



Shir Notes

The Official Newsletter of Congregation Shir Ami Volume 13, Number 2, February-March 2015
Affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

Events of the Month

Shabbat services at New Community Jewish High School

Saturday, February 7 - 10:15 am
Birthday Shabbat
Lunch & Learn - *Creating a Just
Pluralistic Society in Israel*
Saturday, February 21 - 10:30 am
Anniversary Shabbat
Saturday, March 14 - 10:30 am
Birthday Shabbat
Saturday, March 28 - 10:30 am
Anniversary Shabbat

Early Bird Movie & Dinner Sunday, February 15 2:30 pm Northridge Mobile Home Park

The movie will be *Lies My Father
Told Me* followed by pizza dinner.
We have a special treat for Shir
Ami in this heart warming film. See
article on page 2 and flyer.

Around the Rabbi's Tisch Thursdays, Feb. 12, 19, 26, March 5 and 12 7:30 pm at the Vorspans'

We start the second half of our
5775 season of Rabbi's popular
weekly discussion around his dining
room table. Call Rabbi at (818)
888-9817 or see flyer.

Torah and Shabbat Study Saturdays, February 14, March 21 - 10:30 am Northridge Mobile Home Park

Stan Schroeder leads a monthly
study and discussion session on a
Saturday we don't have a service.
See flyer for more details.

Visit our website:
www.shirami.com



Rabbi's Column

When I was a kid, I wanted to stop time. Literally. My elementary school gym coach had a stop watch. He could time races. I thought I want to do that.

I saved up my money, and for \$10 I bought a beautiful silver stop watch. It had a big button along the side which controlled the process. I timed everything. Signals on the corner; the time it took my sister to brush her teeth; how long I could hold my breath.

And I learned that I could control time! When I pushed stop, time stood still. Until one day I decided I wanted to figure out how it worked. I took the watch apart. And after being impressed with all the components, I learned I couldn't put it back together again.

This was about a week after I bought it. I went into a period of mourning that lasted the morning, and then I went on to other mysteries to explore.

A couple of months ago I bought a Fitbit. I wear it and it counts how many steps I take. The goal is 10,000. One day I couldn't find the clasp that kept it on my wrist, so I put it in my pocket until I could fix it.

That evening I discovered that it kept track of my steps anyway!

I began to think. If it kept track while sitting in my pocket, could it keep track just sitting in my hand? The answer was no, but then I experimented. Could it add steps even if I didn't step? Could I pretend to step, but just move my arm in a specific motion. Could it be deceived?

The answer was yes. I then got to remembering my stop watch and the similarities. I could control time with a slight movement of my thumb. And I could control my exercise with a slight movement of my wrist.

But of course, all I was really doing was fooling myself. I was no longer getting the benefit of either the watch or the Fitbit. I was cheating but hurting only myself.

Then I began to realize that life, and especially our Jewish lives, could be like this.

But this is what I'm thinking now. I've done all the work on this article so far. I came up with the idea. I developed it in an interesting way. The Midrash is mine.

What if I now throw the ball onto your court? You, the readers.

How is life like a Fitbit? Or any exercise equipment that can be cheated. Email me your creative responses (vorspan2@att.net), and I'll send them out in the next issue of the *Shir Notes*. There may even be a prize!

Rabbi David Vorspan



President's Report

Shalom,

Now that we have our new Board (with real "new" members), we are ready to charge into the year.



For those of you who haven't been attending our Saturday Shabbat services (and you know who you are), we once again have a SOVA barrel. So, when you come to services, remember our motto "**Shabbat Ain't Ovah 'til You've Given to SOVA.**"

In February and March we are pushing forward with our programs and activities. In February we are having a Special Shabbat service with a Kiddush lunch sponsored by our member **Gloria Weinstein**. The lunch will be preceded by a presentation by her daughter and son-in-law, **Janet and Mark Abelson** entitled "*Creating a Just Pluralistic Society in Israel.*" Also in February, we will be having our "Early Bird Dinner and a Movie", *Lies My Father Told Me*.

We will also be starting our second semester of our adult education program, "Around the Rabbi's Tisch (and on the Rebbitzen's Chairs).

Our Ways and Means Committee is exploring another fund raising drive. The last drive resulted in our beautiful *parochet*. Our next drive will hopefully result in another important addition to our services. Keep tuned!

