

Shmoos letter

October 2013



Religious School, Temple Or Olam

Shabbat on Ice October 04



Time to gather them in! Shabbat service this Friday will be an open house for members and visitors alike.

Representatives of our various committees, small groups, and religious school will be on hand to answer questions and to inform.

It will also be a very cool night! Join us for our special membership ice cream oneg immediately following the service. We are offering this treat to thank returning families and to welcome new members and visitors to our congregation. Now is the time to gather up all those who keep saying they would like to visit TOO. Do them a favor and give them a call this week.

For more information, please contact Michael Filkoff, our membership committee chair, at 704-875-2353.

Bar Mitzvah in Red

Join us on October 19 for Preston Berkowitz's big day. Details will come to you in the *loop*, our weekly e-mail bulletin.

in this issue:

Shabbat Ice Cream Social	1
MiLev HaPardes	2
Education Committee	4
Caring Committee	5
Board of Directors' Meeting	6
New Torah Mantels	7
Know your Aleph Bet	8
Geh Gezunt	10
Birthdays, Yahrzeits, donations	11
Contact information	11

Did you know?

Temple Or Olam has a [web presence](#). Our [Facebook page](#) features videos and pictures; we also have a [YouTube channel](#) and a [Flickr account](#). Rabbi Barbara blogs on Jewish life on [adrenalinedrash](#). Explore, participate, have fun!

Ancient Images, Modern Times



Look at our Torah mantels and you will see powerful images. But you will not see the typical ones. Not the Ten Commandments. Not a menorah. Not a Magen David.

Instead, we chose to depict the Song at the Sea and remind our congregation: *az yashir*. They sang. We chose to recall Mt. Sinai and the description of our people found in Torah—not only descendants of Abraham, but an *erev rav*, a mixed multitude—all of whom went up to

Sinai to receive the gift of Torah.

Why those images? Why those scenes?

Az yashir: Think of the story—a flight from Egypt (which means ‘narrow place’). Anxiety by day and terror by night—mitigated only by God’s presence leading the people in the form of a pillar of fire or a pillar of smoke.

It takes courage to cross a sea of any kind. As human beings we cross over seas of our own making—perhaps of self-doubt or uncertainty, perhaps a sea of repressed rage. Some seas rage beyond our control, the result of a tempestuous economic storm for example that takes our jobs and challenges our ability to take care of house and home.

Yet, we sing. For more than two and a half millennia, we have sung our way into exile and out of one home after another to places we have yet to know. Like Abraham, we have traveled many times to many places. We have been frequently enslaved and oppressed; our stories are not simply a thing of an ancient past. We celebrate like Miriyam again and again; each simcha we mark, from a bar or bat mitzvah to a festival rich with meaning, is an acknowledgment of a certain kind of triumph, a reminder of our freedom and how dearly we have paid to have it. *Az yashir*.

Erev rav alah—a mixed multitude went up. For our congregation, acknowledging the rich diversity among our families has been central to our mission from the get-go. Making sure that we understand how to honor each other has been critical to defining who we are.

Millev Harperdes

From the
Heart of the
Orchard



Mt. Sinai is a critical juncture in our narrative. Exodus 19:8: The Israelites commit: *N'aseh v'nishma*. 'We will do and we will understand.' Every time you act on the basis of ethical mandates, you understand their purpose on a new and higher level. A single act becomes a practice, a way of life.

We must all go up. We must all do. We must all understand.

Our new Torah mantels were almost a year in the making. I hope that they remind you who we are and what we do. A community blessed by its richness and depth.

A community willing to sing.

Rebbi Barbara

Milev HaParodes



t-e-s-h-u-v-a-h

Our school children learned about Yom Kippur, about Jonah's adventure inside the big fish, and about the poetic device of hiding words in poems by letting the first letter of each line spell out a message. Here are their own acrostics.

Thanks for everthing.

Elements of the earth

Sky that's blue

Happy for a caring father

U and me, helping us learn; and the

Victory goes to the Berkowitz family

A safe house to live in, and not go

Hungry.

