

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
June and July, 2008



Jun 3	Rosh Chodesh – 7 PM	Jul 11	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by David Levinsky
Jun 6	Shabbat Services – 8PM Confirmation of Michelle Ross and Sophia Blum Recognition of graduating seniors Led by Diana Zankowsky	Jul 25	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Diana Zankowsky
Jun 19	Board Meeting – 7 PM	Aug 8	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by TBD
Jun 27	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Bekah Stern	Aug 22	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Diana Zankowsky
Jun 28	Emma Silver Bat Mitzvah 4 PM at Temple Beth Sholom in San Leandro. All Shir Ami members are invited.	Aug 23	Religious Committee Mtg – 10 AM at the Schulberg's

President's Message

Ruth Hartman

Dear Congregation Shir Ami Members and Friends,

It was a pleasure to be with so many of you at our end-of-year celebration and annual meeting. I loved the chance to congratulate and appreciate our students, our teachers, and our wonderful Educator, Jodi Blum, for a meaningful and successful school year. I also liked the chance to share with all of you our achievements of the past year and to think together about our future as a community.

As my second year as your president draws to a close, I'd like to offer some personal thanks.

- Thank you to the members who have taken on new volunteer and leadership roles in the past year, including (but not limited to) Lori Knopf Santora, who took over the Community Page; Danielle Keil, who took over eScrip and joined the Board; Nancy Liskewicz who organized the Tu B'Shevat Seder; Judy Brackin, who helped out with the school in so many ways; and Angie Ross, who always seems to be there with a helping hand.
- Thank you to our lay adult education teachers, Diana Zankowsky and Judy Ganz, who have shared their knowledge, sought new knowledge to share, and tirelessly offered their time and care to enrich our adult community.
- Thank you to Jan Dombrower for her inspired leadership of our Rosh Hodesh women's group, which creates such a meaningful connection for so many of us.
- Thank you to the many Shir Ami members who have helped me with transportation over the past year, including Diana and Fred Zankowsky, Harriet and Bruce Skelly, Lilly Erickson, Daryl Berman, Judy Ganz, Aihua Zelinsky, Jodi and Jeff Blum, Barbara Heimowitz, Angie Ross, Barb Haber, Sharon Golembo, Ruth Rosenthal, Lisa Silver, Rahel Ruiz, and others. The generosity of our community is a wonderful thing.
- Thank you to the entire Board, many of whom have served our community since long before I came along, for their dedication, flexibility, and good humor.

I am grateful to this community for the support it has given me and my family, and for the many ways it has helped deepen my Jewish identity, knowledge, and spiritual awareness. I wish each of you a summer filled with gratitude, and I hope you find time to enjoy the beauty of our incomparable Bay Area home.

With love and appreciation,
Ruth Hartman

Friday June 6th 8:00 p.m.
Confirmation of Sophia Blum and Michelle Ross
Recognition of our Graduating Seniors

Friday June 27th 8:00 p.m
Shabbat evening service preceding the
Bat Mitzvah of Emma Silver

I think we have a lot to be proud of at our small but exceptional synagogue with regards to our young adults. Although not an actual statistical survey, conversations I have had regarding other programs indicate to me that Shir Ami is somewhat unique in our ability to keep our teens engaged in synagogue activities and Jewish life. Partly, we are lucky, as our teens continue to comprise a lovely group of bright and engaging students (and teachers). I don't believe they get all of the credit though. I think the founders of Shir Ami set us on the right path with the idea of a religious school that needed to be fun and entertaining at the same time it provided opportunities for learning. Possibly our size, which by its nature insists on community involvement to achieve success and also provides for a small nurturing environment, is another factor. I think the best thing we have going though is that we truly care about our community of kids. We care about their thoughts and opinions, and want to hear their weekly accomplishments as they light Shabbat evening candles. The two Friday evening services this month will focus on our teens and their accomplishments. Families of younger kids, I encourage you to attend. I think it will be great for the younger kids to see our young adults reading Torah, leading services, and being honored.