As Shir Ami continues to provide religious services, programs and activities for our members, we have had to encounter some of the realities and limitations of what we can do. Our Board and our Committees have been working like "*avadim l'pharaoh b'mitzrayim*" for the past 15 years. They have been coming early to Shabbat services to set up our Kiddush. They have been coming early to our program activities. They not only do this to set up, but they stay late to clean up. They do the shopping for our Kiddush and other activities when necessary.

We are grateful for their hard work and it is high time we gave them some help. We are in desperate need of volunteers. You can volunteer by joining one of our committees, but there are other ways. You can come early to help set up, stay late to help clean up, do some shopping and other tasks that may be necessary. If you feel you are up to the task, please contact me by telephone or email and I can put you in touch with the right people.

As always, 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

Save the Date: Brunch and Learn April 19

We are pleased to announce our annual **Brunch and Learn Sunday**, April 19 will feature **Rick Richman**, an acclaimed author and blogger on Judaism and Israel. His articles have appeared in *American Thinker*, *Commentary*, the *Jewish Journal*, the *Jewish Press*, and the *New York Sun*. His blog is www.JewishCurrentIssues.com.



Rick is a graduate of Harvard College and NYU Law School. He is an active member of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles and has spoken there at various occasions. He is a featured speaker in the movie *Body and Soul: The State of the Jewish Nation*, a new film that sets the record straight about the undeniable historical connection between the Jewish People and the Land of Israel.

You won't want to miss this exciting program that will occur the week of Israel's 67th Independence Day.

Early Bird Movie and Dinner February 15 *Lies My Father Told Me*

Our annual Early Bird movie Sunday, February 15 is a special treat. It isn't every day we can see a feature movie made by and about a relative of one of our members. It is the story of the childhood of one of **Ellie Zatz's** father's cousins (**Ted Allan**) in Montreal in the 1920s. The story was written by Ted in 1949 and the film released in 1975, receiving the Golden Globe award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1976. It tells of the relationship of six-year-old Ted (called David in the movie) and his *zayde*, an orthodox Jewish junk peddler who takes Ted with him on his horse drawn cart. Come join Ellie watching this heart warming story.



Following the movie we will enjoy a pizza and salad early dinner, all for \$10 per person. See the flyer with this Shir Notes for more information or to make your reservation now.



DONATIONS

Congregation Shir Ami wishes to acknowledge the following donations:

Yahrzeits

- Marcie and Steve Spetner for Sara Lurie
- Fay and Ed Schneier
- Lonny and Nancy Scharf for Sally Bricker, Rebecca Haas, Gabriel Scharf, and Lillian Scharf
- Doris Beck
- Seymour Gordon for Joseph Gordon
- Ed and Laurie Orens for David Orens
- Linda and Harvey Tapper for parents'
- Fran Friedman for Rebecca Miller
- Jack Kutcher for Louis Kutcher
- Esther Perez for Samantha Perez and Jacob Meyer Paparo
- Clara and Stan Rosenbluth for Sadie Rosenbluth
- Lorraine and Dan Simansky for Helen Anne Sitzer, Morris Simansky, and Helen Simansky
- Paula and Lou Loomis for Roy Loomis
- Rebecca and Gary Finlay for Faridah B. Morales
- Ozzie Strassner for Mabel Mann and Max Perlmutter

Birthdays

- Jerry Gort
- Fiona Taylor
- Lonny Scharf
- Esther Perez
- Nancy Scharf
- Lorraine Simansky

Anniversaries

- Gale and Jay Cohen

Shabbat Service/Lunch and Learn February 7

We will have a kiddush lunch sponsored by **Gloria Weinstein** after her daughter and son-in-law, **Janet and Mark Abelson's** presentation: ***Creating a Just Pluralistic Society in Israel***. See flyer with this *Shir Notes*.

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.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

- Harvey Tapper.....12/2
(listed incorrectly as Paul Soifer last month).
- Nancy Scharf..... 2/1
- Carol Koransky..... 2/2
- Michael Easley..... 2/5
- Esther Perez..... 2/7
- Bette Delman..... 2/9
- Lorraine Simansky..... 2/10
- Sherry Dollins..... 2/12
- Sima Schuster..... 2/13
- Frances Black..... 2/21
- Carol Cramer..... 3/5
- Neil Hattem..... 3/9
- Seymour Potell..... 3/15
- Jerry Michaelson..... 3/19
- Stephen Schuster..... 3/26