Thanks to Adonai

Exremely grateful

Saved by God

Hanukah holiday

Universal God

Very loving God

Apples and honey

Hallah and wine

(or grape juice)

Thank you God for letting us

Everything you've done for us

Sorry we weren't nice at times

Have mercy on us

Unbelie-

Vable things can happen when you're good

Apples are delicious

Hanukah, we are thankful for.

Provided by *Arlene Filkoff*



On September 15, I had the pleasure of being with the children of our Religious School. We had a little demo / Q&A on the shofar. We ascertained that the horn comes neither from a camel nor from a moose, nor is it a sea shell, and that it is not easy to get a sound out of it, unless you sing into it like Ms. Huneycutt did (and then it *did* sound like a moose).

I have given the occasional demo to our kids in years past; this time, it felt simply amazing. The kids clearly love being there. Hugs when you come in the door, eager attention, arms in the air for answers before a question is even quite finished. I watched Ms. Huneycutt interact with the children in such a loving and expert way—they were ever so eager to do right by her and bask in her approval. I even found *myself* following her through the hall single file with the children using my 'respectful voice.'

What a wonderfully run school we have. These are well-cared-for kids. They are happy. They are eager. They are motivated. And they are clearly learning their stuff.

Ralf Thiede

Caring Committee

TOO's new Caring Committee is up and running! The mission of the committee is to assist congregants in times of need, such as in the event of injury, surgery, illness, childbirth, bereavement, or emotional distress, while also respecting your privacy and confidentiality. Our goal for the 2013-2014 year is to encourage *all* congregants to volunteer in some capacity, small or large, at least once a year.

Arlene Filkoff recently completed phone surveys to assess individual strengths and skills to be utilized for congregants in need. That information helped us learn more about who we are as a congregation. For example, we learned that several members like to garden, which could translate into planting flowers as a gift on behalf of the congregation or volunteering at a local community garden.

Following are some specific actions that the Caring Committee plans for congregants in need:

- ✧ set up a 'food train' for meals to be delivered
- ✧ provide food and shopping services on a short-term or emergency basis
- ✧ provide visitation/companionship or phone contact (ex. hospital, hospice, at home)
- ✧ arrange transportation to Or Olam services for those unable to drive due to physical disabilities
- ✧ provide acts of kindness based on congregant skills (ex. planting flowers, crocheting a scarf, playing a game, etc.)
- ✧ gather information concerning public and private assistance for needs beyond what the Caring Committee can provide

Any congregant can request short-term or emergency services by directly contacting the Caring Committee, through either a written or a verbal request. When a request for such care is received, a Caring Committee member will work with the person in need and/or Rabbi Barbara to explore the best way to help. The Caring Committee Coordinator will invite volunteers with matching skills to sign up for a particular service. The volunteer will then contact the person in need to arrange the best way to provide the requested service.

Ideally, the person in need should be the one who makes the request for help. If a congregant senses that the Caring Committee might be helpful in a certain situation, he or she should urge the person in need to directly request help from the Committee. In that way, we hope to maintain and respect any congregant's desire for privacy, while also empowering the person in need.

The Caring Committee would love to welcome new members at any time! Please send your e-mail to CaringCommittee@Or-Olam.org if you would like to be involved. It cannot be said enough that the only way to be a successful Caring Committee is through active involvement of individual congregants! The current members of the Caring Committee are: Heather Chait, Cheryl Greenwald, Arlene Filkoff, Harriett Bogage, and Michael Filkoff.

Heather Chait, Chair
Temple Or Olam Caring Committee
caringcommittee@or-olam.org

Board of Directors' Meeting

September 22, 2013

7:00 p.m., via conference call

[Earl Greenwald, Cheryl Greenwald, Michael Filkoff, Ginger Jensen, and Robbin Smith]

Temple Or Olam's Board of Directors met Sunday, September 22, at 8 p.m. via conference call. Here are some highlights of the meeting:

- ✧ Announced that Michael Filkoff has accepted the position of chair of the Membership Committee, and approved Stephen Smith as chair of the Men's Planning Group.
- ✧ Completed and approved policies for Board committees on Adult Education, Membership, Caring, and for the Director of Outreach and Community Relations. Our definition of 'No Jew Left Behind' was also approved. All policies will be posted on the website under 'Members.'
- ✧ Approved a membership open house and ice cream social in conjunction with the Kabbalat Shabbat service on Friday, 10/4.
- ✧ Approved a new, more efficient arrangement for the bank account.

