



Shir Notes

The Official Newsletter of Congregation Shir Ami Volume 13, Number 3, April 2015
Affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

Events of the Month

Shabbat services at New Community Jewish High School

Saturday, April 18 - 10:30 am
Birthday Shabbat
Saturday, April 25 - 10:30 am
Anniversary Shabbat

Torah and Shabbat Study Saturday, April 11, 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.

Jewish World Watch Walk to End Genocide Sunday, April 12 12:00 noon

Join Team Shir Ami at the Walk in the Conejo Valley, Temple Etz Chaim, 1080 E. Janss Rd. in Thousand Oaks, See article on page 4 or call **Rae Wazana** at (818) 881-5549.

See my first article about my recent trip to Israel on page 8.



Visit our website:
www.shirami.com



Rabbi's Column

Did you see the news? There was a study to determine what the "happiest" jobs in America are. What was near the top? Clergy.

As noted in a recent article in *USY Today*. What makes one career path ultimately "happier" than the next is certainly subjective. According to writer and explorer **Dan Buettner**, it's not a huge salary, but rather plenty of social interaction that makes for a satisfied worker. "The happiest people in America socialize about seven hours a day."

Being with other people, it seems, helps to create happiness. This is why the minyan is so important; it brings people together.

If you ask those who come regularly to services what they are getting out of it, I doubt many will answer because they are talking with God. It's more about talking to each other.

Those who come to the "Around the Rabbi's Tisch" every Thursday evening don't do it just to study and learn. High Holy Day services' high level of attendance has many reasons, but bringing together community is near the top.

Am I happy with what I do? Absolutely! The reasons are many, including feelings of helpfulness to others, being there to multiply the joys and divide the sorrows of people who are dear to me, and the thrill that comes with teaching and studying.

But being part of a community is ultimately what brings happiness. And my community, in large measure, are the members of Congregation Shir Ami! I hope you feel the same!

Rabbi David Vorspan

Brunch and Learn Sunday, April 19 11:00 am Northridge Mobile Home Park

Author and blogger **Rick Richman** will speak on the topic: **Israel at the Crossroads**. See article on page 2 and flyer.

Around the Rabbi's Tisch Thurs., April 16, 23, and 30 7:30 pm at the Vorspans'

We continue 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.

Selling Your *Hametz*

As in past years **Rabbi Vorspan** will act as your agent in selling your *hametz* for the Passover holiday. See the flyer/letter with this *Shir Notes*. Sign and complete the document and follow the instructions therein.

Israel Holidays This Month

April 16 (27 Nisan) Yom Hashoah
Holocaust Remembrance Day
April 22 (3 Iyar) Yom Hazikaron
Memorial Day
April 23 (4 Iyar) Yom Haatzma'ut
Independence Day

President's Report

Shalom,

Happy Pesach to the entire Shir Ami Family!



As we approach Pesach, it seems that our Shir Ami Family is getting a little more spread out around the state. Within the next couple of months, **Stan and Clara Rosenbluth** will be leaving us to move north to be closer to children and grandchildren. Stan and Clara have been part of Shir Ami and its predecessors for almost 55 years! Clara is a Past President and she has been our Treasurer for the past 13 years. But beyond that, Stan and Clara have been regular participants in our Saturday Shabbat Services and you can always find them "around the Rabbi's Tisch and on the Rebbitzen's chairs". You name the Shir Ami event . . . and Stan and Clara are there! We are going to miss them and we're all going to have to make sure they keep in touch!

Clara will be turning over her green eyeshade (and the Quickbooks program) to our new Treasurer, **Mike Easley**.

Of course, Pesach is the "main event" for this month. But it's not the only one. First, after celebrating our liberation from slavery in Egypt, we will begin celebrating the wandering in the wilderness by joining **Jewish World Watch** as we "wander" through the Conejo Valley, walking to end genocide. The Shir Ami team is primed and ready and we need every member to sign up to support us. And, if you want to join us, save the date of April 12.

After Pesach, we will be resuming "**Around the Rabbi's Tisch (and on the Rebbitzen's chairs)**."

In the last *Shir Notes*, I told you that our Ways and Means Committee is exploring another fund raising drive for a new addition to our Shabbat services. Well, we're getting close, so keep an eye out for news.

In the meantime, keep that **SOVA** barrel full and make every effort to come to Shabbat Services. You never know what you're going to see!

