



CONGREGATION SHIR AMI

4529 Malabar Ave.
Castro Valley, CA 94546

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Congregation Shir Ami in Castro Valley is an intimate, intergenerational Reform Jewish Community that welcomes interfaith families.
Affiliated with the [Union for Reform Judaism](#)

JANUARY 2012 Bulletin (Tevet/Shevet 5772)

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CONGREGATION SHIR AMI MISSION STATEMENT

Congregation Shir Ami in Castro Valley, California is an intimate, inclusive, intergenerational Reform Jewish community that welcomes interfaith families. We nurture our members' spiritual growth and cultural identity, and we make Jewish education fun and joyful for children and adults alike. We strive to embody the Jewish values of lovingkindness and righteous action. Shir Ami is a place where people feel wanted and where they want to be.

Editorial:

Congregation Shir Ami never ceases to amaze me. The excellent year 2011 ended with another well attended (packed!) and lively event, our Chanukah celebration. Shir Ami is a small congregation. How is it possible that we do all that we do as well as we do?

Judaism is a religion of action. It is our actions that speak to who we are. Shir Ami is a congregation that fosters the beautiful aspects of Judaism mentioned in our Mission Statement--spiritual growth, cultural identity, Jewish education, righteous action-- and does it in a spirit of joy and fellowship.

Shir Ami is a family. Our children grow up with a strong sense of self and feel their connectedness to the world. They gain a good Jewish education and enjoy it in the process. Shir Ami supports adults in the same manner. We enjoy quality activities with other intelligent and interesting people, activities made possible by an inexplicable collective vitality that we are privileged to know as Shir Ami.

Shir Ami may be small but Shir Ami is mighty! Our thanks and wishes for all good things to all our Shir Ami congregation members and to our friends who make Shir Ami possible.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!
(Didn't we just have
New Years?)

Jews are lucky.
We get New Years twice in
just a few months. Here's a
second chance to be
renewed and inspired.

Happy 2012!



Comments, corrections or additions? Please contact Rose Firestone, Editor editor@CongShirAmi.org

Event Calendar

Please note that the “regular” start time for Friday night Shabbat service will now be 7:30 pm. All 8:00 pm start times have been changed to 7:30 pm. Do you need to correct your calendar?

JANUARY

- Fri. Jan. 6 7:30 pm **Shabbat Service** Led by Andrew Terkel. Bring a friend, bring a potential member. Parsha Vayechi (and Jacob lived...).
- Sat. Jan. 7 3:00 pm **Ketuvim Text Study** Led by Andrew Terkel
- Mon. Jan 16 am **Shir Sholom students** invite you to join them in song at Hayward Martin Luther King, Jr event
- Tue. Jan. 17 7:00 pm **Shir Ami Board Meeting** All members are welcome
- Fri. Jan. 20 7:30 pm **Welcome Shabbat Service** Join Rabbi Lara Pullan Regev and guest speaker Bishop JW Macklin of Glad Tidings Church of God in Christ in Hayward for an exploration of common values. For information, contact Sara Lamnin, 432-7703
- Sat. Jan. 21 3:00 pm **Trope class** Led by Lara Pullan Regev. All are welcome
- Wed. Jan 25 7:30 pm **Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood** at the home of Sharon Golembó
- Fri. Jan. 27 7:30 pm **Shabbat Service** Led by Andrew Terkel. Parsha Bo, Moses is commanded to go in unto Pharaoh...
- Sat. Jan. 28 10:00 am **Religious Committee Meeting** at the home of Diana Zankowsky. This meeting is open to all. Please RSVP as BRUNCH is provided.



FEBRUARY

- Sat. Feb. 4 12:00 pm **Tu B' Shevat Lunch and Service** Led by Diana Zankowsky Saturday at 12:00 pm. Catered lunch: members, \$15; non-members, \$18. RSVP by 1/25 to events@CongShirAmi.org
- Fri. Feb. 10 6:45 pm **Potluck Dinner at 6:45 pm; Shabbat Service at 7:30 pm.** Led by Lara Pullan Regev
- Tues. Feb. 21 7:30 pm **Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood** at the home of Barbara Ann Lewis
- Feb. 24-26 **Women's Retreat** Join us for our 16th annual women's retreat The cost is \$250. Please register online at <http://tinyurl.com/6wa2p4h>, Our group is limited to 19 women. Register ASAP, no later than **February 1**. Questions? Contact Ruth Hartman, events@congsHIRAMI.org

MARCH

- Fri. Mar. 9 7:00 pm **Purim Shabbat Service** Led by Andrew Terkel
- Sun. Mar. 11 **Purim Carnival** A ShirSholom event held at Temple Beth Sholom.
- Fri. Mar. 23 6:45 pm **Pot-Luck Dinner at 6:30 pm Shabbat Service at 7:30 pm.** Led by Lara Pullan Regev.