Anniversaries

- Paula and Lou Loomis..... 3/3 42nd
- Rae and Armand Wazana..... 3/11 48th
- Fran and Sam Kobulnick..... 3/23 46th

Additions and corrections to our roster:

New members:

Denise Feldman
4925 Odessa Ave.
Encino, CA 91316
Phone: (818) 789-5865
Email: denise_feldman@yahoo.com



Allan and Elaine Melnick
18231 Karen Dr.
Tarzana, CA 91356
Phone: (818) 342-8774
Email: Allan2elaine@aol.com

Corrected phone number:
Ethel Granik
Phone: (818) 734-3810

Corrected email:
Linda Tapper
Email: Ltapper2@yahoo.com

Social Action Committee



A special thank you to **Rabbi and Bonnie Vorspan**, the Social Action Committee, Congregation Shir Ami, family and friends for a hugely successful **Linen Shabbat** on January 17. Our guest speaker, **Ms. Kitty Glass**, Outreach Coordinator of JFS Family Service Family Violence Project, had recently been invited to speak to students at NCJHS. Everyone was pleasantly surprised when six of the students, their teacher, and one of their parents joined us for our Shabbat Service. Needless to say, all those who attended this service were thrilled with the students who attended.

I have since heard that the students, their teacher, and the student's father were impressed with our congregation and the mitzvah projects we do. I think meeting the students was a special bonus, and collecting two SUVs full of linens was appreciated. Special thanks to **Sima Schuster** for filling up her SUV also and delivering them to the JFS Family Violence Office. All the linens reached the residents in the shelters in time for cooler weather. On behalf of the women and children who received and are using all the great linens you donated, we thank you for being so caring and generous.

We will start our SOVA Passover Drive in March. You can put your *chametz* and other non-perishable and non-breakable items into the SOVA barrel at all services and events. As soon as the 5 lb. packages of 2015 Passover Matzos appear in the stores, we will again be collecting them for the families in our community who will receive them from SOVA. We have again asked several of our members to be available for collecting bulk donations. Contact a member of our Committee to make arrangements for your bulk donations drop off or pick up. Our goal is to collect at least 250 five lb packages of Kosher for Passover 2015 matzah. I spoke to store managers in the area, and the matzah should be arriving soon. SOVA also accepts drop off of items at their warehouse, and will accept your personal monetary donations as well.



We will participate at the annual **Jewish World Watch Walk to End Genocide** in the Conejo Valley April 12, See article on page 7. We are starting to collect \$10 Target gift cards for the women and children in domestic violence shelters for Mother's Day.



Please send them to Fran or give to a Committee member at services or events.

Save the date **Sunday, June 7** for our **Annual Walk Around Lake Balboa**. Thank you in advance for your emotional, physical, and financial help to make our community mitzvah projects so successful. We could not do this without your help. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (818) 345-2405.

Shalom,
Fran Kobulnick, Social Action Vice President

Operation Gratitude and Project MOT

by Charlene Kazel



Aquarias, the Water Bearer, really came through like a champ because we really did and do need the rain.

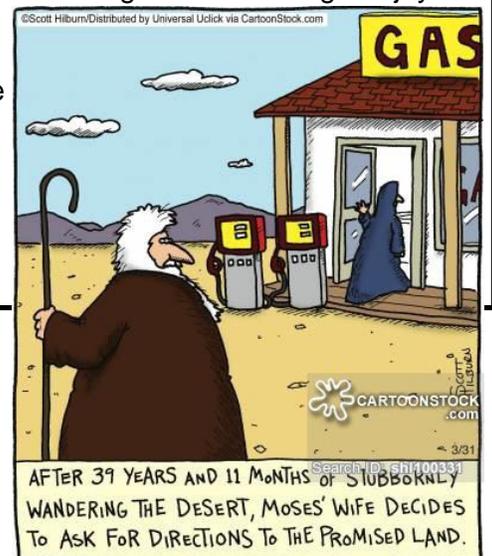
But we are champions, too, in our efforts for **Operation Gratitude and Project MOT**. As promised, here are our contributions for the year 2014:

	Books	Cards/Letters	Magazines	Gifts
Oper Grat	801	652	517	
Ptject MOT	84	268		193

Now its time, as February goes into March and winter turns into spring to celebrate these holidays In February, there's Tu B'Shevat, our New year of the Trees. Flag Day, President's Day, Chinese New Year, even a day for ground hogs. (Do we even have any in California?)

