

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
February, 2008



Feb 3	School – K through Confirmation	Mar 2	School – K through Confirmation
Feb 6	Rosh Chodesh – 7:00 PM	Mar 6	Rosh Chodesh – 7:30 PM
Feb 8	Children’s Shabbat – 6 PM Potluck – 6:45 PM Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Bekah Stern	Mar 7	Shabbat Across America Dinner – 6 PM Shabbat Services – 8PM Led by Bekah Stern
Feb 9	Adult Ed – 2 PM	Mar 8	Adult Ed – 2 PM
Feb 10	School – Preschool through Confirmation	Mar 9	School – Preschool through Confirmation
Feb 17	No School	Mar 16	No School
Feb 21	Board Meeting – 7 PM	Mar 20	Board meeting – 7 PM
Feb 22	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Carla Fenves	Mar 21	K-3 rd grade Shabbat Service and Purim Party – 7 PM Led by Carla Fenves
Feb 22-24	Women’s retreat – see flier	Mar 22	Adult Ed – 2 PM
Feb 24	School – Preschool through Confirmation	Mar 23	School – Preschool through Confirmation – Purim Carnival
		Mar 30	No School

President's Message

Ruth Hartman

Dear Congregation Shir Ami Members and Friends,

February days are short and often stormy. It's tempting to stay indoors with a book. But spring planning is well under way at Shir Ami, and we have a full calendar of programs for you to come out and enjoy—many of them led by our remarkable rabbinic interns, Rebekah Stern and Carla Fenves. It's a great gift to have two such inspiring interns with whom to study, sing, and celebrate. Here are some of the upcoming events that I hope you'll mark on your calendar.

Friday, February 8: Children's Service at 6, Potluck Shabbat Supper at 6:45, Shabbat Service at 8, featuring an auf-ruf in celebration of the upcoming wedding of Sara Lamnin and Jonathan Zimmerman. Services led by Bekah Stern.

Friday, March 7: Shabbat Across America, Outreach Potluck Supper at 6:30, Shabbat Services at 8 pm led by Bekah Stern. Bring friends and neighbors!

Friday, March 21: Purim Shabbat Service at 7, with Purim spiel participation by grades K-3 and special chanting of Megillat Esther by Rachel Brott. Service led by Carla Fenves. Also, **School Purim Carnival on Sunday, March 23**.

Saturday, April 26: Shir Ami Community Passover Seder, led by Carla Fenves with special accompaniment by her fiancé, cantorial student David Frommer. Save the date for this celebration of liberation and hope, to be held again this year at the Castro Valley Community Center.

Friday, May 2: Teen Shabbat Service at 8, led by the members of our regional NFTY youth group, with a special celebration of our extraordinary class of graduating high-school seniors.

Friday, May 9: Israel at 60 Shabbat Service at 8, led by Bekah Stern.

Sunday, May 16: End-of-the-school-year picnic and Annual Membership Meeting.

And **Adult Education continues, Saturday afternoons at 2 pm** on the weekends that our interns are in town. Carla and Bekah have a fascinating roster of topics planned, and all are welcome.

I look forward to seeing you at Shir Ami this spring. If you'd like to help with the coordination of any of these events or with the planning of next year's programs, please give me a call.

B'shalom,

Ruth Hartman

Rabbis' Corner

Bekah Stern

Carla Fenves

Dear Congregation Shir Ami members and friends,

Next week will mark the beginning of the month of Adar. Unfortunately, for those of us who associate Adar with the celebration of Purim, we are going to have to wait another month before pulling out costumes and baking hamentaschen. During a leap year such as this one in the Jewish calendar, there are two months of Adar—Adar *alef* and Adar *bet* or Adar 1 and Adar 2—and Purim takes place during the second month.

Although it dictates much of our Jewish life, from when to light Hanukah candles to a bar mitzvah's Torah portion, many of us know very little about the Jewish calendar. The Hebrew Bible formed the original core of the calendar by marking events such as revelation at Sinai. The Babylonian exile then gave shape to the system with the adoption of the names for months and the lunisolar calendar.

