

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
April, 2008



Apr 6	School – K through Confirmation	May 4	School – Preschool through Confirmation
Apr 8	Rosh Chodesh – 7:00 PM	May 5	Rosh Chodesh – 7:30 PM
Apr 11	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Bekah Stern Siddur Dedication	May 9	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Israel @ 60 Led by Bekah Stern
Apr 12	Adult Ed – 2 PM	May 10	Adult Ed – 2 PM
Apr 13	School – Preschool through Confirmation School Passover Seder	May 11	School – K through Confirmation
Apr 17	Board Meeting – 7 PM	May 16	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Carla Fenves
Apr 20	No School	May 17	Adult Ed – 2 PM
Apr 25	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Carla Fenves	May 18	School – Preschool through Confirmation End of Year Party – 11:30 AM Annual Congregation Mtg – 12:30 PM
Apr 26	Community Passover Seder – 5:45 PM – see flier for details		
Apr 27	No School		
May 2	EDJY Teen Shabbat – 8 PM Led by Carla Fenves	Jun 6	Shabbat Services – 8PM Confirmation of Michelle Ross and Sophia Blum Led by Diana Zankowsky
May 3	Adult Ed – 2 PM		

President's Message

Ruth Hartman

Dear Congregation Shir Ami Members and Friends,

Mark your calendars now for two important upcoming events:

- **Community Passover Seder**, Saturday, April 26. Please see the flier in this bulletin and send in your registration by April 17 for this inspiring and joyful event led by Carla Fenves.
- **End-of-School-Year Party and Annual Membership Meeting (with Board elections)**, Sunday, May 18 starting at 11:30 am. Last year's annual membership meeting was brief and upbeat, and this year's meeting will have the same tone.

One of my goals is to make the leadership of our congregation as "transparent" as possible, so everyone feels they have access and understands how (and even why!) we do what we do. Our Board meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month and are open to all members. I welcome you to contact me any time you have questions or concerns about what is happening at Shir Ami.

In addition, the Shir Ami Board is actively interested in expanding our Board membership for the coming year (which starts July 1). Service on the Shir Ami Board offers the reward of knowing that you are sustaining our local Jewish community for ourselves and for our children and grandchildren. The Board culture is collegial, and responsibilities vary according to each member's interests and availability.

Here's a brief description of some of the key Board roles:

- **President:** Chairs Board meetings, serves as chief executive officer, supports committee efforts. I am currently completing my second year in this position.
- **Vice Presidents:** Chair Board meetings in President's absence, serve as committee heads as needed. Current Vice Presidents are Barbara Heimowitz, who also serves as Membership Chair, and Noah Markus, who also serves as Building Maintenance Chair.
- **Treasurers:** Manage our finances. Current Treasurers are Toni Schulberg, who handles all billing and revenues, and Maryann Leshin, who manages our budget process and pays the bills.
- **Secretary:** Records Board meeting minutes and edits our monthly bulletin. Position currently held by Harriet Skelly.
- **Trustees:** Offer sage counsel and fiscal oversight. Current trustees are Immediate Past President Barb Haber, Diana Zankowsky, and Bruce Carter.
- **Committee Chairs:** Shir Ami members who chair committees may also serve on the Board. Two such current Board members are David Schulberg, Religious Chair, who coordinates rabbinic intern relationships, plans High Holiday services, manages the calendar, and oversees religious policy; and Jodi Blum, Education Chair, who runs our Religious School with incredible dedication

We have formed a nominating committee for the 2008-2009 year. If service on the Shir Ami Board is interesting to you, I hope you will contact Harriet Skelly at 538-8105 or hskelly@pacbell.net. I can testify that although the pay is low, the jobs nonetheless yield great rewards.

B'shalom, Ruth Hartman

Rabbis' Corner

Bekah Stern

Carla Fenves

Dear Congregation Shir Ami members and friends,

Pulitzer-Prize winning author Geraldine Brooks just came out with a novel entitled *People of the Book*. It traces the history of a rare illuminated Hebrew manuscript known as the Sarajevo Haggadah. Originally produced during the Golden Age of Medieval Spain, the Haggadah had been smuggled to Lisbon, then Venice, and eventually ended up in Sarajevo at the Bosnian National Museum.

