

Events of the Month

Shabbat services at Temple Ramat Zion

Saturday, June 7, 10:30 am
 Birthday Shabbat
 Delman's 50th Anniversary
 Saturday, June 14, 10:30 am
 Saturday, June 21, 10:30 am
 Kiddush hosted by Ramat Zion
 Saturday, June 28, 10:30 am
 Anniversary Shabbat

Walk Around Lake Balboa Sunday, June 1, 9:00 am

Our Walk this year raises money for the Association of Jewish Educators Scholarship Fund. **Call Fran Kobulnick** at 345-2405. See article on page 4 and flyer.

Ice Cream Social Sunday, June 29, 3:00 pm at Northridge Mobile Home Park

This annual members appreciation event will feature ice cream sundaes and Jewish jokes. We will provide the ice cream and all of us attending will tell our favorite joke. **Call Ken Bereny** at (818) 324-0688. See article on page 2 and flyer.



Visit our website:
www.shirami.com



Rabbi's Column

This summer, Bonnie and I will again be in search of our roots.

We will be attending a week-long seminar in Salt Lake City presented by the **Jewish Genealogical Society**.

Each day will be packed with informative lectures and programs to educate us (Bonnie, primarily, as this has become a passion) on how to search for ancestors. We will also take advantage of the Mormon resources, as they are equally as passionate in gathering ancestral information from everybody, Mormon or not!

And shortly after that experience, Bonnie and I will be visiting my father's home town, St. Paul, Minnesota.

He was born and raised there, yet I have never visited. His brother (my uncle) still lives there, and he will be taking us on a tour of their ancestral home, the synagogue my father attended for Hebrew School, and other sites important to me and my quest to learn more about my roots.

The ability to research our past has never been more convenient! A simple (and free) search on **Ancestry.com** will open doors to our past many of us thought long closed.

I urge you to similarly discover your past. Visit the website and begin a process which, I can guarantee, you will not be sorry you initiated!

I am who I am, in part, because of the locations and events of my ancestors' past. I look forward to sharing my results with you.

Rabbi David Vorspan



Shavuot June 4
 Hag Sameach



Shaina (daughter of Bonnie and Rabbi David Vorspan) and Aaron Brenner, married May 18 (Lag Ba'omer) at Brandeis-Bardin campus of American Jewish University

President's Report

Shalom,

We will be having a bittersweet June, this year. Sweet, because we are all looking forward to a summer break (perhaps sleeping late on Saturdays) and just enjoying the summer. Bitter, because after two years, we will be saying goodbye to our friends at Temple Ramat Zion. I would like to take this opportunity to thank **Rabbi Sela** and the Board of Directors and members of TRZ for making us feel welcome for the past two years. You invited us into your home and we thank you.

Looking to the future, we will begin our new fiscal year at the **New Community Jewish High School**. ("Next fiscal year in West Hills?") If the past few years have taught us anything, it is that Congregation Shir Ami is an old hand when it comes to new beginnings. We look forward to seeing many of you there at our twice monthly Saturday Shabbat services.

Of course, there is still the matter of June to take care of. We begin June on Sunday June 1 with our annual **Walk Around Lake Balboa**, with proceeds going to the **Association of Jewish Educators Scholarship Fund**. On, Sunday, June 29, we will wind up with our **Ice Cream Social**, while providing our own entertainment with our favorite Jewish-themed jokes. All through the month, we will continue our Shabbat Service schedule.

Since this is our last month together until September, let's make that extra "push" for **SOVA** this month.

Watch your mail for our 2014-2015 membership packages. Renew your membership early and often and give our Membership Vice President, Ritual Vice President; and Treasurer something to kvell about!

If you have any questions or want to provide your input, please feel free to email me at JDPistol@aol.com.

Thank you.

Jordan Pistol, President



Ice Cream Social Sunday, June 29

Our annual Ice Cream Social will be Sunday, June 29 at 3:00 pm at the rec room of Northridge Mobile Home Park. This afternoon event is **free to our members** and a great opportunity to get together before our two month summer break.

