00pm
The Jewish Community Center of San Francisco

As Israel nears its 60th anniversary, the **New Israel Fund** challenges Israelis and Diaspora Jews to imagine a more just, equitable and pluralistic state. How can a Jewish and democratic state also become a real home for its Arab citizens? How can a state founded on the ideals of equity regain fair social and economic policies? How can equality for the various streams of Judaism and true religious pluralism be attained? We believe that Israel can live up to the ideals it was founded on, and invite you to join us in exploring the challenges of Israeli society. We are not satisfied with the Israel that "is"—we want you to help us change it for the better.

Join us **Sunday, October 28, 2007 at the JCCSF** to delve into the real issues that will impact Israel's future. Meet the activists and leaders shaping Israeli society and working on issues you won't hear about elsewhere. And be a part of a frank and honest discussion of the choices Israel faces, as it strives for ideals not yet attained.

For more information, contact New Israel Fund at 415.543.5055 or sf@nif.org.
Visit us online at www.nif.org/niforum.

Used Cell Phones Wanted

Barbara Heimowitz is still collecting used/old cell phones that you leave at Shir Ami and to send them in for cash. You can bring in your cell phones to Shir Ami anytime – just leave them in the box in the kitchen. Any questions? Please call Barbara

Used Ink Cartridges Wanted

Bruce Skelly is collecting used ink cartridges to trade in for reams of copy paper and other supplies for Shir Ami. Please bring in your used ink cartridges and place them in the box in the kitchen (by the cell phone box). Any questions? Please call Bruce.

The Community Page

October, 2007

Yahrzheits:

October 5, 2007 – Simchat Torah

Jeanette Brody, grandmother of Noah Markus
Helen Knopf, mother of Lori Knopf Santora
Karl Meininger, father of Ingrid Weinberg
Timothy Rogers, brother of Zoey and David Rogers

October 19, 2007

Anne Aronowitz, mother of Rose Levine
Ruth Bergel, mother of Marci Loss
Morris Cohen, father of Zac Cohen
Gustav Kurz, father of Fran Johnson

Kaddish List: (to be read at all services in October)

Georgie Brooke, mother of Toni Schulberg and aunt of Sidney Simpson
Moshe Vanous, long-time member of Shir Ami
Hyman Abraham Rebotsky, grandfather of Jonathan Zimmerman
Gordon Greenfield, father of Julie Greenfield
Keith Carter, brother of Bruce Carter
Leon Meier, long-time member and one of the founders of Shir Ami
Syd Kramer, uncle of Jan Dombrower
Martin Michelson, brother-in-law of David Schulberg

May their memory be a blessing...

Ever wonder how the names read out loud for yahrzeit and kaddish at Friday night services get on that list? If you are a member of Shir Ami, and want a personal reminder for the yahrzeit of a loved one, just send Toni Schulberg the following information: the name of the deceased; the relationship of that person to the member of Shir Ami; the full date (month, day, year) that person died; and whether you want to use the Hebrew or English calendar for their yahrzeit (Toni will look up the Hebrew date for you). Questions? Call Toni at 278-1695 or e-mail her at toniaps@comcast.net

TODAH RABAH FOR THESE GENEROUS DONATIONS:

- From Judy Ganz: In Memory of her mother Shaiva Bernstein and In Memory of Georgie Brooke
- From Maryann Leshin: In Memory of Georgie Brooke.
- From Toni and David Schulberg : In Memory of Georgie Brooke and In Honor of Diana Zankowsky, for the lovely Shiva Service of Georgie Brooke .
- From Ruth Hartman and Gary Wolff: In Memory of Georgie Brooke.
- From Rose and Hillie Levine: In Memory of Georgie Brooke.
- From Karl and Audrey Hand: In Memory of Moshe Vanous.

A contribution to Shir Ami is a great way to honor, remember, or show appreciation for someone special. It's easy, send a check and note to:

Florrie Finkle

18730 West Cavendish

Castro Valley, CA 94552

Florrie will send a card to the person you are honoring and your dedication will appear on this page.