It seems appropriate to feature Karen Gelender this month after just talking about the teens, because the great start Karen gives the preschool kids with fun and learning lays such a great foundation for the future. Outside of Shir Ami, Karen likes to read, make jewelry, and get together with family and friends (including husband Mark, and children Shayna, Mandy and Jake). Karen also loves to teach, and currently teaches Adults with Disabilities and ESL at the Castro Valley Adult School. She has taught several different age groups over the years at Shir Ami (I particularly remember Spencer Blum, soon to become a Bar Mitzvah, in her then second grade class). She loves how the preschoolers are so excited about learning, and her favorite project they did this year was Purim groggers made from bean-filled plastic bottles with very Kingly/Queenly bottle tops. There was a lot of shaking going on!! Thanks Karen, and thanks to all for providing such a supportive environment for our kids!

As always,
Jodi

Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh Group

Jan Dombrower



Sisterhood:

Last month, Sisterhood met at our annual Paint and Glaze night at Aran's. We talked, laughed, painted, and enjoyed refreshments. Women painted vases, salad bowls, angels, and novelty items to name a few. We look forward to seeing the finished glazed products. Thanks to Harriet Skelly for hosting it.

This month we will meet for our final Sisterhood end of year barbeque. We will meet on Tuesday, June 3 at 7:00 at a new location - the Cull Canyon Reservoir park. We will barbeque hamburgers and Kosher hot dogs. Please bring a side dish to share. We will bring in the new month of Iyar.

Directions:

From I-580 eastbound in Castro Valley, take the Center Street exit, go north (left) on Center to Heyer, right on Heyer to Cull Canyon Road, and left on Cull Canyon Road to the park entrance on the left.

From I-580 westbound, take the Castro Valley exit and continue west (left) on Castro Valley Blvd. to Crow Canyon Road. Turn right on Crow Canyon, then left on Cull Canyon Road and continue to the park entrance on the left.

Youth Group News

Leah Hartman



Hey Teens,

The year is winding down and so is EDJY. I'm sad to be leaving this community. I won't talk about it too much because it's just depressing, but I love and respect everyone here and am truly grateful for everything they've given me. I'll miss you.

On a brighter note, EDJY has a few more events before the year ends. On June 7th EDJY is planning a Senior Goodbye event, details TBD. This will be the last chance to have all the seniors together. It will be very emotional for us but is by no mean just for seniors; underclassmen are encouraged to come to close off the year and see what EDJY meant to us.

Regional events are AMAZING experiences and really connect you with friends from all over the state. I highly recommend that you go. Next year's NFTY Regional events are as follows:

CMC October 24-26, 2008
Fall Inter December 12-14, 2008
Spring Conclave March 6-8, 2009
MTC May 1-3, 2009

That's it for this year. EDJY will resume in the fall with a new board including Shir Ami members Michelle Ross, Sophia Blum, and Hana Hartman. Have a good summer and stay Jewish!

Your Religious and Cultural Vice President,
Leah Hartman

The Tzedakah Box
A Social Action Column
Sara Lamnin
Daryl Berman

A Shavuot perspective from the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism...

Shavuot and Economic Justice

'And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger.' (Lev. 23:22) In Leviticus, Shavuot is linked with the commandments of *pei-ah* (leaving crops at the corners of the field for the poor) and *sh'chicha* (leaving the fallen grain for the poor). Even as we enjoy the first sweet summer fruits, we are encouraged to remember those in need. We are taught that our rejoicing is incomplete unless even the poorest and most vulnerable members of society have enough to eat.

Ancient Israelites counted a cycle of seven sets of seven years to the "Jubilee Year." The 49-day count of the Omer leading up to Shavuot may be considered a modern reflection of this Jubilee cycle. In a Jubilee year, debts were forgiven, the land was redeemed, and those who were indentured were set free. In this way, the Jubilee ensured that no person or family remained trapped in a cycle of poverty or enslavement. All people had the opportunity to return to the land and to sustain themselves. The ideal of Jubilee carries forward today, mandating that we create a community in which all people have an opportunity to sustain themselves.