Many pictures were taken at December's Chanukah dinner and service. If you want to see them, click [HERE](#) for a public look at Shir Ami's Chanukah celebration Facebook photos

President's Message

Dear Shir Ami Members and Friends:

I hope you had an enjoyable holiday season and I wish you a Happy New Year!

In December I attended a really interesting meeting regarding Camp Kadima held by Congregation Beth Emek's President, Skylar Cohen. Many of our Shir Ami youth have been campers



Harriet Skelly, President

or counselors in training at Camp Kadima and as a result have strengthened their Jewish identity and connection to Judaism. Research shows that when our children are involved in meaningful Jewish programs beyond b'nei mitzvah they are more apt to create a life long connection to Judaism.

Let me share with you some important information that I learned at the Camp Kadima meeting that I think you should know:

- Congregation Beth Emek formed Camp Kadima in 1993 for Jewish youth of the East Bay Area with the help of the Jewish Federation's resources.
- The formation of Camp Kadima included the formation of an independent Advisory Committee to oversee camp administration, financials, programming, etc.
- The Jewish Federation has been decreasing the amount of grant money each year with the goal that Camp Kadima will become self-supporting.
- Currently four entities sponsor Camp Kadima and are members of the Advisory Committee: Beth Emek, Beth Torah, Temple Beth Shalom and Congregation Shir Ami.
- **Camp Kadima relies heavily on fundraising to be able to break even each year.**

Before this meeting, I didn't realize that Camp Kadima was NOT a part of Beth Emek, or that the proceeds of Kadima fundraising events went directly to Camp Kadima, not to Beth Emek. Now that I understand where the money is going and how important camp is to our children's Jewish connection and identity I am more eager to participate in Camp Kadima fundraising events. I encourage you to participate as well – even if you don't have a camper in your family! Supporting Camp Kadima benefits the future of our local Jewish day camp and our Jewish youth.

At this year's URJ Biennial the URJ leadership presented the Campaign for Youth Engagement: Committing to the Jewish Future. The goal of this campaign is *"to dramatically improve the ability of Reform institutions to involve young people in meaningful Jewish life and strengthen post – b'nei mitzvah engagement and retention in synagogues, day schools, camps and youth programs throughout North America."* The URJ leadership also presented the Campaign for Youth Engagement Resolution: A 2020 Vision. You can read more about this resolution here:

http://urj.org/teen/?syspage=article&item_id=74920

I don't usually make New Years resolutions but this year I am making an exception. The future of Reform Judaism is very important to me and the key to the future is with our youth. Therefore my resolution is to participate in some of the Camp Kadima fundraising events.

I hope to see you at one of the Camp Kadima fundraising events this year. Be watching for the flyers as I know there are a few events being planned!

Harriet Skelly
President@congShirAmi.org



Rabbinic Interns' Page

Shalom m'Yisrael! Hello from Israel! I'm writing to you this month from Jerusalem, where I have just arrived and where I will be spending two weeks entrenched in the history and traditions of our people.

I arrived in Israel shortly after spending a week in Washington, DC, at the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) Biennial, a conference held every two years with an attendance of over 5,000 Reform Jews from all over the world. The speakers, including Ehud Barak, Israel's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Dr. Wendy Mogel, best-selling author of *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee* and *The Blessing of a B-*, and even President Barack Obama, and so many more, talked about Israel, the world, and life therein, and even mentioned a word or two of Torah. The Campaign for Youth Engagement was launched to roaring applause, with goals of finding new ways to engage our youth, teens and young adults, and to reach more than the staggering 20% that are currently actively involved. Rabbi Eric Yoffie, outgoing President of the URJ, passed the torch to incoming President Rabbi Rick Jacobs. Rabbi Jacobs presented the three most pressing tasks that he hopes to begin working on as he assumes the role of President:

1. Catalyzing congregational change
2. Engaging the next generation
3. Extending the circles of our responsibility

Rabbi Jacobs spoke with a desire to create anew, to move forward, and to make change. He closed his remarks with the following statement:

"I accept the faith you show in me today with humility and gratitude; I need you with me, however. Together we will seize this moment and shape a better tomorrow for our congregations, our Movement, our people and our world. Help me open our doors, our

minds and our imaginations. Grasp the Torah with me as we carry it out of seclusion. We are the Reform *Movement*, so let's get MOVING!"