TODAH RABAH TO OUR ONEG HOSTS

For September 12th: Keil Family

For September 28th: Nate and Melanie Einbund

TODAH RABAH

- ❖ These people were extremely helpful in unloading our new chairs: Bill Santora, Ruth Hartman, Diana Zankowsky, Barb Haber, Angie Ross, Jodi Blum and Judy Brackin.
- ❖ For the contributors of the chair fund and the carpet cleaning and repair: Bercovich Family and Liskewicz Family.

- ❖ Barbara Heimowitz wants to thank the many people who helped set-up, cook, donate raffle items at our annual BBQ:
 - our chefs: Fred Zankowsky, Bruce Skelly, Gary Wolff, and David Schulberg,
 - our shoppers: Harriet and Bruce Skelly
 - raffle helpers: Barbara Heimowitz and Jan Dombrower
 - to Harriet Skelly who donated her beautiful greeting cards for the raffle.
- ❖ Many thanks to the following people for bringing food, shopping, and helping with setup and cleanup for the Yom Kippur Break-the-Fast: Kaitlin Beckman, Daryl Berman, Jeff Bum, Judy Brackin, Lilly Erickson, Rose Firestone, Barb Haber, Hana Hartman, Ruth Hartman, Barbara Heimowitz, Sherie Kidwell, Marlene Lamnin, Sara Lamnin, Marci Loss, Toni Schulberg, Harriet Skelly, Diana Zankowsky and Jonathan Zimmerman. Apologies to any helpers left off the list!
- ❖ Our thanks to Barb Haber and Matthew and Kaitlin Beckman for coordinating the nametags and greeting table at our High Holiday services.
- ❖ Thanks to Todd Finlay for coordinating the decoration of the Shir Ami sukkah



“Dear Shir Ami Friends,

I want to thank all of you for your love, affection and sympathy during my time of grief. I'm deeply touched by your wonderful support for me since my mom (Georgie Brooke) died on the last day of August.

You phoned, you sent cards and e-mails, you sent donations to Shir Ami (and even had a tree planted in Israel) in her honor, you came to the memorial service at the Chapel of the Chimes, and our home was jammed to the rafters when you arrived with food (and chairs) for the Shiva service. When I looked around our home and saw so many people who came to honor my mom and show support for me and David and our daughter, Brooke, I was overwhelmed. Thank you, Diana, for leading such a moving service.

I also want to give a special thank you to Diana, Harriet and Jan for bringing dinners for us, and to Barbara Haber for baking such fabulous challah for our Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur dinners.

I feel so very fortunate to be a part of Shir Ami – we're not simply a congregation – we're a family, and I love you.

Thank you,
Toni Schulberg”

What's Nu?

- We want to welcome our newest Shir Ami member:
Nancy Storch
3193 Chardonnay Drive, Pleasanton, CA 94566
(925-462-8811) (retiredandmore@yahoo.com)
- Mazel Tov to Bruce and Susan Carter on the birth of their new grandson, Cameron Levi Carter!

Shir Ami Contacts

Area code is (510) unless specified

President:

Ruth Hartman
582-3379

Membership:

Barbara Heimowitz
537-2066

School:

Jodi Blum
881-5672

Religious:

David Schulberg
276-6100

Oneg Shabbat:

Sharon Golembo
795-0607

Newsletter:

Harriet Skelly
538-8105

Newsletter mailing:

Lily Erickson
538-6022

Scrip/eScrip:

Lisa Silver
881-2616

Community Page:

Lori Knopf Santora
614-5929

Dues:

Toni Schulberg
278-1695

Invoices/Payables:

Maryann Leshin
635-2898

Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood:

Jan Dombrower
(925) 462-3205

Social Action:

Daryl Berman
538-6022

Sara Lamnin
733-5114

Yahrzeit Listings:

Tonia Schulberg
276-6100

Donations:

General Funds, Special Funds,
Wall Plaques
Florrie Finkle
538-9660



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Simchat Torah



Simchat Torah Celebration
after a painting by Naama Notham, South Africa

Services on Friday, Oct. 5th at 7:00 PM

led by

Carla Fenves

Bring a friend!

Paresha Lech L'cha

To the land which I will show thee...



Shir Ami Services
Friday, October 19 at 8:00 PM

Led by
Bekah Stern

Saturday, October 20th, the B'nai Mitzvah of Michelle and Daniel Ross