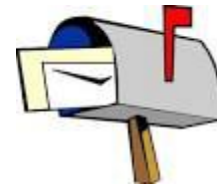


The event chairperson is again **Ken Bereny**. Besides our usual delicious ice cream sundaes to delight your tummy, Ken is planning a program to tickle your funny bone. We know some members who provide humor just being themselves, but in addition, we will repeat a successful program of "Jewish" jokes. We will be both the audience and the performers. We invite everyone to bring their favorite joke to share.

Please see flyer for more details and how to register.

Mailbox

Congregation Shir Ami,



We thank you for your many kind messages of sympathy and your donations in memory of our grandson, **Brandon**, who passed away after a three year battle with cancer. We are very fortunate to be part of such a caring congregation. We would like to share with you an excerpt of what Brandon's boss wrote on his company's blog. He expressed beautifully what so many people have said about our grandson.

"As his co-worker, being with him was seeing an amazing act of courage and strength every day, but you would never know it. You would never know he was fighting cancer, because he didn't make a big deal out of it. His relentless positivity in the face of great adversity was awe-inspiring, a life lesson that we will hold dear for the rest of our lives." **Mark Kelly**

Clara and Stan Rosenbluth



DONATIONS

Congregation Shir Ami wishes to acknowledge the following donations:

In Memory of Brandon Gribin

Sherry and Lee Dollins: Shir Ami prayerbook

Yahrzeits

- Alan Siebler for Carol Siebler
- Esther Perez for Sam Perez
- Rabbi David and Bonnie Vorspan for Sandy Vorspan
- Lynn Cherney for Merel Moore
- Paula and Lou Loomis for Doris Loomis and Jay Goldfarb
- Lorraine and Daniel Simansky for Florence
- Fiona Taylor for Norman Miles
- Andrea and Leon Nachenberg for Sheila Nachenberg
- Maralyn and Paul Soifer
- Fran Friedman for H Grossman and D. Rubin
- Philip Hockmeyer for J. Hockmeyer
- Nancy and Lonnie Scharf for Blima Frollech
- Fay and Edward Schneier
- Corine Geller for Hildegard Geller
- Rae and Armand Wazana for Isaac Wazana
- Amir Gnessin and Orit Stieglitz for Shoshana Gnessin and Shaula Stieglitz
- Gale and Jay Cohen
- Fran Friedman for Jean Friedman
- Sylvia Hockmeyer for Joseph Hockmeyer

Birthdays

- Ben Vorspan
- Yael and Gavi Sela
- Jerry Kovar
- Laurie Orens
- Stan Goodman
- Irwin Koransky

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

Al Simon.....	6/2
Wayne Geffen.....	6/3
Sondra Licht.....	6/6
Gary Finlay.....	6/10
Stan Rosenbluth.....	6/14
Nancy Bereny.....	6/15
Irwin Koransky.....	6/15
Jay Cohen.....	6/26
Helga Unkeless.....	6/26
David Lipman.....	6/29
Gale Cohen.....	7/1
Heather Hyman.....	7/1
Ethel Granik.....	7/7
Paula Mishkin.....	7/9
Fran Feinman.....	7/12
Ed Schackman.....	7/15
Mariana Stark.....	7/19
Barbara Hattem.....	7/22
Alan Siebler.....	7/22
Phyllis Schroeder.....	7/27
Stan Goodman.....	7/27
Charlene Kazel.....	7/29
Judy Eisikowitz.....	7/30

Anniversaries

Bette and Owen Delman.....	6/7	50th
Marcie and Steve Spetner.....	6/10	35th
Becky and Gary Finlay.....	6/13	15th
Paula and Paul Frankel.....	6/16	24th
Karen and Fenton Harvey.....	6/24	30th
Sherry and Lee Dollins.....	6/25	47th
Maralyn and Paul Soifer.....	6/28	45th
Clara and Stan Rosenbluth.....	7/6	62nd
Lorraine and Dan Simansky.....	7/10	49th
Susan and David Lipman.....	7/12	44th
Sima and Stephen Schuster.....	7/15	47th
Laura and Al Simon.....	7/30	53rd

Congregational News

Get well wishes *rafuah schleimah* to:



Frank Locasio knee surgery
Laura Simon

May he be blessed with a complete recovery in body and spirit.