In this month of the trees we plant seeds of good deeds. We spread life through the earth and to the soul. Before you know it we will reach our goals of sending the joys of gifts and love.

Call me at (818) 701-7679 to arrange for giving books or writing cards to our deserving service men and women deployed overseas.



Three Journeys

by Owen Delman

This is a tale of three journeys which became intertwined through time and circumstance.

Journey number 1: "Coming of Age"

The thirteen year old boy sat composed, as he usually seemed, next to the Rabbi while the Cantor's tenor voice filled the smallish temple space. We smiled along with the 200 other guests as we watched Adam await his time at the *bimah*. He was the eldest child of a friend of ours, and our families had broken the Yom Kippur fast together over the past ten years. He was, as usual, calm and composed

His journey to this Bar Mitzvah ceremony was one of choice -- not for a party, not for gifts, but because he felt it was an important part of his growing into an adult. He had studied hard and in so doing had followed a family tradition dating back to his grandmother who, many years before, had been the Sisterhood President of this 100 year old congregation in Long Beach. So perhaps one could say Adam's journey started long before his birth -- he was but the latest chapter of an on-going story.

He chanted his Torah portion beautifully, with skill and confidence. And this brings us to the second of our journeys.

Journey number 2: "The Torah"

Before the temples of Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic) were destroyed by the Nazis in 1943, the invaders gathered up the Torahs and sent them to Prague to be stored with many others from across the conquered nations. There the Czech Torahs stayed for twenty years, along with 1564 other Torahs, until long after the end of war, in 1963, when all were moved to the Westminster Synagogue in London. Then, with the creation of the "Memorial Scrolls Trust", over a thousand of these precious articles of faith and history began to be loaned out to synagogues and institutions throughout the world.

Temple Beth El, where Adam would become a Bar Mitzvah, received one of these treasures and it was from this scroll that he read that day. This particular Torah had been created in 1890, so its journey, by the time of the ceremony, had lasted 124 years. Since its arrival at Temple Beth El, forty-three people, aged 13 to 86, had used this special scroll to commemorate becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.



Journey number 3: "The Visit"

This tale shows what I call the magical, sometimes, mystical, circles of life which exist.

During the summer of 2014, Bette and I visited the towns of Czechoslovakia, one of which was Ceske Budejovice. There was no temple, its memorial was not pointed out nor mentioned, and the Jewish population, once numbered in excess of 10,000, had disappeared. Since World War II, there had been no active Jewish community in all of southern Bohemia. The principle sight for visitors these days was the brewery, creating and distributing fine Czech beer.

It wasn't until Adam's Bar Mitzvah ceremony that we became aware of Ceske Budejovicie's Jewish history and amazingly realized that the Torah from which he was reading came from a site we had visited a few months before -- the town with virtually no remaining evidence of Jewish life or history.

The Torah and its survival, like Adam, was just the latest chapter of a long and miraculous journey. Together, Adam and the Ceske Budejovice Torah, which represents all Torahs and all survivors, will continue to write the history of the Jewish people.



Memorial to Synagogue in Ceske Budejovice



Adloyada: Purim parade in Israel
Purim is Thursday, March 5

Biography of the Month: Rabbi Joseph Telushkin

by Stan Schroeder

Joseph Telushkin was born in Brooklyn in 1948, the son of **Solomon** (Shlomo), an accountant, and **Helen** [Schneerson] Telushkin of the Lubavitcher family. He attended Yeshiva of Flatbush, along with his future co-author and lifelong friend **Dennis Prager**. He was ordained at Yeshiva University and he and Dennis attended Columbia University where they authored *Nine Questions People Ask About Judaism* and *Why the Jews?: The Reason for Antisemitism*.



While at University, Telushkin was an active leader of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry. As part of his position, Telushkin visited the Soviet Union where he met with dissidents such as **Andrei Sakharov**. He was eventually listed by the KGB as an anti-Russian agent.

In 1977 Prager became director of Brandeis Bardin Institute in Simi Valley, following its founder **Shlomo Bardin**. Telushkin served as educational director there from 1977 to 1983.

Telushkin lives in New York City with his wife, **Dvorah Menashe Telushkin**, and their four children. Dvorah was personal secretary and assistant to Yiddish author **Isaac Bashevis Singer** for twelve years. She has translated short stories by Singer and other Yiddish writers and performs at storytelling festivals. She wrote about her years with Singer in a memoir, *Master of Dreams* (1998).

