

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
May, 2008



May 2	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Carla Fenves	May 17	Adult Ed – 2 PM
May 3	Adult Ed – 2 PM	May 18	School – Preschool through Confirmation End of Year Party & Potluck – 11:30 AM Annual Congregation Mtg – 12:30 PM
May 4	School – Preschool through Confirmation	Jun 3	Rosh Chodesh - 7 PM
May 6	Rosh Chodesh – 7 PM	Jun 6	Shabbat Services – 8PM Confirmation of Michelle Ross and Sophia Blum Led by Diana Zankowsky
May 9	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Israel @ 60 Led by Bekah Stern	Jun 19	Board Meeting – 7 PM
May 10	Adult Ed – 2 PM	Jun 28	Emma Silver Bat Mitzvah 4 PM at Temple Beth Sholom in San Leandro
May 11	School – K through Confirmation		
May 16	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Carla Fenves		

President's Message

Ruth Hartman

Dear Congregation Shir Ami Members and Friends,

What richness Carla Fenves and Bekah Stern have brought to us this year! Learning, storytelling, music, laughter, inspiration, insight, professionalism, sensitivity, collaboration, creativity, pastoral caring, and so much more. It has truly been a pleasure to learn from each of them, and I hope they have gained valuable experiences from us as well.

Bekah was with us for two years, and we also knew her before she decided to become a rabbi. She has deep relationships in our community and will always be part of us. Carla was only with us for one year, but we are no less fond of her and no less sad to see her go. New York's gain will be our loss—but having now met her fiancé, David, we understand her reasons for leaving us. We thank both Bekah and Carla for all they have shared with us, and wish them both every success and fulfillment in their rabbinic careers and in their lives. **I hope you'll join us on Friday, May 9 for Bekah's last Shabbat service (celebrating Israel's 60th birthday) and on Friday, May 16 for Carla's last Shabbat service.**

As a community, we prepare to welcome two new rabbinic interns in the fall. They will not be Bekah and Carla, but they will bring fresh talents, ideas, enthusiasm, and energy. This annual change of clergy is one of the pleasures and challenges of life at Shir Ami. Each year we get to experience some of the best new minds and spirits that the Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles has to offer. Each year we attach—and then must say goodbye.

In exchange, we have the opportunity to be part of the training process for these students, and to watch them grow into the role of rabbi. We get to see ourselves freshly each year through their eyes. They offer us their best, and we get to reach for the best in ourselves in return. It's an unusual arrangement, but it seems to work pretty well for us.

In addition to our **Shabbat services on May 2, 9, and 16**, please mark your calendars for two important upcoming events:

- **End-of-School-Year Party and Annual Membership Meeting**, Sunday, May 18 starting at 11:30 am. We'll be electing next year's Board and discussing our financial situation. I'll try to keep it brief—but we do need you to attend!
- **Shavuot Confirmation Shabbat Service**: Join us on Friday, June 6 at 8 pm as we celebrate the Confirmation of Michelle Ross and Sophia Blum and recall the giving of the Torah at Sinai. The service, led by Diana Zankowsky and the Confirmation Class, will include a special recognition of our graduating high-school seniors.

B'shalom,
Ruth Hartman

Rabbis' Corner

Bekah Stern
Carla Fenves

Dear Congregation Shir Ami Members and Friends,

It was less than 2 weeks ago that we concluded our Passover Seders with the words, *l'shanah ha'ba'ah bi'Yerushalayim*—next year in Jerusalem! And it was just a little over a half a year ago, on Erev Rosh Ha'Shanah, that I spoke to you about developing a new kind of love for Israel. I spoke of the kind of true, deep, steady love that allows each partner to see the other's flaws and gifts, and to work together to be the best they each can be. I spoke about *ahavat tzion*, an old idea, meaning *a love of Zion*, this same eyes-wide-open kind of love. Zion, Israel, is at the center of our Jewish focus throughout the year, on every annual holiday, on every Shabbat, during every prayer service.

But now, this month, Israel is on our minds perhaps more than at any other time of the year. On May 7th Jews around the world will mark Yom Ha'Zikaron—a day of memory for Israel's fallen soldiers. And the next day, May 8th, we will celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut—the Day of Independence, the day that marks the 60th anniversary of the birth of the modern State of Israel. It is an emotional one-two-punch. Our Israeli brothers and sisters have sacrificed, and continue to sacrifice much to ensure that there will always be a safe place for Jews to live freely as Jews. The timing of these two holidays, falling as they do less than a week after Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom Ha'Shoah), reminds us that Jews have not always had such an accessible refuge. Many times in the last half-century has the question been asked, "Would the six million Jews of Europe have been spared if the State of Israel had existed during World War II?"