Brooks' story is intriguing. In 1942, the Bosnian Museum's chief librarian, a young Muslim scholar named Dervis Korkut barely rescued the Haggadah from falling into the Nazi's hands. He hid the small manuscript in his jacket and smuggled it to a remote village where an imam kept it concealed among the holy books of a small local mosque during the war.

A few months later, Korkut and his family go on to hide a young Sephardic Jewish woman named Mira Papo. For saving a Jew during the Holocaust, Korkut and his wife Servet are eventually named at Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem. The story ends with Korkut's daughter reuniting with Papo's son in the Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv as she seeks a safe haven from the Serbian violence.

The incredible journey of the Sarajevo Haggadah reminds us of the enduring values of Passover. We must never forget the value of freedom for we were once slaves in Egypt. We must continue to give thanks for those who took us out of bondage. We must tell and retell our children the rich stories of Jewish history.

May this Passover help us to appreciate our own freedom and then enable others to share in that freedom.

Carla Fenves

April 6th Kindergarten to Confirmation
April 13th Passover Seder for Preschool to Confirmation
Classes

April 20th No School: Passover

April 27th No School: Passover

Thanks to everyone who helped with our lovely Purim Carnival Celebration. I so appreciated everyone jumping in to set up tables, and games, help with clean up, participate at stations, and stay around to chat and enjoy the day together. Special thanks to Rose Firestone and friends who designed and contributed all the supplies for the special Purim wand, and watercolor etching crafts. Rose also contributed the two tables full of wooden games and puzzles that added such a nice touch to the event. Also, special thanks to Danielle Keil who arranged for the jumpy, and to Judy Brackin who all year has been posting our events to the Castro Valley Mother's Club.

This month at religious school we will have a typical day on April 6th, and on April 13th we will have a special school Passover Seder led by Rebekah Stern. The Seder will be held during Religious School 10:30 – 12:45, and Hebrew classes will meet as usual that day.

Shir Ami is lucky this year to have Stacey Zankowsky teaching both the Gimel, or third year, Hebrew Class as well as the K-1 Religious School Class. Stacey is a senior at the Jewish Community High School in San Francisco. She is presently deciding between college choices of U.C. Davis, Northeastern, or Smith. When not in school or teaching at Shir Ami, Stacey keeps very busy with extracurricular activities. She is biking with Team in Training where her efforts are helping to raise funds for cancer research. She is presently training for a 103 mile ride to be completed in June 2008. She is also a competitive soccer player (she plays goalie). She is interested in photography, and can be seen snapping shots around Religious School from time to time. Most recently, she is learning to play the guitar. Stacey loves to see her students' progress as they use what they are learning. Her favorite holiday is Purim, and this year she loved how the kids responded to the sandwich making project. She reports that Sophia Silver made 14 sandwiches, and was so excited to be able to make such a contribution. I was impressed this year when Stacey, along with Hebrew teachers Leah Hartman and Irene Gilchriese helped to develop a plan for better coordination between the Hebrew classrooms. This will help guide Hebrew teachers year to year. Thanks, Stacey.

I hope all of our families enjoyed their Spring Break, see you all April 6th,

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 April, the adult education class, facilitated by Diana Zankowsky, will meet on the **first** Wednesday, April 2nd 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 seventh (and last) meeting on this topic and it will cover the last section of the book, called "Yearning for Transcendence". 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 April 12th, Bekah will lead an in-depth study of the Passover Haggadah. Please bring any Haggadot from your home to the class. There will be no adult education on April 26th because of the Community Passover Seder to be held later that same day.

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.

Dear Shir Ami member family,

I'm writing to let you know about a new program starting soon at Congregation Shir Ami. In response to interest from several of our members, we are starting a class for adults interested in exploring conversion to Judaism.

The Shir Ami community is blessed with many non-Jewish members who support the Jewish involvement of their partners and, often, the Jewish education of their children. We deeply appreciate all that these members do to strengthen our Jewish community. We strive to make sure they feel welcomed, respected, and cherished just as they are.

Now, for the first time, we are able to also extend the invitation to those who feel inspired or interested, to join the Jewish people by exploring conversion. The class will be led by Shir Ami lay leader and adult education specialist Diana Zankowsky, under the guidance of Rabbi Rick Winer of Congregation Beth Emek. It will "kick off" with a luncheon and discussion on Saturday, April 12 from noon to 1:30.

