

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
September, 2008



Sep 1	Labor Day Annual BBQ and Raffle/Fundraiser – 2PM to 5 PM	Sep 30	Rosh Hashanah – 10 AM See flier for details
Sep 12	Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Suzy Stone	Oct 5	No school
Sep 14	First Day of School – Preschool through Confirmation; See School news page in this bulletin for details	Oct 8	Kol Nidre Service – 8 PM See flier for details
Sep 15	Board Meeting – 7 PM	Oct 12	School – K through Confirmation
Sep 20	Beth Emek Teen Coastal Cleanup – 8:45 AM – 9PM	Oct 17	Sukkot Potluck 6:30 PM Shabbat Services – 8 PM Led by Matt Dreffin
Sep 21	School – K through Confirmation	Oct 19	School – Preschool through Confirmation; Sukkot
Sep 28	No School	Oct 20	Board Meeting – 7 PM
Sep 29	Erev Rosh Hashanah – 8 PM See flier in this bulletin for details	Oct 24	Simchat Torah Services – 7PM ; Led by Suzy Stone
Sep 29	Teen Erev Rosh Hashanah at Beth Emek – 8 PM; led by Hana Hartman		

President's Message

Ruth Hartman

Dear Congregation Shir Ami Members and Friends,

Recently, my beloved stepfather honored me by giving me a gold pendant that had belonged to his father. On one side is a menorah, on the other side, an inscription, dated 1919, recognizing William Bensinger's service to the St. Louis Chapter of B'nai Brith. I shall wear it proudly.

My paternal grandmother, Pearl Hartman, devoted thousands of hours to transcribing mathematics textbooks into Braille. The large manila pages were then bound into books at the Braille bindery that Pearl helped found at Temple Beth El in Detroit. The women of the Beth El Sisterhood shipped these volumes all over the world so that blind students would be able to study higher mathematics. My grandmother had no idea that two of her granddaughters would be afflicted by serious, hereditary vision loss. But I feel her presence supporting me as I confront my disability.

Many members of the Shir Ami community are active doing good works in our local community. They serve on the Boards of parent organizations at our schools, work as museum and zoo docents, help provide services to immigrant day laborers, work at food banks and animal shelters, host exchange students, walk and cycle to raise money for medical research, distribute school supplies to disadvantaged kids, work on political campaigns, coach youth sports teams, visit the sick, help clean up local beaches and creeks, petition local agencies to restore services that have fallen to budget cuts, support local Jewish community organizations, and much more. They also work hard and give generously to support and sustain our Shir Ami community.

As Reform Jews, we have chosen not to continue many of the ritual observances of earlier generations of Jews. But the traditions of ethical Judaism, the mitzvah of *tzedakah*, and the work of *tikkun olam*, repair of the world, remains central to who we are as 21st century Jews. Our children and grandchildren are shaped by these expressions of our Jewish values, just as I was shaped by the example of my grandmother and so many others of that generation.

I appreciate the foresight and generosity of the early members of Shir Ami who established our synagogue and purchased and paid for our building on Malabar Avenue. We stand on their shoulders as we begin a new year in the Jewish calendar. We are stewards of their physical legacy as well as their spiritual and ethical legacy, and you'll be hearing more from me about that in the coming months. I'm honored to carry their work forward, and I hope each of you draws satisfaction from the work you do to better our community and the world

B'shalom/In peace,
Ruth Hartman

Rabbis' Corner

Matt Dreffin

Suzy Stone

Meet Matt Dreffin:

My name is Matthew Dreffin and I am a native of Sarasota, FL. Growing up the son of a synagogue education director, I have been intimately involved in URJ programs like NFTY and the camping system. I attended Tulane University in New Orleans where I received my degree in studio art with a concentration in hot glass sculpture. I worked as an assistant studio manager for a couple of years before matriculating into HUC. I am passionate about working with youth as well as bringing creativity into every day.