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

Brunch and Learn with Rick Richman 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*, *Jewish Journal*, *Jewish Press*, and *New York Sun*. His blog is **www.JewishCurrentIssues.com**.



He is working on a book about the trips to America in 1940 by **Chaim Weizmann**, **Vladimir Jabotinsky**, and **David Ben-Gurion**. It is a story that few know, one that should be better known, and one that, in his view, contains a lesson for the crisis that Israel is currently facing (and seems always to be facing).

A bagel and salad brunch will precede Rick's presentation. You won't want to miss this special opportunity to begin celebrating the birthday of our Jewish and democratic State of Israel. See flyer with this issue.

Celebrate Israel's 67th Independence Day

by Stan Schroeder

Our April 23 (*Yom Haatzma'ut*, Israel Independence Day) *Around the Rabbi's Tisch* will feature the film ***Beneath the Helmet: From High School to***



the Home Front which follows the journey of five 18 year old Israeli high school graduates who are drafted into the army to defend their country. Call me at (818) 718-7466 to reserve a place so we know how many will attend. The makers of *Israel Inside* have created another important documentary you won't want to miss.

Save the Date: Shabbat Service, May 2 Farewell Kiddush Lunch for the Rosenbluths

Clara and Stan Rosenbluth have sold their Woodland Hills home of 55 years and are moving to Arroyo Grande in San Luis Obispo County be near their family. We will have a special Kiddush lunch following our Shabbat service Saturday, May 2 to honor this couple who has contributed so much to our Shir Ami family.

See the flyer with this *Shir Notes* and respond accordingly so that we can order food for the occasion.



DONATIONS

Congregation Shir Ami wishes to acknowledge the following donations:

Yahrzeits

Laura and Al Simon for Allegra Haim
 Lynn Cherney for Bert Dones
 Gerry and Sam Hochberg for Tova Hochberg
 Claire and Lew Silverman for Milton Silverman
 Rae and Armand Wazana for Fifyne Henderson and Paul Kroop
 Corinne Geller for Hildegard Geller
 Lori and Ed Orens for Julius Orens
 Rabbi and Bonnie Vorspan for Leonard and Sime Meshu
 Shirley Esko for Harvey Balles
 Betty and Harvey Cohen for Bertha Gottesman
 Esther Perez for Josephine Paparo and Bertha Perez
 Susan and David Lipman
 Clara and Stan Rosenbluth for Helen Wolf
 Ethel Granik for Tena Granik and Sarah Goldberg
 Fran and Sam Kobulnick for Reva Suckman
 Carol and Art Altshiller for S. Martin Altshiller
 Rose Chaplan for Ronye Chaplan
 Fiona Taylor and Stan Goodman for Grace Konrad
 Shirley Shapiro
 Fran Friedman for Charlotte Mintz Frances Kanter, Frank Miller, Saul Joachim, and Mickey Levine
 Jacquie Gordon for Lee Gordon
 Carol and Irwin Koransky for Blanche Koransky
 Ed Schneiier for Harry Harvey
 Irv Strassner for Peggy
 Ann and Seymour Potell for Joseph Potell
 Seymour Gordon for Lee Gordon
 Stan and Phyllis Schroeder for Sally Schroeder
 Ben Bloom for Ethel Bloom
 Ethel Granik for Calman Goldberg
 Gabriel Lichtman for Lillian Lichtman

Birthdays

Rabbi Ahud Sela
 Seymour Potell
 Steve Schuster

Anniversaries

Fran and Sam Kobulnick
 Rae and Armand Wazana

In Honor

Lonnie and Nancy Scharf for Eddie's surprise visit and safe return

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

Sylvia Hockmeyer..... 4/5
 Joan Easley..... 4/5
 Frank Locascio..... 4/5
 Ken Bereny..... 4/10
 Rose Chaplan..... 4/10
 Gabriel Lichtman..... 4/13
 Lee Dollins..... 4/16
 Carol Altshiller..... 4/17
 Marian Perlmutter..... 4/17
 Jerry Zatz..... 4/20
 Pat Michaelson..... 4/22
 Ed Orens..... 4/23
 Marcie Spetner..... 4/25
 Betty Cohen..... 4/28
 Ellie Zatz..... 4/28

Anniversaries

None

Our Condolences

We regret to inform the congregational family of the passing of: **Harry Schackman**, father of member **Ed Schackman**. May God comfort **Ed** and **Roz** and their family during this time of their bereavement.



