

shmooze letter

November 2013



It's a Thanksmitzvahpaloozukkah!

Put down that turkey leg and join us at John Jensen's bar mitzvah on Saturday, November 30, at the NASCAR Hall of Fame in Charlotte. No simulators here; this is the real thing. To follow Preston's joyous service will be a tough act, but John is up to the task and will add his own unique qualities. Come and be reminded of Judaism's bright future by the enthusiasm of Or Olam's young people. And learn about the mysterious world of Jewish NASCAR journalists in [Viv Bernstein's blog](#) 'The Merry Jews of NASCAR' – it even mentions John's bar mitzvah.

Saturday, November 30

10:00 am, NASCAR Hall of Fame, The Legends Room
400 E Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28202

It's an ISJL Weekend! (see p. 4)

Our new Religious School curriculum from the Institute for Southern Jewish Life (ISJL) comes with perks. Not only do we have a comprehensive program that is fun and teachable, we also are encouraged to host regular visits from our ISJL intern. Our fall visit from [Elaine Barenblat](#) is on the weekend of November 8-10, and it will be an activity-filled weekend indeed.

[Kabbalat Shabbat](#) on Friday the 8th will be led by Rabbi Barbara with our religious school students playing key roles. Saturday afternoon and evening will be full of teacher training with Elaine, learning opportunities for adults and children, and a potluck supper and havdalah to enjoy together. Sunday's school session will be a group experience with Elaine leading everyone in a study of tzedakah and Jewish heroes and heroines.

An evite was sent last week to get a count for dinner. Please let us know if you will be joining us for Saturday's activities.

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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!

Light the Menorah and Serve up a Little Thanks...

It's Thanksgivukkah!



We are lucky to be alive at this particular time.

After all, what is happening this November is not going to happen again for tens of thousands of years. Secular time and Jewish time are intersecting in wonderful and strange ways in just a few weeks. This year, Chanukkah is a happening thing on Thanksgiving Day.

The last time such a thing happened was back in 1888 (notice the happy chai that begins that number!). The next time the two holidays will converge, according to Jonathan Mizrahi, a quantum physicist, will be in 76695.

What do these two holidays have in common? An overabundance of food, obviously.

More seriously: The Pilgrims and the Jews of Maccabean times knew what it was to have their right to worship as they pleased challenged. Both holidays are about, in part, giving thanks for the gifts of wholeness and peace.

One way the rabbis extract additional meanings from the word *Chanukkah* is to point out that the first three letters of the word, *chet-nun-hey*, form a root that means 'to settle oneself,' 'to rest.' That might be worth remembering this Thanksgiving. We could commit to settling and resting, to spending time with family and friends instead of the clothing racks and shelves of electronics at the local mall.

We began 5774 focusing on the many meanings of the root *shinn-bet-ayin*, a root that evokes beautifully varied meanings, from simple abundance to making a pledge or a vow. *Shinn-bet-ayin* also stands for seven, the number of completion.

Most of you, I hope, still have your Books of Seven. May I make a suggestion?

Take advantage of the overlapping holidays. On Thanksgiving (and Chanukkah!), express your thanks for the gifts you have received in your lives. Then, dedicate those first seven nights of the

Millev Harperdes

From the

Heart of the

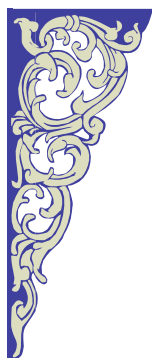
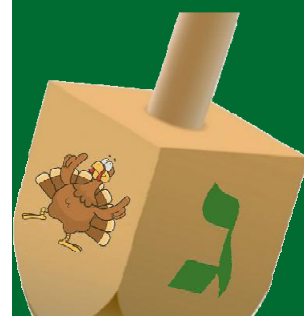
Orchard

festival of rededication to thanksgiving. Put cards and Post-It notes under the chanukkiah and then light the candles. Express the abundance and gratitude you feel. Keep the notes and cards in your Books of Seven along with the poetry and notes from High Holy Days. Remember the vows you made at the beginning of the New Year? Remember the celebrations of wholeness, the hopes you felt? Take the first seven days of Chanukkah to rededicate yourself, to permit yourself time for settling and resting.