Rabbi Jacobs is passionate. He is ready and willing to get moving, to get the job done, and to get the job done right.

I invite you to watch his speech, as well as the many other speeches, performances, and celebrations, and to be a part of this exciting time of change in our movement. All videos can be found here: <http://urj.org/biennial11/>.

On another note... SASSY (Shir Ami Shalom Student Youth) had a wonderful first event! I was fortunate enough to spend an evening filled with bowling, Havdallah and watching a movie with 7 teens, 1 Shir Ami alum and 2 SASSY parents, and we all had a great time! May this be the start to Shir Ami's part in the Campaign for Youth Engagement, and may there be many more SASSY events to come!

See pictures on the next page.

Best wishes to all for a happy and healthy new year!

Submitted by Rabbinic Intern Lara Pullan Regev

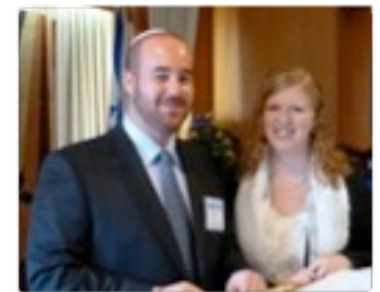
Rabbinic Interns

Lara PullanRegev

RabbiLara@congratshirami.org

Andrew Terekel

RabbiAndrew@congratshirami.org



Rabbinic Interns' Page, continued



Photos of SASSY's first event See article on the previous page.



Rabbi Andrew at a night of song at Shir Ami



Paresha Vayechi (and Jacob lived...)

As the book of Genesis closes, the seventy souls of Jacob's family become the twelve tribes of Israel. On his death bed, Jacob blesses his sons, assigning to some their role as a tribe leader: Judah will produce legislators and kings. Although Levi and Shimon were rebuked, priests will come from Levi. Scholars will be produced by Issachar, seafarers by Zebulun, and schoolteachers by Shimon. Soldiers will come from the tribe of Gad, and judges from Dan. Olive growers will be the legacy of Asher, and Naphtali shall deliver words of beauty. Joseph is granted the blessings of fertility. Benjamin is likened to a wolf and spoiler.

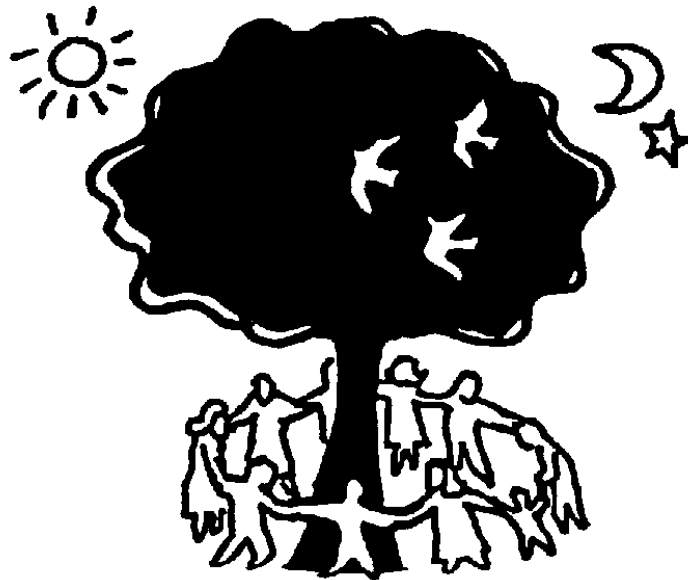


Shabbat Services will be conducted by
Andrew Terkel
on Friday, January 6th, 2012 at 7:30 PM

Bring a friend, bring a potential member, all are welcome

“Make a Joyful Noise Unto God”

