




Song of Peace in Sonoma Valley

December 2009/5770 Kislev/Tevet	Banner Dedication Poem Nina Bonos	President's Message Bonnie Lasky
<p>Inside this issue.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Changes in Yahrzeit Notification Page 6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Calendar Page 8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">From Pamela Page 7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">School News Page 6</p> <p>....and much more</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>Yea, I walk through the Valley of the Moon, And it is wonderful! Adonai is alive in the vineyards.</p> <p>I feel her presence within and around me While drawing and painting from my soul. Inside the Shir Shalom window shape A carefully crafted artist's story comes alive. Intuitively, shapes and colors emerge From my heart, mind and hands To share with you.</p> <p>Sweet, purple grapes are ripening While dancing on their vines. Grapevines appear as outstretched arms of friends, Reaching for one another, Linking arms, davening and singing: <i>Hiney Ma Tov u-ma nayim Shevet achim gam yachad</i> meaning.... <i>How good and pleasant it is when Brothers live together in harmony.</i></p> <p>High above, the Shir Shalom Dove Sings her Song of Peace. Soaring in the blue sky towards the clouds, The full harvest moon, and the heavens, Her melodious song delights the ears Of the valley inhabitants below. We see man and woman's presence In the bountiful valley, In barns and homes sheltered among Native valley oaks and Italian cypress trees.</p> <p>Grapevines become a menorah, The symbol of ancient Israel. Multi-colored leaves become flickering candle lights, <i>Concluded on page 5</i></p>	<p>I can't believe how quickly summer has past, fall is almost gone, and winter will be here by the time you read this. I didn't even think to send a Thanksgiving message in last month's Newsletter. I have to learn to think a month ahead when writing the President's message for it to be current - so here I am a month behind. I hope you don't mind if I take a moment now to say I hope you had a meaningful Thanksgiving with family and friends and to also remember our servicemen and women.</p> <p>Being an Air Force brat and wife, I think of all the holidays we missed sharing with our family. Whether you support the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan or not, it is time to reflect on our friends, family members and people we don't know who are serving our country in conditions we can't even imagine: we can take a warm shower whenever we feel like it; they go days and sometimes weeks without running water. We decide whether we have time or feel like going to services, they hold onto the star of David or a cross on a chain next to their dog tags as they dodge bullets. We gossip or complain about a friend or family member and they don't know if they will see their buddy again as the Medivac helicopter carries their wounded friend off for medical attention.</p> <p>So, here we are in safe, abundant and beautiful Sonoma, so much to be thankful for. May we find a way to acknowledge and care for those less fortunate than we are and to remember and support our soldiers in harm's way.</p> <p>We had another moment to be thankful for on Saturday, November 14th as our <i>Concluded on page 5</i></p>

**CONGREGATION
SHIR SHALOM**

Rabbi Jack Gabriel
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Board of Directors

Bonnie Lasky, President:
769.1778 bglasky@att.net
Celia Lenson, 1st Vice President
257.3498 celialenson@att.net
Lee Morgan Brown, 2nd Vice President
939.1104 leeamorgan@pacbell.net

Lori Bremner, Treasurer:
363.1263 loribrem@gmail.com

Maxine Gordon, Secretary:
343.1135 ruthie4u@comcast.net
Jennifer Bernstein-Lewis
658.1829 jblewis@guidedogs.com

Marvin Diamond
996.9850 mldiamond@earthlink.net

Sam Friend
996.4412 sfriend@ehsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us

Lori Goldman
939.2738 loriknits@hotmail.com
Adley Hochstadt

996.1389 adley@vom.com

Mara Kahn
935.6272 marakahn@gmail.com
Carol Marcus

996.4926 cmmwa@comcast.net
David Schoenbach

938.0110 davidsch@sonic.net
Betsy Surtshin

252.9039 asbrr@comcast.net
Gwen Watson

938.5601 gwatson@sonic.net

School Director

Susan Jebrock
707.938.5425 Sjlj814@aol.com

Newsletter Staff

Peggy Feuer, Editor
Bonnie Lasky, Photographer

Items for newsletter are due the 16th of each month.
Send to Peggy Feuer, P.O. Box 2248, Sonoma 95476
or e-mail peggyf@vom.com
Published monthly except July

Congregation Website: www.shir-shalom.org
Telephone: 707.935.3636

Contributions/Donations: Send to
Congregation Shir Shalom,
252 West Spain Street,
Sonoma, California 95476

Menschenings.....