Rabbi Telushkin never intended to be a pulpit rabbi. He states, "...my career has always been primarily devoted to writing and lecturing. It seemed to me that there were certain aspects of Judaism that needed to be taught, that weren't getting proper attention. I was particularly interested in the laws of *lashon hara*, and the other Jewish teachings on the ethics of speech, including the principle of *ona'at dvarim*, of not oppressing others with words. The truth is that if you'd listen in at a therapist's office, I think you'd learn that more people are hurt by things that people have said to them than by things that may have been said about them. Things that are said in anger, unfair criticism – there's a whole host of issues."

He is a versatile author, writing everything from mysteries to TV shows to biographies to books on Jewish ethics, wisdom, values, and humor. He is one of the most sought-after lecturers in the Jewish world. However, he has been a part time rabbi at **Synagogue for the Performing Arts** since 1993, conducting a Friday night Shabbat service every other month at American Jewish University, as well as their High Holy Day services.

Rabbi Telushkin maintains an orthodox life style, but bridges the gap to the liberal Jewish world as well as anyone can. He promotes Jewish values and emphasizes Jewish behavior and community.

He is a Senior Associate with CLAL, the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, and is a member of the board of directors of the Jewish Book Council. He has been on the Newsweek's list of the 50 most influential Rabbis in America since 1997.

Among his many works that should be in every household library are:

A Code of Jewish Ethics: Volume 1: You Shall be Holy A Code of Jewish Ethics:

Volume 2: Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People and Its History

The Book of Jewish Values: A Day-by-Day Guide to Ethical Living

Words that Hurt, Words that Heal: How to Use Words Wisely and Well

Jewish Humor: What the Best Jewish Jokes Say About the Jews

Biblical Literacy: The Most Important People, Events, and Ideas of the Hebrew Bible

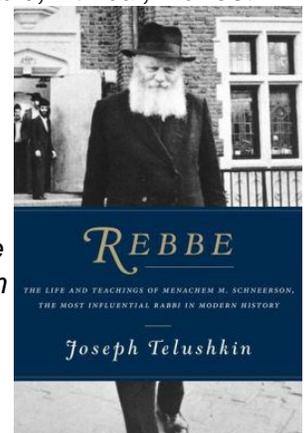
Jewish Wisdom: Ethical, Spiritual, and Historical Lessons from the Great Works and Thinkers

The Ten Commandments of Character: Essential Advice for Living an Honorable, Ethical, Honest Life

The Golden Land: The Story of Jewish Immigration to America

His latest book, published last year, is *Rebbe: The Life and Teachings of Menachem M. Schneerson, the Most Influential Rabbi in Modern History*. It not only tells the story of his life and how

Chabad has changed the Jewish world, it relates how the Rebbe changed Joseph Telushkin's and our lives and continues to "repair the world".



Jewish World Watch Walk to End Genocide 2015

by Fiona Taylor

Jewish World Watch has set the dates for the 2015 Walks: Congregation Shir Ami will be participating again this year, at the **Conejo Valley Walk on Sunday, April 12.**

This will be at the same location as last year, starting at 12 noon from the parking lot area adjacent to Temple Etz Chaim on Janss Road in Thousand Oaks. Our team captains will be **Rae Wazana** and **Fiona Taylor**.

As many, if not all of you know, Shir Ami has been active with the **Walk to End Genocide** since its founding over ten years ago, by **Rabbi Schulweis**, of blessed memory. We urge everyone to join us at the Walk as part of the team or, if anyone is unable to walk, to be a "virtual walker" and support the cause by sending a donation or by sponsoring another walker.

The atrocities in Darfur, South Sudan, and Congo are sadly continuing but, with our help, the women and children are greatly assisted and are able to live with less fear for their lives. The solar cooker project means that women no longer have to venture out of their area to collect wood to build fires, with the ever present risk of being captured, raped or killed. JWW does so much to help these people who have been displaced by the systematic war being perpetrated by the sadistic governments in the region. **We must not stand idly by.**

For online registration: www.walktoendgenocide.org
For more information, contact Rae at (818) 881-5548 or Fiona at (818) 903-6381.

Association of Jewish Educators Movie

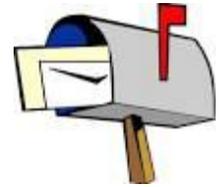
by Maralyn Soifer

I want to thank you for all your support for the **Association of Jewish Educators (AJE)** Scholarship fund. Last year's Walk Around Lake Balboa helped to raise money that will be used to fund a scholarship for a Jewish High School senior. We plan on naming this scholarship in honor of our wonderful Rabbi.