Entering the Month of Elul

My main professor in college was extremely adamant about preparation. Before we would create a piece of art as a team, we would walk through it step by step and he always asked, "Do you have the backup plan to the backup?" He wanted us to have a contingency plan for every part of the process, ensuring the safety of the crew as well as the success of the piece.

Much like this experience, we are about to embark on a very big mission of our own. The current year is coming to a close as the month of *Elul* signals the approach of *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*. Often times the end of a time period can cause us to worry about things unaccomplished. Perhaps it is the fleeting days of summer, in which we try to get in as much relaxation as possible before the grind of the school year. Maybe it's the end of a long trip abroad where we try to squeeze in as many experiences as possible so as not to "miss anything." This however, is not the purpose of *Elul*. It is not a "last gasp," a time to think about what has gone unaccomplished.

Elul is quite the opposite, and if we think about the High Holy Days as the process of making art, the month of Elul is our time to prepare and find inspiration. The *Shofar* is sounded every day during the month, serving as a reminder to contemplate the past and present as well as the future. It is a time that reminds us to start those activities (if we have stopped) that inspire us. Perhaps this inspiration is found in a good book, reconnecting with friends, or taking the time to quietly meditate on ourselves. Exactly what we will be able to create in the future is pure conjecture, however, one thing is certain... the possibilities for good are limitless.

B'Shalom,
Matt Dreffin



First Day of School
Sunday, September 14th
Meet Rabbi Suzy
It's a Preschool to Confirmation Day

The Schedule

9:15-9:30

Morning Prayers for 3rd graders through B'nai Mitzvah students

9:30-10:30

Hebrew Classes for 3rd graders to B'nai Mitzvah students

10:30

Preschoolers to 2nd graders and Confirmation classes arrive

10:30-10:50

Group and songtime for all

10:50-11:45

Religious school classes for all

11:45-12:00

Oneg for all

12:00-12:40

Continuation of Religious school classes or special events for all

12:40-12:45

All meet by the bima for closing song and dismissal to parents

Program notes:

- ▶ **The second religious school day will be Sunday, Sept. 21. There will not be preschool that day.**
- ▶ The full year schedules will be available beginning at the Labor Day BBQ.
- ▶ There is a change in the confirmation class schedule. Class will start at 10:30.
- ▶ I will provide families with copies of registration materials from last year, and you will only need to submit changes.

Looking forward to a great year with your families, Jodi

Adult Education

In 5769, Congregation Shir Ami will have several different adult education offerings.

Our ongoing monthly class for adults interested in conversion to Judaism will continue to meet on Saturdays. Contact Diana Zankowsky for more information, if you are interested in joining.

Last year, we had a monthly book discussion group that met on a weekday evening. We are looking for a book to use as a text for this class for this year. Please email Diana Zankowsky, dzankowsky@aol.com, with your suggestions. Our first meeting will be in October.

Judy Ganz continues to teach the weekly "Learning Hebrew through Prayer" class, for those who already have basic literacy skills. Please contact Judy at jbganz@aol.com if you are interested in joining.

Rabbinic Intern Suzy Stone will be leading a monthly class on the Saturdays when she is here, called "Parashah HaShavuah--The Weekly Torah Portion: From the Mystics to Modernity". This class will meet to discuss the Torah portion of the week from three different, but complementary perspectives. Some weeks we will be exploring how the Jewish mystics and kabbalists interpreted the Torah. Other weeks we will be examining the writings of Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, also known as the "Aish Kodesh," who preached to congregants throughout the difficult times of the Warsaw Ghetto. Last but not least, we will be reading the work of contemporary writers, including, but not limited to that of Dr. Aviva Gottlieb-Zornberg. The class will meet for the first time in October.



Rabbinic Intern Matt Dreffin will be bringing Israeli films and discussion, combined with Havdalah (and probably some food), to the monthly Saturday evenings when he is in town. More details about the first film will be in October's bulletin.

