



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

## DECEMBER 2012 Bulletin (Kislev~Tevet 5773)

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### A SPIN ON THE DREIDEL

By Bonnie Frey



When most people think of the Jewish Holiday Chanukah, they think of the dreidel. I thought I would share some information to help you gain some perspective on its origins and to teach you how to play with this simple yet wonderful spinning top.

Here is a bit of history of the dreidel. Long ago, during the rule of the Greek king Antiochus, Jews were forbidden to study their religion. Jewish children resorted to learning in outlying areas and forests. When the children were studying, they would keep a dreidel nearby to pull out and play in case they were discovered, so that they could pretend to be merely playing games.

A dreidel has one Hebrew letter on each side. Outside of Israel, those letters are: נ (Nun), ג (Gimmel), ה (Hay) and ש (Shin), which stand for the Hebrew phrase "Nes Gadol Haya Sham." This phrase means, "A great miracle happened there [in Israel]." After the State of Israel was founded in 1948 the Hebrew letters were changed for dreidels used in Israel. They became: נ (Nun), ג (Gimmel), ה (Hay) and פ (Pey), which stand for the Hebrew phrase "Nes Gadol Haya Po." This means, "A great miracle happened here."

The miracle referred to in both versions of the Hebrew phrase is the miracle of the Hanukkah oil, which lasted for eight days instead of one.

Article continues: See how to play dreidel on page 6.



**HAPPY CHANUKAH**  
December 9-16  
(light first candle on 12/8)

# Event Calendar



CONGREGATION  
**SHIR AMI**

4529 Malabar Ave.

Castro Valley, CA 94546



## DECEMBER

- Sat. Dec. 1 2:00 pm Trope Study with Allie Fischman. See [Rabbinic Interns' Page](#)
- Sat. Dec. 1 3:30 pm Adult Education, *100 Blessings*, with Allie Fischman 3:30-5pm. See [Rabbinic Interns' Page](#)
- Sun. Dec. 2 11:00 am [Chanukah Faire & Boutique](#) 11am - 3 pm at Shir Ami. Fundraiser for Shir Ami: craft and gift items and Chanukah food for sale; silent auction; and children's activities.

**Chanukah Children's Activities**-- \$5 fee to access all children's activities. There is no charge for children enrolled in Shir Ami's Sunday School who will attend the Chanukah Faire in place of regularly scheduled activities

- Wed. Dec. 12 6:30 pm [Rosh Chodesh](#) Tevet, **Sisterhood event: Women's Chanukah Party** at the home of Bettina Skehan.
- Fri. Dec. 14 6:30 pm Potluck [Chanukah Party](#) and **Shabbat Service** led by Aaron Sataloff
- Sat. Dec. 15 7:30 pm Havdallah and a movie led by Aaron Sataloff. See [Rabbinic Interns' Page](#)
- Tue. Dec. 18 7:00 pm **Board of Directors' Meeting** at Shir Ami. All are welcome.

## JANUARY

- Fri. Jan. 4 7:30 pm **Shabbat Service** led by Aaron Sataloff
- Sat. Jan. 5 7:30 pm Havdallah and a movie led by Aaron Sataloff. See [Rabbinic Interns' Page](#)
- Tue. Jan. 15 **Rosh Chodesh S'vat Sisterhood event.** Details to follow next month.
- Fri. Jan. 18 7:30 pm **Shabbat Service.** Led by Allie Fischman
- Sat. Jan. 19 2:00 pm Trope Study with Allie Fischman. [See Rabbinic Interns' Page](#)
- Sat. Jan. 19 7:00 pm **Shir Ami Shirah (Music Night!)** with Allie Fischman. Join together at Shir Ami for snacks, havdallah and festive singing!. See [Rabbinic Interns' Page](#)
- Tue. Jan. 22 7:00 pm **Board of Directors' Meeting** at Shir Ami. All are welcome.
- Fri. Jan. 25 7:30 pm **Shabbat Service.** Led by Aaron Sataloff
- Sat. Jan. 26 12 noon Tu B'Shvat Sedar with lunch. Led by Aaron Sataloff
- Sat. Jan. 26 time TBD **BOOK CLUB** *Everything is Illuminated*. Led by Aaron Sataloff. See [Rabbinic Interns' Page](#).