Mitzvot.....

Menschenings.....

Mitzvot.....

Mazel Tov

*The Congregation Gratefully Acknowledges
Generous Contributions*

• *To the General Fund*

From Maxine Brownstein
in honor of Shirley Diamond
From Celia and Richard Lenson
in support of the Cantor
From Norman and Susan Goldstein
in support of the Cantor

• *For Yahrzeits*

From Andy Weinberger
in memory of his father Arthur Weinberger
From Maxine Gordon
in memory of her mother Ruth Gordon

• *Yom Kippur Memorial Roll Additions*

From Larry & Susan Jebrock
From Robert & Regina Harf
From Jim & Marcia Levy

• *Additional High Holy Days*

Nancy Adler
James and Patricia Amdur
Anonymous
Robert Baker
Nicole Bendayan
Daniel & Geetal Beugelmans
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Sandi Perlman and Eleanore Campus
Bess Nathan Rice
Loren & Layne Rigney
Marni Sager
Norman & Carol Silverman

.....and More

- *Many Happy Returns:*
 - Membership Renewals*
 - David Artson
 - Lori Barron
 - Lori Bremner
 - Shirley & Donald Diamond
 - Norman & Susan Goldstein
 - Maxine Gordon
 - Gary & Eileen Greenberg
 - Rori & Paul Habas
 - Maralee Josephs & Steve Whiteley
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 - Richard & Celia Lenson
 - Celia Levy
 - Carol Marcus & William Willers
 - Howard Morris
 - Greg Ostroff & Hannah Hymans
 - Rickie Roark
 - Judi & Mitchell Shapiro
 - Casey & Diana Tucker
 - *Welcome New Members*
 - Tarney Baldinger
 - Stanley & Noreen Feig
 - Linda Miller
 - Heidi Stearn

Thank You! Todah Rabah!

Kiddish Sponsor
For November:

Julie Diamond

We are keeping the following people
in our thoughts and prayers for
Refuah Schleimah

Marvin Diamond
Paul Habas
Leonard Leib
Esther Norton
Michael and Erika Zuntz

WAITING FOR YOUR CALL Committee and Activity Chairs

Adult Education

Susan Cohen 939.6637 susanmcohen@gmail.com
Phyllis Shnairson 939.7519 phylish@netzero.net

Calendar Mavens

Maxine Gordon 343.1135 ruthie4u@comcast.net

Caring

Ann Clark Atkinson 933.9430 ladyann@sonic.net
Frank & Michele Samson 933.8512 michelesamson@sbcglobal.net

Children's Education

Casey Tucker 539.7326 kcdc@sonic.net
Gwen Watson 938.5601 gwatson@sonic.net

Development

Mark Hummel 939.9701 hummelmark@hotmail.com
Avram Goldman 939.2738 loriknits@hotmail.com

Directory & Roster

Mara Kahn 935.6272 marakahn@gmail.com
Maxine Gordon 343.1135 ruthie4u@comcast.net

Dues & Finance

Lori Bremner 996.9829 loribrem@gmail.com

E-News Bulletin

Maxine Gordon 343.1135 ruthie4u@comcast.net
Bonnie Lasky 769.1778 bglasky@att.net

Festivals, Family Shabbat

Lee Morgan Brown 939.1104 leeamorgan@pacbell.net

Liaison JCA

Gwen Watson 938.5601 gwatson@sonic.net

Membership

Mara Kahn 935.6272 marakahn@comcast.net

Men's Club

Gary Greenberg 707-935-5880 gary@leadingtechnologysales.com

Music & Art Festival

David Schoenbach 938.0110 davidsch@sonic.net

Newsletter Noodge

Peggy Feuer, editor 938.2981 peggyf@vom.com
Bonnie Lasky, photographer 769.1778 bglasky@att.net

Office Managers

Adley Hochstadt 996.1389 adley@vom.com
Maxine Gordon 343.1135 ruthie4u@comcast.net

Oneg/Kiddush Coordinator

Your Name Here!