Corrections to our roster:

New email addresses:



Claire Silverman **claire.savta@gmail.com**
 Lew Silverman **papalew2@gmail.com**
 Lorraine Simansky **lasimansky@gmail.com**

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.

Social Action Committee

The Social Action Committee is hustling about trying to get 5 lb packages of Passover matzos donated to the **SOVA** food pantry! Special thanks to **Sima Schuster**,

Fiona Taylor, and **Claire Silverman** for collecting them and delivering them for us. Our goal is to collect 100 5 lb packages of Passover matzah with your help. Please keep supporting us in this special mitzvah! Call Fran, Fiona, or Sima if you have bulk donations to arrange for drop off or pick ups. You can also drop them off at our services and events.



We have started our Mother's Day collection of **Target \$10 gift cards** we donate to the **women and children in the domestic violence shelters** that we help sponsor. Please mail your cards to me or give them to Committee members at our services or events. We will be giving the gift cards to the women and children in the domestic violence shelters on **Friday, May 8**. Any questions, please contact me.



Shir Ami will again walk in the **JWW Walk to End Genocide** on Sunday, April 12. See article in right hand column.

Our Committee and friends will again be visiting the **West Valley Healthcare Center** to celebrate the Sabbath and have a **Mother's/Father's Day celebration** on Friday, May 8, at 1:00 pm. **Claire Silverman** will lead us in a fun filled sing-along with the residents. There are still some old-time Temple Beth Ami members who live there. We will serve some great refreshments, have one-on-one visits, and plan to give beautiful plants to all the residents. We welcome everyone to join us in this rewarding and meaningful mitzvah. Please contact me for more information.

Flyers have recently been mailed for our annual **Walk Around Lake Balboa** on Sunday, June 7. The flyer is also in this *Shir Notes*. This year we will be walking for **Crohn's disease and colitis**, to raise much needed money for research to finally help find a cure! We will have a speaker and tables set up for **Operation Gratitude** and **Project MOT** card writing, and we have ordered perfect weather. We will again be led by **Rabbi and Bonnie Vorspan**, and follow the Walk with a great brunch that everyone brings to share. **Ellie Zatz** and I are co-chairs, and **Sheilah Hart** is our liaison with our charity benefactors.

Please feel free to contact Sheilah for more information about these illnesses and to contact Ellie or me for more information regarding our Walk. Mail your flyer with your donation check as soon as possible so we can start planning accordingly. This is always one of the best attended events, and we always have a good time! We encourage you to invite family and friends to sign up and attend.

The Committee and our families wish you and your families a special Pesach with seders that create beautiful memories to last for many generations to come.

Shalom,
Fran Kobulnick, Social Action Vice President

Jewish World Watch Walk to End Genocide

by Rae Wazana

Our Walk Team is participating with other synagogues and community organizations in the annual JWW Walk to End Genocide.

This Walk will take place on Sunday, April 12th in the Conejo Valley starting at 12:00 noon at Temple Etz Chaim at Janss Road in Thousand Oaks.



To date, we have a Walk Team of 12-15 people including **Rabbi and Bonnie Vorspan**. The team co-captains are **Fiona Taylor** and me. Shir Ami has been involved with Jewish World Watch since its inception over 10 years ago. We have participated in the Los Angeles, San Fernando Valley and Conejo Valley Walks for the past 7 years.

WHY DO WE WALK? We walk to advocate, educate, and raise awareness about genocides and mass atrocities worldwide, especially in Darfur, South Sudan, and Congo. We walk to honor more than 500,000 survivors who JWW has supported through its many projects throughout the last 10 years. We walk to raise funds to purchase solar cookers for Darfuri women and girls living in the refugee camps in Chad. We walk to help fund community-based organizations in the Congo, such as the Sons of Congo program that trains men to honor their wives and have open conversations about sexual violence and women's empowerment. We walk to honor **Rabbi Schulweis**, of blessed memory, in his creation of Jewish World Watch and his admonition to all of us that **WE MUST NOT STAND IDLY BY**. Our deeds, not just our words, are what count.