If you, or a member of your family, are interested in personal and spiritual exploration of a decision to embrace Judaism, we would love to have you join us on April 12.

Please contact Diana Zankowsky, either of our Rabbinic Interns, or me if you'd like to discuss this opportunity. We welcome your interest and thank you for your engagement in our community.

B'shalom/in peace,

Ruth Hartman
President

Contact information:

Diana Zankowsky, 510-881-8466, adulthoodeducation@congshirami.org

Bekah Stern, 510-339-3039, rabbi.rebekah@congshirami.org :

Carla Fenves, 214-801-2024, rabbi.carla@congshirami.org

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

Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh Group

Jan Dombrower



Sisterhood:

Last month's Rosh Chodesh was led by new member, Nancy Storch. There was a discussion about why Adar was the happiest, most joyous month in the Hebrew calendar. Nancy led us in Qigong (pronounced Chi gong) for breathing, health, happiness, and healing. Other activities were a reading of a Dr. Seuss book, video clips, and of course Rosh Chodesh rituals and treats. There was a great response to her program. The women who attended said Rosh Chodesh was delightful. There was a lot of variety and fun. Nancy did a great job and it went very well.

Next month we will be meeting on Tuesday April 8th at Aran's Paint and Glaze at **7:00 PM** hosted by Harriet Skelly. All sisterhood members and their daughters are invited to join us as we bring in the month of Nissan. We will each pick a piece of ceramic to paint and refreshments will be provided.

Aran's paint and Glaze is located at the Castro Village Shopping Center: 3313 Village Dr. Please note that Aran's has moved across the parking lot where the old bicycle shop used to be.

Please be advised that there is a change in the Rosh Chodesh schedule. In June, the date is changing to Tuesday, June 3rd for the end of year Barbecue and Wednesday June 4th is cancelled. There will be more information as the date nears.

Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh Group

Jan Dombrower



Camperships

Jewish summer camp is a great way for kids to enhance their Jewish experience.

Sisterhood is proudly sponsoring scholarships for camper aged children in our congregation. Generous donations were made from Sara Lamnin and Jon Zimmerman in honor of their wedding and Sydney Simpson and Sisterhood to this scholarship fund.

We will be awarding individual children with \$100 camperships to our URJ camps Newman and Swig and Camp Kadima. Other Jewish camps may be applied as well. We are awarding the children their scholarships on a need basis. If you would like to apply for a scholarship, please write a letter with the name or names of the children that are applying with your intention in applying. Please state the name of the camp that your child is applying for.

Send the letter to 'Shir Ami care of Sisterhood Camp Scholarships:

Attn: Jan Dombrower, 4529 MALABAR AVE., Castro Valley CA 94546.

Or you may hand deliver the letter and place it in the "Sisterhood" mail slot in the front classroom at Shir Ami.

Letters may be sent at any time, as long as our campership funds last.

Candidates will be notified within three weeks from the time their letter was received.

Youth Group News

Leah Hartman



Dear Teens,

Please come and vote for next year's EDJY Board this weekend! Elections will be held Saturday, April 5 from 5–7 pm at Congregation Beth Emek. This is your chance to decide who will lead your youth group, so please take the time to come and make your voice heard. Snack food will be provided.

Do you like chocolate? Do you like Passover? Combine these two passions with EDJY's chocolate seder on Friday, April 18th. Join us at 5:00 pm at Congregation Beth Emek to celebrate the sweetness of freedom. This is the day before Passover so as to avoid conflict with family seders, so we expect to see everyone there! Carpools can be arranged.

Finally, mark your calendars for the last NFTY Regional Event of the year, May 16–18. This is a great event for both new and old members. The focus is social action and graduation (and I guarantee that you will see every senior cry). Please note that 8th graders are also welcome to attend this final event. Registration forms will be online soon at www.nfty.org/cwr.

Your Religious and Cultural Vice President,
Leah Hartman

The Tzedakah Box
A Social Action Column
Sara Lamnin
Daryl Berman

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Day Labor Center 782-9675 Driving students from ESL classes
- Family Resource Center 782-2947 light receptionist work
- USDA Food Distribution 303-1890 Help pack and distribute food
- South Hayward Parish 782-5795 Data entry. Help bag bakery donations on Tues. and Thurs. mornings.