Our Condolences

We regret to inform the congregational family of the passing of: former Temple Beth Ami member



Sol Kaplon and Brandon Gribin, grandson of members **Clara and Stan Rosenbluth**.

May God comfort Sol's daughter and son-in-law, **Michelle and Victor Levin**, and Brandon's wife, **Miriam**, and Clara and Stan and their families at this time of their bereavement.

Social Action Committee

I am writing this in May, so I am still hopeful that our annual **Walk Around Lake Balboa** June 1 will be as successful and fun as all our previous walks! We were given the opportunity to raise money this year for local high school students to use next year for their first year of college. The charity we chose is the **Association of Jewish Educators**. Their president is **Maralyn Soifer**, fellow Shir Ami-ite and long time Temple Beth Ami member. This is the first time we are attempting to raise money for a charity that is not related to an illness because we wanted to help our local youths become educated and serve our community in the future. Please send in your registration flyer with a check made out to Congregation Shir Ami as soon as possible. Special thanks to **Ellie Zatz** and **Paullette Pistol** for co-chairing the Walk, and to the Social Action Committee for their help. And thanks to **Charlene Kazel** for setting up our **Operation Gratitude** card writing at the Walk.

Very special thanks to those who donated **Target gift cards** to the mothers and children in the **Domestic Violence Shelters** we help sponsor for Mother's Day. I was told that the mothers and children were very excited to be remembered during this difficult time in their lives. This is truly a special mitzvah project, and we will continue collecting these Target \$10 gift cards all year. Please contact **Fran Kobulnick** for more information.



Our Committee had a most memorable and enjoyable visit to the **West Valley Healthcare Center** for Shabbat and Mother's/Father's Day. The staff brought many mothers and fathers to take part in our annual celebration. Everyone participated in the blessings over the Challah, wine, and Shabbat Candles and enjoyed the sing-along led by **Claire Silverman**. We enjoyed refreshments together and stayed to meet many of the residents. We hope that you will consider joining us on our next visit. Very special thanks to **Rae Wazana** and **Fiona Taylor**, co-chairs of Team Congregation Shir Ami for their hard work on behalf of **Jewish World Watch** annual **Walk to End Genocide**. Thanks to your generosity, our team raised over \$1100 this year! See the article on page 7.



The **Mitzvah Day** committee is already meeting to discuss which projects we will be doing this year. You will receive letters this summer updating you on our Mitzvah Day projects.

Leon Nachenberg and **Mike Easley** will again be our co-chairs, so you can be assured it will be a well organized event you will not want to miss! Please contact Leon or Mike if you have some ideas you want to share for Mitzvah Day.

Happy Father's Day to all the special men in our life!

Fran Kobulnick, Social Action Vice President

Operation Gratitude and Project MOT

by Charlene Kazel



And now we've come full circle and it's time to celebrate Father's Day. Thank God for fathers or else there wouldn't be mothers - it's a partnership.

Who do you think does the heavy work? Just come to Operation Gratitude on a prep or assembly day and watch how hard they work. Thank you, fathers, for all you do and for being good role models for your families.

Now we're coming to the end of the Shir Ami 2013-14 year. So far in 2014 we have donated:

	Operation Gratitude	Project MOT
Books and magazines	446	88
Cards	202	174
Gifts	97	192

Until September when we meet again and start over, enjoy life, be well, and have a Happy Father's Day and wonderful summer.

Thank You, Linda Lingle

We were very fortunate to have former Governor of Hawaii and Jewish Valley Girl **Linda Lingle** speak at a special edition of *Around the Rabbi's Tisch* May 15. Over 30 in attendance were enthralled by her knowledge and charm.



Linda, who taught a senior class in public policy at her alma mater CSUN last semester, spoke of her career in politics and current issues such as immigration, political power and compromise, and Israel. Everyone agreed that we need more people in government with her ability, morality, and dedication.

Heart and Soul

by Owen Delman



The bride and groom made their entrance dressed in country, cowboy chic -- she in a period-looking full skirt and white blouse, he in black jeans, long black coat and black cowboy hat. (Imagine **Bart Maverick** of the old television series.) It was a bright, sunny day and we were on the large wooden deck of their hillside home overlooking the golf course. It was all very Southern California and the assembled guests reflected the casual style of the area. Suits, cruise wear, expensive and not so expensive jeans, shorts and flip flops all mixed together as the guests awaited the stars of the event.