The Jewish month of Elul begins on Sunday evening, August 31st. This month is traditionally the time to prepare oneself for the High Holidays. If you are interested in receiving a daily message during the month of Elul and sharing observations and learnings with others, please join the Yahoo Groups, Elul5769 by going to this link: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Elul5769/> and following the instructions to join. The group is moderated by Diana Zankowsky and is limited to members of Shir Ami and invited guests.

Sisterhood/Rosh Chodesh Group

Jan Dombrower



Sisterhood:

Sisterhood had a successful gathering in August to welcome the month of Elul.

First, Sharon Golembo organized a kitchen cleanup to address a rodent problem. Thank you very much to all the women who participated in that cleanup.

Then, we met outside for a discussion led by Jan and Diana on the Jewish view of sin. It was lively, educational, and had many points of view. Just in time for the High Holy days, this discussion got us thinking about the ideas of wrongdoing, atonement, and forgiveness.

Afterward, there was a healing prayer to meet the needs of those in our community.

Last, we sat down to eat the "sinful" desserts that everyone brought along with the theme of the night.

Sisterhood will not be meeting again until after the High Holidays. Please check the bulletin and emails for news of our next meeting.

The Tzedakah Box
A Social Action Column
Sara Lamnin
Daryl Berman

The Alameda County Tools 4 School Collaborative will provide approximately 1600 supply filled bags or backpacks to students in need throughout Alameda County this year. Approximately 40% of student served live in the Castro Valley/Hayward area.

The project would not be possible without the magnanimous donations of community members. The students and professionals of the collaborative wish to express their deep gratitude to the following Shir Ami members: Jodi, Spencer, and Adam Blum, Diana Zankowsky, Jon Zimmerman, and Kevin, Danielle, Gabriella, James, and Sarah Keil. Without your generous volunteer time, this service would not be possible! "I love this project," said one 16 year-old recipient. "I'm going to help out more next year so that other kids can have the supplies they need for school. It's really important."

For more information about Tools 4 School, visit www.actools4school.org or call Sara (510) 583-8026.

SHIR AMI BULLETIN BOARD



COMMUNITY SHABBAT WEEKEND

SAVE THE DATE! JOIN YOUR COMMUNITY TO LEARN TOGETHER, PLAY TOGETHER AND EXPAND THE WAYS YOU LIVE JEWISHLY...

Mark your calendars from **Friday, Nov. 7 - Sunday, Nov. 9** and join our multi-congregational, multi-generational and multi-faceted Shabbat weekend at URJ Camp Newman in Santa Rosa . All ages warmly welcomed; engaging educational, cultural and social programs guaranteed.

We are very excited to announce that Cantor Ellen Dreskin will be our Guest Artist/Scholar-in-Residence for the weekend. Ellen Dreskin is a teacher of liturgy, synagogue transformation and mysticism, who has served for many years on the faculty of URJ Summer Kallot, Hava Nashira and the URJ Kutz Camp Leadership Academy. Ellen has worked with Jews of all denominations from Houston to Chicago and Los Angeles to Boston, both as a scholar in residence and in her capacity as Director of Programs for Synagogue 2000, a national, not-for-profit institute dedicated to revitalizing and re-energizing synagogue life in North America. She has served as both Cantor and Educator at Woodlands Community Temple in White Plains, New York and at Anshe Chesed-Fairmount Temple in Cleveland, Ohio, and as the spiritual leader of Chavurat Tikvah in Westchester County, New York. Ellen has also served as Associate Dean of HUC-JIR in New York, and sings with Begeg Kefet, a musical tzedakah collective. Ellen is a native Texan, a 1986 graduate of HUC-JIR School of Sacred Music and has a Master's Degree in Jewish Communal Service from Brandeis University. Check out www.dreskin.us to learn more about this amazing Jewish educator, performer and scholar.