Mailbox

Congregation Shir Ami -
Social Action Committee



Dearest Friends,

On behalf of the women and child victims of domestic violence served at Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles} Family Violence Project, I would like to thank you all so very much for the wonderful "**Linen**



Shabbat" you hosted on Saturday, [January 17]. It was indeed an amazing event and the service and participation were so meaningful to everyone. I was particularly

impressed with the students that attended and their interest in this very important issue and how they might impact our community in a very positive way.

It was so wonderful being with all of you Saturday and I truly meant what I said about feeling as though you're all part of the JFS Family. We are beyond grateful and appreciative for all the years of support you have exhibited and for the time, effort and involvement invested with Family Violence Project. We could simply never do all that we do without the assistance of incredible community members like you.

The staff joins me in thanking you as well and I will look forward to seeing you all very soon. In the meantime, please take care and my best wishes to you and yours for much health and happiness.

Kitty Glass. Community Outreach Coordinator

AJE is having another fund raising event, a movie day. "**Hava Nagila, The Movie**" is an entertaining and educational experience as it traces the religious and cultural roots of the song so often used at special occasions. Using film clips and narrative from an array of sources, the movie is enjoyable and fun to watch. The event is scheduled for Sunday, March 1 at 2:00 - 4:00 pm at the Yeshiva of Los Angeles Girls High School. It is located at 1619 Robertson Blvd, Los Angeles. Coffee and cake will be served. We welcome all Shir Ami members and friends.

Tickets are \$18 per person. Send your check and responses to **Maralyn Soifer**, 7241 Hyannis Drive, West Hills, CA 91307 or call me at (818) 532-2937. I look forward to seeing you there.

January 7 Board Meeting Dvar Torah: *Shemot*

by Stan Schroeder

This week we start the Book of Exodus, the core story of the Jewish people. In Hebrew, the books of the Torah and the weekly portions are named after the first significant word therein. So, both the book and the parsha are named *Shemot*, meaning “names”. The parsha starts by telling us, “These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with **Jacob**...”

The names, starting with Reuben and ending with **Asher**, are then listed. We are then told that **Joseph** dies and eventually a new king (Pharaoh) arose who didn't know about Joseph.

What he did know was that the Israelite people had become numerous and prospered. He told the Egyptian people that they must deal shrewdly with the Israelites, so that they will not be able to fight with our enemies against us in the event of war. The Israelites were forced into hard labor overseen by taskmasters to oppress them. However, the Israelites continued to increase in number. The **Pharaoh** decided to instruct the Hebrew midwives **Shiphrah** and **Puah** to kill all the boys born to Hebrew women and allow the girls to live.

We are then told the classic story of a birth of a boy to a Levite couple. The mother hides him for three months and then places the baby in a basket and puts the basket in the reeds near the Nile. She tells her daughter to watch and see what happens. Wouldn't you know it, but none other than the daughter of the Pharaoh goes down to the river bank to bathe at that time. She spots the basket, has it fetched by her handmaidens, and arranges with the baby's sister to have his mother be his wet nurse. And the rest, as they say, is **his story**. At this point, all the characters in the story are unnamed.

Some commentators say that the fact they are unnamed signifies how dehumanizing life had become for the Israelites. I think it teaches us that any Israelite family at the time could have had this experience. And, moreover, each of us could have a profound impact on what God, later in the parsha, calls “My people”.



Tu B'Shevat (15th of Shevat) is Wednesday, February 4
New Year for Trees



The Pharaoh's daughter names the boy **Moses** (*Moshe*), meaning to draw or pull out of water. Names and naming are an intrinsic part of the Torah. Going back to the Creation story in the Garden of Eden, **Adam** named all the animal species, and established dominion over them. Names have significance and are often symbolic of achievement, such as **Abram** becoming **Abraham** and **Jacob** becoming **Israel**. We name our children after loved ones, attempting to perpetuate their memory and the qualities they embodied.

Our congregation's name is also significant, Shir Ami, Song of My People. As I mentioned, Exodus 5:1 relates that Moses issues the command in the name of the God of Israel to Pharaoh: *Shalach et-ami v'yakogoo lee bamidbar* – Let My people go that they may hold a festival to Me in the wilderness. God is declaring the people of Israel as His people according to His covenant. Each of us must have a covenantal relationship with the Jewish People, so that I, for instance, can say my People.