Publicity/Public Relations

Your Name Here!

Shamash

Adley Hochstadt 996.1389 adley@vom.com
Sam Friend 996.4412

Sisterhood

Eileen Greenberg 935.5880 eileen@leadingtechnologysales.com

Social Action

Sally Brian 996.3355 sbrian@sbcglobal.net
Peggy Feuer 938.2981 peggyf@vom.com

Volunteer Coordinator

Your Name Here!

Website

Bonnie Lasky 769.1778 bglasky@att.net
Howard Egger-Bovet 996.7046 heb@findthefunproductions.com

Worship

Neal Atkinson 933.9430 scoop@sonic.net
Richard Lenson 257.3498 naplen@earthlink.net

Yahrzeit Celia Lenson 257.3498 celialenson@att.net

Sisterhood happenings

Adult education offering

Men's club

On Thursday, November 19th we had a very successful dinner with the Sisterhood & Men's Club at Mary's Pizza Shack. We want to thank everyone for participating and making this such a fun evening for all. We look forward to planning more events in the New Year. Look for upcoming details.

Also, don't forget the "Brown Baggers" on the second Friday of the month. Sisterhood and Temple members in conjunction with the First Congregational Church are doing the Brown Bag lunches for the homeless and needy. We meet in Burlingame Hall at 9:00 a.m. till 10:30 a.m.

Also, we are asking for volunteers to bake a batch of homemade cookies for these lunches. The cookies need to be at Burlingame Hall by 9:00 a.m. that morning.

We have had a huge success with volunteers from the Sisterhood and members of the Temple. We really appreciate your time and energy and kindness in helping members of the community less fortunate than ourselves.

Again, thank you and please **R.S.V.P.** to me if you can help stuff brown bags or bake cookies.

Eileen Greenberg
eileen@leadingtechnologysales.com
935-5880

We want to wish everyone a happy holiday season and a very happy and healthy New Year.

Eileen & Gary Greenberg

Join us for

Potluck Dinner and a Movie **Friday, January 15th** **(Mark your calendar now!)**

Doors open at 6:00 pm, Burlingame Hall-
Potluck 6:30-7:30 pm
Film 7:45 pm

Feature film: Avalon

Writer-director Barry Levinson is at his best when exploring his native Baltimore during his formative years: the 1950s and 1960s. This film, drawing upon family stories, tells a compelling, amusing tale about an extended group that came to America one by one, each earning enough to bring the next sibling. The new, American-born generation--represented by Aidan Quinn and Kevin Polak--sees a future in that mysterious machine known as the television, even as the older generation, led by Armin Mueller-Stahl, finds its traditions shattering or being put aside. Funny, tragic, and telling, it's a terrific, multi-faceted film.

Please bring a dish to serve 8-10, according to the first letter of your last name:

A - F: dessert
G - L: side dish
M - R: main dish
S - Z: salad

Beverages will be provided

To help us know how many tables to set up, please call or e-mail Phyllis Shnairson: 939-7519 / phylsh@netzero.com and let her know that you plan to attend.

Your prompt reply helps us to plan and is greatly appreciated.
Please reply no later than January 8th.

President's message
Conclusion from page 1

"Song of Peace" banner was dedicated with a service led by Cantor Bella, while Rabbi Gabriel is on medical leave. Bella created a warm and spiritual service calling Julie Diamond, Carol Marcus and Lori Bremner to the Torah and blessed them for their commitment, which brought the banner to life at Shir Shalom. Nina Bonos, the artist, read a poem she wrote about creating the banner and explained the process, the inspiration and hidden messages. (See poem, left column on page one)

It was good to see so many members present and also to see Ed and Ruth Adams and Peggy and Michael Lipson there to share the moment. It was also a treat to see Leonard Leib looking so wonderful – Sandra's chicken soup must be full of healing powers - as it is hard to believe he just had heart and pacemaker surgery a month ago. But, Marvin Diamond was missing. I hear he has been charming all the nursing at Sonoma Valley Hospital as he recovers from a broken hip. Our wishes for a speedy recovery go out to Marvin and we look forward to see him at the Chanukah party on December 11th.