**You are invited to Congregation Shir Ami’s annual
Welcoming Shabbat/Sabbath service**



**Join Rabbinic Intern Lara Pullan Regev and guest speaker
Bishop J.W. Macklin
of Glad Tidings Church of God in Christ of Hayward
for an exploration of our common values
alive in our community**

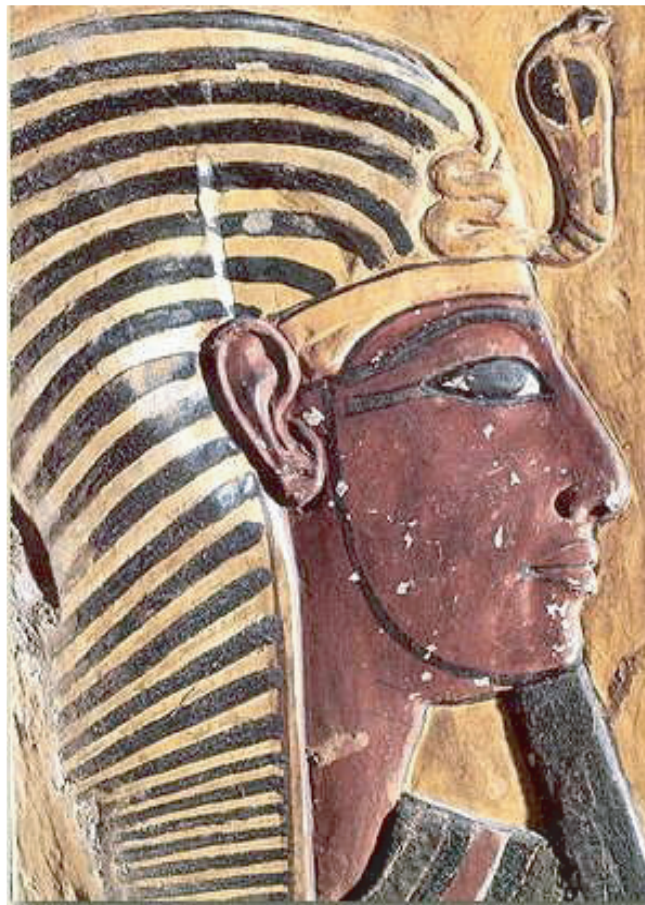
**Friday, January 20, 2012, 7:30 PM
Congregation Shir Ami
4529 Malabar Avenue
Castro Valley, California 94546**

Everyone is Welcome

**For more information, please contact Sara Lamnin
Phone: (510) 432-7703, E-mail: SaraLamnin@sbcglobal.net**

Paresha Bo – Go in unto

G-D commands Moses to go in unto Pharaoh to plead for the liberation of the Israelites. Pharaoh resists. The last three of the Ten Plagues are visited on Egypt: a swarm of locusts devours all the crops and greenery; a thick, palpable darkness envelops the land; and all the firstborn of Egypt are killed at the stroke of midnight on the 15th of the month of Nisan. The Exodus is then sanctioned..



Shir Ami Services
Friday, January 27th at 7:30 PM
will be conducted by
Andrew Terkel

Religious Committee Meeting, Saturday, January 28th at 10:00 AM

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ



Tu B'Shevat Celebration February 4, 2012
Recalling Israel's Festival of the Trees

Services will be led by
Diana Zankowsky
on Saturday, February 4th, Noon

Delicious Luncheon

Charges \$15 Members, \$18 Non-Members

Planting citrus trees and parsley will be led by Peter Lewis
Please RSVP by January 28th by Evite, or by sending an email to
events@congshirami.org

Send your check payable to Congregation Shir Ami to:
Tu B'Shevat Seder, Congregation Shir Ami
4529 Malabar Ave., Castro Valley, CA 94546

Please join us for our 16th Annual
Shir Ami Women's Retreat

Spread Over Us A Shelter of Peace

Friday, February 24 – Sunday, February 26, 2012

At the beautiful Westminster Retreat Center
in Alamo, California

Discover Jewish sources of inner peace and comfort. Join us for a weekend of women's friendship, worship, creativity, inspiration, and play. Rabbinic Intern Lara Pullan Regev joins us once again to share her musical and spiritual leadership. As always, newcomers are *very* welcome.

The cost for the weekend is \$250.