Please join us at this Walk, either as a Congregation Shir Ami team member or by sending a donation to Jewish World Watch to sponsor our Shir Ami Walk team. Help us reach our goal of fighting genocide, **ONE LIFE AT A TIME, ONE STEP AT A TIME**. (continued on page 7)

“Take Me Out to the Ball Game”

by Owen Delman



I am a baseball fan -- not a fanatic -- just a fan. I can't recite baseball statistics, quote major league histories of players, the benefits of possible trades or any other minutiae of the sport. However, I do love the game -- its strategies, its dramatic moments -- but especially, I love the game because it reflects America and its constant growth as a nation of opportunity for all. Let's go back to 1955 when I was fourteen and I first began to understand this.

Back then, I would prepare to watch a Chicago Cubs game on television long before the umpire called “Play Ball.” With my baseball cards fanned out in front of me on the floor, I made sure that the roster of the Cubs and the opponent of the day were current and the lineups reflected the latest trades, injuries or manager's whims. Finally, with the Topps baseball cards still smelling strongly of sweet, pink bubblegum, I was ready.

The 1955 season promised to be exciting because the Cubs now had a rookie player unlike all others and I proudly had his card in my lineup. **Ernie Banks** was the first black player for the Cubs and he went on to become a mainstay of the team and eventually be elected into the Hall of Fame.

In the same year, on the east coast, another minority player, also destined for the Hall of Fame, joined the Brooklyn Dodgers. However, this athlete was Jewish -- **Sandy Koufax**. Though there had been Jews in baseball almost from the beginning of the sport, they were still few and far between. In fact, the year before Koufax joined the Dodgers there were only three active Jewish players in the major leagues.

Even though, over the years, there had been some outstanding Jewish competitors in baseball, the general population still referred to both the few current baseball athletes and those of the past as “Jewish players.” (Chalk it up to the times -- not dissimilar to what the black players were going through in those middle 50's years -- even though “that great Negro player”, **Jackie Robinson**, had been tearing up records in the major leagues since 1947).

Generally, though, people didn't even think about Jews in baseball. Even Jews didn't much think about it! Though proud of any Jewish achievement, athletic, political, military, whatever, Jewish mothers didn't go around touting, “I'm so proud, my son wants to grow up to be a baseball player.” It just couldn't compete with the big three -- doctor, lawyer or professor. However, after 1955 and Sandy Koufax, the prospect

of a baseball career didn't seem quite so alien to the Jewish population.

The change really had begun much earlier with the adoption of “American ways” by the first generation of Jewish immigrants. As the documentary “*Jews and Baseball: An American Love Story*” shows so well, the newly arrived saw baseball as the “American game”, and boy, did they want to be American. So they came to the games, learned the rules, cheered for their teams and thus felt and became more American. Their children, the 2nd generation, played this American game in the streets and parks with other Jewish children and a few went on to become professionals. By the time of the 3rd generation, who had moved out of the central city into the suburbs and grew up playing the game with all types of children, professional baseball was viewed with the same hopeful ardor as their playmates.

So, here it is today, sixty years after Ernie Banks joined the Cubs and Koufax joined the Dodgers. Banks, who died this year, left a lasting mark on the Cubs, baseball and America's attitude toward blacks in baseball. What about Jewish baseball? Last year, there were 16 active professional Jewish players in the major leagues and 13 in the AAA (highest level of the minors). There is even a set of baseball cards devoted entirely to Jewish players, past and present. Enough said.

I am writing this while attending Spring Training in Phoenix where, among other teams, I will get my first look at the 2015 Dodgers. This year, the hottest Dodger rookie around is a Jewish player, **Joc Pederson**. Great things are expected from him and he has been featured in many sports columns. And today, sixty years after Koufax became a Dodger, in all those lines of sport talk, I have never seen Joc labeled “the Jewish baseball player.” America's growth continues.



Joc Pederson (2015)



Brad Ausmus (2009 -10)
currently Detroit Tigers manager

Biography of the Month: Leonard Nimoy

by Stan Schroeder

Leonard Simon Nimoy was born March 26, 1931 in the West End of Boston, Mass., the son of Jewish immigrants from Iziaslav, Soviet Union (now Ukraine). His parents left Iziaslav separately—his father first walking over the border into Poland—and reunited in the United States. His mother, **Dora (née Spinner)**, was a homemaker, and his father, **Max Nimoy**, owned a barbershop in the Mattapan section of Boston.