The crowd quieted as the bride and groom stepped in front of the judge officiating at the civil ceremony... *however, let me stop here and go back a few years.*

Born six years before me, Ivan was already seven when Pearl Harbor jolted America into the war. For him, growing up during the conflict, the war meant headlines, uncles in service, and worried parents. For me, as I was growing, the war was over and was represented by plastic toys and war movies. During Ivan's childhood, Dad was still working his way up the economic ladder, busy providing for his growing family. Six or seven years later, he was in management, soon to be an owner. The times can shape a person, making him tougher and more of a risk taker. That was my brother. I loved him heart and soul.

He always identified with the hard edged characters he saw in the movies and, in a way, they became role models. Personalities like **James Dean**, **Dana Andrews**, **John Wayne** -- tough guys sometimes getting into trouble because they would never back down. To the world, that's how Ivan often presented himself, especially in his early years. Never to me.

Jewish, but not observant, and though he was the only Jew in his high school in the late forties and early fifties, he didn't hide in the shadows. With his collar turned up, black leather jacket with four zippered pockets, motorcycle boots and his hair combed just right with a few strands on his forehead, this young **Marlon Brando** formed the school's first car club. The leather jacketed "Road Kings" had an affiliate club, the "Road Queens", similarly garbed, as companions for parties, dances and movies. **Fonzie** would have fit right in.

He was proud of being a member of an ancient tribe that had toughed it out throughout the centuries. However, if there were those who wanted to make trouble about who he was, he was ready. Though tough on the outside, he was naturally charitable and philanthropic, working with disadvantaged youths and helping those in need. When older and in the business world (earning a BS in Metallurgy, a BA in Business Administration and a DC in Chiropractic) he did become more tempered, however he still did things "his way", but more often with a smile and subtlety.



But, back to the ceremony on the deck. So now this popular and prosperous businessman, President of the Kiwanis, a civic leader with a good sense of humor and a reputation for being a bit of a stiff neck in business negotiations was getting married.

The cowboy couple stepped forward, the judge said a few preliminary words and then, Ivan made a silent statement. With a bit of theatrical flourish, he removed his black cowboy hat to reveal a white satin kippah which gleamed in the bright California sun. He looked over his shoulder at me and smiled. Heart and soul.

Around the Rabbi's Tisch Concludes Season

by Stan Schroeder

Our weekly educational series at the Vorspan home has concluded its 5774 season. For many years **Rabbi Vorspan** has started the Thursday after Yom Kippur and ended the Thursday before Shavuot. The format includes the study of Jewish text and a discussion of current events as they relate to the Jewish people and Jewish values. We sit around the dining room table *tisch* (as



our President **Jordan Pistol** is fond of saying "*on the Rebbetzin's chairs*") and, in the Jewish tradition, express our varying views on the subjects in an informal environment. Those of us who regularly attend enrich our lives and enjoy sharing opinions.

Starting next season the *tisch* schedule will change as part of our reduced budget structure. I encourage members to look for the new schedule starting in October and see how enjoyable learning can be. Thanks to **Rabbi and Bonnie** for their hospitality to our congregation.

Biography of the Month: Mark Fields

by Stan Schroeder

My bio last month of **Hedy Lamarr** came from an email I received. This last month I received an email from our member **Sheilah Hart** that I am sharing for this month. I edited it to include more up-to-date information.



Mark Fields, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Ford Motor Company since December of 2012, will be making history July 1 when he succeeds **Alan Mulally** as Ford Chief Executive Officer. He will become one of the highest-ranking Jewish executives in the global automotive business. Fields will be the first Jewish person to, in effect, run the 111-year-old international automaker with 164,000 employees.

A Jew running Ford, the company founded by **Henry Ford**, one of the most notorious anti-Semites in American history? Veteran observers of the automotive scene thought it could never happen. But it's a new era at Ford, an era that actually started when the elder Ford's grandson, **Henry Ford II**, took over the company in the 1940s and launched his version of affirmative action.