This Community-wide Shabbaton is jointly presented by Congregation Shir Ami, Temple Beth Torah, Temple Beth Sholom and Congregation Beth Emek. We are equally excited to let you know that Rabbis Avi Schulman, Harry Manhoff, and Richard Winer and Student Rabbi Rebekah Stern will be leading services and many of our other activities as will several other clergy and lay leaders, enabling us to offer inspiring and diverse programs for all ages and all interests.

Many details still to follow, including cost and registration options -- keep an eye out for all our upcoming Community Shabbaton announcements.

SHIR AMI BULLETIN BOARD



Meet Day Schildkret: Our New Midrasha TV/TC Director

It is with great pleasure that we introduce Day Schildkret as the new Director of Midrasha Tri-Valley/Tri-Cities Jewish Community High School (Midrasha TV/TC). Day brings a fresh, spirited and innovative energy to the program for Jewish teens in grades 8 through 12, which meets Sunday evenings in Pleasanton, 7:15 to 9:15 PM, beginning September 14.

An experienced Jewish professional, Day has worked in Jewish education on both the East and West Coasts for over a decade and is known for creating pioneering curricula – such as “Jewish Jedi in Training” – that entice students to continue their Jewish learning throughout the high school years. As Midrasha TV/TC Director, Day is dedicated to re-imagining the Jewish educational experience and facilitating spiritual exploration for the next generation.

Day joined the staff of Midrasha TV/TC last year, teaching the 8th grade core class and several electives, including “Meditation and Yoga,” and serving as Student Life Coordinator. In these roles he nurtured strong relationships with students and developed his vision for the program’s future direction. “I have a deep connection working with teens,” notes Day. “We seem to ‘get’ each other.”

Day’s passion and purpose is inspiring students towards a relevant and life-affirming spiritual experience, and his vision is apparent in the program’s theme for 2008-09: **Revolution!** A new team of specially selected, highly energized young educators is preparing to engage the students from the moment they walk through the doors on Opening Day – September 14. Creative elective classes, such as “Hip Hoppin’ thru Tradishin” and “Journey to Jewpiter,” are poised to capture the attention of scores of teens looking to find meaning in Judaism.

Day views the Tri-Valley-Tri-Cities Midrasha as fertile ground for growing a successful teen program. “I am committed to increasing enrollment in the Midrasha TV/TC program by 30% in the next two years,” he reveals. “By totally revamping our program and awakening the spirit of our community, we have an opportunity to reach new students and make our current ones happier and more committed.”

Among the strategies to bring new students into the program are a free trial enrollment for the first two sessions (September 14 and 21) and a special “Summer Savings” promotion, developed by Day, which provides incentives for students to earn tuition credits – or even free tuition – for recruiting new students.

In addition to providing Jewish education for teens, the Midrasha TV/TC program will also offer learning opportunities for parents, led by the new Director, throughout the year. The inaugural parent gathering on Sunday evening, September 7th – a wine-and-cheese and dessert extravaganza at the home of Harley and Steve Williams in Pleasanton – will introduce parents to Day and the Midrasha TV/TC teaching staff and provide a preview of the 2008-09 school year.

The community warmly welcomes Day to his new role as Midrasha TV/TC Director. His vision for this year's program is guaranteed to make Midrasha an experience not to be missed!

For information regarding Midrasha registration, including **free trial** enrollment and **promotional discounts**, or for answers to any questions about Midrasha, contact Day at 925-549-1664 or director.tvtcmidrasha@gmail.com.

Midrasha TV/TC is sponsored by Congregation Beth Emek (Pleasanton), Temple Beth Torah (Fremont), and Congregation Shir Ami (Castro Valley), in partnership with the Center for Jewish Living and Learning (CJLL) of the Jewish Community Federation of the Greater East Bay.

Congregation Shir Ami

ANNUAL LABOR DAY BBQ & RAFFLE FUNDRAISER

Featuring a Silent and Live Auction and "Bag" Items



Monday, September 1, 2008

2:00 - 5:00 P.M.