Nimoy began acting at the age of eight in a children's and neighborhood theater. Another experience from that young age became a trademark of his career with *Star Trek*. the split-fingered Vulcan salute. He recalled, "...when I was about eight years old, sitting in the synagogue at high holiday services with my family. There comes a moment in the ceremony when the congregation is blessed by a group of gentlemen known as *Kohanim*, members of the priestly tribe of the Hebrews.



And the blessing is one that we see in the Old and New Testament: 'May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord cause His countenance to shine upon you', and so forth. When they give this blessing, you're told not to look! You're supposed to avert your eyes. I peeked, and I saw these guys with their hands stretched out - there were five or six of them, all with their hands stretched out toward the congregation - in that gesture, that split-fingered gesture. Some time later, I learned that the shape that hand creates is a letter in the Hebrew alphabet, the letter *shin*, which is the first letter in the word *Shaddai*, which is the name of the Almighty. So the suggestion is that they're using a symbol of God's name with their hands as they bless the congregation."

His parents wanted him to attend college and pursue a stable career, or even learn to play the accordion, with which, his father advised Nimoy could always make a living. But his grandfather encouraged him to become an actor. His first major role was at 17 in an amateur production that dealt with the struggles of a Jewish family during the Depression. Nimoy took drama classes at Boston College and sold vacuum cleaners to make extra money. He saved the \$600 he earned and moved to Los Angeles. There he studied acting at the Pasadena Playhouse and got a job at an ice cream parlor on the Sunset Strip. His method-acting role model was **Marlon Brando**. He went back to Boston and graduated from Boston College in 1953. He then enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve where he put on shows for the Armed Forces that he wrote, narrated, and emceed.

Following his discharge with the rank of sergeant at the end of 1955, Nimoy returned to Hollywood to pursue his acting career. He got work playing a "heavy," where his character used street weapons like switchblades and guns, or had to threaten, hit, or kick people. Despite overcoming his Boston accent, because of his lean appearance Nimoy realized that becoming a star was not likely. He played more than 50 small parts in B movies and television series such as *Dragnet* and *Perry Mason*. To support his wife, **Sandra [Zober]** whom in married in 1954, and two children, **Julie** (1955) and **Adam** (1956), he often did other work, such as delivering papers, running a pet shop in Canoga Park, and driving cabs.

Nimoy's featured role on a 1965 episode of *The Lieutenant* earned the attention of producer and writer **Gene Roddenberry**. At the time, Roddenberry was casting for the upcoming sci-fi series *Star Trek*, and thought Nimoy would be ideal for the role of the stoic, logical, and brilliant science officer known as Mr. Spock. *Star Trek* premiered in 1966 and turned both Nimoy and co-star **William Shatner** into legitimate stars. The groundbreaking show garnered a steady following and earned Nimoy three Emmy nominations. Despite the show's cult popularity, *Star Trek* closed down production and was taken off the air by 1969.

The 1977 blockbuster *Star Wars* and a renewed interest in *Star Trek* as a result of rerun syndication convinced Paramount Pictures to stay competitive with **Lucas'** high-grossing creation, giving the green light to a big-screen version of *Star Trek*. After settling some longstanding financial issues with the studio, Nimoy signed on to reprise his role as Mr. Spock.

Star Trek: The Motion Picture, was released in December of 1979. It was a box-office smash, and was nominated for three Oscars. Nimoy returned for 1982's sequel, *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan*, and even directed the 3rd and 4th installments. 1984's *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* and 1986's *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*.

Nimoy's interest in photography began in childhood; for the rest of his life, he owned a camera that he rebuilt at the age of 13. In the 1970s studied photography at UCLA . His work has been exhibited at galleries in Massachusetts.

(continued on page 7)

Biography of the Month: Leonard Nimoy

by Stan Schroeder (continued)

Nimoy had long been active in the Jewish community. He could speak and read Yiddish, his first language. In 1997, he narrated the documentary *A Life Apart: Hasidism in America*, about the various sects of Hasidic Orthodox Jews. In October 2002, Nimoy published *The Shekhina Project*, a photographic study exploring the feminine aspect of God's presence, inspired by Kabbalah.

Nimoy died of complications of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) on February 27, 2015 at the age of 83 in his Bel Air home. He was survived by his second wife, **Susan Bay**; two children; six grandchildren; a great-grandchild; and his elder brother, Melvin. A few days before his death, Nimoy shared some of his poetry on social media website Twitter: "*A life is like a garden. Perfect moments can be had, but not preserved, except in memory. LLAP [Live long and prosper]*".

