

Shmoozeletter

Temple
Or Olam



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- JinJing Jacobson Bat Mitzvah May 19
- May 04 Service in the Park
- Rabbi Thiede on Amendment One
- Religious School notes
- Call for donations to Or Olam Religious School Scholarship
- June 3 Annual Meeting and Potluck dinner
- Religious School's Violins of Hope trip

JINGJING JACOBSON'S BAT MITZVAH

We are gearing up for JingJing (Tzeitel Shachar) Jacobson's bat mitzvah on May 19. I know you will all be thrilled to show your support for this amazing young woman by attending that service. Please save the date (we are holding this service on JingJing's birthday – isn't that fun?).

JingJing will be chanting from a Torah portion that set out a plan for social and economic equality in ancient Israel. We know you will enjoy finding out what she has to say about what our Torah has to say about caring for all our citizens.

Saturday, May 19 at 10:0 a.m. sharp (arrive by 9:45)

Cabarrus Arena & Events Center

4751 NC Hwy 49 North

Concord NC 28025

(alternatively, enter '4551 Old Airport Rd. Concord NC 28025' into your GPS)



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KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICE IN THE PARK – MAY 04:

Join us for a special Kabbalat Shabbat service where we will learn and practice home rituals, sit down to a wonderful potluck supper, and close by singing zemirot, Shabbat songs. We'll be blessing children and animals in Dorton Park this Friday and enjoying plenty of shmooze time with one another over dinner and song.

Informal, easy, and joyous learning will combine with a great deal of relaxed fun. Join us!

When: May 04 at 7 p.m.

Where: 'Shelter #1' at Dorton Park
5790 Poplar Tent Rd., Concord NC 28027





MILEV HAPARDES

FROM THE HEART OF THE ORCHARD

At Pesach, I hold an orange aloft and ask: ‘Why is this on the seder plate?’ Inevitably, someone will say that a man once said that a woman belongs on the bimah about as much as an orange on the seder plate. The response? Jewish committees began adding an orange to the seder place.

That’s not how it happened.

It was scholar and feminist *Susannah Heschel* who presented the orange as a new

AMENDMENT ONE

Pesach symbol – as a symbol of the fruitfulness we gain when lesbians and gay men are accepted, welcomed and valued as contributing and active members of Jewish life. The orange is about the freedom we must offer every member of our community.

Because we must offer that freedom, I am praying (really) that the citizens of North Carolina reject Amendment One.

For thirty years I have met with GLBT students who struggle with the bitter reality that they are condemned and despised. I met with suicidal students who had tried every method they could find to become “normal,” students who would have done anything to be like the majority that rejected them.



Twenty years ago, when my son was born, I resolved to make it clear that whoever he turned out to be, whether he wanted to spend his life with a man or a woman, he could count on unqualified love and acceptance from me.

If parents can’t offer that much, they shouldn’t be parents.

Today I find people living in the state I love prepared to make a hash of hard-won legal protections domestic partners have earned in past decades – whether straight or homosexual. Parents could lose custody rights to their children. Domestic violence protection could be withdrawn from unmarried couples.

Does anyone want to increase the ability of one human to brutalize another?

Just imagine that you can no longer visit a beloved partner in the hospital, make decisions if your partner is incapacitated, dispose of his or her remains. What kind of world – what kind of people would prevent anyone from helping a loved one in illness or death?

The present legal state of affairs restricts marriage to one man and one woman.

We should be working to overturn the existing law, not struggling against additional discriminatory amendments.

Our Torah has nothing to say against the love of two women. What it says about homosexuality is frequently read out of historical context and – as my students at UNCC discover – learning more deeply about that context can alter the reading significantly.

‘You shall love your neighbor (your friend, your associate) as yourself’ (Lev. 19:18). When a non-Jew asked Rabbi Hillel to tell him the very essence of Torah, Hillel alluded, Talmud tells us, to this very verse: If you wouldn’t want someone to do something to you, he explained, then don’t do it to someone else.

Jews know what it is to live with constraints on their movements, on their free expression, on their very lives. Heterosexual Jews ought to know that it is wrong – just plain wrong – to refuse GLBT citizens access to ceremonies, rituals, and rights that they enjoy.

Oranges belong on the seder plate and GLBT citizens belong in our communities and in our state – with the same rights as any other human being.



Rabbi Dr. Barbara Thiede

Rabbi Barbara

STUDENTS AND RELIGIOUS SERVICES

WHAT OUR CHILDREN ARE LEARNING AT TEMPLE OR OLAM
RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

The children in the upper-level Hebrew class at Temple Or Olam's religious school have been studying the language of the Amidah this year. Rabbi Barbara's visit to the school on April 29 gave the children an opportunity to consider the meaning of the ideas of the Amidah, not just the words.

The lesson began with a description of the prayers said at home upon rising, then turned to the synagogue service. When Rabbi Barbara asked why the prayers changed from 'I' to 'we,' Caleb Malin answered, 'Because WE all go to temple together.'