Open gifts on the eighth night of Chanukkah, after you have spent the first seven days extending the spirit of Thanksgiving. Merge the purpose of these two holidays, take stock and give thanks.

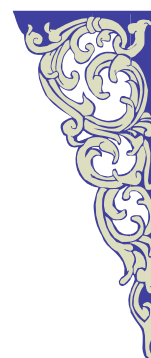
Thanksgiving and Chanukkah will never happen again in our lifetimes in quite this way. May yours be filled with an awareness of your blessings, a conscious acknowledgement of your gratitude, and a rededication to creating a world filled with wholeness and peace.

Rabbi Barbara



In our next *Shmoozletter*, Marilyn Atlas will revive and re-vision "The Kvelling Corner." The TOO definition of *kvelling* is: 'Talking with Beaming Pride about the People you Love.' TOO has so many amazing people and events to "kvell" about. Even the smallest contribution that each person makes to further our TOO congregation is something to kvell about. You are welcome to write to her about TOO members and sponsored events that you want to kvell about. Her e-mail address is:

Marilynaf@aol.com.





ISJL Weekend, November 8-10

Friday 11/8	7 p.m.	Kabbalat Shabbat with Rabbi Barbara and our Religious School students
Saturday 11/9	2-4 p.m.	Teacher training
	4-6 p.m.	Movie for children
		Adult and Teen Ed: The Real Story of Chanukkah. A look at what we really know about the history of the holiday. What a different story!
		Jewish Art — Art through a Jewish Lens. This class will look at Jewish artists and the commandment that they must wrestle with: ‘Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth...’ (Exodus 20:3)
	6-8 p.m.	Potluck supper and havdalah
Sunday 11/10		Religious School with Elaine

Board of Directors' Meeting

October 27, 2013

7:00 p.m., via conference call

[Earl Greenwald, Cheryl Greenwald, Charlotte Miller, Michael Filkoff, Ginger Jensen, Robbin Smith, and Rabbi Barbara Thiede]

Temple Or Olam's Board of Directors met Sunday, October 27, at 7 p.m. via conference call. Here are some highlights of the meeting:

- ✧ Approved Fundraising Committee policy and added to Policies and Procedures manual.
- ✧ Reports by committee chairs and treasurer, focusing on membership and promotion. Parents are asked to invite Jewish families to services.
- ✧ A Board retreat on Nov. 02 will be devoted to a discussion of membership and growth strategies.

Fundraising Initiatives

Temple Or Olam's Fundraising Committee is hard at work gathering awesome donations for our future yard sale as well as for our action at Dinner, Dancing and Desserts. The committee has also come up with a wonderful way to spend your Christmas Eve.... Packing gifts and earning donations. Check out opportunities to help our congregation secure its financial health.

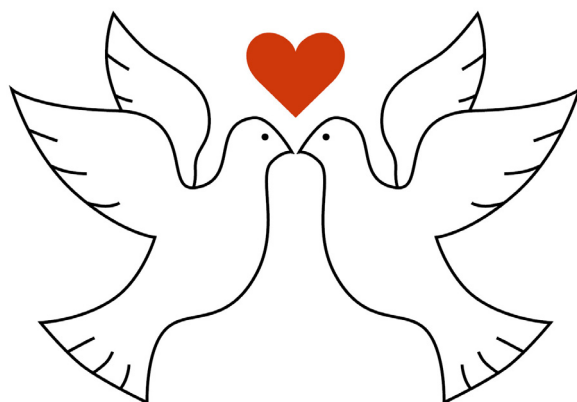
Dec. 24 Gift Wrapping: A fun event that all adults and teens can join is the gift-wrapping booth at Bass Pro Shops in the Carolina Mills Mall. This is a very busy store at holiday time, and we have snagged the prime day, Christmas Eve. Customers pay for the gift wrapping, and we get to keep the donations. But we need wrappers! If you are handy with scissors and tape, we want you. Even if you are encumbered with two left thumbs, we need you to take orders, to box items, and to be essentially useful. Contact Cheryl Greenwald to volunteer—cg@greenwalds.net.

Yard Sale: Please don't forget our 2014 yard sale when you are doing that New Year's cleanout. Call Cheryl for pickup or advice.