Editor's Note: I identify with some of Leonard Nimoy's early life. He was born seven months after I was. Like him, I earned money while at University (UCLA) selling vacuum cleaners. I also delivered papers as a teenager and while at UCLA.

Stan Schroeder

Jewish World Watch Walk to End Genocide

by Rae Wazana (continued)

For on-line registration: visit the website www.walktoendgenocide.org Click on the Conejo Valley location to find our Shir Ami Team to donate or to join as a walker. For more information, contact me at (818) 881-5549 or Fiona at (818) 903-6381. Thank you for your help!

Update on Frank Locascio



Frank is improving every day. He had a little set back and returned to the hospital, however, the pain he was experiencing led to a good thing. He had his feeding tube removed and is now taking nourishment the good old fashioned way. He is still not ready for visitors but thanks everyone that sends him cards and calls. He really appreciates your interest and caring! Please continue to send your good wishes to:

Frank Locascio
19242-4 Hamlin St.
Reseda, CA 91335.

They are decorating his walls and making his room more cheery!! If you need any additional information, please don't hesitate to call me at (818) 886-8853 or email efremed@socal.rr.com

Ellen Fremed

Operation Gratitude and Project MOT
by Charlene Kazel



"P" is for Purim and Pesach and prayers for Peace. The holidays are stories about survival and overcoming all obstacles.

And we are the future, the keepers of our tradition. Our future also lies in the hands of those who serve and protect us and our country.

The members of our military need our support and we show our love and say thanks by sending gifts of cards, books, magazines, scarves, videos, etc, Everyone needs a little R & R and we provide it. Thanks for supporting **Operation Gratitude and Project MOT** and showing the world that Congregation Shir Ami cares!

Congregational News



Get well wishes *rafuah schleimah* to:

Frank Locascio recovering from stroke
Gabriel Lichtman recovering from sciatica
Bette Delman recovering from deep vein thrombosis

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

Stan's Trip to Israel with VBS - Rabbi Feinstein

by Stan Schroeder

On Sunday, February 15 I flew with El Al and about half the group of 22 from Valley Beth Shalom, including



Rabbi Ed Feinstein, arriving at Ben Gurion Airport Monday about two in the afternoon. We were met by Keshet, the educational tour organization led by **Yitzhak Sokoloff** who was our tour guide for the trip. Yitzhak, who founded Keshet, is a political analyst in his own right, and lectures widely on issues of strategy and political culture in the Israeli-Palestinian Arab conflict and contemporary Zionism.

We met the rest of the group at the Royal Beach Hotel in Tel Aviv and proceeded to Independence Hall, the site of **Ben Gurion's** announcement May 14, 1948 that the Jews of Palestine declared the independent Jewish State of Israel despite the advice from the U.S. Secretary of State **George Marshall**. At the time the Hall was the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and the former home of **Meir Dizengoff**, the city's first mayor.

Now the Hall is set up to replicate that historic date.

There is a movie that shows the history and then a guide gives a presentation, pointing out the artifacts and creating the environment and glory of the event. At the conclusion everyone joins in the singing of Hatikva, just as they did after Ben Gurion ended his reading (in Hebrew, translated):



Placing our trust in the "Rock of Israel", we affix our signatures to this proclamation at this session of the Provisional Council of State, on the soil of the homeland, in the city of Tel Aviv, on this Sabbath Eve, the 5th day of Iyar, 5708 (May 14, 1948).

It is indeed an emotional experience, and I have had it several times.

We started Tuesday with a talk by **Professor Uzi Arad**, former National Security Advisor to **Prime Minister Netanyahu** and Head of the Israeli National Security Council from 2009 - 2011. The Council wasn't established until 1999 when then Prime Minister Netanyahu created the body under his authority. Its responsibilities were anchored in law in July 2008, partly as a response to the Second Lebanon War.

Arad outlined the various strategic issues that concern Israel and are addressed by the Council. There are

three groups of experts that are working on a national security strategy document concerning the long term viability of Israel, foreign threats, and internal problems. There are ten key issues that are divided among the three groups.

There are indications that Israel's innovation and technology, though ahead of Iran and its Arab neighbors, is declining over time. Israel's universities do not rank among the top 100 in the world and the high school scores are also lower than before. Changes in government policy to solve social problems of increased poverty, shrinking middle class, inequitable resources for minority groups, and high cost of living are recommended.