Shir means song. What is a song? Words set to music, meant to be sung. Later in Exodus we read the Song of the Sea (*Shirat HaYam*) sung by Moses and the Israelites after crossing the Sea of Reeds. The Song of Songs (*Shir HaShirim*), attributed to **King Solomon**, extols the virtues of erotic love and/or a second interpretation of God's love for Israel. Today we also have *Hatikvah* (The Hope) as the national anthem of Israel and symbolic of the relationship of the state of Israel to the Jewish people: in other words Zionism.

We can choose whatever song that gives meaning to our Jewish values. Many of us sing for the better part of two hours at our Contemporary Shabbat service. Our Social Action Committee, with song leader **Claire Silverman**, sings at the West Valley Healthcare Center. We had a delightful program of Jewish song by Cantor **Mike Stein** last October.

Congregation Shir Ami gives us the opportunity to live up to our name.



TREE OF LIFE

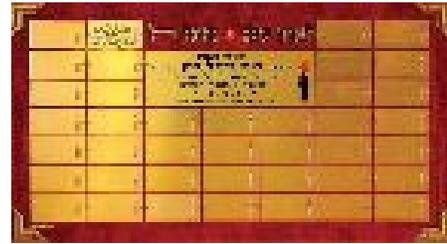


This beautiful Tree of Life, with leaves priced at \$100 and rocks at \$250 (one remaining), makes a perfect way to celebrate family occasions and support Congregation Shir Ami.

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.

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Vice President and Realtor®
c. 818.645.7606 / w. 818.887.4518

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.

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

**Thursdays February 12, 19, and 26,
March 5 and 12, 7:30 - 8:30 pm
“Around the Rabbi’s Tisch” at the Vorspans’**

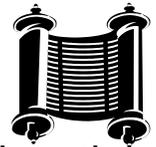


This popular Shir Ami educational series starts its second half of the 5775 season. Come join us for our weekly discussion of Rabbi Vorspan’s selected topics of Jewish interest. We discuss Jewish texts and current events as they relate to Jewish values and our lives as Jews. This is a unique opportunity to learn and share in an informal way around the Vorspans’ dining room table.

The Vorspans’ home is located at 22320 Philipprimm St. in Woodland Hills. Call Rabbi Vorspan at (818) 888-9817 for more information.

**Saturday February 14, March 21, 10:30 am: Torah/
Shabbat Study at Northridge Mobile Home Park**

Stan Schroeder leads a Shabbat study session one Saturday morning a month at 10:30 at the Northridge Mobile Home Park Rec Room, 19120 Nordhoff St. We discuss the weekly Torah portion, the Shabbat prayers that are included in our Contemporary service, and various subjects relevant to Conservative Judaism.



Our fifth session will be February 14; the Torah reading will be parsha *Mishpatim* (Exodus 21:1 - 24:18). Our sixth session will be March 21; the Torah reading will be *Vayikra* (Leviticus 1:1 - 5:26). We are commanded “*la asok b’divrei torah*” (to engage in the study of Torah). Join us and fulfill the mitzvah.

Call Stan at (818) 718-7466 for more information.

Congregation Shir Ami Early Bird Movie and Dinner
Lies My Father Told Me

Sunday February 15th 2:30 pm at
Northridge Mobile Home Park Recreation Room
19120 Nordhoff St., Northridge

Turn left at entrance to park, walk to rec room by pool.

Movie starts at 3:00 followed by pizza and salad dinner...
and still drive home before dark!

This Canadian film, written in 1949 by **Ted Allan** and released in 1975, is about a Jewish boy growing up in Montreal in the 1920's. The story actually tells of Ted Allan's young years with his family, and his loving relationship with his Zaida. The film was an Academy Award nominee for Best Screen Play in 1975 and won the Golden Globe award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1976.