Originally, the sighting of a new moon determined when a new month began. (The Jewish day, therefore, begins at sundown rather than midnight.) While we still preserve this tradition by symbolically identifying the new moon with various Rosh Hodesh rituals, the calendar today is based on a series of lunisolar formulas. For instance, an entire extra month, Adar 2, is added every two to three years to ensure that the calendar remains seasonal and we do not celebrate Sukkot in the cold of February. In contrast, the Islamic calendar is based purely on a lunar calendar with no intercalary month, so observance of Ramadan is not associated with a particular time of year.

Since Purim is celebrated in Adar 2 during a leap year, Adar 1 is left with no significant Jewish moments. It functions as a placeholder in the Jewish calendar while we wait for the excitement of the upcoming Purim and Passover. The only occasion marked on the calendar is Purim Katan, Little Purim, which has no set observances. It is in essence a reminder or dress rehearsal for the month to come.

Rather than bemoan the lack of activity on the Jewish calendar during Adar 1, I hope we can take this time to prepare ourselves for the upcoming festivities. Spend a little more time putting together that Esther costume or planning your Passover seder menu. Release a sigh of relief over the regularity of the Shabbat and Religious School schedules. Truly relish the added rest in Jewish time.

An Early Rosh Hodesh Tov,
Carla Fenves



The Israel Corner

Featured Location:

Haifa



Carmel overlooking the Mediterranean. On a clear day--of which there are many!--you can look north from Haifa and see Lebanon.

Perhaps most notably, Haifa is known as one of the leading centers for interfaith dialogue and tolerance in Israel.

Religious and secular Jews, Israeli Arabs, Christians, Druze, and people of the Baha'i faith all work to coexist in Haifa in relative peace, actively building bridges with their neighbors.

Bay Areans will feel immediately at home in hilly seaside Haifa. It feels remarkably like San Francisco! It boasts natural beauty, a prominent university, a vibrant art culture, and delicious restaurants. Haifa is Israel's 3rd-largest city, built on the slopes of Mt.

THE SPECTACULAR BAHAI WORLD CENTER OF HAIFA



Marching in terraces up the steep slope of Mt. Carmel in Haifa is the Baha'i World Center. It is a perfectly-manicured living work of art--open to the public! The Baha'i World Center is yet another example of the beauty that flowers from Haifa's relatively peaceful interfaith environment. Well worth a visit!



February 3rd Kindergarten – Confirmation
Friday, February 8th Children’s Service 6 p.m.
February 10th Preschool – Confirmation
February 17th No School President’s Day
February 24th Preschool – Confirmation

The rain held off for some outdoor Tu B'Shevat events at Sunday school on January 27. We had all of the students together for a nature-themed art project, bobbing for an apple hanging from a string, and a game of tag where those tagged became trees. Every once in a while, we use the last 45 minutes of the school day to gather the entire school together for various activities. The idea of interrupting class time for these school-wide events has been debated among the staff at some length. Questions are asked such as – Would learning be better served for all if we stayed in a more formal setting? Is this the best use of our teaching resources? Is the planning time taking away from teen education? But we consistently decide to keep including these events in our repertoire. There seems to be great benefit and joy to be gained from letting all the age groups work together. I see older kids gaining real confidence and a sense of responsibility from helping kids younger than themselves to succeed. I see younger kids getting a real sense that Shir Ami is an important and valuable place, by seeing that it is meaningful to the bigger kids. A sense of community, I guess, is what I'm seeing. I also see kids having fun, which is an important element of providing a quality school.

Speaking of providing a quality school, this month in my continuing series of teacher profiles I would like to introduce **Irene Gilchriese**. Irene is teaching our Bet or 2nd year Hebrew class this year, as well as teaching Religious School for the fourth and fifth graders. Outside of Shir Ami, Irene is a busy senior at Castro Valley High School. She is a Class 3 competitive soccer player, and is about to join the CVHS track team where she runs the 400 meters. Irene is taking photography this year at CVHS, and recently brought in a class portfolio which featured photographs of her Shir Ami students. Irene really enjoys the community aspect of Shir Ami, and likes the chance to give some of the education she received here back to her students. Irene says that she is constantly astounded by the smartness of the discussions taking place among her fourth and fifth graders. She feels like she is learning from them as well as teaching them. She is truly teaching them though, and has provided them with a lot of thought-provoking discussions around art with letters and words. They have also written poetry to explore the meanings of some of the prayers they have learned. Irene is likely headed to sunny Southern California in the fall, the direction where her college applications have gone. We will miss her, but thank her sincerely for all she has added to our school.

