

# shmooze

TEMPLE  
OR OLAM

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B'nai mitzvah students Robbin Smith, Jessica Waldman, Terri Malin, and Angela Hodges with Rabbi Barbara in Oak Island, NC.



## Grab your pen and pitch in.

This has been a year of blessing for our TOO family. We've come a long way, and now we need to keep that momentum going...

There are a lot more blanks on the Oneg sign-up sheet this year, but there's a good reason for that. We're implementing a new practice that relieves a great deal of the stress from those who have been wearing themselves to a frazzle for the past several years making sure everything is beautiful when the rest of us arrive for services.

If you haven't seen the new oneg sign-up sheet in the member's section of our website, please take the time to check it out

and volunteer for the days and duties that your family would like to take on this year.

Along with familiar tasks like Oneg food prep/setup and cleanup, you'll see new tasks involving the setup, takedown, and reset of the McGill sanctuary. Festival and holiday dates are also listed on the signup sheet.

At the moment, we're asking everyone to sign up for at least three things (although setup and teardown in the sanctuary will require you to sign up for six dates). We may need to revisit the signup sheet and fill in additional blanks as the year progresses.

We encourage everyone to please sign up as soon as possible. The new dates are upon us, and it's vital that they are covered.

As in past years, signup is a requirement; those who do not sign up will be drafted.

Thank you for your help in ensuring that the work and responsibility of maintaining our congregation is fairly distributed!

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## HHDs 2012

If you want a different experience this year, you've come to the right place.

For some of us, the liturgy surrounding the High Holidays can be problematic. Does it speak to the way we actually live or to the way we really understand God? Does it have to be so painful? What does Torah say about the Days of Awe? What have the rabbis and other Jewish communities made of the words we find there?

Join Temple Or Olam this year for a thoughtful look at the beautiful variations available in our tradition.

For more information, visit our website at [www.or-olam.org](http://www.or-olam.org) or call 704.720.7577. and leave a message.

## At-One-Ment: High Holy Days, 5773



Once a year on the tenth day of the seventh month, the *Kohein Gadol*, the High Priest, cleansed the sanctuary. His work completed, he went before the people and announced, simply and surely: *Mikol khatoteykhem lifnei Adonai titharu*, 'Before Adonai you shall be cleansed from all your sins' (Leviticus: 16:30). Torah tells us: God responded by granting the community complete forgiveness.

Torah makes no mention of any process of *teshuvah* to be observed between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The text doesn't actually connect the two holidays. Neither does Torah depict God decreeing who shall live and who shall die in the year to come – not on either day.

Nevertheless, many of us assume that our rites follow a prescribed tradition with a trajectory of thousands of years.

But Judaism is neither static nor one-dimensional. For Ashkenazi Jews, *Unetaneh*

*Tokef*, the prayer in which we describe a day of judgment that evokes fear even in the angels, is pivotal. *Unetaneh Tokef* was a late addition to Ashkenazi liturgy and probably became widespread only following the 10th century. Many Jews consider it a centerpiece of their devotion – but not if they are Sephardic. Most Sephardic communities do not recite the prayer.

In Hungary, so their descendants write, Chassidic rabbis of the 17th and 18th centuries walked to the House of Prayer for Kol Nidre in such trepidation that even their earlocks trembled with fear. But words like 'awe,' 'fear,' or 'judgment' are completely absent from a 1663 stele describing how Jews in Kaifeng observed Yom Kippur. Instead, the stele describes Yom Kippur as a day when 'desires are forgotten, attainments are put aside, and all apply themselves to preserving the heart and nourishment of the mind, so that through direction there may be a restoration of goodness.'

It's obvious from the historical record: Jews have differing practices where our High Holy Days are concerned – even different perspectives on their purpose. These differences transcend time, location, and gender.

Why regard them as anything more than curiosities?

They force us to ask questions about our own time, about our own beliefs. Do today's Jews believe that God is a stern judge who decides each year who shall live and who shall die? Has God pointed the finger of death at the child dying of hunger in the Sudan, and rewarded the child whose home is in Ballantyne with life? How are we to contend with this theological perspective after the Holocaust? What would happen if we observed the kind of Yom Kippur the Kaifeng Jews enjoyed, a day in which 'man remains at rest [so that] his heavenly nature will reach perfection'?

Recognizing the rich diversity we are heirs to reminds us to be conscious – and to appreciate – the extraordinary diversity we represent today. Jews have made and remade their traditions for centuries. They have responded to their times and to their ancient texts with new readings and with abiding reverence. We have the opportunity – and we will take it – to create Days of Awe that are filled with rejoicing and hope. We do not need to feed fears. We need to nourish respect and love.

One year on Kol Nidre, Rabbi Meir of Apt arrived at the synagogue to find his congregation in tears: 'Jews,' he said, 'this is not what I desired; I wish you to turn to God in joy!' And he began to chant the hymn 'Majesty and faithfulness are God's who lives forever' with such enthusiasm and pleasure that they all stopped crying and took one another by the hand and danced for an hour in a great circle. Then they began Kol Nidre.