Please register online at <http://tinyurl.com/6wa2p4h>, and mail your check, payable to Ruth Hartman, the same day. (Mailing address is at the online registration site.)

Our group is limited to 19 women.
*Register ASAP, no later than **February 1.***

Questions?

Contact Ruth Hartman: 510-582-3379 or events@congshirami.org

UPCOMING Rosh Chodesh

Wednesday, January 25, 7:30 pm. We will meet on Wed, January 25 at 7:30 at the home of Sharon Golembo to bring in the month of Shevet. Please join us for program, rituals, visiting, and refreshments. Check your email for address and directions. Hope to see you

Rosh Chodesh Recap December & November:

December recap: Our Chanukah party was wonderful! We met at Bettina Skehan's home in Union City. After greetings and catching up, we set up our 14 menorahs with eight candles aglow and sang prayers for the last night of Chanukah. A festive meal of latkas, salads, and sweets followed with lots of discussions, laughter, and sharing over dinner. Everyone brought a gift for the Chanukah gift exchange. Playing our traditional "steal the present" game, gifts changed hands until they settled into the final hands. It was a lot of fun and great that we could spend the 8th night all together.

[November recap can be found on page 16](#)

Women's Retreat: February 24-26, 2011

Register now for our [Sisterhood annual retreat](#). Join us for a weekend of women's friendship, worship, creativity, inspiration, and play.

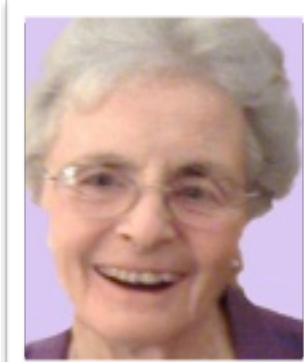
Chanukah celebration pictures. [Click HERE](#) to see more pictures on Shir Ami's Facebook page.



Jan Dombrower, Sisterhood
Sisterhood@congShirAmi.org



ROSE'S RAMBLINGS



Note from the Community Editor: Wouldn't you like to share some of your activities with the rest of us?? Come on, let's hear from you!

Please send your shmooze and news to:

community@congshirami.org

LETTERS

This month we received three letters from community members. The first is from Rose Firestone who shares with us information on her upcoming surgery. The second and third letters are from David Schulberg and Emma Silver.

LETTER FROM ROSE FIRESTONE

(in response to a request for more information)

I was diagnosed with Parkinson's (PD) in 1997. PD is a progressive, degenerative



neurological disorder that affects about one in one hundred people, usually over age 60. A lack of dopamine results in various movement difficulties. Standard treatment for PD uses medications to replace or augment the lacking dopamine. Over time, as symptoms progress, the medications are not as effective, and surgery becomes an option.

I am scheduled for Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) surgery on February 8 & 22. A DBS device (think of it as a pacemaker for the brain), is implanted in each hemisphere of the brain to relieve or abate many of Parkinson's symptoms. Each surgery

takes many hours, so two separate surgeries are performed two weeks apart (and, yikes, I will be awake the entire surgery!). The DBS device is activated 2 weeks after the second surgery and it takes another 3-6 months to adjust the device to be most effective. I like to call this upcoming DBS procedure my "Personal Stimulus Package."

Reports on this surgery are extremely positive and my symptoms closely match the profile of someone who can benefit from DBS. The success rate is high, the risks are low, the surgery is reversible, and every person I've met who has had DBS surgery says they would do it again.

We all wish Rose well and are encouraged by the reported results of DBS.

If you want to know more, here's a link to a 40 page booklet from the Parkinson's Disease Foundation [Deep Brain Stimulation Brochure](#)

[Parkinson's Disease Foundation website](#) has more online resources.

LETTER FROM DAVID AND TONI

Toni & I are having a great time in Hawaii, diving, playing tennis, doing yoga and enjoying the warm weather. We miss you all.

Happy Chanukah & a Happy & Healthy New Year.



LETTER FROM EMMA SILVER

Hi Rose,

My mother mentioned that you wanted a bit of information about my trip and SASSY, our new temple youth group.

Here's what I have:

1. SASSY (Shir Ami Sholom Student Youth) is our new Temple Youth Group for Jewish Teens in high school in Castro Valley. We welcome all Jewish teens, belonging to Shir Ami or not, in Castro Valley to be a part of the group, which is through NFTY, the North American Federation for Temple Youth. Our first event, a bowling and movie night was very successful. We had a great time at Castro Village Bowl on December 10th and then headed over to my house for Havdallah and a viewing of "Keeping Up With the Steins". Rabbi Lara joined us and it was a blast!