News for the Jews

Our Partner in 3D: Dove House Children's Advocacy Center

Several Temple Or Olam members attended the fall Dove House fundraising luncheon on September 10. The Dove House Children's Advocacy Center serves sexually-abused children with concern for their personal welfare as well as their non-offending family members, focusing on healing. Prosecutors and government agencies work with Dove House to create a safe place for children to be able to share their experience and get justice. Dove House Advocates guide each child through the entire process from their interview with the authorities to court appearances and at trial. In one of the speeches at the event, an Advocate spoke of her struggle as she spends her days working with the children and helping them through their process: 'I can't explain the unexplainable; I just try to make sense of the unthinkable.'



Save the Date: February 8

Dove House holds many fundraising events to have the capital available to run at full capacity. Temple Or Olam is happy to support Dove House through the shared proceeds of our **Dinner Dancing & Dessert** event on February 8. With the able assistance of Dove House volunteers, Or Olam is planning a first-class evening for your Valentine's Day celebration. There will be a silent auction and a delicious catered meal, as well as raffles, games, live auctions, and live music. Tickets will be ready for sale soon! It should be another wonderful night for Temple Or Olam and our community to give back and help heal our world.

Chanukkah + Christmas = Or Olam + McGill



Chanukkah sneaks in early this year, right on Thanksgiving. We will celebrate the end of those nine days on Sunday, December 8, with a joint holiday party/dinner with McGill from 3-7 p.m. Everyone had a great time at the last "Chrismakkuh" party a few years ago, and this one should be even better. And of course, food! A potluck dinner is planned.

Do you have an idea for sharing Chanukkah customs and fun? A foolproof recipe? Songs, skits, crafts? Send your suggestions to

afilkoff@gmail.com

or templeadmin@or-olam.org.


And then plan on being part of the action!




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

Know your ALEPH-BET


The Chet

Rabbi Benjamin Blech, assoc. prof. of Talmud at Yeshiva University in New York, and Roy Doliner, a tour guide at the Vatican, have just published *The Sistine Secrets: Unlocking the Codes in Michelangelo's Defiant Masterpiece*. The authors have found that Michelangelo had arranged figures in the nine scenes from the Hebrew Bible to suggest letters of the aleph bet. The arrangement of Judith and her handmaiden carrying the head of the Assyrian general Holofernes looks like the letter *chet*. The authors suggest it stands for *chesed* 'loving kindness.' But who knows, it could as well stand for *chai* 'life,' which the general quit when he was a head.

 The way in which the letter is traditionally written (as it is in both our Torahs) certainly does bear a resemblance to Michelangelo's fresco: It is a combination of the letters *vav* followed by *zayin*, linked by a tent (the technical term is *chatoteret*). Note that Michelangelo's Judith lifts a cloth over their heads like a tent. The letters *vav* and *zayin* refer to the feminine and masculine (and are used as the symbols for the two genders in grammar), so one fond reading of the letter is that it forms a *chuppa* for the two and makes them one. Maybe in ancient times, the female and the male aspects of God were understood to hold up the sky?

 The origin of the letter is a hieroglyph that denoted an enclosure or 'courtyard'; it became the Phoenician letter , and later the familiar Hebrew .



Numerically,  has the value 'eight.' Naturally, symbolic references to 8 abound, beyond our eight-day holidays Sukkot and Chanukka:

- ✧ The traditional day for a Brit Milah is the eighth day after birth (Gen. 17.12);
- ✧ Eight people were saved on Noah's ark;
- ✧ God confirmed his covenant with Abraham eight times;
- ✧ The High Priest was decked in eight vestments;
- ✧ Eight threads in a tzitzit;
- ✧ And yes, *ochos candelicos*.

It is a nice letter, the *chet*, if you pronounce it properly ('khet,' not 'tshet' - constrict your throat). It stands for chuppa, chai, chanukkah, chesed... so make a little toast to it next Shabbos. L'chaim!

Ralf

A Bar Mitzvah Invitation

Dear

It is with great stress (emotional and physical) and unbelievable financial hardship beyond your comprehension that Rebecca and I cordially invite you to join us in kvelling over our wonderful son, Jonathan Sam, as he is called up to read the maftir and haftorah on his bar mitzvah day.