Setup and Breakdown

'We have to sit when the spirit says *sit*, we have to stand when the spirit says *stand...*' – which means we have to have chairs, tables, ark, leyning table, shabbat table, and siddurim in place, ready to go for every service.

The signup spreadsheet is on the website under 'Members' after you log in. The scheme is to have three families/groups rotate setting up and three families/groups rotate taking down. One different family/group will be responsible for oneg setup and cleanup every service. Holidays and festivals are listed below the regular services and have separate needs from Fridays.

Setup families prepare the room by 6:00 on Friday so that Rabbi Barbara and Ralf can rehearse peacefully and prayerfully before the service. Takedown families carefully stow our equipment away during/after oneg and then set up the McGill arrangement so that their worship can commence smoothly on Sunday.

We want everyone to experience the satisfaction of making a worshipful atmosphere. You may be able to do only oneg; that's fine. Sign up for several dates. If you can commit to 5-6 setup/takedown dates through June, we want you! If you can be a mainstay at every holiday prep, you are someone we can count on. Take your pick and get your name on the spreadsheet before all the dates are gone.

News for the Jews

New Torah Mantels

It's a mystery what universal forces can inspire, given the right surroundings. Imagine the handyperson strolling the aisles of Home Depot, pen and pad in hand, scribbling furiously. A writer inhaling deeply that heady aroma of paper and ink in a bookstore. The cook at a rural farm stand. Or, a rabbi and temple administrator gazing across an acre of fabrics.

We had just finished the furious months of anxiety and joy of finding and funding a new Torah. Now Or Olam had not one but two with their original mantles. They didn't match or coordinate in any way. Sitting side by side in the ark, our two Torahs would not look like proud sisters or, more accurately, mother and daughter. They were a bit dowdy. They needed new clothes.

Of course, this project would require a pilgrimage to the site of all things fabric in these parts: Mary Jo's in Gastonia. Rabbi Barbara had some lace with a tree-of-life motif that could go with our chuppah pattern. Maybe we could ap-

pplique the lace onto a nice fabric.

That idea didn't last long; nothing looked right. We

scoured all the tables for tree of life-patterned fabric, but came up unsatisfied.

Then, we stood gazing at a 25-foot rack of Dupioni silks in every color of the wheel. Rabbi Barbara began thinking out loud about phrases from the Torah section we had just decorated with Neil Yerman, *az yashir* and *erev rav*. They evoked the scene of the Sea of Reeds and Mt. Sinai in the distance – wouldn't those be great scenes for Torah mantels? We started brainstorming, sketching, imagining.

Commandeering an entire cutting table, we laid out almost a dozen bolts of fabrics until two color schemes emerged.

It was quite a process. Finding designs we could work with and adjust to serve our needs; drawing those designs in true size; cutting the pattern pieces; checking, checking, and re-checking the Torahs' measurements; figuring out how the original mantles were made—that was my labor given Rabbi



Barbara's schedule. I also worked on finding Torah mantle rings and negotiating with a master seamstress in Charlotte about embroidering the script. Because mantles do get handled quite a bit, we decided all fabric edges needed applique stitching for strength. Thank goodness Rabbi Barbara got her new Bernina sewing machine just in time to spend some time hunched over the many seams holding the designs together.

There was another issue: We only had one High Holy Day mantel. We took a good long look at the six yards of white Dupioni silk I had bought for possible tallitot. We decided on easy this time, and sketched two matching mantles with the Or Olam flame, white on white. But easy wasn't what it said it would be – one uncorrectable mistake on one mantle necessitated a quick redesign using the already-embroidered script. The new High Holy Day mantels were blessed with white silk gartels and a simple *bein gavra*.