Maimonides' ladder of *tzedakah* (charity) ranks the various ways we offer assistance to those in need. At the first rung is the person who gives *tzedakah* grudgingly. Somewhere in the middle is the person who provides food for the poor. At the highest level is the person who helps another become self-sufficient. In a world where everyone performed *tzedakah* on this highest rung, we would no longer be under the obligation to provide *tzedakah* because all people would have enough in a sustainable and self-sufficient society.

INTERFAITH ESSAY CONTEST
Sponsored by Ik Onkar Peace Foundation.

Question: Please describe those aspects of your spiritual practice or belief system that contribute to peace and harmony and promote respect for those who have a different belief system or spiritual practice than yours.

Participants: Persons age 15 to 25 from all religious backgrounds or persons who belong to no religion are all invited to participate. Cash prizes will be awarded to the top three essay writers. Essays are due June 15th, 2008. For more information, please contact Julie Greenfield juliegreenfield@gmail.com

COME CELEBRATE COMMUNITY!

June 7, 2008 1-4pm, South Hayward Stroll

Take a walk in the neighborhood. Find new resources by visiting the 50 community services booths and multiple event locations. Learn the history of one of the most diverse areas in the nation. Play games. Enjoy food and music. Follow the trail of flowers.

Celebrate the new Family Resource Center and Kinship Office, 125 years of Lincoln Child Center, South Hayward Parish history, expanded programming at the Hayward Library, improved Silva Clinic, one-year of service at the Day Labor Center, and much more!

This Free Event will be held at 680 W. Tennyson Road (Eden Youth and Family Center) and nearby Matt Jimenez Community Center, and at 27287 Patrick Avenue (Westminster Hills Presbyterian Church, Kinship Center, and South Hayward Parish Food Bank) and across the street at Weekes Library and Community Center. For more information, contact Sara (510) 583-8026 or saralamnin@lincolncc.org

REGARDING LOCAL NEEDS:

According to the Public Health Department, Alameda County maintains the largest poverty rate in the state and children are the highest proportion of that population.

- Call 800-870-FOOD or visit <http://www.bayareahunger.org/> or the Alameda County food bank.
- Contact the Alameda County Tools 4 School Collaborative to help provide school supplies to 1,500 students in need throughout Alameda County. Volunteers and donations are needed. www.actools4school.org or call Sara at (510) 583-8026 x12
- Your junk can help local kids! The Lincoln Child Center's Kinship program is holding a Rummage Sale, June 21 to raise funds for its youth recreation program. Every dollar raised supports local youth. Donations of items in good condition are needed. Please contact Amy 510-583-8026 x15 for more information.

The Community Page June & July, 2008

Yahrzheits:

June 6 , 2008

Ted Balmforth, son-in-law of Ann and Sam Blank
Jerry Becker, early active member of Shir Ami
Sarah Blank, mother of Sam Blank
Arthur Kramer, father of Marion Kramer

June 27 , 2008

George Berenstein, father of Judy Ganz
Robert Levinson, lay leader of Shir Ami for many years

July 11, 2008

Clint Carter, brother of Bruce Carter and uncle of David Carter
Sondra Permison, sister of Joel Permison
David Teferi, father of Rahel Ruiz

July 25, 2008

Naomi Greenblatt, sister of Hillie Levine
Ana Marie Haber, mother of Barbara Haber
Joseph Haber, father of Barbara Haber
Leo Knopf, father of Lori Knopf Santora
Frances Wolch, former member of Shir Ami, who made the Ark door tiles

Kaddish List: (to be read at both services in June & in July)

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 & 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 Gail Berman and Lilly Erickson: in Memory of Morris Berman at his Yahrzeit,
- From Bruce and Susan Carter: in Memory of Keith Carter at his Yahrzeit,
- From Karl and Audrey Hand: for receiving the Shir Ami Bulletin,
- From Jonathan Zimmerman: in Memory of his grandfather, Hyman Rebotsky,
- From Muriel Small: in Memory of Harold Small at his Yahrzeit,
- From Judy Ganz: in Honor of the 50th Wedding Anniversary of Eleanor and Pete Chroman,
- From Harriet and Bruce Skelly, to support Shir Ami's membership in the Castro Valley Chamber of Commerce.