March 8-10, [Women's retreat](#). See flier, page 9

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## President's Message

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Shalom Shir Ami,

As promised, let me start this month's Message by concluding my preview of coming Shir Ami events for the year. At our Shabbat service on Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, we'll be honoring and thanking all the volunteers that help put on the great events we have throughout the year. We also have a service planned for Friday, April 26<sup>th</sup>. In May, we'll have a Shabbat service on Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, as well as a special Shavuot/Shabbat service on Friday, 17<sup>th</sup>. Both of these services will be our last weekends to spend with our Student Rabbis, so I encourage you to attend to thank Aaron and Allie, respectively, for their service to Shir Ami for the year. On Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, we'll have our end of the year potluck lunch and Annual Congregation Meeting, where we recap what Shir Ami accomplished this year, and preview what's ahead. I hope you'll join us for that special occasion.

The month of November was a challenging one for many in our Congregation. Local elections took place resulting in changes at all levels of Government, some for the better, and others disappointing. At the national level, members like myself found their East Coast families and friends overwhelmed by the effects of Hurricane Sandy and the winter storm that followed. On the global stage, many had feelings ranging from outrage to anxiety to sadness to regret about the violence between Israel and their Palestinian neighbors in Gaza. Certainly, this past month has been among the most tumultuous in recent memory, and has left many of us wondering how to support each other and the community at large.

I am proud to say that several Shir Ami members took this time of doubt as a challenge and promoted action and discussion as our response. Diana Zankowsky, our Religious Committee Co-

Chair, led an unplanned and small yet introspective Shabbat service the evening of November 16<sup>th</sup>. This service enabled many of us to come together to pray for peace and sanity on the other side of the world, and also contained a serious discussion on what we can do to relay our concerns to those with the power to affect policy, and to improve Jewish-Palestinian relations both within the U.S. and beyond. I much appreciate Diana's leadership on this, and would encourage you to talk to your fellow members to express how this event has impacted your life, and what constructive actions we can take together.

In that vein, on Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup> Tom Spitzer led a group of 14 Shir Ami members to volunteer at the Alameda County Food Bank. The bunch of us spent about two and a half hours sorting and packing food that's given out to families in need in our community. The Food Bank relies on volunteers year-round to do the necessary and much appreciated work they do. While I certainly encourage you to join Shir Ami whenever we go as a group, for those with more flexible schedules and weekday time available, please consider donating some of your time as you can throughout the year. This is especially needed in the post-holiday season that starts in January. Here's hoping for a tranquil and festive December and a joyous New Year!



Jon Zimmerman,  
[president@congshirami.org](mailto:president@congshirami.org)

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### ONEG HOSTS NEEDED

Have you signed up to host an oneg (refreshments for Friday night service)? Try it! We'll help out. Contact Sharon Golembo, [oneg@congshirami.org](mailto:oneg@congshirami.org)

## Rabbinic Interns' Page

This month, we encounter one of my favorite festivals of light, the holiday of Chanukah. We celebrate this joyous tradition on the twenty-fifth day of the Jewish month of *Kislev*, or evening of December 8th. On each of the eight days of Chanukah, we light the menorah, commemorating the miracle of the oil that lasted for eight days during the time of the Maccabees. That miracle symbolizes for us that God had again protected the Jews, allowing the continuation of the Jewish tradition at a time when we were persecuted. In memory of this, our sages appointed these eight days for annual thanksgiving and for lighting candles. However, God did not simply kindle the oil in the menorah, but the hope of the Maccabees. During the last few weeks we have been bombarded with news from Israel, telling us about the chaos happening in the Jewish homeland. So, at this time in the lives of Jews today, we too need sustaining, we too need kindling. Not of oil, but of hope for peace. At this time we too need a light to guide us through hard times like the Maccabees. Therefore, for this Chanukah celebration, we not only remember the oil that lasted for eight days, but the Jews that lasted for three thousand years!