Of course, time flies, you know. All this took nine months in fits and starts. Our congregation can thank Steve Smith, who created the wooden platforms we needed and cut holes for the *etz chayyim* to exact measure. We are also forever indebted to Jan Gorelick, creative seamstress of Kippah Designs, who was as excited as we were about the four mantles, spending several hours laying on the scripts. It was a cherished mitzvah for her, and she did not charge Or Olam a cent for her valuable time. Rabbi Barbara and I worked together when we found a rare moment, though most of the technical and pattern development work was on my side of the table and the applique stitching was on hers. Those mantles, their pieces, and the designs did a good bit of traveling from house to house. We joined forces completely on the Song of the Sea mantle, the most difficult design.

We are almost finished with our special 10th anniversary gifts to the congregation. Our Sea of Reeds and Mt. Sinai mantels still need their gartels and a *bein gavra*. That should be ready by November. Just in time, we hope, for Hanukkah.

E-mail Charlotte Miller at
templeadmin@or-olam.org

The *bein gavra* is the cloth used to cover the Torah between readings. Also pictured here are the two *gartels* for our High Holy Day mantels. Everything in the picture to the right was made by our Temple Administrator, Charlotte Miller.

The white silk High Holy Day mantels on the previous page owe their existence to applique work by Rabbi Barbara and construction work (lining, hemming, cording, etc.) by Charlotte Miller.

Our Sinai mantle was constructed in the same way: Applique work by Rabbi Barbara, construction work by Charlotte Miller. Our Song of the Sea mantle was created equally by both Rabbi Barbara and Charlotte Miller.

Jan Gorelick was responsible for laying Hebrew scripts on each mantle, and Stephen Smith created the plates used for mounting the Torah mantels.