Then we began working our way through the seven prayer gates of the Amidah:

ANCESTORS — *AVOT V'IMAHOT* Why do we remember them? 'Because they are our story.' — **Leta VanArsdale**

GOD'S POWERS — *G'VUROT* Why do we live? 'Because God created us.' — **Charli Bombardier**

HOLINESS — *K'DUSHA* How can we make God's name holy? 'By making God's name important to us.' — **Evan VanArsdale**

SHABBAT — *K'DUSHAT HAYOM* Why is Shabbat holy? 'We need one day to worship God for all the work God did in the six days.' — **Leta VanArsdale**

WORSHIP/SERVICE — *BIRKAT AVODAH* Why does God need our service? 'He has given us his service, and we need to give service back.' — **John Jensen**

THANKSGIVING — *BIRKAT HODA'AH* Many wonderful reasons to be thankful were suggested.

PEACE — *BIRKAT SHALOM* What can one person do to create peace? 'Treat people the way you want to be treated.' — **Caleb Malin**



Caleb Malin

Our children ask so many good questions. But they also give us answers we might very well wish we had thought of ourselves.



Ginger Jensen

DID YOU KNOW . . .



The Hebrew word *tzedakah* normally refers to charity that is given anonymously. The derivative of *tzedakah* means ‘righteousness,’ ‘fairness’ or ‘justice.’ During our current economic atmosphere it is so important for those who are still living comfortably to help those who are not. For that reason it is important to make our congregants aware that we have a Temple Or Olam School Scholarship that our very own Rabbi Barbara created.

For years, Rabbi Barbara has donated the money for at least one student every session to attend our Religious School out of her own purse. Normally this would be anonymous, but when such selflessness comes from the top of our congregation, it can easily promote others to take action for similar causes. We are challenging our congregants now to ‘match the Rabbi’ for this \$385.00 donation to help another family afford the fees. Your ‘match’ does not have to be the total cost, because every dollar counts in helping our children be exposed to other children in the congregation in a happy, healthy learning environment.

Please contact me at jmalin@trimarkusa.com if you would like to donate to our Temple Or Olam School Scholarship.

Thank you!



*Judah Malin
President*

J E W S I N T H E N E W S

Combined for the Very First Time: Our First Annual Summer Potluck Dinner, Awards Ceremony, and Congregational Meeting.

This year’s annual meeting will just be the start of the celebration we are planning for the afternoon of June 3 at McGill. We will...

- ✧ enjoy an amazing potluck dinner;
- ✧ hold a raffle of beautiful Jewish items, a chotschke or two, and, perhaps, Jewish food -- everyone who attends gets a ticket, and whoever wins, WINS!;
- ✧ hand out awards for both youth and adult members of our community. (It’s high time we recognize one another for the ways that we all bless one another and help create our community!).

We’ll also do some congregational business, like voting in next year’s board and reviewing our budget and goals. And the whole time, we’ll be having FUN! Can you imagine?

Please mark the date on your calendar and help us all stay involved in creating and maintaining the communal space we so enjoy. You help us create the community we are!

Angela Hodges



S C H O O L O F T H O U G H T

WE ENCOURAGE UNDERAGE THINKING

April is a big month for Religious School, because April means we get to go on a spring field trip! During the last month, the children had the opportunity to bring their parents out and to join the larger congregational community for a trip to the Violins of Hope exhibit, housed in the UNC Charlotte Center City Building. This was an amazing opportunity for us to view violins from the Holocaust, beautifully restored to playing condition. It also gave the children, and the community alike, a chance to learn a little more about the role music played in the Jewish community before, during, and after the Holocaust. We also had the special opportunity to be some of the first people in the United States to see these violins, as they made their national debut here in Charlotte!



*Jessica Waldmann
Director, Religious School*

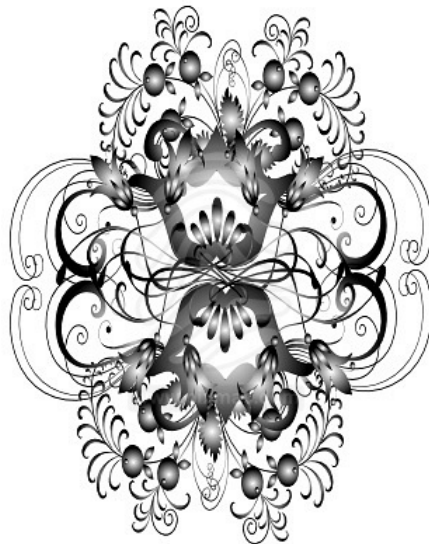
Y A H R Z E I T S

- 05-09 Mary Dare Roettger, mother of Ginger Jensen
- 05-15 Ralph D. Dorzback, brother of Ruth Kingberg
- 05-29 Morton G. Atlas, father of Marilyn Atlas

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BIRTHDAYS

- 05-01 Barbara Thiede
- 05-12 Judah Malin
- 05-18 Tom Jensen
- 05-19 JingJing Jacobson (birthday and bat mitzvah)
- 05-20 Noah Huneycutt



C O N T A C T I N F O R M A T I O N

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