May we turn to God with open hearts this New Year in the honest pursuit of goodness and kindness. May we live out our joy – in who we are, who we have been, and who we are yet to be. May we be blessed with High Holy Days that nourish and sustain and refresh our souls. And may the year to come be a happy and healthy one!

FROM THE  
HEART OF THE  
ORCHARD

# Millev HaPardes

[WHAT WAS, IS, AND WILL BE HAPPENING AT TOO]

# Jews in the News



Earl & Cheryl Greenwald

## The women's Rosh Chodesh group invites YOU...

The first time TOO's ladies got together, Rabbi Barbara demonstrated kippah making and tzitzit tying. We noshed and kibbitzed and had a grand time getting to know one another and laughing together.

Now, we're trying out a new format. All the women in the congregation are officially invited to come up with a day, a place, and a plan for hosting their own Girls' Night (or day). There are almost no restrictions on this; you don't need to teach anything or really even DO anything. In fact, if you just want to have people over to your house for food and visiting, that's just fine. Some ideas that have been thrown around in the past include going to see a play or musical, having a picnic in the park, and participating in a dance class, but pretty much anything goes.

If you're interested in hosting at some point in the coming months, contact Cheryl Greenwald, Arlene Filkoff or Marilyn Atlas and they'll get the ball rolling for you!



Yvette & Emory Spivock @ Love Song service

## TOO's Wish List

While we're still riding the coattails of our recent school fundraising success, we thought it might be a good idea to let everyone know that there are still a few things that our little congregation would benefit from acquiring.

To that end, we have compiled a small Wish List of things that we believe would add beauty, joy, and/or ease to our services.

First, we're looking at a **sukkah**, which usually retails for about \$400. In past years, the religious school children have gone to the Malin's house for their Sukkot celebration, (and they are likely to do that again this year), however it's a big hassle every year for the Malin's to build the sukkah beforehand and to make sure that it's safe for the kids to be in. [A new, prefab sukkah](#) would solve all of these problems.

Second, for several years, some of us have been pining for a **new ark for our Torah**. These are typically handmade, and they retail for around \$2000. While our present ark has served us well, a new ark would fix several problems, not the least of which is our current inability to place the Torah inside while still decorated with the finials.

Third, we have reached the point at which a **new mixer for our sound system** would be very beneficial. On any given week, balancing the sound and eliminating the static is a high-wire act, and it's not always one that we're doing successfully. New mixers cost between \$400-500, but we believe it would pay for itself shortly in enjoyment and ease of use.

If you would like to donate toward the purchase of any these objects, please contact Robbin Smith and let her know where you'd like to direct your donations.

## \$1500...check.

This past summer, members of TOO's Education Planning committee submitted a grant proposal and our school was allotted half of the \$1500 Lenora Stein Fund for Community Creative Learning. In the time since, Arlene Filkoff (along with the Berkowitz family) has managed to raise the remaining money to fund the plan that we had envisioned all those months ago when we wrote the proposal. Thanks to their collaborative and exhaustive efforts, the special needs kids at TOO's religious school will have access to new technological and curricular technologies to facilitate and encourage their Jewish learning. Way to go, everyone!



Ginger, John, and Leanna Jensen, 2011



Leta & Evan  
VanArsdale

INTERVIEWS  
WITH OUR  
TOO FAMILY

# meet the mishpooche

*This month, Robbin Smith takes a hiatus and Angela Hodges steps up to talk about her experiences in community with the younger members of our Tribe.*

### I'll admit it: some of my best friends at shul aren't yet bar/bat mitzvah.

I taught a few of our kids Hebrew. All of them have set cross-legged in front of me on the floor at Mr. Jacobson's house, singing whatever song I brought them to learn for religious school that week. And every one of them—at one time or another—has bummed candy off of me. (Usually, it's lemon drops, although occasionally I mix it up a bit.)

Somehow, I think I have become one of our congregation's "cool" adults. I'm not sure how that happened, but regardless, the position certainly has its perks.

For one thing, I never sit alone at Oneg. After kiddush, I plop my purse down on an empty table, head for the water pitcher, and by the time I get back, there's a passel of children and pre-teens in the other chairs. I never lack for entertaining conversation, and usually, I learn more about how to operate my technology than I could ever hope to learn from a manual. The kids are also pretty skilled at locating the treats on any given Oneg table, and they don't mind hopping up,

slipping unobserved to the front of the line, and grabbing an extra if I didn't get one when I went through. (Okay, I'll be honest: sometimes they go up and grab me seconds. Or thirds.) In any case, there's no judgement about my occasionally less-than-healthy eating habits. They're all too happy when I steer clear of the vegetable plate and forget I'm an adult. And frankly, so am I.

We almost never discuss "childish" things when we're together. They tell me stories they'd tell their friends. I tell them the same stories I'd tell their parents (or my own friends), and they laugh in all the right places. Most of the time, they shake their heads, roll their eyes, and look at one another as though they've never seen anything like me. This doesn't bother me at all. In fact, I kind of like it, and I pretty much feel the same way about them.