SASSY Board consists of Spencer Blum- President, Adam Blum- Programming Vice President, myself- Social Action Vice President, Sarah Keil- Communications Vice President, Katherine Kolden- Treasurer, Religious and Cultural Vice President- Rueben Spitzer, and Lior Raskin- Membership Vice President. We are still on the hunt for an Advisor (an adult position) so if anyone is interested, contact me at (650) 483 7438.

2. The program I'm doing in Israel is called NFTY EIE (Eisendrath International Exchange) and is also run through NFTY. We study abroad in Israel, but go to a school specifically for the program. We stay on a Kibbutz about 20 minutes away from Jerusalem for the majority of the trip, with the exception of traveling to Poland and other places in Europe for a week, a trip called Yam el Yam, or Sea to Sea, where we start out at the Mediterranean and make our way to the Dead Sea, Gad'na, where we go into the Israeli Defense Force for a week, and a few other excursions. In addition to all my normal school classes, I will be taking Jewish History and Hebrew while I'm there. Many people I know have come back and said that it changed their life, so I am super excited to go. I leave January 24th and come

home May 29th.

The \$2500 scholarship that I was awarded was also given to me through donors to the NFTY EIE program. I applied for it a month or so ago, and the maximum amount that NFTY gives out is \$2500, so I was incredibly fortunate to have received that amount.

I hope this is enough information! If you'd like anything else shoot me an email.

Emma Silver

We wish the new youth group much success, and Emma, have a good trip!

HISTORY OF SHIR AMI (PART 3)

In our previous articles we spoke about remodeling the building. But what about all the interior details? We had to scurry around to take care of the furnishings, the drapes, the carpeting, the tables and chairs, the Ark, the ritual objects. And of course, the kitchen. All these needed to be ready for our "Grand Opening" on Rosh Hashanah of that first year in the new building, 1966.

After the construction work, it was the women's turn to play a major role. We wasted no time forming ourselves into an organization that we called "The Shir Ami Ladies," or, informally, "The Sals." We divided up the many tasks so that some of us worked on cleaning the kitchen and acquiring supplies, while others set up the library and the classrooms. Then we realized that this was like a family moving into a new home, why not have a kitchen shower?

And what a shower we put on! Now we acquired new and used items to fill the cabinets to overflowing: multiple sets of dishes, silverware, cutlery, tablecloths, kitchen gadgets, coffee makers, Challah boards, wine goblets and whatever else a synagogue can use for its events. The kitchen party became a regular occasion to clean and upgrade existing inventory. Ingrid Weinberg, Rose Levine, Elaine Leavitt, Ann Blank, Judy Ganz and many other devoted "Sals" took part.

Later on, when we started having Russian emigres settle in the Castro Valley area, we found a new mission. The refugees arrived with no money, but an apartment was

provided for them by the Jewish Federation. The need was great for beds, sofas, dishes, tables and chairs, for everything to furnish their new homes. Our kitchen showers not only provided them with necessities, but also served as a social outlet to welcome them into our community.

Shir Ami Ladies has evolved into what are today our Sisterhood and Rosh Hodesh groups. Sure, there have been demographic and life style changes since those early years, but basically, the women of Shir Ami have always been there when they were needed. Kol Ha Kavod!

NEWS OF MEMBERS

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

MELANIE AND NATE EINBUND- PROFILE

Melanie and Nate met in a surprising way- through an ex girlfriend of Nate's-let's call her Miss B. After breaking up with him, Miss B. told Nate about her friend Melanie and recommended that he go out with Melanie instead of with her. Somehow she must have known that they would make a good pair. It is obvious from the interests that Melanie and Nate have in common, that Miss B. was right on the button.

Melanie and Nate Einbund have lived and worked in an unusual variety of areas. Melanie was born and raised in Philadelphia. Her early education was all centered in Philadelphia, where she attended high school, college, and the University of Arts. When she graduated, she began her career as a fabric designer in New York City, but left to go to Israel. She spent a year in Israel, working and studying Hebrew. On her return to the U.S., she turned to studying Finance, and received a Master's in Finance Management at John F. Kennedy University. She is presently working as an accountant for a Bay Area company.