SOCKS NEEDED

There is an urgent need for socks for the homeless. South Hayward Parish is collecting socks to distribute to the homeless through the Hayward Day Labor Center, the Generations Project and at the feeding of the homeless program at Portuguese Park in Hayward.

VIGILS of CARING

The South Hayward Parish goes to sites of violent deaths in Hayward each Friday at 12:15 PM until 3-21-08 to remember the victims, families and perpetrators of the violent acts. It is a very moving experience that generates compassion, understanding and a connection to others. All are invited to attend. For more information call Daryl Berman (510 538-6022) or Sara Lamnin (510 733-5114).

FOOD for PETS of the HOMELESS

The South Hayward Parish is participating in new program. A woman dedicated to pets procured food to be distributed to pets of the homeless. Sometimes a homeless person will give his/her pet food meant for the person. The distribution helps to maintain the homeless person's health.

SHIR AMI BULLETIN BOARD



Special Shabbat Service

Please join us for a special Shabbat service honoring our new siddurim (prayerbooks) and the donors whose contributions helped to make their arrival in our community possible! **Friday April 11th at 8:00pm.**

Save the Date for Our Confirmation and Teen Grads Shabbat Service

Please save Friday, June 6 for the celebration of the holiday of Shavuot, the Confirmation of Sophia Blum and Michelle Ross, and a special "sendoff" appreciation of our graduating seniors. **Friday June 6th at 8:00pm, led by Diana Zankowsky and the Confirmation Class.**

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
April, 2008

Yahrzheits:

April 11 , 2008

Blanche Fink, very active early member of Shir Ami
Sam Ganz, former member and father-in-law of Judy Ganz
Marjorie Wolf, aunt of Ruth Hartman

April 25 , 2008

May Ganz, former member and mother-in-law of Judy Ganz
Benjamin Halpern, father of Harriet Skelly
❖

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

Sy Mouber, long-time former member of Shir Ami
Chris Partridge, son of Ricki Baird, former member of Shir Ami
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

TODAH RABAH FOR THESE GENEROUS DONATIONS:

- *From Harriet Skelly: in Memory of her father's yarhzeit, and for Jan Dombrower's birthday.*
- *From Bruce and Susan Carter: in Honor of Marla Ganz' wedding and in Memory of Esther Cooper.*
- *From Judy Ganz: in Memory of Matthew, May and Sam Ganz.*
- *From Ann and Sam Blank: to Ricki Baird in Memory of her son Chris.*
- *From Frances Johnson: in Memory of her husband, Melvin Johnson.*
- *The following generous donors are helping to underwrite our Community Passover Seder: Marion Kramer, Marilyn Schneider and Gil Gilchriese, Danielle and Kevin Keil, and David and Toni Schulberg.*

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.



*Thank you to our Oneg Hosts:
March 7th: Barbara and Stan Heimowitz
March 21st: Jan Dombrower*



What's Nu?

- *Sam Blank recently graduated from a 3-month intensive low-vision training at the Western Blind Center at the Veteran's Administration campus in Palo Alto. The training included living skills, mobility training, woodshop and computer training.*
- *Ann Blank recently saw Gail Null, a very active former member of Shir Ami. Gail sends a warm hello to all those who remember her. She now lives on the Peninsula.*
- *Best Wishes for a speedy and full recovery to Fred Zankowsky, who had tendon repair surgery on his left hand on March 12th.*
- *The Jewish Club at Castro Valley High School participated in the school's annual Days of Diversity program. The club members developed a 45-minute presentation on Jewish culture for their peers, including a brief overview of Judaism, a fun learning game, challah and grape juice. Sophia Blum, Leah Hartman, Carolyn Gilchriese and Hana Hartman were the student presenters; Ruth Hartman worked on the planning and helped the presentation as well.*

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Shir Ami Contacts

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Tonia Schulberg
yahrzeits@congshirami.org

Donations:

General Funds, Special Funds,
Wall Plaques
Florrie Finkle
donations@congshirami.org