Jonathan Sam's special service takes place on Shabbos, May 19, at the Hendon United Synagogue. We realize this service might take place on FA Cup final day, but you can always tape it – the match that is, not the service.

The service commences at the ungodly (please excuse the language) hour of 9 o'clock in the morning and we would like you to be there at this time, even though you don't really need to be there until 10:30 a.m., when the real action starts.

The service lasts for three hours, and we hope you will be able to survive our rabbi's speech and our chazan's voice. If you do, you can skip the kiddush (which is usually only biscuits and grape juice), which will take place in the Ladies Guild room. This is just for those not invited to our main affair, which takes place later on that evening.

So please join us at 7 p.m. for an over-the-top, shmaltzy, ostentatious semi-kosher evening meal at the MCC (Mishegass Country Club). Rebecca wants me to mention that we had to join the MCC just to book their hall and, oy vey, you wouldn't believe how much they charged us.

We've booked lots of expensive and noisy entertainment, including Minky's Kosher Jammers Orchestra (with 6 singers) and Moshe the Jester.

Apart from Jonathan Sam's friends, the guests will include 50 unruly teenagers, no doubt wearing expensive outfits and fake bling, and 70 middle-aged adults with lots of botox and real bling. At least a quarter of the guests will be hormonally and/or chronologically challenged, while others will act stupid while under the influence of the Palwin table wine we've ordered. And no doubt many will complain about the food (we would hope that you won't be one of them.)

Please have the courtesy to complete the enclosed RSVP card in the next few days. I don't want to receive it at the last minute - I just can't take any more stress. Also note that if you indicate on the card that you will be attending, I will have no choice but to invoice you \$100 per person if you subsequently don't show up for any reason.

In terms of what present to give Jonathan Sam, may we suggest it should be: flat; made of paper; with a signature and account number on it; and presented inside a small white envelope. Any other types of gift are a waste of your time and ours.

We hope you can make it.

PS: Please bring your own kippot, as I don't have any money left to buy these.

Geh
gezunt

share and enjoy



CALENDAR

- Nov. 03 5 p.m. Torah study
- Nov. 07 7 p.m. Adult Hebrew via conference call
- Nov. 08 7 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat with Religious School students participating
- Nov. 09 All day: ISJL activities (see p. 4, above)
- Nov. 10 ISJL Religious School gathering
5 p.m. Torah study
- Nov. 14 7 p.m. Adult Hebrew
- Nov. 17 7 p.m. Torah study
- Nov. 21 7 p.m. Adult Hebrew
- Nov. 24 5 p.m. Torah study
7 p.m. Board of Directors meeting via conference call
- Nov. 28 *No Adult Hebrew*—Thanksgiving, First day of Chanukkah
- Nov. 30 John Jensen's bar mitzvah (see cover page)
- Dec. 05 Last day of Chanukkah
- Dec. 08 3—7 p.m. Chrismukkah party with McGill
- Dec. 13 7 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat Torah service

November BIRTHDAYS

11-11

Brian Cutler

11-12

Richard Jacobson

11-23

Philip Jacobson

11-29

Samuel Leder

YAHREZEITS

11-06

Goldie Barna

mother of Cheryl Greenwald

11-12

Belle Wetterhahn

grandmother of Michael Filkoff

11-17

Gertrude Resnick

mother of Phyllis Herschenfeld

11-20

Dorothy Filkoff

stepmother of Michael Filkoff

11-21

John Jensen

father of Tom Jensen

11-26

Beno Chait

father of Sergio Chait

Donations

Temple Or Olam would like to thank the following members and visitors for their donations:

- ✧ Alan Coffman to the Ruth Kingberg Memorial Fund.
- ✧ Joseph Hunter in memory of Anne C Hunter
- ✧ Robert and Muriel Ketay
- ✧ Arlene and Michael Filkoff in honor of Ginger teaching at Religious School
- ✧ Arlene and Michael Filkoff in honor of Ralf's visit to the Religious School with the shofar
- ✧ Heidi Lasser
- ✧ Rabbi Barbara and Dr. Ralf Thiede in memory of Wilhelm Thiede and Suzie Shapiro

If you need to add a date to the temple calendar or check the availability of meeting space, please contact:

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president@or-olam.org

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