As always, Jodi

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 February, the adult education class, facilitated by Diana Zankowsky, will meet on the **second** Wednesday, February 13th at 7pm, at Diana's home. We will continue to study from Yearnings by Irwin Kula (Rabbi), published in 2006. This book is available in hardcover, paperback and audio.



This will be our fifth meeting and it will cover the next section of the book, called "Yearning to Create". If you are interested in joining the class, or for address and directions, please contact Diana at dzankowsky@aol.com.

Please join our rabbinic interns, Rebekah Stern and Carla Fenves, as they continue to provide an adult education session on the Saturday afternoons when they are in town. These classes meet at Congregation Shir Ami, from 2 to 3:30 pm. On February 9th, Bekah will lead a study of the taboos of progressive Judaism. These taboos include Messianism, resurrection, angels and some gender issues. On February 23rd, Carla will help us look at Kashrut, trying to arrive at a new understanding of keeping Kosher, including eco-Kashrut and vegetarianism and an understanding of Jewish views of food.

Shir Ami will be offering an adult class in prayerbook Hebrew starting this spring. If you know how to read Hebrew and would like to participate in the class, please call Judy Ganz, 581-6268. The class will meet at 7:30 p.m. on Monday evenings. This class will be a wonderful opportunity to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of various prayers, Hebrew concepts, and Jewish practices.

Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh Group

Jan Dombrower



Sisterhood:

For last month's Rosh Chodesh we studied Kaballah under the leadership of Diana Zankowsky. It was very interesting and everyone got something new out of the presentation and discussion.

We brought in the new month of Shevat with candle lighting ritual, prayer, and readings. Refreshments and connecting followed.

This month Sisterhood is hosting a wedding shower for Sara Lamnin who will be getting married to Jon Zimmerman. All women of Shir Ami are invited to shower Sara on Wednesday, February 6, at 7:00PM at the home of Ruth Hartman, 18850 CULL CANYON RD., Castro Valley, CA 94552. Join us for a catered dinner, fun, and celebration!

Unless you already have, please RSVP to Jan Dombrower: Jandom@comcast.net to get instructions about what to bring. Hope to see you there!! Email Jan with any questions.

Youth Group News

Leah Hartman



Hey teens,

Do you want to be on the EDJY board? If you...

- ...like hanging out with Jews
- ...want some leadership experience
- ...want to be involved in the Jewish youth community
- ...have ideas for exciting events

then this could be a perfect opportunity. Our youth group board does everything from service planning to community service to making phone calls to just having fun at our board meetings. If you think you might be interested, come to our Potential Board Member Information Night on February 23 at my house (18850 Cull Canyon Road). You can learn all about the positions and what being a board member entails without making a binding commitment. We will also have food, movies, and time to get to know other members. Please, if there's even a small chance you might want to be on board, come by, talk to current board members, and pick up an Intent to Run Form for our elections in the spring.

Speaking of spring, we have a fabulous event planned for early March. On March 8th, together with ETY-TESTY of Temple Emanu-El in San Francisco, we will be playing an exciting game called Bigger Is Better here in Castro Valley. In this game, teams start with a paperclip and go door-to-door trading for bigger (if sometimes less useful) items. The team with the biggest item at the end of the time period wins. In the past, teams have ended up with a garden hose, a sofa, and even an old washing machine. The game will be chaperoned and completely safe. We will meet at noon at Loard's Ice Cream. Be there for an amazing day!

Your Religious and Cultural Vice President,
Leah Hartman

The Tzedakah Box
A Social Action Column
Sara Lamnin
Daryl Berman

MLK Celebration 2008

The hope of a secure and livable world lies with disciplined nonconformists who are dedicated to justice, peace and brotherhood. **-Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Shir Ami Members, Sara, Daryl, Fred, and Diana (pictured below left to right) joined Hayward Councilmember, Barbara Halliday (in the rear, far left) and dozens of community members at the annual Martin Luther King Day rally and peace march. Participants of all ages braved the rainy January weather to listen to a youth choir, folk singers, and quotes from Dr. King. A flyover from members of the Tuskegee Airmen energized the peace marchers who walked together in friendship and solidarity around downtown Hayward. Shir Ami was one of six congregations participating in the event.