Professor Arad discussed the security problems of a Palestinian peace agreement and the importance of maintaining control of the Jordan Valley. Other areas of concern are diplomatic problems with Europe and the relationships with the U.S. government and the U.S. Jewish community.

After not solving any of these problems we went by our comfortable bus that could accommodate a group twice our size to Ashkelon. Ashkelon is a city of over 100,000 located about nine miles northeast of Gaza. I hadn't been there since the summer of 1987 when Phyllis and I volunteered on an archaeological dig for five weeks. At that time it was a small town and Israel was enjoying the relatively trouble-free times before the first intifada that started later that year.

Our first stop was an elementary school and we arrived at recess time. Kids were running around and playing and eager to pose for pictures for our group. We heard from the head of the school and two sixth grade girls. They told us of their experience in their safe rooms with their families during the summer rocket fire from Gaza.

After lunch in Sderot, about a mile and half from Gaza, we went to Moshav Netiv HaAsara located 400 meters (four football fields) from Gaza. There we divided into three groups; mine heard from a family of a husband, his pregnant wife, and a four year old son. His wife and son left home for most of the summer.

Last we visited the Kerem Shalom border crossing into Gaza and heard from the young IDF officer in charge of coordinating the 500 trucks daily carrying food into Gaza and the humanitarian civilian traffic.

I will continue sharing my trip in subsequent issues.

TREE OF LIFE

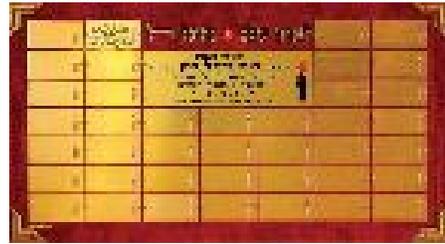


This beautiful Tree of Life, with leaves priced at \$100 and rocks at \$250 (one remaining), makes a perfect way to celebrate family occasions and support Congregation Shir Ami.

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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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

Congregation Shir Ami's Social Action Committee invites you to join them



for a walk to benefit

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America

Sunday, June 7th at 9:00 am at Lake Balboa

Registration required beginning at 8:30 am

What is Crohn's disease and colitis?

Together they are known as Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) which affects 1.6 million adults and children in the U.S. primarily of Ashkenazi heritage. IBD is an auto-immune disease where the body attacks itself and causes chronic inflammation of the intestinal tract resulting in abdominal pain, bloody diarrhea, nausea and malnutrition. Other symptoms include arthritis, skin diseases, diabetes, vision problems and depression. 65% of patients will have multiple surgeries in their lifetimes related to IBD complications. Help us find a cure for IBD.

Minimum Donation \$10 per person – NO MAXIMUM! Please bring vegetarian salad, side dish or dessert to share following the walk. Remember to wear your Mitzvah Patrol shirt.

Sit down activities are available for those who can't walk. Sign up by returning the tear off with your check for \$10 (or more!) per person to Congregation Shir Ami, PO Box 6353, Woodland Hills, CA 91365. Make check payable to **Congregation Shir Ami**. For more info: Ellie Zatz (818) 883-9924, Fran Kobulnick (818) 345-2405 or Sheilah Hart (818) 884-2342.

Please bring non-perishable and non-breakable food for SOVA. Pets are welcome

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 []

Lake Balboa Walk

Congregation Shir Ami presents Brunch and Learn with **Rick Richman** *Israel at the Crossroads*



Rick Richman, an acclaimed author and blogger on Judaism and Israel whose articles have appeared in *American Thinker*, *Commentary*, the *Jewish Journal*, the *Jewish Press*, and the *New York Sun*, will share his views on the ever-changing situation in Israel during the week of her 67th Independence Day. He is currently working on a book about the trips to America in 1940 by **Chaim Weizmann**, **Vladimir Jabotinsky**, and **David Ben-Gurion**. It is a story that few know, one that should be better known, and one that, in his view, contains a lesson for the crisis that Israel is currently facing (and seems always to be facing).

A bagel and salad brunch will precede Rick's presentation. You won't want to miss this special opportunity to begin celebrating the birthday of our Jewish and democratic State of Israel.