Nate lived in Gary, Indiana as a youngster. He was raised in a strictly Orthodox home. His first job after high school was working part-time in his father's manufacturing company. He started taking courses in college, but his father became ill

so Nate had to drop out of school and take over the business full time. Then sadly, his father died. Nate remained in Indiana for a couple of more years until he was able to sell the firm.

From the hot, humid summers and freezing winters of the Mid-West, Nate moved to Arizona. There he attended Junior College and Arizona State University. In one of his classes the professor, a paleontologist, got him interested in science photography, which entails taking pictures through a microscope. Photography had always been an interest of Nat and this suited him perfectly. The professor hired him, and this work became a prime source of income for him throughout his college years. He graduated from Arizona State with a degree in Communication, moved to Tucson, then came to California. He's now in Marketing, as a Manufacturer's representative for an electronics firm.

Even though they also belong to Congregation Sherith Israel in San Francisco, Melanie and Nate have become active and contributing members of Shir Ami. They are avid attendees of the Hebrew class, the film night, the brunches, as well as of many other activities. They feel that Shir Ami is warm and friendly to newcomers, and expressed the hope that the congregation will grow in membership. We say "Amen" to that, as we welcome Melanie and Nate to our membership roll!

VICKY SAPPER

Vicky Sapper lives in Danville and is the mother of Danielle Keil . Vicky has often been seen accompanying her grandchildren, Sarah, Gabrielle, and James Keil at services. She has joined the Hebrew class. We look forward to seeing her at many more activities.

SUZANNE AND STEVE GAYLE

Suzanne and Steve Gayle live in Hayward. Their daughters Violet and Tanzanite are actively participating in the school. Suzanne is an artist, specializing in creating murals.

RICK AND MARY GOLDHOFF

Rick and Mary Goldhoff live in Castro Valley. Their daughter Marlo attends our pre-school.

VALERIE GOLDMAN AND SAM KRANTZ

Valerie Goldman and Sam Krantz live in Castro Valley. Sam is an immigration lawyer and Valerie is an interior designer. She hosted a very enjoyable Rosh Hodesh meeting in her home.

Barbara Heimowitz presented welcome baskets to new members. Baskets contained grape juice, candles, Chanukah candles; coupons for Challah made by Sharon Golemba and information about Shir Ami.

We look forward to meeting all of our new members soon. Watch for more new member profiles in the coming months.

IRVING BERLIN PLAY IN CASTRO VALLEY

Here's a question. What American song was written by an immigrant and is one of the most successful Christmas songs in history? The song is "I'm dreaming of a White Christmas" (it sold 30 million worldwide), and the song writer is Irving Berlin., a Jew who started life in a Shtetl in abject poverty. The show was featured at the Castro Valley Center for the Arts.

He was born Israel Bailin, one of 8 children. His father was a cantor who traveled around the Ukraine countryside, singing at synagogues whenever they gave him work. He often took his son Israel with him, and in this way the boy was exposed to music at an early age. Then things became tough for Jews, and they were faced with pogroms in the villages in which they lived. Israel claimed that his earliest memory was of lying on the ground, being wrapped in a feather quilt, and watching his little wooden home being burned to the ground, till there was nothing left but ashes.

In great haste, the father smuggled the family out and fled to America. In New York their condition was not much better. Unfortunately there was very little work for a cantor, and they were penniless. They lived in a window-less cold water tenement flat, and the children found whatever work they could in sweat shops and cigarette factories; the eldest daughters even prostituted themselves to support the family.

When Israel was 8 years old his father died, and at age 13 he left home and worked on the streets as newspaper boy and collected small change to give his mother. He remembered sleeping under the tenement steps and eating scraps of food. However, he worked diligently saving his pennies until he had enough to find jobs as singing waiter in bars, where the clientele would reward him with more pennies.

Eventually his singing waiter business paid off, and he began playing roles in Lower East Side musicals. At 18 he ran away from home and became independent. Due to a printer's error, Bailin was changed to Berlin, and he became Irving Berlin. He fell in love with Elin Mackay, a society woman, daughter of Clarence Mackay, head of Post Telegraph Cable company. The father did not approve of his daughter marrying a Jew and was furious when the young couple eloped. He disowned them and gave them nothing- until the market crash of 1929, when he came to Irving and had to beg him for money. Irving and Elin were married 63 years and had four daughters.