Respectfully, Bonnie Lasky

Banner Poem
Conclusion from page 1

Warming the glow of Hebrew letters spelling Shalom.

Bright, red pomegranates recall our Torah.
It's seeds, numbering 613, represent the number of mitzvot

Prescribed by our Tree of Life.

Alive branches are another important peace symbol,

Reminding us of the Noah's ark dove returning from dry land,

Signaling an end to flood, and a return to peaceful times.

The golden, rolling hills of California,
Expressed in pastel, rainbow colors
Are our backdrop for a wonderful life in paradise,
Here in the Valley of the on a beautiful autumn day.

Help Is Available
Jewish Family and Children's Services
Call 707.571.8131 in Santa Rosa

News and views
From Ann Clark Attinson

When Bad Things Happen For Good Reasons

You know those times in life when something which seems awful actually turns out for the best?

Taken to its heroic extreme, we are all familiar with stories of courageous people who have survived great ordeals (cancer, for example) only to focus on the "gifts" with which they emerged – deeper gratitude, a sense of rebirth, feeling closer to the mysteries.

What I've been reflecting on, however, are the smaller benefits derived from difficult situations which fall short of major life crises. And, as I cruise ever closer to getting my bachelor's degree, I'm remembering an incident which happened in late 2006, when I was still a full-time paralegal in a high-pressure job while going to school.

I was having lunch at my desk. It was pouring rain, freezing cold, and windy. My boss was holding a meeting with several other attorneys and clients, and when they broke at noon they remained in the conference room, relaxing. My boss called a deli to order sandwiches and then sent me out in the storm (effectively ending my own lunch break) to fetch food for the higher-ups. I remember being acutely aware of the power structure -- that, as a clerical worker, I was the one being sent out in the wind and rain to get food so that others could eat.

The incident bothered me for many weeks until I had a major realization: At the time, I was preparing for another full semester of classes, and the subjects were very difficult. I wrote in my journal: "Whenever I feel like giving up, whenever I wonder whether the time and expense are worth the diploma, I am going to remember that I am working this hard in order to get enough education so that I am *not the girl who gets the sandwiches.*" I then wrote, "This was a gift."

While acknowledging that all work has its dignity – bringing food, digging ditches, hauling trash – throughout all thirty years I spent as a secretary doing the file-and-fetch, I always felt called to a different path. And until I graduate in May, the Day of the Deli will serve as my reminder to do more, strive harder, reach higher. Further, I know that a life review would reveal countless similar examples of trauma-turned-treasure.

The secret is in the *self*-realization. In the moment of despair, no one wants to be *told* to make lemonade; we ourselves must find the good. That search for positive meaning is an exercise I've found to be as crucial to my emotional well-being as my daily walk is to my physical well-being. What I found thereby was another little push up the ladder from Girl Who Gets Sandwiches to Woman With College Degree.

Shir shalom school news

Last month our teachers communicated to our school parents what their students have been doing in class. Following is an excerpt from Dania's newsletter:

"Every week we practice reading, writing, and simple conversation in both Hebrew classes. Hebrew One students continue to improve in their reading and understanding of basic Hebrew. Hebrew Two students continue working towards better fluency and understanding. During a typical class we spend ½ hour focused on the modern language and a full hour building our prayer knowledge, playing Hebrew games, and listening to Jewish stories. This year, I have developed a new method for helping students self-evaluate. Each week they use a rubric to determine their progress for the prayers we are currently studying. They must score themselves on a 1-4 scale and when they are ready, they lead the class in preparation for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

We are so proud of our Hebrew students, who led the Family Shabbat service in November. Way to go, Dania and future Bnei Mitzvah! Next month this column will feature "what's happening" in the Shabbat school classes!

Following is an important announcement about funds that are available for families to send their children to Jewish summer camp. This is offered as an incentive to send your kids to camp, and is not need based! Please check it out!