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:

May 2nd : Ruth Hartman
May 9th : Sara Lamnin and Jon Zimmerman
May 16th : The Markus Family

What's Nu?

- Mazel tov to these graduates: Graduating from Castro Valley High School: Alex Zaslavsky will attend UC Berkeley, Alexis Skelly will attend Cal State East Bay, Aliya Finlay will attend Las Positas College, Elizabeth Bercovich will attend University of Arizona, Irene Gilchriese will attend UCLA (Go Bruins!), Leah Hartman will attend Macalester College.
- Graduating from the Jewish Community High School of the Bay, Anastasia Zankowsky will attend Northeastern University.
- Graduating from College Preparatory, Vitaly Druker will attend Columbia University.
- Best Wishes to them all in their future education!
- Graduating from Northeastern University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering, David Zankowsky.
- Helen Markus is graduating from respiratory therapy school!
- Mazel tov to David Schulberg on his retirement after more than 30 years as a classroom teacher!
- Leah Hartman also graduated from East Bay Midrasha in May, following four years of participation.
- Hana Hartman participated as a member of the East Bay Jewish Community Teen Foundation Board for 2007-2008. Thank you to Shir Ami members who made contributions to the Teen Foundation on Hana's behalf. The group awarded grants totaling more than \$40, 000 to educational programs in the Bay Area and Israel.
- The Heimowitz family enjoyed attending a family wedding in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida over Memorial Day Weekend.
- We bid a fond farewell to Shir Ami member, Tom Manley, who is moving to the East Coast to be nearer to his family. We will miss you, Tom, and we wish you well on your life journey.

Congregation Shir Ami 2007-2008 Highlights

- Successful year of religious school – many special events
- Implemented new URJ CHAI curriculum
- Two teens confirmed; three Bnai Mitzvahs
- Raised funds for camperships outside of operating budget
- Participated in the NFTY high school youth group
- Offered Taste of Judaism outreach class
- Offered two successful year long adult education classes
- Offered an adult Hebrew class
- Held two early children's Shabbat services
- Inaugurated a conversion class
- Brought in Rachel Brott as our new High Holy Day cantorial soloist
- Two board members attended the URJ Biennial Convention
- Participated in Martin Luther King day community events and other interfaith community events
- Hosted successful community Passover seder
- Held 12th annual women's retreat and monthly Rosh Chodesh meetings
- Operated all major events on breakeven budgets
- Replaced all chairs and most tables
- Presented on Jewish culture at Castro Valley High School Days of Diversity
- Offered shiva minyamin for the bereaved
- Made visits to the sick and provided meals for families in temporary crisis
- Implemented QuickBooks accounting software for better financial tracking

**Congregation Shir Ami 2008-2009 Board
Voted in at the Annual Membership Meeting on
Sunday, May 18, 2008 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

Shir Ami Contacts

President:

Ruth Hartman
president@congshirami.org

Membership:

Barbara Heimowitz
membership@congshirami.org

School:

Jodi Blum
education@congshirami.org

Religious:

David Schulberg
religion@congshirami.org

Oneg Shabbat:

Sharon Golembo
oneg@congshirami.org

Newsletter:

Harriet Skelly
editor@congshirami.org

Newsletter mailing:

Lily Erickson
editor@congshirami.org

Scrip/eScrip:

Danielle Keil
escrip@congshirami.org

Community Page:

Lori Knopf Santora
community@congshirami.org

Dues:

Toni Schulberg
treasurer@congshirami.org

Invoices/Payables:

Maryann Leshin
treasurer@congshirami.org

Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood:

Jan Dombrower
sisterhood@congshirami.org

Social Action:

Daryl Berman
Julie Greenfield
Sara Lamnin
socialaction@congshirami.org

Yahrzeit Listings:

Tonia Schulberg
yahrzeits@congshirami.org

Donations:

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



eScrip Families

Renew today!

It's easy to renew:

- Have your Safeway Club Card Number Available
- Visit escrip.com
- Click on **"YES! RENEW"**

**If you have not renewed,
our contributions have
stopped. Renew now to
start earning again!**

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.

Shop Safeway, and earn valuable money for our school or group.