Ford II, a friend of philanthropist **Max Fisher** and other Jewish leaders and frequent contributor to the old United Jewish Appeal, hired Jewish, African American and other minority employees, and installed minority dealers and suppliers. What's even more important, many of the minority employees rose to higher ranks within Ford than did those at GM and Chrysler.

Mark Fields was born January 24, 1961 in Brooklyn into a Romanian/Russian Jewish family. The family name was originally **Finkelman**. His father **Gerald** was a purchasing manager and avid golfer who died in 2005. His mother **Elinor** lives in Wyckoff, New Jersey. Mark and his two older brothers grew up in Paramus, New Jersey. He had his bar mitzvah at Conservative Congregation Beth Tikvah there. After graduation from Paramus High School, he earned a BA in Economics at Rutgers and a MBA at Harvard. In between, he worked for six years at IBM in marketing and sales.

Fields has been an employee at Ford for 25 years, holding a variety of positions. In 1989, Ford was seeking potential executives with product sales and marketing experience as part of a new marketing leadership program. His first job was as a marketing manager for the Thunderbird car line. "I loved cars, so Ford was a perfect fit for me," reflected Fields, who had a collection of 100 mini cars as a youngster.

By corporate standards, Fields rose pretty quickly through the Ford ranks. He held managerial positions at offices in California, Dearborn, and Detroit.

In 1996, he became assistant managing director of Ford Argentina in Buenos Aires (where only about 1/2 percent of the population is Jewish), then managing director a year later when his predecessor took ill. In two years there, he helped turn the affiliate around from a \$100 million loss to a \$2 million profit.

After that, it was off to Hiroshima, Japan, for several posts at Mazda, leading up to executive vice president and assistant to the president. Only a few weeks later, fate intervened again when the president retired unexpectedly because of ill health — and Field moved right to the top as president and CEO. Ford owned controlling interest of Mazda at the time. "You must be joking," was the response from Fields' wife, Jane, whom he had met in Atlanta, Ga., during his IBM days, when he told her of the promotion. "She just laughed and refused to believe me," Fields mused. "It was so soon after my previous promotion. But she quickly got used to it."

Fields had to overcome several obstacles as the "brash young foreign" Mazda chief, including the "element of surprise when they found out I was Jewish," he recalls. "There are all kinds of religions there ... but there certainly are no Jews in Japan. "But I never experienced any anti-Semitism there, and I have never encountered one iota of discrimination as a Jew during my career at Ford," he said. His mother used to send him packages of matzah and Chanukah candles around the world to remind him to keep up his Jewishness.

Fields led Mazda through a period of significant transformation, reducing losses through restructuring and a series of cost-cutting measures. That performance earned his promotion to executive vice president of Ford of Europe and CEO of the company's Premier Automotive Group, handling all activities of the company's premium vehicle business, including cars like Jaguar and Aston Martin.

Bill Ford Jr. then summoned him from Europe to take over the Americas organization during the trying times beginning in 2005. This led to his promotion in 2012 to COO responsible for everything in Ford's worldwide business operations from Product Development, Manufacturing, and Labor Affairs, to Purchasing, Quality, Environment and Safety Engineering, and Information and Technology.

May Mark Fields enjoy continued success, and lead to more opportunities for Jewish auto executives.

Jewish World Watch Walk to End Genocide

by Rae Wazana

Our Congregation participated in the **Jewish World Watch Walk to End Genocide** in the **Conejo Valley** on May 4th. We joined with about 300 other people from synagogues, churches, schools, and other organizations to make our voices heard. The theme for this year is **we will help one life at a time**. Our Shir Ami Walk Team was the largest we've ever had, and we raised \$1,183 to support Jewish World Watch's many projects in Chad, Sudan, and the Congo. Our Team this year consisted of Co-Captains **Fiona Taylor** and **Rae Wazana**, **Ellie and Jerry Zatz**, **Laura Simon**, **Stan Schroeder**, **Mike Easley**,

Jordan Pistol, **Rosie Pistol-Boesch**, **Stan Goodman**, **Claire and Lew Silverman**, **Pat and Jerry Michaelson**, **Charlene Kazel**, **Debbie Sipos**, Debbie's friend, **Jean**, three of **Debbie's sons**, and their wonderful German Shepherd. **Judy Eisikowitz** was a virtual walker with our Team. The Conejo Valley Walk participants raised almost \$20,000 this year from registration fees, donations, Mitzvah Day Tzedakah cans, and various sponsorships.