Get Your Camp On!

Parents (and grandparents) of current 5, 6 and 7th graders! Have you always wanted to send your child (and/or grandchild) to Jewish summer camp? There's never been a better summer to send first-time campers to one of 20 nonprofit Jewish overnight camps throughout Western North America. The JWest Campership Program, now in its third year, awards financial incentives of up to \$2,500 over multiple years to first time campers from the 13 western states who will enter grades 6-8 after camp. Here's what you do: enroll your child in a Jewish overnight camp for at least two weeks (12 days minimum), and if s/he is entering 6, 7 or 8th grade in the fall of '10, has never been to Jewish overnight camp before and is not currently a Jewish day school student, s/he will qualify! It's that easy! To learn more or to apply, visit www.onehappycamper.org.

If you have friends or relatives who also meet the eligibility requirements, please help spread the word! If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Foundation for Jewish Camp at 888-888-4819 or email jwest@jewishcamp.org.

At Jewish summer camp, campers develop confidence, independence and the ability to live and work together as a community. It's never too early to begin thinking about your young person's summer plans, and there is really nothing comparable to spending a summer with Jewish friends at camp. The Foundation for Jewish Camp's JWest Campership Program is funded by the Jim Joseph Foundation.

Yahrzeit Notification Going Green & Electronic

The Yahrzeit mailing is going green (paperless and electronic). We began with the November Yahrzeits. The printing and mailing of each Yahrzeit notification costs \$1.37. The savings will be close to \$500 per year and decrease carbon footprint. Additionally, it will provide us with a more effective electronic check and balance system.

Of course, we will mail Yarzheit notifications if you do not have e-mail or if that is your preference. If you would like to make a donation in memory of your loved one, please go to Congregation Shir Shalom's Donation website page <http://www.shir-shalom.org/donations/> to make a donation by PayPal. If you prefer to mail a donation, see following directions and form.

Questions? Please feel free to call Celia Lenson at 290-2535 or e-mail Celia at celialenson@att.net

"Our days like grass; we bloom like the flower of the field; a wind passes by and it is no more." -Psalm 103:15-16

Enclosed is my gift to Congregation Shir Shalom in memory of _____

Relationship; _____

Annual Yahrzeit Date; _____

\$180 \$90 \$72 \$54 \$36 \$18

Other _____

Please enclose this information with your check payable to Congregation Shir Shalom

MAIL to: CSS/Yahrzeit, 252 West Spain St., Sonoma or

Go directly to our website <http://www.shir-shalom.org/donations/> and click "Donate to Our Congregation" and follow the prompts.

From Pamela

There is a story of a Daddy who wanted to keep his little daughter busy while he worked at home. He carefully cut out a picture of the world from a magazine and then cut it up again like a jig saw puzzle. He gave his little one the puzzle and said, "Put the pieces together, honey. It's like a puzzle." He figured it would take her a long time to complete so he went back to his office and started his work.

In a few minutes, the daughter pulled on the Daddy's sleeve. "Daddy! I did it. Come and see." The Daddy could hardly believe it. He walked into the next room and sure enough, she had quickly put the entire jig saw together. "How did you do it so fast, honey?" he asked. "Well," said the daughter, "on the other side of the picture of the world, is a picture of a person. I just put the person together and the world took care of itself."

I heard this story a long time ago from someone. And, this week, I've been thinking how easy it would be if we could just put ourselves back together, after tearing ourselves a part. Unfortunately, it feels not so easy and maybe we aren't even supposed to.

In the last few days, my Mother has been in my thoughts. She used to say, "Love makes the world go 'round," and "always stay positive," and "You get more with sugar than vinegar." The truth be told: those sayings were burned into my mind as a younger woman. But in the last ten or fifteen years, I can't say I agree with them anymore. The fairy tale has been shattered by real life coming into MY life and bonking me on the head. Many times, the parts of us that are not completely "together" come breathing out of us, like a dragon's fire.

Why? Because all of us are broken. That's how we got here. At some point, I believe, our soul made a deal with God to come back into life only if we really dedicate our Self to learning what we have to learn to be whole.