I crochet blankets for people; several members of our congregation have received them over the past couple years. I make them with love, and I'm happy to do it because I find it impossible to watch television without simultaneously busying my hands. But mostly, I just like giving people

pretty things so they know they're precious to me. At the moment, I'm finishing up a brightly colored pink, purple, blue and green afghan for Leta, who picked out her own colors more than six months ago and has been patiently waiting for the finished product ever since. For my part, I can't help imagining the life that blanket will bear witness to. Childhood is so very short, and it won't be long until Leta's knocking on adulthood's door and foregoing cake for carrots.

Time flies, doesn't it? In a relatively short time, I'll look up and realize that the kids I sit with every week have all grown up. When that happens, I'm hoping that they carry with them the knowledge that no matter what else happens in their lives—no matter the adults they become—they'll always have a place at my table, and I'll always be more than happy to listen to their stories and share my lemon drops.

# school days

SPOTLIGHT ON  
TEMPLE OR  
OLAM'S HEBREW  
SCHOOL AND ITS  
AMAZING  
CHILDREN.



## Introducing the 2012 Religious School Staff

TOO's religious school teachers are an amazing group. This year, the teaching staff will grow by one, and the school will welcome a new director for the Fall session. This article will introduce all of them, providing some fun as well as informative information.

**Keri Huneycutt** got her degree in Child and Family Development from UNCC. She also spent several years as a preschool teacher and values family above all else. Keri's very excited to be stepping into the role of religious school director and feels like the job was made for her. More than that though, she's determined to see the school succeed. Her son Noah is a student in the K/1 lower school, and she wants to see him enjoy and profit from the experience. Keri also feels that she brings a level of sensitivity to the table; she's in an interfaith marriage, and she understands that sometimes teaching children about Judaism requires care and understanding. She brought that consideration to the table during her time on the Education Planning Committee and hopes to continue doing so as director of school. Keri loves to travel (she and her family go to the mountains once a month) and will read

almost anything. She also enjoys watching and playing all kinds of sports.

**Arlene Filkoff** comes to us originally from California where she worked as a licensed substitute teacher for several years. She'll be overseeing our Lifecycle Events programming this year, and she does not seem to be able to stop extolling its community-strengthening virtues. Years back, both of her (now grown) daughters Rachel and Michelle participated in a similar program. To this day, Arlene says, she still maintains contact with many of the parents and children that she encountered along the way, as do her kids. She looks forward to seeing the same kind of success in our program. Arlene enjoys spending time with her doggies, crocheting, reading and cooking.

**Angela Hodges** has completed extensive coursework in Judaic Studies at UNCC, including classes on the history of Judaism, the history of European anti-Semitism, Torah, Ketuvim and Jewish philosophy. She is currently pursuing an M.A. in Religious Studies. Angela has completed one year of Biblical Hebrew and serves as lay cantor for Temple Or Olam. She is a professional

photographer and enjoys crocheting colorful blankets for the people she loves. She's seriously obsessed with music. This is Angela's third year teaching at our religious school.

**Ginger Jensen** is a bibliophile and would spend her life in a library if possible. She has completed one year of biblical Hebrew. She has studied Jewish ritual, thought and philosophy. She co-leads adult Torah study and serves as Director of Religious Services on the Temple Or Olam Board. Ginger has been teaching at our religious school for five years.

**Rabbi Barbara Thiede** has several degrees in Jewish-related fields, including an MA focused on Holocaust and genocide studies, and an MA focused on biblical Israel and early Judaism. She also earned a PhD along the way, as well as ordinations as a mashpia'ah (spiritual director) and as a rabbi. She teaches almost every course offered on Judaism at UNCC. She also writes a blog on Jewish life, community and literature, and has been teaching the children of Temple Or Olam since its founding. She likes to sing.

September

## BIRTHDAYS

09.04

Julie Roberts  
Julia Chait

09.05

Allison Billings

09.07

Gabriel Malin

09.15

Janet Sternbach

09.24

Alan Coffman

## YAHRZEITS

Harold Spivock, father of William Spivock

Samuel Gantwerk, father of Roz Gantwerk

Joseph Resnick, father of Phyllis Herschenfeld

Lena Shapiro, mother of Harriet Commike

Pearl Commike, mother of Fred Commike

## Contact info:

If you need to add a date to the temple calendar or check the availability of meeting space, contact our administrative assistant at [templeadmin@or-olam.org](mailto:templeadmin@or-olam.org)

For information about Temple Or Olam's religious school, email [religious-school@or-olam.org](mailto:religious-school@or-olam.org)

Corrections or submissions to the Shmooze can be directed to [webmaster@or-olam.org](mailto:webmaster@or-olam.org)

Rabbi Dr. Barbara Thiede's email is [rabbi.thiede@or-olam.org](mailto:rabbi.thiede@or-olam.org)

## On the web

Temple Or Olam's website:  
<http://www.or-olam.org>

Please "like" us on Facebook at:  
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Temple-Or-Olam/135017053202476>

## Treasurer

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