Know your ALEPH-BET

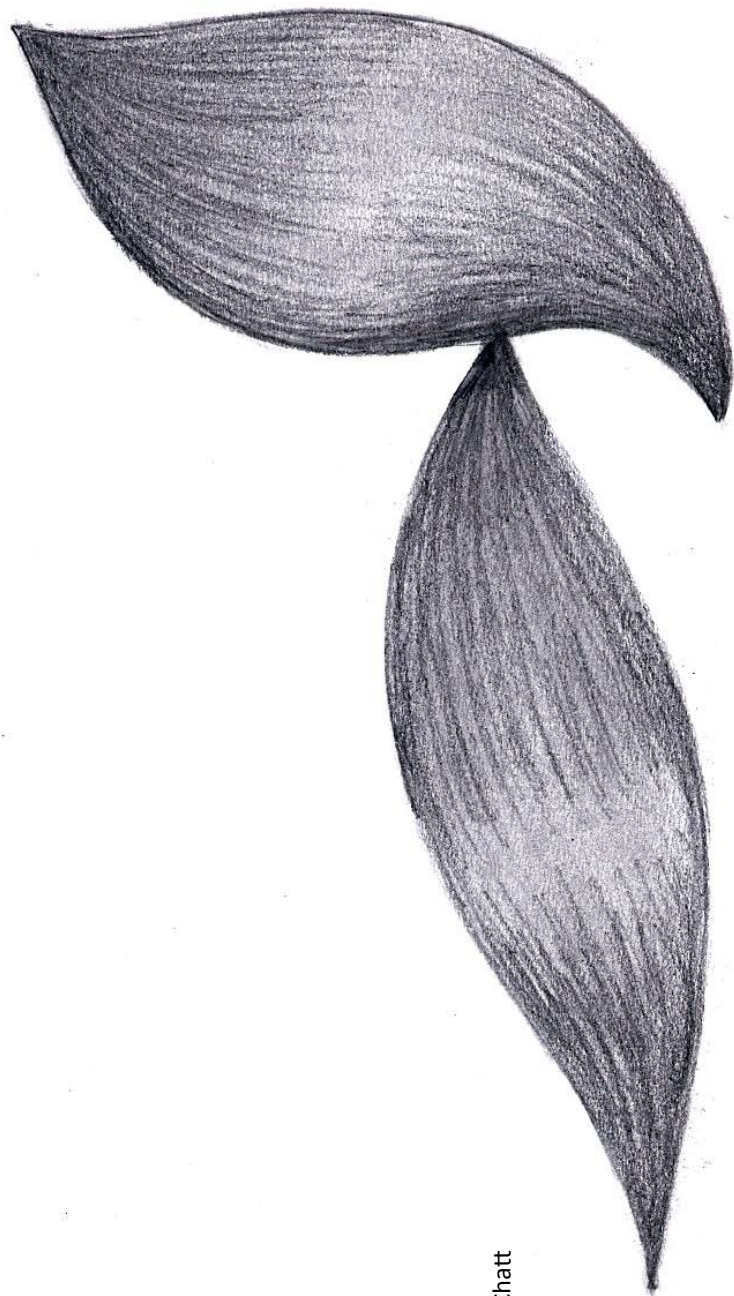
The Zayin

The name for the letter zayin is a word with two meanings that seem to be unrelated: *Zayin* means either 'sword' or 'sustenance, harvest.' That seems like a strange combination of meanings for one and the same word. If we look at how the letter evolved over time, though, we can imagine how those two meanings combined. The original shape of the letter, the Phoenician **𐤆**, was understood to depict a plow; the shape of the Hebrew letter **ז** was understood to represent a sword. The word *zayin* was the same in both languages. Both meanings seem to be reflected by the letter's shifting shape. Today, we know that same letter as the Greek Zeta—our 'Z.'

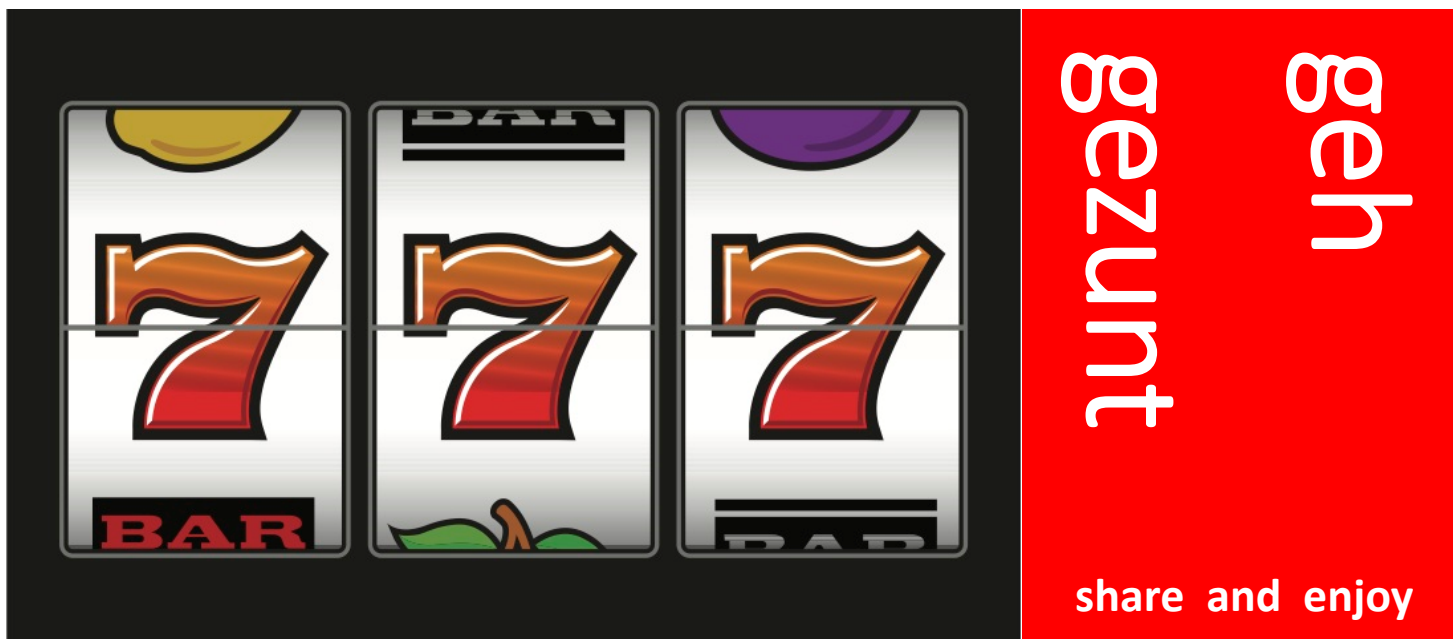
Z₇ Not only has Zayin morphed into our Z – the same letter, being the seventh letter in the aleph bet, has also given us the Arabic cypher '7.' Seven is one of those important numbers for Jews, and it seems to pop up everywhere. You will recall that the very theme for this year's High Holy Days was the number seven (the multiple meanings of the root shin-bet-ayin), and that our new ark is adorned with carvings of the seven fruits of Israel. From March to May this year, we counted the seven times seven days of the Omer. There are seven candles on a menorah, and Shabbat is the seventh day, rest after creation.