But I am not only a survivalist. I do not only engage with the State of Israel because I want it to be a refuge should America become hostile to Jews in my lifetime or in the lifetime of my children or of my children's children. I learn about Israel, and work on behalf of Israel, and feel a love for Israel because it enriches my Judaism. We are a people with two major centers in the modern world—one is here in the US, but the other is in the East, in Zion. I have learned in the State of Israel that Judaism can be a guiding principle even in the most secular areas of my life. It is in fact possible to be Jewish in a taxi, in the supermarket, and at the post office. Israel inspires me to try to find more Jewish time in my secular American life. And this pursuit leads me to a place of greater connectedness with our past, with my spiritual center, and with the Divine.

I cannot predict what effect a deepened relationship, your own version of *Ahavat Tzion*, will have on you and on your Jewish journey. I can only encourage you to learn as much as you can, to meet and talk with Israelis—either in the US or in Israel—as often as you can, and, as always, to examine your assumptions as carefully as you can. As Theodore Herzl wrote, "If you want it, it is no legend: to be a free people in our land of Zion and Jerusalem." Only by engaging deeply with Israel can it truly become the Israel of legend.

Since this will be my final bulletin article, I want to take a sentence or two to thank you, the Shir Ami community, for all that you have given me in the last two years. I have learned so much from you about what it means to be a rabbi. Thank you for opening your homes and yourselves, and for allowing me to be a part of your lives. It has been my honor. I very much hope to be able to say goodbye to you in person during my last visit May 9-11. ~ Rebekah

May 4th Preschool to Confirmation
May 11th Preschool to Confirmation
Special Programming "Passport to Israel"
(Hebrew classes meet as usual)
May 18th Preschool to Confirmation
School meets until 11:45 followed by the end of year potluck
and general membership meeting

This coming Sunday May 4th our confirmation and B'nai Mitzvah students will be helping prepare for a special day of religious school taking place on Sunday, May 11th. To recognize the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel we will be having a "Passport to Israel" event as well as appreciating Rabbi Bekah on her last day as our student rabbi. On Sunday May 11th, students will learn about different parts of Israel through hands-on activities, and will have their *passports* stamped as they experience the various stations available. This event promises to be both very fun and educational. It is sure to be a fun way to spend your Mother's Day Morning!

On Sunday May 18th, parents please join us as Religious School ends at 11:45 to provide an opportunity for the entire Shir Ami congregation to gather as we enjoy our annual end of year potluck. We will be recognizing our teachers for their excellent service. After the potluck, please stay to support your Board members at the annual membership meeting. This will also be our last chance to thank Rabbi Carla for this year she has shared with us as our student rabbi.

My featured Shir Ami teacher this month is our Hebrew Alef (first year) teacher Todd Finlay. Todd has been teaching Hebrew at Shir Ami long enough that his first group of students have become Bar and Bat Mitzvah. Todd loves the spirit and learning that go on at Shir Ami. Todd has a daughter Aliya graduating from Castro Valley High School this year, and a son Daniel graduating from UC Irvine. Outside of Shir Ami, Todd is a special education teacher at Marshall Elementary School in Castro Valley. He was recently awarded the "Excellence in Special Education" award by the Mid Alameda County SELPA. This is a group of school districts including Castro Valley, Hayward, San Leandro and San Lorenzo. Todd is interested in issues of democracy, justice, education and critical thinking. Todd also likes to translate Chinese, and has recently been working on Tang Dynasty Poetry from the 700's. To quote Todd's thoughts about Shir Ami, "I think we have been blessed with a long series of wonderful Rabbis and a community that helps us be better people." We are lucky to have such a respected and thoughtful educator teaching in our school.

Be assured that planning is well underway to provide another inspiring and instructive year of Hebrew and Religious School for the 2008-2009 school year.
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

Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh Group

Jan Dombrower



Sisterhood:

This month's Sisterhood meeting: Tuesday, May 6th 7:00 at Aran's Paint and Glaze

Last month's Rosh Chodesh was cancelled, but this month we will resume at Aran's Paint and Glaze on Tuesday, May 6th at 7:00 PM hosted by Harriet Skelly. All sisterhood members and their daughters are welcome to join us as we bring in the month of Iyar. We will each pick a piece of ceramics to paint and then we will pick up the piece later in the week after it gets glazed. Refreshments and Rosh Chodesh rituals will be a part of the evening

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

Please note that the date for the end of year Barbecue has been changed to Tuesday, June 3rd.