Many people, like my Mother z"l, wanted to imagine a world that exists just on love. It's a beautiful fairy tale. I bought it for most of my life. Until, I've realized, that God's 2 by 4 has been trying to teach me balance since I was a little girl. Every time something good was happening, there was something uncomfortable to go along side it. Every time I thought life was going just swell, swooping down was an experience or a person to remind me of balance. Stand in the sun and one part of me is getting tan while, at the same time, the shadow prevents a tan on my backside. One goes with the other. Every time I breathe in, my body makes me breathe out: it's balance. There IS love. There IS also hate. There IS extraordinary happiness and elation. There IS undeniable pain. I actually hate this reality because it leaves me feeling sad unless...unless...I really allow myself to experience the balance.

In the last few months, I have had the chance to allow reality to sink in and to look to where, in my being, I am broken, wounded, hurt; where I have positioned myself so self-righteously that I even give pain to another soul. After lots of reflection time, I feel the smallness of myself. I have to ask myself to forgive myself to cleanse my soul so I can start over.

I have often told my daughters, after an explosion of emotion, that we can always start over with each new breath we take. That we are mere humans and perfection is not possible. There's only progress towards that ideal.

To my Mother, may her memory be a blessing, I honor your denial because it kept you going, when the going was very tough. But for you and me, I have higher standards. I want to heal the world, one person at a time, and invite everyone to start putting your own puzzle together, one piece at a time too.

A special apology to **Lee Schein**, who has been a devoted and supportive member of Congregation Shir Shalom for 13 years. The names of her loved ones were inadvertently among those left off of the Memorial Roll.

Her mother and father, **Shaindel Weiler** and **Leo Weiler** perished in the holocaust. We also remember her husband, **Herbert Schein** and his parents, **Dora Schein** and **Joel Schein**.

We plan to have a special Yizkor service on **May 20th**, during Shavuot, to dedicate a Tree of Life plaque. At that time the Board will ask Lee to place the first leaves inscribed with her mother and father's names on the tree, in their memory.

december 2009

**HAPPY
CHANUKAH**

**Yahrzeits
To Be Observed in
December**

Elmer Berry
Father of Bonnie Lasky

Marilyn Blaushild
Sister of Sandra Leib

Rose Blumberg
Grandmother of Judi Shapiro

Jane Bremner

Mary H. Brittin
Mother of Alice Horowitz

Jacob Cohen
Father of Stanley Cohen

Carl Friend
Father of Sam Friend

Lisa Friend
Sister of Sam Friend

Ben Gold
Husband of Maria Gold Lippman

Eva Goldstein
Mother of Norma Goldstein

Beatrice Gordon
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Father of Lotte Klugman

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Father of Leona Jacob

Ruth Melnikoin Miller
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Mary Patterson
Mother of Kimberly Blattner

Paul Pollock
Brother of Esther Norton

Rose Rakowitz
Mother of Phyllis Shnairson

Eleanor Rather
Mother of Pat Rather

Stanley Schwartz
Father-in-Law of Robert Lutolf

Alfred Seliz
Father of Lynn Selix Blankfort

Israel "Sam" Shainsky
Father of Muriel Robbins

Ruth Shapiro
Relative of Judi Shapiro

Stephen Surtshin
Husband of Betsy Surtshin

Carolyn Swann
Mother of Dan Swann

Joseph Yogman
Father of Shari Glago

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2 6:00-8:00pm Hebrew School	3	4 4:30-6:00p Shabbat Schl No Family Shabbat Potluck	5
						1st c a n d l e
6	7	8 6:30-8pm Membership Com.Mtg. Mara 935.6272	9 6:00-8:00pm Hebrew School	10	11 4:30-6:00pm Shabbat School 6-10:00pm Chanukah Party See pg 10	12 9-10:30am Torah Study 10:30am Shabbat Service
13	14	15	16 6:00-8:00pm Hebrew School	17	18	19
20	21	22 7:00-9pm Board Meeting	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	Save the Date: January 15th Adult Ed. Potluck & Film	