In his life time, Irvin Berlin had written a total of more than one thousand five hundred songs including world wide popular hits such as White Christmas, Alexander's Ragtime Band, God Bless America, Easter Parade and more. He died in 1988, at the age of 101, considered by many to be the most prolific and famous song writer in American history.

MONTHLY JOKE

RABIES SCARE IN NEW YORK CITY?

A Public Health expert was called upon to present a course on rabies to the NYC police. This was precipitated by a policeman's action in separating two fiercely fighting dogs. The policeman was bitten severely, but, thankfully, neither dog was rabid. Nevertheless, the municipal authorities felt it was prudent to make the police force aware of the potential hazard in a dog-fighting situation.



At the end of the course, the teacher was more than amused by the written answer to one of the questions asked in a test—

“What is rabies and what can be done about it?”

The answer: “ Rabies is Jewish priests and nothing can be done about it.”

THANK YOU FOR DONATIONS TO SHIR AMI

Ann and Sam Blank in memory of Moe Levy.

Spitzer Family to thank Ruth Hartman for helping Reuben in his Hebrew Studies

Sharon Golembo on the yahrzeit of P. Golembo

Audrey and Karl Hand in memory of Moe Levy



Rosh Chodesh recap, continued from page 11

In **November** we brought in the month of Kislev at the home of Valerie Goldman, one of our new members. We had a program related to the month of Kesliv, which is the darkest month. We were asked to think of a woman who had brought light into our life. Each woman shared about that woman and told us why she was significant to her. There were a variety of women from daughters, mothers, friends, mentors, and noble prize winners. Later we made a card thanking that woman who was important to us.

Thank you to Valerie who created a wonderful program on her first time hosting and planning. Good job!! We also enjoyed delicious refreshments, brought in the new month with prayers and rituals, and caught up with each other.

Retreat **BOOK** Information

For the Women's Retreat of 2012 we will be reading "Great House" by Nicole Krauss. The book is available in all media formats (print, CD, Audible, Kindle and other readers) and can also be borrowed from the Alameda County Library.

The novel consists of four stories divided among eight chapters, all touching on themes of loss and recovery, and anchored to a massive writing desk that resurfaces among numerous households, much to the bewilderment and existential tension of those in its orbit, among them a lonely American novelist clinging to the memory of a poet who has mysteriously vanished in Chile, an old man in Israel facing the imminent death of his wife of 51 years, and an esteemed antiques dealer tracking down the things stolen from his father by the Nazis. Much like in Krauss's "The History of Love", the sharply etched characters seem at first arbitrarily linked across time and space, but Krauss pulls together the disparate elements, settings, characters, and fragile connective tissue to form a formidable and haunting mosaic of loss and profound sorrow.

Yahrzeit List

January Yahrzeit List

January 6, 2012

Zac Cohen,	long time member of Shir Ami
Darlene Golembo,	sister of Sharon Golembo
Bridget Laky,	past president and long time former member of Shir Ami
Peter Rosenberg,	uncle of Alex Druker
Helen Rosner,	long time active member of Shir Ami

January 20, 2012

Joseph Bressler,	father of Florrie Finkle
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January 27, 2012

Tyler Brooke,	father of Toni Schulberg
Cecilia Kramer,	grandmother of Marion Kramer
Clara Schneider,	mother of Marilyn Schneider, and grandmother of Irene, Sarah and Carolyn Gilchriese

Kaddish List (to be read at all services January)

Moe Levy,	long-time former member of Shir Ami
Mayer (pronounced ma-YARE) Yashar,	brother-in-law of Ruth Hartman
James Wallace Bergmann,	father of Ruth Levin
Anne Firestone,	mother of Bill Firestone
Civia Rudman,	former member of Shir Ami
Sherrie Kidwell,	Shir Ami member and wife of Bernard Kidwell
Harold Dombrower	father of Jan Dombrower
Ingrid Weinberg,	long time founding member of Shir Ami
Florence Lewis,	mother of Peter Lewis

Adult Learning

Adult Hebrew :Learning Hebrew through Prayer

Adult Hebrew classes are ongoing.

Do you want more information?

Contact Judy Ganz,.

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