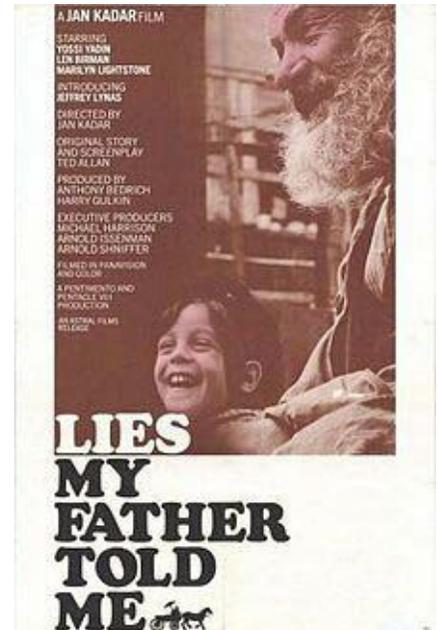
Ted Allan and **Ellie Zatz's** father were first cousins and they shared the same paternal grandfather. So, this is a story about Ellie's great grandfather and his relationship with one of his grandson's Allan. In the movie Allan's name was changed to David. All the others use their real name. Ellie's maiden name was Elias and you will hear the Zaida, being addressed several times as Mr. Elias.

We hope you enjoy this heartwarming story.

Each year our annual Early Bird Movie and dinner has been lots of fun and an opportunity to schmooze with your Shir Ami old and new friends. Come join us for an entertaining afternoon.

\$10 per person (\$18 for sponsor)

For more information call Jerry Zatz at (818) 883-9924.



Clip this form and send with payment by **February 9th** (Early Bird Movie)

Your name: _____ Phone No.: _____

of people attending: _____ Total enclosed: \$ _____

Mail this form and payment to:

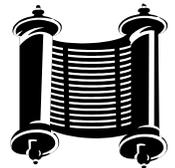
Congregation Shir Ami P.O. Box 6353 Woodland Hills, CA 91365

More Info on Shabbat Service and Lunch and Learn

Saturday, February 7, 10:15 am

New Community Jewish High School

22622 Vanowen St., West Hills



Creating a Just Pluralistic Society in Israel

Saturday, February 7, we will have a kiddush lunch sponsored by our member **Gloria Weinstein** following a presentation by her daughter and son-in-law, **Janet** and **Mark Abelson** entitled *Creating a Just Pluralistic Society in Israel*.

They are active in the **Jewish Community Federation**, a Bay area organization that funds projects in Israel that address Israel's most pressing social needs. Please note service will start at 10:15 instead of 10:30.



Would you like to find out how Israel is changing: now integrating many different peoples into mainstream Israeli life??

Mark and Janet will introduce you to several programs and some of the special people who created and benefited from them. You will learn about:

An organization that employs ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) men as software engineers and also allows them to study Torah for 6 hours a day;

A program associated with the Israel Defense Forces that recruits Haredi men and trains them to be soldiers in a number of non-combat units;

A program that assists Ethiopian Jews (college graduates) to obtain jobs commensurate with their level of education;

A program that has recently been adopted by the President of Israel's office that will foster the employment of large numbers of Arab-Israelis in the largest and most successful companies in Israel and train all of employees, Jews and Muslims and Christians alike, with the skills to enable diverse peoples to work side by side;



A program that trains Arab-Israeli women who have never worked outside of their homes, with skills for entry-level positions in the high tech sector.

They look forward to sharing some amazing personal stories with you.

The presentation will immediately follow the service, followed by the Kiddush lunch. This program is free and open to the community. However, we would appreciate an RSVP to Gloria Weinstein at (818) 222-0500 or email larryandgloria@me.com so that we can prepare food for the lunch.

Congregation Shir Ami Schedule of Shabbat Services 2015
Conducted by Rabbi David Vorspan at
New Community Jewish High School, 22622 Vanowen St., West Hills
Services held in library near the front entrance

Saturday 10:30 am (unless otherwise noted)



January 2015

Saturday, January 3 - Birthday
Consecration of Officers
Saturday, January 17 - Anniversary
Social Action Linen Shabbat

February 2015

Saturday, February 7 10:15 am - Birthday
Presentation by **Janet and Mark Abelson**, son-in-law of **Gloria Weinstein**, *Creating a Just Pluralistic Society in Israel*
Kiddush lunch sponsored by Gloria
Saturday, February 21 - Anniversary

March 2015

Saturday, March 14 - Birthday
Saturday, March 28 - Anniversary

April 2015

Saturday, April 18 - Birthday
Saturday, April 25 - Anniversary

May 2015

Saturday, May 2 - Birthday
Saturday, May 16 - Anniversary

June 2015

Saturday, June 6 - Birthday
Saturday, June 20 - Anniversary



David Vorspan
Rabbi



Jordan Pistol
President

If you would like more information about our congregation please visit our website at www.shirami.com