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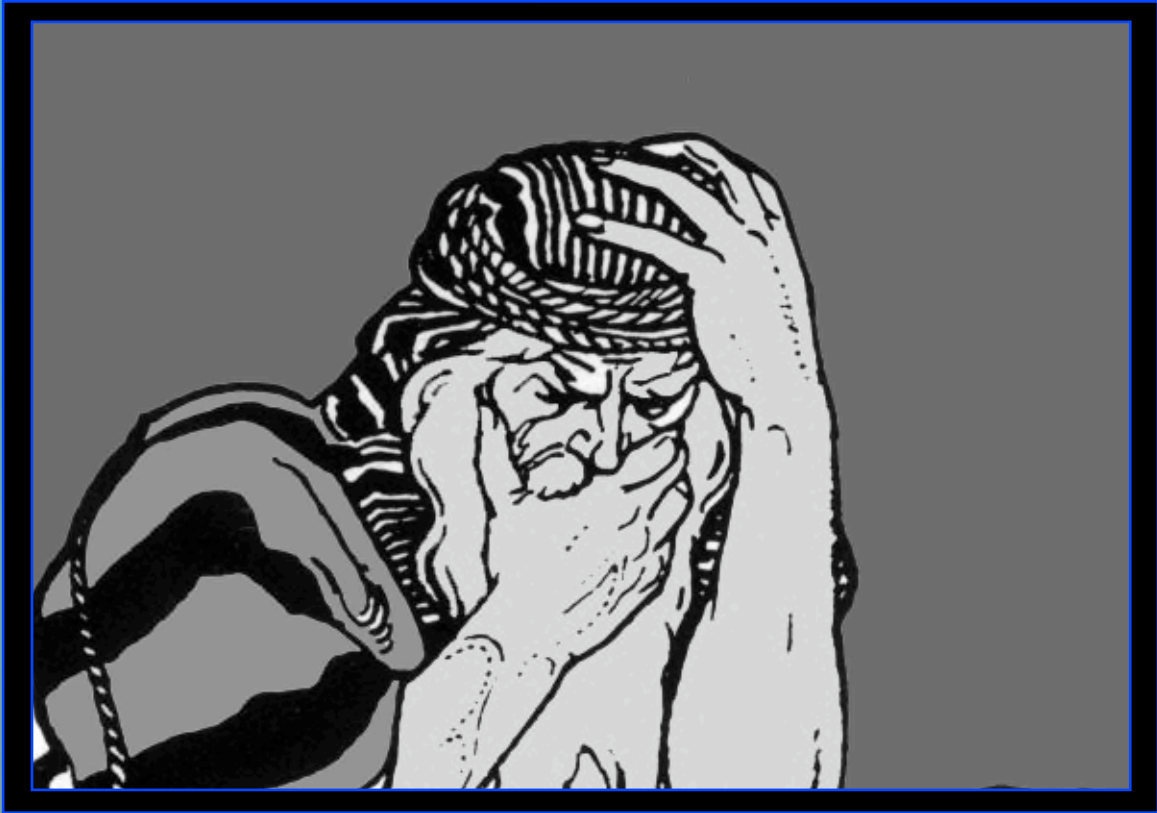
Safeway is proud to partner with eScrip to support the education of youth.

If you participated last year, don't forget to renew your commitment to the program to continue receiving Safeway contributions.

If you are not enrolled in the program sign-up today at escrip.com.

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Paresha Metzora: *"One who speaks negatively"*



The Paresha describes the purification rites for the malicious speaker.

Shabbat Services at Shir Ami
Friday, April 11th at 8:00 PM

Conducted by

Bekah Stern

Bring a friend to Services

Congregation Shir Ami
Community-Wide Passover Seder

will be led by Carla Fenves
on Saturday April 26th, 2008, 5:30 - 9.00 PM
at the Castro Valley Community Center



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.



Seating is limited ~ please provide the information below:

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

No. _____ adult Shir Ami members @ \$25 = \$ _____ No. _____ adult non-Shir Ami members @ \$30 = \$ _____

No. _____ children 12 and under @ \$10 = \$ _____ Additional donation to help defray costs \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Your Reservation is made by check, payable to Congregation Shir Ami, and mailed with the information above no later than April 17th to:

**Congregation Shir Ami
Attn: Barbara Heimowitz
4529 Malabar Ave
Castro Valley, CA 94546**

MONEY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AT THE DOOR

For more information call Barbara Heimowitz after 5:00 PM (510) 537-2066