Adults: \$12.00 in advance, \$15.00 at the door

Children (12 and under): \$5.00 in advance,

\$6.00 at the Door ~ under age 3 – free

~Prospective Members are free~

Bringing friends and family is encouraged!

Enjoy hamburgers, veggie burgers and hotdogs

Please participate in our potluck:

A-L: Bring a salad or side dish

M-Z Bring a dessert and drink

Please remember cell phones for our ongoing fundraiser.

Also, bring gently used paperbacks for a paperback book sale fundraiser.



Cut off and return by August 26

Name _____ # adults _____ # children _____

Total \$ _____

Make checks payable to: Congregation Shir Ami

Mail checks to Barbara Heimowitz, c/o Shir Ami, 4529 Malabar Ave.

Castro Valley, CA 94546

CONGREGATION SHIR AMI
 2008 Labor Day BBQ Raffle and Live Auction
 Partial List as of 8/22/08

This year we are starting the auction via email. If you're interested in placing a bid, please email Barbara at bheimowitz@aol.com with your minimum and maximum bids.

The bidding will continue at the Labor Day BBQ on Monday, September 1 at Shir Ami. If you're not able to attend that day, you can still bid on these terrific auction items. We will notify you if you're the highest bidder.

Good Luck!

<u>Item # and Description</u>	<u>Opening Bid</u>
1. <u>Hagafen Cellars, Napa</u> : Case of wine and winery tour for 6, \$500 value	\$200
2. <u>Berkeley Repertory Theater</u> : 2 tickets for the 2008-09 season, \$96 value and <u>La Mediterranee Restaurant</u> , Berkeley, \$25 certificate for brunch or lunch	\$45
3. <u>Pleasanton Playhouse</u> : 2 tickets for "Miss Saigon," \$60 value, and <u>Hana Japan Restaurant</u> , Dublin \$25.00 gift certificate	\$35
4. <u>San Jose Repertory Theater</u> , 2 tickets, \$74 value	\$30
5. <u>California Shakespeare Theater, Orinda</u> : 2 tickets for the 2009 season, \$80 value, and <u>Armadillo Willy's</u> in Dublin and other locations, \$30 certificate for dinner	\$45
6. <u>San Francisco Experience</u> : 4 tickets for Ripley's Believe it or Not , Wax Museum, and a Pier 39 Package including a Bay Cruise for 4, 4 carousel rides, 48 tokens, 4 turbo rides and 2 hours parking, \$275 value	\$100
7. <u>Charles Schultz Museum</u> , Santa Rosa: 4 tickets, T-shirt, and note cards \$52 value	\$20
8. <u>San Jose Family Adventure</u> : 2 passes to Winchester Mystery House, 4 passes to Happy Hollow Park, 2 passes to Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, \$130 value	\$50
9. Sunflower Painting by Shir Ami member Nancy Storch \$100 value	\$35
10. <u>Theatre Works</u> : 2 tickets to any performance Mt View Center for Performing Arts or Lucie Stern Theatre in Palo Alto. T-Th evenings \$112.00 value	\$45

We hope you'll support this year's major fundraiser!!

The Community Page

September, 2008

Yahrzheits:

September 12 , 2008

- Shaiva Berenstein, mother of Judy Ganz
- Blanche Rose Berman, mother of Daryl Berman
- Ben Blank, father of Sam Blank
- Martin Brody, grandfather of Noah Markus
- Maurice Finkle, husband of Florence Finkle and former president of Shir Ami
- Betty Meininger, mother of Ingrid Weinberg
- Marvin Rozofsky, father of Marlene Rogers

September 29 &30, 2008

- Maurice Aronowitz, father of Rose Levine
- Helen Knopf, mother of Lori Knopf Santora
- Timothy Rogers, brother of Zoey and David Rogers
- Abraham Wolf, father of Ann Blank

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

- Betya Druker, mother of Alex Druker
- Sy Mouber, longtime former member of Shir Ami
- Chris Partridge, son of Ricki Baird, former 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 David and Toni Schulberg : in Memory of Betty Schulberg and Georgie Brooke at their Yahrzeits

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:

Aug 8th: Marilyn Schneider

Aug 22nd: Sharon Golembo



What's Nu?