Volunteer for
CSS
Call or write to
Bonnie
769.1778
bglasky@att.net

A hin und a hair (here and there)

6th Annual JCC Jewish Meditation Retreat Dec 4-6, 2009

Walker Creek Ranch, Petaluma

Bittul haYesh: Uncovering the Authentic Self

With the dynamic Rabbi Ethan Franzel of Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, our wonderful local Rabbi Lavey Derby of Kol Shofar in Tiburon, musicians, and each other. We will use meditation, sacred chant, and especially the practice of contemplation and self-inquiry in order to reach the divine truth of our authentic selves, remembering who we really are. Practicing *hitbodedut*/contemplation of spiritual wisdom, sacred text becomes our mirror, revealing to us the true aspects of ourselves. The Retreat Band will provide amazing live music as we practice meditative chanting. The weekend also includes yoga, drumming and art workshops, and prayerful dancing.

NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED--This retreat is open to all, regardless of meditation experience or background. We will have special beginning meditators' sessions with instruction and practice. One Day Registration available.

For more information visit website www.jccsoco.org, or contact: sheilak@jccsoco.org, (707) 528-4222 x 330.

Schindler's List Exhibit at Petaluma Museum Through December 13th

The exhibition is co-sponsored by the Center for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide and the School of Social Sciences at Sonoma State University. Additional Petaluma Museum events and programs presented in conjunction with this special exhibition include Holocaust testimonies from local survivors, special music programs, docent-led group tours for school children and more.

For additional public information, call (707) 778-4398 or visit the Petaluma Historical Library & Museum at www.petalumamuseum.com for updates.



'Resource, A Guide to Jewish Life in the Bay Area'

For your copy, contact
Jewish Community
Information & Resource
Services (JCI&R)
877.777.JCIR(5247)
Info@JewishNfo.org

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Mother of Susan Tillem

Robert Walleston

Father of Betsy Shurtshin

Leo Weiler

Father of Lee Schein

Shaindel Weiler

Mother of Lee Schein

Moosie Weinberger

Mother of Andy Weinberger

Gittel Wiener

Grandmother of Gwen Watson

Yahrzeits To Be Observed in *January*

Ben Alper

Father of Amy Alper

Eva Alper

Grandmother of Amy Alper

Minna Artson

Mother of David Artson

Charles Feingold

Father of Joyce Revis

Alice Feldman

Sister of Esther Norton

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Harry Levy

Grandfather of Mara Kahn

Elsie Lisses

Mother of Cyl Levy/

Grandmother of Mara Kahn

Mary Lowey

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Henrietta Mayer

Grandmother of Dan Sondheim

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Mother-in-law of Muriel Robbin

Richard Saul

Relative of Rudy Lacoé &

Peggy Hammett

Dora Schein

Mother-in-law of Lee Schein

Joel Schein

Father-in-law of Lee Schein

Ruth Shapiro

Mother of Mitchell Shapiro

Leonard Smith

Father of Susan Cohen

Carl Tillem

Father of Susan Tillem

Next Year in Jerusalem?

Join Rabbi Alan and Dori Greenbaum

On a memorable tour of Israel in 2010

See their new website for details

www.greenbaumisraeltour2010



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Community Chanukah Celebration

WHEN: Friday, December 11, 2009
WHERE: BURLINGAME HALL

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

- 4:30-6:00 pm - Shabbat School (special Chanukah activities in the classrooms)
- 6:00 pm - Bring in the Light for Shabbat & Festival of Lights led by Rabbi Jack
Please bring your menorah and candles to light at your table.
- 6:30pm - Potluck Dinner with latkes made by the Men's Club
 - 7:00-9:00pm - Simcha Klezmer Band!



Our Hosts: Lori and Avram Goldman are donating the roasted chicken. Men's Club will begin making latkes early in the day!

Others joining the celebration please bring:

A-G Salad H-O Vegetable or Rice Dish P-Z Dessert

Please consider volunteering to help clean up

'many hands make light work'



Please contact Bonnie Lasky @ 769-1778 or bglasky@att.net to let us know you are coming to the celebration and what you would like to bring for the potluck or if you can help clean up.