SHIR AMI BULLETIN BOARD



Film Festival at TBS

The members of Temple Beth Sholom in San Leandro invite the Shir Ami community to the 2008 TBS Film Festival. Each night they will show two films, some with time for discussion.

Saturday February 9th & Sunday, February 10th

On Sunday, February 10th, there will be a Kids Film Festival featuring a great film for the whole family.

For film listings and other details, visit www.tbssanleandro.org.

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 Bru

The Community Page
February, 2008

Yahrzheits:

February 8 , 2008

Paul Bergel, father of Marci Loss

Tessie Bressler, mother of Florrie Finkle

Shellie Cohen, active member of Shir Ami

Gene Gash, Shir Ami organist for many years

Fannie Heimowitz, mother of Stan Heimowitz

Syd Kramer, uncle of Jan Dombrower

***Leon Meier, long-time member and one of the founders of
Shir Ami***

Rivka Rosenberg, grandmother of Alex Druker

***Jacob Small, grandfather of Toni Schulberg and Sidney
Simpson***

February 22 , 2008

Esther Cooper, aunt of Ann Blank



Kaddish List: (to be read at both services in February)

***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 and uncle of David
Carter***

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 TO OUR ONEG HOSTS

For January 11: Ruth Levin

For January 25th: The Blum Family



TODAH RABAH FOR THESE GENEROUS DONATIONS:

- *From Marla Brown: in Memory of her father, Matthew Ganz.*
- *From Florrie Finkle: in Memory of her father, Joseph Bressler at his Yahrzeit.*
- *From Ingrid Weinberg: in Memory of Rolf Weinberg at his Yahrzeit.*
- *From Jan Dombrower and Tyler Dean: a Memorial donation for Larry Dean.*
- *From Joel Permison: in Memory of Rose and Arthur Permison.*
- *From Karen Gelender: at the Yahrzeit for her mother, Charmion Stein.*
- *From Irina and Alex Druker: in Memory of Peter Rosenberg at his Yahrzeit.*
- *From Florrie Finkle: in Congratulations to Judy Ganz on her daughter Marla's wedding.*
- *From Florrie Finkle: in Memory of Mickey Levinsen.*

- *From Rose and Hillie Levine: in Memory of Ann Starr.*
- *From Rose and Hillie Levine: a Mazel Tov to Judy Ganz on Marla's wedding.*
- *From Rose and Hillie Levine: in Memory of Mickey Levinsen.*
- *From Ann and Sam Blank: in Congratulations to Judy Ganz on Marla's wedding.*
- *From Jill and Bob Hartmann: in Congratulations to Harriet Skelly on her retirement.*
- *From Gloria Halpern and Mel Levine: in Congratulations to Harriet Skelly on her retirement.*

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.



What's Nu?

- *Harriet Skelly, Julie Greenfield, Daryl Berman and Ruth Hartman attended the YMCA-sponsored Martin Luther King, Jr. "Great Community Fellowship Breakfast" at Cal State East Bay on Wednesday, January 16th. Ruth read some brief remarks on behalf of the local Jewish community.*



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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Second Kids' Shir Ami Shabbat



Friday February 8th
6:00 PM

Pot Luck 6:45 PM

Services conducted by Bekah Stern 8:00 PM

Please participate in Shir Ami's rotating food assignment

A through L.....Salad or side dish
M through Z.....Main dish

Bring a friend

Paresha Ki Tisa: ("When you take..")



Moses returns from Sinai
as Israelites worship the Golden Calf
(from a painting by Rembrandt)

Shabbat Services Friday, February 22nd at 8:00 PM

Conducted by

Carla Fenves

Bring a friend!

Congregation Shir Ami
Community-Wide Passover Seder

on Saturday, April 26th 2008, 5:30 - 9:00 PM
at the Castro Valley Community Center

Save the



Date!

The Community, including unaffiliated and interfaith families, is invited to join the Congregation in a great festival retelling the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery and their redemption. The Evening Service will feature Passover songs, music and a festive, kosher-style Holiday meal.

**Watch for the Shir Ami Newsletter
and fliers for further information.**