- David Zankowsky has begun a full-time mechanical engineering position with QUANTUM ENERGY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGIES, INC. (QuEST) in Berkeley, CA.
- Anastasia (Stacey) Zankowsky has begun college at Northeastern University, Boston, MA, majoring in Human Services and International Affairs.
- Fred Zankowsky will be riding in the Waves to Wine 2008, a National Multiple Sclerosis Bike event on September 13 and 14. He is riding in support of a friend of his, Lisa Blume, who was recently diagnosed with MS and in spite of the diagnosis (or maybe because of it) she is a team captain of a group of friends that she met through Team in Training. If you wish to support Fred's efforts, please go to his website at the event page and make a contribution. Any amount is appreciated.
http://main.nationalmssociety.org/site/TR/Bike/CANBikeEvents?px=5080940&pg=personal&fr_id=9066
- David Firestone has recently moved into a new home in Redwood City, CA.
- A big thank you to all who contributed to a major cleanup of Shir Ami's grounds, building exterior, and kitchen over the past few weeks. They include the Zankowsky family, the Schulbergs, Jeff Blum, Bonnie Frey and son Sean Lange, Barb Haber, and a Sisterhood team headed by Sharon Golembo and including Rose Firestone, Harriet Skelly, Melanie Einbund, Sara Lamnin, Judy Ganz, and Cheryl Solomon.
- URJ Camp Newman is going green, helped out by a donation by Gary Wolff of 150 low-flow showerheads. Look for them when you're at camp for the family Shabbaton this coming November!

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Donations:

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

High Holidays at Shir Ami, 2008, 5768-5769



Rosh Hashanah

Monday, September 29, Evening Service.....8:00 PM
Tuesday, September 30, Morning Service.....10:00 AM
Children's Service, September 30.....2:00 PM

Yom Kippur

Wednesday, October 8, Kol Nidre Service.....8:00 PM
Thursday, October 9, Morning Service.....10:00 AM
Children's Service, October 9.....1:30 PM
**Study of the Story of Jonah.....1:15~1:30PM
Discussion in the garden, October 9..... 2:00 PM
Yizkor and Concluding Service, October 9.....3:30 PM
Break the Fast.....5:30 PM

Congregation Shir Ami

4529 Malabar Avenue Castro Valley, CA 94546

www.congshirami.org

August 30, 2008

Dear Friends:

You are undoubtedly aware of our upcoming High Holyday Services in September. This year, we will once again have 2 student Rabbis from Hebrew Union College: Suzy Stone and Matt Dreffin, both 2nd year students. In addition, we are very pleased to once again have Rachel Brott as our Cantorial Soloist. We are looking forward to beautiful High Holyday services. We know that you will enjoy our program with even more surprises from our younger members.

This year's High Holyday ticket prices will be the same as last year. If you have any guests, we will have tickets for \$300 per family and \$150 for singles available by contacting me. This donation can again represent partial membership at Congregation Shir Ami. Full-time college students and members of the armed forces on active duty are always welcome as our guests at no charge.

Our current budget does not allow for these services. Once again we ask you for a Memorial Contribution. Please return the stub below to my address as soon as possible, for *tickets* (non-members only) and *memorials*. The names of the departed will be read at the Yom Kippur Memorial Service. We do **not** depend on last year's list.

Thank you for your help. I would like to extend my best wishes for a healthy and happy New Year to you and your family.

Sincerely,
David Schulberg
Religious Committee Chair
(510) 276-6100

To: David Schulberg
16174 Via Arroyo
San Lorenzo, CA 94580-2506

Enclosed is a check for ____ tickets @ \$_____ for

Name: _____

Address: _____

Enclosed is my Memorial Contribution for \$_____ in memory of:

(Please Print Clearly)