The connections to Shabbat, to rest and peace after creation, and to the original meaning of the Phoenician letter might give us a good idea of what to do with our swords: Beat them back into ploughshares. Make bread, not war.

Ralf



Rosalyn Chatt



The lucky number Seven

Rabbi Aaron L. Raskin tells the following story about the number seven:

Rabbi Jacob J. Hecht, o.b.m., my maternal grandfather, once told me the following story: In the times when the Jews lived in the shtetl—long before the New York Lottery came along—there would be a traveling lottery “agent” who would station himself every week in a different shtetl and sell tickets. In this one particular town everyone bought a ticket. Everyone, that is, besides Shlamazal. You all know what a shlamazal is: someone who has two left hands and two left feet—who can’t do anything right. Shlamazal refused to buy a ticket. After a lot of arm twisting, the shtetl people convinced Shlamazal to buy a ticket, and he did. In those days you wrote your own number on the ticket and then you put the ticket in a communal hat. When the ticket was drawn, to everyone’s surprise, the winner was... Shlamazal!

When asked how he won, he answered with a newfound intelligence: “Ah, it was very simple. Everyone knows that to win a lottery, you only need two things: brains and mazal. Now, my mother always told me that seven is a lucky number. Seven reminds us of the Shabbos, the seventh and holiest day of the week. Seven reminds us of the seventh year called Shemittah, the Sabbatical year when the land lay fallow; also the Hakhel year—the year when all of Israel, men, women, and children, came to the Holy Temple to be inspired by the king—which took place once every seven years. So I used my brains. I said, ‘If one times seven is good and holy, then seven times seven is even better and holier.’ So for my number, I picked forty-eight.” The people shouted, “But seven times seven is forty-nine!!” Shlamazal said, “Yeh, that’s where the mazal comes in. I was never good in mathematics.”



October BIRTHDAYS

10-07 Ellie Joffe	10-09 Dennis and Penny Cutler	10-11 David Huneycutt	10-15 Adam Roberts
10-17 Linda VanArsdale	10-25 John Jensen	10-25 Bryston and Emory Spivock	10-29 Phyllis Herschenfeld

YAHRZEITS

10-12 Morris Miller father of Ellie Joffe	10-24 Annadine K. Jaffee mother of Marilyn Atlas	10-25 Wilhelm Thiede father of Ralf Thiede
10-26 Jacqueline Hutchins aunt of Arlene Filkoff	10-31 Hulda Dorzback mother of the late Ruth Kingberg	

Flea Market

Or Olam is planning another flea market. Do you have any items? Contact Earl and Cheryl Greenwald (president@or-olam.org and outreach@or-olam.org).



If you need to add a date to the temple calendar or check the availability of meeting space, please contact: templeadmin@or-olam.org

President: president@or-olam.org

Religious school: school@or-olam.org

Membership coordinator: membership@or-olam.org

Submissions to the shmoozeletter: editor@or-olam.org

Rabbi Dr. Barbara Thiede: rabbi.thiede@or-olam.org

Caring Committee: caringcommittee@or-olam.org

Outreach Committee: outreach@or-olam.org

Treasurer: treasurer@or-olam.org

P.O. Box 362
Huntersville NC 28070-0362

Phone: **704-720-7577**

CONTACT INFO