As we walked, we knew that our funds raised would go towards such things as:

Providing solar cookers for refugee families in Chad

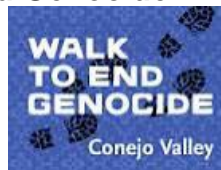
Supplying livestock to women to begin their own businesses

Paying for uniforms that enable preschoolers to attend school for an entire year

Supporting the Chambucha Rape and Crisis Center in Congo

Many other educational and advocacy projects which JWW supports.

Thank you to **Rabbi and Bonnie** and our Congregation for your generosity in supporting Jewish World Watch and in helping us to not stand idly by for these past ten years.



Congregation Shir Ami Team



Most of Team under canopy



Co-captains Fiona Taylor and Rae Wazana



My Upcoming Trip to Israel

by Stan Schroeder



As many of my readers know, I am passionate about our Jewish State of Israel and visit almost every year. I have signed up for a trip organized by **Stephen S. Wise Temple** in Los Angeles. It is located across the street from American Jewish University and has an extensive Israel program and many supporters. The group of more than 80 leaves June 15 and returns June 26.

I had considered other organizations offering tours this year, but wasn't satisfied for various reasons. So I searched on the internet and was attracted to several places and activities on the itinerary. There will be two tracks, the first one is for families and those who haven't been to Israel before. The second is for adults who have been to Israel and are seeking a different experience.

Among the things I found exciting are:

Visit Herzliyah's **Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy, and Strategy**, to learn about Israel's diplomatic and strategic challenges

Continue to Atlit, site of the **pre-state British Detention Camp for "illegal" Jewish immigrants** which tells the story of the struggle of Jews fleeing Europe (*Ma'apilim*), trying to reach British controlled Palestine, only to be incarcerated by the British in camps similar in appearance to the Nazi camps of Europe.

Visit the **Mahmood Mosque** with members of Haifa's Ahmadiyya Muslim community.

Visit a **Druze village** for a dialogue with communal leaders on the complex identity challenges that they face as Arab Druze within Israeli and Arab society.

Explore the beautifully restored **19th century Rosh Pina village** and learn about the early Zionist Halutzim pioneers who dreamt and built there

Visit and sing at the **Kinneret Cemetery** where many early Zionist pioneers are buried. We'll focus on the early Zionist poet **Rachel Blaustein** and Israel's songwriter laureate **Naomi Shemer**.

Session at the hotel with **Khaled Abu Toameh**, Arab Affairs Correspondent for the Jerusalem Post: *Can Israel and the Palestinian Authority Make Peace?*

Guided drive around the **Jerusalem seam line** including Jewish and Arab housing in the contested Shimon HaTzadik/Sheik Jarrah neighborhood, Har Homah and outlook into Bethlehem. Meet local residents and hear a variety of perspectives about coexistence in Jerusalem.

Depart to the slopes of **Mt. Scopus** to participate in an **archeological salvage dig**, sifting through soil and artifacts from the Temple Mount.

Meet students at the **Megemeria School of Jewelry** and see how the Yvel Jewelry Company is helping to train Ethiopian Jewish Immigrants and integrate them into the work force.

Visit **Ben Gurion University of the Negev** for a VIP tour. Meet some of Israel's top researchers and professors and learn about Israel's pre-eminent place in the fields of bio medical research and environmental innovation. Consider how David Ben Gurion's vision of making the desert bloom is being updated and applied

Meet young pioneering residents of an **Ayalim student village**. The Ayalim Association goal is to strengthen existing communities and social involvement in the Negev and Galilee, to revive and renew the Zionist idea in the 21st century through the establishment of student and entrepreneur villages.

In addition, other activities include:

Visit to Yad Vashem and Mount Herzl Cemetery.

Tour Western Wall tunnels.

Tower of David spectacular Sound and Light Show

Shabbat at Hebrew Union College

Independence Hall: the birth of the State of Israel with a dramatic reenactment where **David Ben Gurion** declared the establishment of the State of Israel in May 1948.