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 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



Hey Teens,

The most important event of this month is NFTY MTC!!! This is the final regional event of the year and it is going to be AMAZING. The theme is social action and saying goodbye to seniors; personally I will be crying all weekend but I still want all of you to come and have fun. Remember that 8th graders are invited to this event. The registration forms are online now at nfty.org/cwr, login "nftycwr" password "newman". The Early Registration deadline is May 2 and the final deadline is May 10th. Please consider going to this event even if you've never been before. It is a great first NFTY experience.

Unfortunately, we are canceling our May 2 teen-led service. The service will still be led by the lovely Rabbi Carla Fenves but there will be no teen participation due to scheduling confusion and conflict with the SATs. Teens are, however, encouraged to attend Shir Ami's confirmation and senior appreciation service on June 6th.

Do you like staying up late? Do you like bowling? Combine these two fun activities with EDJY Midnight Bowling on May 30th at Earl Anthony Dublin Bowl. We intend to have a crazy (and chaperoned) night and would love you to join us. Rides and sleep-overs can be arranged.

Your Religious and Cultural Vice President,

Leah Hartman

The Tzedakah Box
A Social Action Column
Sara Lamnín
Daryl Berman

The South Hayward Parish (of which Congregation Shir Ami is a member) offers a food program to families in need in South Hayward. The food pantry includes fresh produce, bread, and many other items. The program is connected to other family resource programs so that families can gain the resources and skills they need to be safe and stable.

With the current economy and rising food costs, more families are relying heavily on this program. Families who do not live in the area are referred to the program closer to home.

"Shelf stable foods" (canned and packaged goods) and donations are needed year-round. Volunteers are needed on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. For more information, contact Tereza Wichman (510) 785-3663.

SHIR AMI BULLETIN BOARD



New Adult Hebrew Class

Shir Ami will be offering an adult class in prayerbook Hebrew starting **Tuesday, May 6**. If you know how to read Hebrew and would like to participate in the class, please call Judy Ganz, 581-6268. This class will be a wonderful opportunity to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of various prayers, Hebrew concepts, and Jewish practices.

On **Friday evening May 9th** during our Erev Shabbat service we will be honoring the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the modern State of Israel. If you have been to Israel or have a special connection to Israel, I would love for you to share your personal reflection on your time in Israel or your connection with Israel during the service. **Please contact me ASAP at rabbi.rebekah@congshirami.org** so that I can be sure to allow enough time for everyone's reflections. I look forward to your participation! ~Rebekah

Calling Youth, ages 15-25

You are invited to participate in an essay contest sponsored by the Ik Onkar Peace Foundation. The subject is your spiritual or belief system and how it promotes peace and harmony in the world, and respect for others with different beliefs than your own. There are two categories of entries: for ages 15-18 years old, and 19-25 years old. There are cash prizes ranging from \$500 to \$100. For more information, see the bulletin board at Shir Ami, or e-mail Julie Greenfield at juliegreenfield@gmail.com.

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.**

The Community Page
May, 2008

Yahrzheits:

May 2 , 2008

Harriet Cohn, grandmother of Ruth Hartman
Bernard Nasatir, father of Cary Nasatir
Harold Small, uncle of Sidney Simpson and Toni
Schulberg and former member of Shir Ami

May 9 , 2008

Morris Berman, father of Daryl Berman
Keith Carter, brother of Bruce Carter and uncle of David
Carter
Hyman Abraham Rebotsky, grandfather of Jonathan
Zimmerman

May 16, 2008

Gordon Greenfield, father of Julie Greenfield



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

Sy Moubert, long-time former member of Shir Ami
Chris Partridge, son of Ricki Baird, former member of
Shir Ami
Georgie Brooke, mother of Toni Schulberg & aunt of
Sidney Simpson
Moshe Vanous, long-time member of Shir Ami

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 Ann and Sam Blank:

- *in Memory of Matt Ganz at his Yahrzeit,*
- *in Memory of Edna Vanous at her Yahrzeit,*
- *and in Memory of Sy Mauber.*

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:
April 11th: Rose Firestone and Sharon Golembo
April 25th : Larry and Ruth Bercovich



***Thank you to all who helped make the
Community Seder a success! The following
people generously donated to offset the cost
of the Seder:***

***Marion Kramer
Schneider/Gilchriese Family
Danielle Keil—Coldwell Banker—www.GotYourKeys.com
Hartman/Wolff Family
Skelly Family
Heimowitz Family
Toni and David Schulberg
Lily Erickson/Daryl Berman.***