Sunday morning, April 19 at 11 o'clock
Northridge Mobile Home Park Recreation Room
19120 Nordhoff St., Northridge
\$10 per person (\$18 for sponsor)
Call Stan Schroeder at (818) 718-7466

Brunch & Learn reservation: Please mail by April 13

Name:	Mail check payable to Congregation Shir Ami
No. of tickets:	Congregation Shir Ami
Regular Sponsor	P.O. Box 6353
Phone:	Woodland Hills, CA 91365

Please Join Us as Congregation Shir Ami Presents a



FAREWELL TRIBUTE TO CLARA AND STAN ROSENBLUTH
at a **Luncheon** on **Saturday, May 2nd**
at the conclusion of Shabbat services
at **New Community Jewish High School**

After 55 years of being members of our congregation, **Clara and Stan** have decided to move north to be near their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Clara and Stan have been very active members and leaders of the congregation since they first joined the synagogue. Clara's resume includes being a Sisterhood President and Board Member of Temple Beth Ami, Congregation Shir Ami's first Executive Vice President and its second President as well as Treasurer for the last several years. Stan was a Board Member of Temple Beth Ami and is currently a Board Member of Congregation Shir Ami. They are currently Sustaining Members of the congregation. Both Clara and Stan have been active on the Program and Ritual Committees throughout their entire membership and have always been on hand to help set up and clean up temple events and prepare our Shabbat *kiddushim*. For years and years, Clara and Stan could be counted on to help whenever worker bees were needed, and they did it willingly and graciously. Clara has been a guiding force in the leadership of our synagogue since its earliest days. Her level head and generous heart, as well as a wonderful intelligence, have helped us to maintain our role as a *menschelik* beacon in the Jewish community in the San Fernando Valley. Her fierce determination to keep our congregation afloat financially has served us well at times when our future was not always rosy. As you can see, Clara and Stan have enriched our synagogue and our lives and we will always remember them fondly.

All Shir Ami members are invited to this free tribute luncheon,
HOWEVER.....

In order to prepare the necessary amount of food for the luncheon, we would appreciate receiving an R.S.V.P. if you plan to attend. Please call Sherry Doliins at 818-886-7590 or Ellen Fremed at 818-886-8853 by April 24th. Your prompt responses will be greatly appreciated.



Thursdays April 16, 23, and 30, 7:30 - 8:30 pm “Around the Rabbi’s Tisch” at the Vorspans’



This popular Shir Ami educational series continues 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.

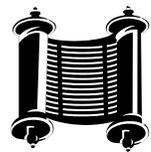
Our April 23 session will feature the film *Beneath the Helmet: From High School to the Home Front* which follows the journey of five 18 year old Israeli graduates who are drafted into the army to defend their country. Call Stan Schroeder at (818) 718-7466 to reserve a place so we know how many will attend. The makers of *Israel Inside* have created another important documentary you won’t want to miss.



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

Saturday April 11, 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 next session will be April 11. This is the last day of Passover at which time the traditional Yizkor memorial prayer for loved ones is recited. We will discuss the Passover holiday and the significance of the Yizkor prayer. 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 Contract for the Sale of Hametz

Know ye that I, the undersigned, fully empower and permit Rabbi David Vorspan to act in my place and stead, and in my behalf to sell all Hametz possessed by me (knowingly or unknowingly) as defined by The Torah and Rabbinic Law (e.g. Hametz, doubt of Hametz, and all kinds of Hametz mixtures). Also Hametz that tends to harden and to adhere to a surface of inside of pans, pots or cooking and usable utensils, and all kinds of animals that have been eating Hametz or mixtures thereof. And to lease all places wherein the Hametz owned by me may be found.

Rabbi David Vorspan has the full right to sell and to lease by transactions, as he deems fit and proper and for such time which he believes necessary in accordance with all detailed terms and detailed forms, as explained in the general authorization contract which have been given this year to Rabbi David Vorspan to sell the Hametz.

This general authorization is made a part of this agreement. Also do I hereby give the said Rabbi David Vorspan full power and authority to appoint a substitute in his stead with full power to sell and to lease as provided herein. The above given power is in conformity with all Torah, Rabbinical regulations and laws, and also in accordance with the laws of the State of California and of the United States. And to this I hereby affix my signature on this _____ day of _____, 2015.

Signature _____

Address _____ City _____

Please note additional locations (summer home, cottage, work place) where Hametz might be located:

You may deliver in person or mail to: Congregation Shir Ami
P O Box 6353
Woodland Hills, CA 91365