Most important, I will have time to appreciate Israelis, themselves, who personify the Jewish State I love and for which we are all grateful for. I will see the young IDF soldiers who serve to protect the State. I will be inspired again by the spirit and vitality of all kinds of Israelis: young and old, observant and secular, Jewish and Arab, all religions, colors, and ethnicities.

I will have much to share when I return.

Shavuot Starts Tuesday Evening, June 3

by Stan Schroeder

The holiday of **Shavuot**, celebrating the concluding **festival of the grain harvest** in Israel and **the giving of the Torah to the Israelite nation at**



Mount Sinai, occurs exactly 50 days after the start of Passover. We count the days starting the second night of Passover for 49 days. This counting of the *omer* is accomplished by saying a prayer "blessed is God who commanded us to perform this counting" in the Torah (Leviticus 23:15). An *omer* is a dry measure for grain equal to one tenth of an *ephah* (approximately one bushel). In the days of the Temple an *omer* of barley was cut down and brought to the Temple on the second day of Passover as an offering. The word *shavuot* means weeks, thus the name of the holiday is derived from the seven weeks of counting.

In the days of the Temple an offering of two loaves of bread from the wheat harvest was made on Shavuot. It was also the first day on which Israelites brought **first fruits (*bikkurim*)** to the Temple. The *bikkurim* were brought from the seven species in the land of Israel praised in Deuteronomy 8:8:

wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates.

Jewish farmers would tie a reed around the first ripening fruits from each of these species in their fields. At the time of harvest, the fruits identified by the reed would be cut and placed in baskets woven of gold and silver. The baskets would then be loaded on oxen whose horns were gilded and laced with garlands of flowers, and who were led in a grand procession to Jerusalem. As the farmer and his entourage passed through cities and towns, they would be accompanied by music and parades.



On Shavuot we read the **Book of Ruth**. Among the reasons for this reading:

King David, Ruth's descendant, was born and died on Shavuot (Talmud)

The events of Book of Ruth occur at harvest time

Ruth was a convert, and all Jews also entered the covenant on Shavuot, when the Torah was given.

There is a tradition among Ashkenazi Jews of eating dairy foods such as cheesecake, cheese blintzes, and cheese kreplach on Shavuot. It is also customary to study Torah all night on Erev Shavuot. **Temple Ramat Zion has invited our congregation to their study session Tuesday, June 3, from 8 pm to 11 pm. Rabbi Vorspan** will be one of the teachers. Dairy refreshments will be served.



Ruth in Boaz' field

Congregation Shir Ami Tribute Cards

Thanks to **Phyllis Schroeder** for sending your cards celebrating *simchas* and conveying your get-well and condolence messages.



She is creative with individualized, artistic cards that include a message and color graphics. Call her at (818) 718-7466. Minimum donation of \$5 per card is appreciated.

Mailbox

Dear Friends,

On behalf of all the women in our Family Violence Project domestic violence shelters, I would like to thank you very much for the generous gift cards you donated to our program in honor of Mother's Day. You succeeded, yet again, in making the day a very special one for our wonderful residents. They were all overwhelmed with the "kindness of strangers" and they have a wonderful time shopping for something special for themselves.

I'd also like to thank you for the delicious chocolates as well. They were devoured quickly and everyone thought that was an extra special treat, so we are deeply grateful and appreciative for all your gifts.

We are always appreciative of your ongoing support of our program. Thank you to all and the staff joins in thanking you with wishes for a healthy and happy summer.

Warmly,
Kitty Glass, Community Outreach Coordinator



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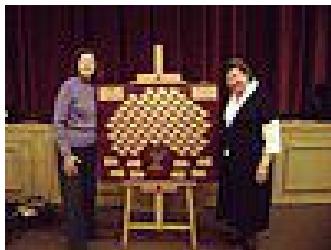

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TREE OF LIFE

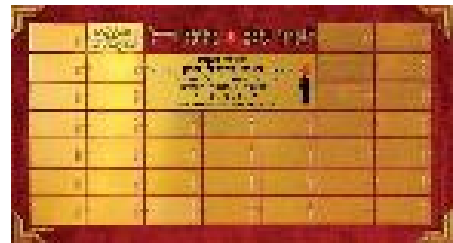


This beautiful Tree of Life, with leaves priced at \$100 and rocks at \$250 (one remaining), makes a perfect way to celebrate family occasions and support Congregation Shir Ami.