- Rabbi Aaron



### BOOK CLUB Saturday, January 26

Book: *Everything is Illuminated*

There is still plenty of time to read our next BOOK CLUB selection, *Everything is Illuminated*. Synopsis: A young Jewish American man endeavors to find the woman who saved his grandfather during World War II. Set in a Ukrainian village that was ultimately razed by the Nazis. Discussion led by Rabbi Aaron



Rabbinic Interns

Allie Fischman

[Rabbi.Allie@CongShirAmi.org](mailto:Rabbi.Allie@CongShirAmi.org)

Aaron Sataloff

[Rabbi.Aaron@CongShirAmi.org](mailto:Rabbi.Aaron@CongShirAmi.org)

### ADULT EDUCATION

#### Saturday, December 1: Trope Class, 2-3pm

Join us for (mostly) Torah trope class. Learn the cantillation (musical markings) that enable us to chant from the Torah. ~Rabbi Allie

#### Saturday, December 1: 3:30-5:00pm

##### Adult Education: 100 Blessings,

Jews are supposed to say 100 blessings each and every day. Come learn about Jewish blessings and discuss ways to add blessings of gratitude to your daily routine. We'll end the evening with havdallah. ~Rabbi Allie

#### Sat. December 15: Havdallah and a movie, 7:30 pm

##### Movie: *Walk on Water*

Synopsis: Following the suicide of his wife, an Israeli intelligence agent is assigned to befriend the grandchildren of a Nazi war criminal. ~Rabbi Aaron

#### Sat. January 5: Havdallah and a movie

##### Movie: *The Bubble* ~Rabbi Aaron

Happy December!

Technology is constantly changing and we must keep up with the changes in the classroom. "Today, the term "technology" often means computers and the Internet. Ten years ago, "technology" may have meant a bulky video camera or a VHS or BetaMax videotape recorder. In looking at the use of technology in the classroom, an educational technologist uses the broadest definition of technology.

Technology is any instrument or tool that can be used to assist a person in teaching a lesson. Technology can be anything from a pencil and a piece of paper to the electronic superhighway" (V'shinantam, URJ Teachers Newsletter, Technology & the Jewish Classroom - No II, 5763).

If you have a Smartphone, you can check out an app called **iShabbat** where you can learn the Shabbat prayers in a fun new way. It features blessings for candle lighting, Kiddush, Havdalah and much more. You can listen to the melodies of the prayers, and even record your own! It also includes instructional flashcards to reinforce the meaning of the Hebrew in each prayer.

**iShma Lite** goes beyond basic reading or flashcard programs and provides interactive study tools that help you learn Hebrew prayer. You can learn or refresh reading by singing the Four Questions with your own interactive **iMah Nishtanah. Jewish and Me (JAM) Matching**, is a fast-paced matching game that helps develop cognitive skills and Jewish identity at the same time. By matching the lively cat blowing a shofar, eating hallah, or spinning a dreidel, your kids will have so much fun they won't even know they're learning!

For high school youth, there is **iTorah**. Every month they can receive an e-mail, which will include a piece of Jewish learning, questions (with suggested answers) and practical suggestions for using what was presented in temple, camp or NFTY region; in school and in other extra-curricular activities, like clubs or teams. Have your high school student subscribe to **iTorah** on the URJ website! We are a team: the synagogue and the home, teachers and parents, all teachers and learners. By working together, our children will benefit greatly. It is our duty to give them the tools they will be able to utilize throughout their lifetime.