***The Seder Committee was led by Harriet Skelly and
Maryann Leshin.***

***Other helpers included Barbara Heimowitz, Toni
Schulberg, Bruce Skelly, Charlie Ridgell, Barb Haber,
Matt Beckman, Kaitlin Beckman, Lilly Erickson, Jodi
Blum, Sophia Blum, Diana Zankowsky, Hana Hartman,
Michelle Ross.***

***Thanks also to those that supported the seder by
preparing our ritual foods and desserts: Jan Dombrower,
Maryann Leshin, Harriet Skelly, Diana Zankowsky, Ruth
Hartman, Sharon Golembo, Jeff Blum, Sara Lamnin
Eighty-four people attended the Community Seder, which
was catered by Sigi's Catering.***

***Today Rabah to Carla Fenves and her fiancée David for
leading a beautiful service.***



What's Nu?

- *Congratulations to Sophia Silver, who was voted Student Council President by her classmates at Independent School in Castro Valley.*
- *Congratulations to our former Rabbinic Interns Dean Shapiro and Kate Speizer, who will be ordained as Reform Rabbis on May 18. Dean writes the following about his plans, "Haim and I will be moving to Auckland, New Zealand, where I will be the rabbi of the Progressive congregation. Needless to say, we're beyond thrilled!" Kate, with her husband, Ilan, and new baby son, Yonatan Gavriel (born mid-March), will be moving to Ithaca, NY, where she will be joining the staff of Cornell University's campus Hillel.*
- *Diana Zankowsky recently spoke about Passover, the Exodus story and seders in the 21st century at Sunday morning services at the Westminster Hills Presbyterian Church in Hayward. Westminster Hills is a member of the South Hayward Parish, as is Congregation Shir Ami. Daryl Berman is the current president of the South Hayward Parish.*
- *Elizabeth Bercovich traveled to Atlanta in April to represent Castro Valley High School's DECA business and marketing club in an International Career Development Conference and Competition.*
- *The Contemporary Jewish Museum of San Francisco, <http://www.jmsf.org/>, will be opening its new building on June 8th, 2008. As part of its opening exhibit, they will be presenting a collage of photos titled, " 'Being Jewish' in the Bay Area: What does it mean to you?" Stacy Zankowsky has three of her photos accepted by the museum for this exhibit, including one of Miriam Goldgeil.*
- *Rose and Hillie Levine spent Passover in Israel.*
- *Susan Carter traveled to France in April.*
- *"It was great to see Past President Henry Bennett at the Shir Ami Community Seder", writes Ruth Hartman. Henry now lives in Irvine, where he is still looking for a Reform congregation as warm and welcoming as Shir Ami.*

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Donations:

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

Slate
Congregation Shir Ami 2008-2009 Board
To be voted at the Annual Membership Meeting
Sunday, May 18 at 12:30 PM at Shir Ami

President	Ruth Hartman
Vice President, Membership	Barbara Heimowitz
Vice President, Building & Mtce.	Noah Markus
Vice President	Danielle Keil
Secretary	Harriet Skelly
Treasurer, Receivables	Toni Schulberg
Treasurer, Payables	Maryann Leshin
Trustee	Bruce Carter
Trustee	Barbara Haber
Trustee	Diana Zankowsky
Religious Chair	David Schulberg
Education Chair	Jodi Blum



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PARESHA *KEDOSHIM*

"YE SHALL BE HOLY; FOR I THE LORD YOUR GOD AM HOLY."

Biblical injunctions



At the Kotel -- Hillie Levine

Yom Hashoah and Teen Shabbat Service

Friday, May 2 at 8:00 PM

Led by

Carla Fenves

Bring a friend! Remember Shir Ami's Food Basket.

SHIR AMI SERVICES



**ON THE 19TH DAY OF THE OMER AND
THE WEEK OF YOM HAATZMAUT**

**WILL BE CONDUCTED BY
BEKAH STERN
ON FRIDAY, MAY 9TH AT 8:00 PM**

Pareshot Behar (on the mountain) and Bechukotai (if you keep)

On Mount Sinai the laws for the sabbatical year are given. The lord also said: "If ye walk in my statutes and keep my commandments, then I will give you rains in their season and the land shall yield her produce and the trees ...their fruit."



Joshua Tree Fruit

Shir Ami Services Friday, May 16th at 8:00 PM

will be led by

Carla Fenves

This is the season's final Service before the Summer series begin

May 18 - End of Year Party and Annual Congregation Meeting

Friday, June 6 - Confirmation Service

Saturday, June 28th - the Bat Mitzvah of Emma Silver