The Tree is on a rosewood background and consists of gold-colored leaves and rocks. It is displayed at all Congregation Shir Ami services and events.

For more information or to place an order, call Sherry Dollins at (818) 886-7590.

Congregation Shir Ami Memorial Board



If you would like to honor the memory of your loved ones by dedicating plaques on our new Memorial Board, please call Clara Rosenbluth at (818) 348-1498 so she may mail you an order form. The cost of each plaque is \$36.

Each plaque may contain up to three lines of engraving: English name, Hebrew name, and the years of birth and death. Both of our Memorial Boards are displayed at all our services.

Shop at Ralphs - Earn Money for Shir Ami

by Maralyn Soifer

Here is an easy way to earn money for our Temple. We

are now officially a **Ralphs' community agency**. All you have to do is follow these simple instructions to help earn money for Congregation Shir Ami.



1. If you don't have a Ralphs' rewards card already, go to the store or go to website **www.ralphs.com** and select **Order a Ralphs reward card**.
2. Once you have your card, go to the website: **www.ralphs.com** and select **Create an account**
3. If you have an account, your email address is your account ID. If you forgot your password, select **Forgot your password?** and you will receive an email with instructions to reset it. Follow the instructions to enter your email address and create a new password.
4. If you already have a Ralphs' reward card and an account, you will see Account Summary when you login. You can change to our Temple by clicking on **Edit** within **Community Rewards**.

You can do a search for Congregation Shir Ami by putting in the number **92785**. Our congregation will pop up and click on the button next to the name. Click on the button that saves the changes.

5. You should also check the bottom of your receipt when you shop. It should say "**At your request, Ralph's is donating to CONGREGATION SHIR AMI**".
6. If all else fails, call me in the evening at (818) 704-0306. I'll be happy to walk you through it.
7. Start Shopping!

Make sure that the clerk swipes your card each time you shop. Verify that your receipt shows a contribution to Congregation Shir Ami at the bottom.

Important Note: All participants must confirm their selection annually starting in September. On or after September 1, sign into your account and reconfirm Community Rewards selection.

Congregation Shir Ami
P.O. Box 6353
Woodland Hills, CA 91365



Let's go for a walk around Lake Balboa!

Join Congregation Shir Ami's Social Action Committee on **Sunday, June 1st at 9:00 am.**
 Registration required starting at 8:30 am

All Proceeds go to Association of Jewish Educators Scholarship Fund

Minimum donation: \$10 per person, NO MAXIMUM! Following the walk, a brunch will be provided by our Social Action Committee near the lake. Please bring vegetarian salad, side dish, or dessert to share, and remember to wear your Mitzvah Patrol shirt. Pets are welcome.



Also please bring non-perishable and non-breakable food for SOVA.

Sit-down activities are available for those who don't walk. Call **Ellie Zatz** at (818) 883-9924 or **Paullette Pistol** at (818) 389-1892. Sign up by returning this tear-off with your check for \$10 (or more) per person to Congregation Shir Ami, P.O. Box 6353, Woodland Hills, CA 91365. Make check payable to **Congregation Shir Ami.**

Total Donation \$ _____

Walker Names: Brunch (y/n)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Donation Amount: \$10 [] \$18 [] \$36 []
 \$72 [] Other []

Phone no. _____

Number of participants _____

I will bring: Salad [] Dessert [] Side dish []

Congregation Shir Ami
Invites you to a

"FREE" MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION EVENT

Sunday, June 29 - 3:00 PM

*Northridge Mobile Home Park Rec Room
19120 Nordhoff St. (East of Tampa) Northridge*



Please join us, at this members' only program, for a FREE afternoon of Jewish jokes and Ice Cream. We want all of our members to come and have a good time for FREE. (Yes, it's FREE.) Please bring your favorite joke and enjoy with us.

*To attend, please R.S.V.P. by June 22 to:
Ken Bereny at (818) 434-0688 or email bereny@roadrunner.com*