***V'shinantam levanecha. You shall teach them diligently to your children.***

**Upcoming dates to remember:**

**Religious School meets December 9 and 16**

**Join the fun at the Pot Luck/Chanukah Party/ Service on December 14<sup>th</sup>!**

**January classes meet on Sunday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>**

Wishing you all a ***de-light-full*** Festival of Lights,  
Ricki Weintraub, Educator



## Shir Ami thanks the following individuals for their generous donations

- Edetha Speceal, (a former member, many years ago, all of whose children were in our schools). She sends us a check EVERY MONTH!
- Nancy Storch, in honor of Shir Ami's New Board.
- The Skelly Family, in honor of the birth of Hillie Levine's great granddaughter.
- Judy Ganz, in honor of the birth of Hillie Levine's great granddaughter.
- The Lewis Family, in memory of Peter's father, Lazarus Lewis, and in memory of Lorraine's father, Joseph Forman.

## Member News

- Welcome returning member Lisa Steindel-Byrne! We're pleased you've returned to our Shir Ami community and look forward to seeing you at many upcoming events and services.
- Stan Heimowitz is recuperating from hip replacement surgery. He appreciates all the cards, support and well wishes! He's doing well!

## Tzedakah Box

- Don't forget our tzedakah box on the wall as you enter the sanctuary from the kitchen-- easily available for any of us to drop a few coins and fulfill the mitzvah of tzedakah.

## Alameda County's Homeless Count

EveryOne Counts! Please volunteer with Alameda County's 2013 Homeless Count! Count is held on January 30.

Please contact EveryOne Home at [510-670-9796](tel:510-670-9796) or [everyonehome@acgov.org](mailto:everyonehome@acgov.org). Thank you!

## DREIDEL, continued from page 1

Here is how to play dreidel:

Any number of people can play. At the beginning of the game each player is given an equal number of "gelt", usually about 10-15. "Gelt", is the Yiddish word for money. Children most frequently use chocolate coins, nuts or pennies to play, but use whatever you like.



At the beginning of each round, every player antes up and puts one piece into the center "pot." They then take turns spinning the dreidel, with the following meanings assigned to each of the Hebrew letters:

.Nun means "nothing" in Yiddish. If the dreidel lands with a nun facing up the spinner does nothing נ

Gimmel means "gantz," in Yiddish which means "everything." If the dreidel lands with the gimmel facing up ג  
.the spinner gets everything in the pot

.Hey means "half" in Yiddish. If the dreidel lands with a hey facing up the spinner gets half of the pot ה

Pey means "pay." If the פ Shin means "shtel," in Yiddish for "put in." If you are using an Israeli dreidel, the ש  
.dreidel lands with either a shin or a pey facing up the player adds a game piece to the pot

By Bonnie Frey

# Chanukah Faire & Boutique

Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>

11:00 AM to 3:00 PM

4529 Malabar Ave, Castro Valley

*Fundraiser for...*

*Congregation Shir Ami*

- Craft Items & Holiday Gifts by Local Artists for Sale
- Kids' Activities (\$5/child for access to all activities including face painting & crafts)
- Chanukah Food
- Chanukah Items for sale
- Silent Auction... And More!

Questions? Contact:  
[info@congshirami.org](mailto:info@congshirami.org)  
510-220-3345

**Everyone Welcome!**





**Friday, December 14th at 6:30 PM**

**POT LUCK**

**and SERVICES led by**

**AARON SATALOFF**

**Please participate in Shir Ami's rotating  
menu list**

**A through L-----Main dish and or Latkes  
M through Z---Salad or dessert, clean up assist**

Join us for our 17th Annual

# Shir Ami Women's Retreat

Friday, March 8 – Sunday, March 10, 2013

At the beautiful Westminster Retreat Center  
in Alamo, California

Connect with your Jewish sisters and yourself! Join us for a weekend of women's friendship, worship, creativity, music, and play. Rabbinic Intern Allie Fischman joins us 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/co4xkkt>, 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 20**.*

*Questions?*  
Contact Ruth Hartman: 510-582-3379 or [events@congshirami.org](mailto:events@congshirami.org)

## Rosh Chodesh/Sisterhood

### UPCOMING ROSH CHODESH

**Wednesday, Dec 12th at 7:00 pm**

The next Sisterhood gathering will be our Chanukah party at the home of Bettina Skehan (Dec. 12th at 7). We will have a Chanukah **potluck** of latkas, salads, and sweets.

Bring a menorah and 6 candles for the 5th night menorah lighting as we each light our menorah. We will also have a present exchange. Please bring a wrapped present (\$20.00 maximum). We will play the usual "steal the present" so make sure your present is one that people would like to steal to make the game more exciting and fun. Look for an e mail with more information and a reminder.

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### ROSH CHODESH RECAP

Last month's Rosh Chodesh was hosted by Jan Dombrower at her home. We brought in the month of Kislev with readings and blessings. Since it is the darkest month, we each shared what is that has brought light into our lives. There was meaningful sharing as we went around the circle to express the light in our lives. Continuing the theme of light, each woman made a Chanukah sun catcher decoration for her home. We enjoyed refreshments and visiting.



On the business side, dues were collected and we discussed joining the national and local Sisterhood organization. We decided that Sisterhood would donate to Shir Ami in memory of some of the congregation's family members who have passed away. Finally, we decided to wear Tallit to upcoming services in solidarity with women's right to pray at the Kotel (Western Wall), sponsored by the Women of the Wall.



### Rosh Chodesh 5773 (2012-13)

Wed. Dec 12 Tevet- **Chanukah Party**  
Tues. Jan 15 S'vat  
Tues. Feb 12 Adar  
Fri.-Sun. Mar. 8-10 [Women's Retreat](#)  
Tue. Mar 12 Nissan  
Wed. April 10 Iyar  
Wed. May 8 Sivan  
Wed. June 5 Tammuz

Jan Dombrower

For more information about Rosh Chodesh (sisterhood) events, contact Jan at

[Sisterhood@CongShirAmi.org](mailto:Sisterhood@CongShirAmi.org)



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## Yahrzeit List

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### December 2012 Yahrzeit List (as of 11/26/12)

Frederick Apple,	father of Angie Ross
Sheila Arthur,	long time former member of Shir Ami
John Blum,	father of Jeff Blum
Ann and Michael Bruser,	active early members of Shir Ami
Joseph and Meshka Druker,	grandparents of Alex Druker
Inez Gautreaux, (pronounced GO-TRO)	aunt of Toni Schulberg
Frieda Greenbaum,	grandmother of Diana Zankowsky
Jan (pronounced YAHN) Okoniewski,	husband of Marion Kramer
Isaac Rosenberg,	grandfather of Alex Druker
Max Schulberg,	father of David Schulberg

### **Kaddish List** (to be read at the service in December)

Joseph Forman	father of Lorraine Lewis
Katherine Schuelke,	mother of Susan Spitzer
Rose Levine,	wife of Hillie Leviine, and long-time founding member of Shir Ami
Fran Johnson,	long-time member of Shir Ami
Robert Krantz,	father of Sam Krantz
Sylvia Weingarten	aunt of Stan Heimowitz
George Lange,	brother of Mickey Lange

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### Do you have a name you would like to have read for Kaddish at Friday services?

Is there someone for whom you'd like a Yahrzeit reminder letter? The process is very simple. **Please email Toni Schulberg** ([yahrzeit@congshirami.org](mailto:yahrzeit@congshirami.org)) the following information: your name, the name of the person who died, their relationship to you, the date they died (month, day, year in the English calendar), and whether or not you want to use the English or the Hebrew calendar for your reminder. If you want the Hebrew calendar dates, Toni will get them for you, and send the reminders on the corresponding dates.

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## Adult Learning

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See [page 4](#) for details on Adult Learning provided by our Rabbinic Interns.

### **Adult Learning: Learning Hebrew through Prayer** (classes ongoing, various levels)

Have you always wanted to learn Hebrew?

Contact Judy Ganz [AdultHebrew@CongShirAmi.org](mailto:AdultHebrew@CongShirAmi.org)

## Contacts

### Congregation Shir Ami 4529 Malabar Street Castro Valley, CA 94546



\*\*\*Please submit invoice and reimbursement requests to:

Congregation Shir Ami Treasurer  
PO Box 2099  
Castro Valley, CA 94546

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