

# Shmoosze letter

December 2013



## Decompress and Bless

### Dec. 13 Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 7:00

Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday the 13th will be a gentle family-friendly and musical experience. This service would be a wonderful time to invite guests and friends with children. Relax with us in an atmosphere of warmth and joy as we close out 2013. We will congregate in the large classroom (not in the sanctuary).

### Jan. 03 Kabbalat Shabbat Service, 7:00

This will be our sweet start of 2014—right between football weekends. Like our service on the thirteenth, this service will be especially appropriate for guests and friends with children. Relax with us in an atmosphere of warmth and joy as we open 2014.

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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!

## News of our Imminent Demise is

### Greatly Exaggerated



If you just looked at the headlines, you might feel you have reason to worry.

Recently, newspapers across the country have had a great deal to say about the Pew Report on American Jewish life. Some Jewish leaders termed the report's conclusions downright disastrous for the future of American Jewry. They claimed the study proved that American Jews were less educated, less committed to Jewish institutions, and less religious.

According to the report, the interviewees identified themselves about two thirds of the time as Jews by religion. Around 22%, however, claimed to be Jews of no religion. Those identifying themselves in the latter category described themselves as Jewish by ancestry, ethnicity, and culture. The Pew report claimed that the latter group had tripled since 2000.

As I said on WFAE's 'Charlotte Talks,' the conclusions the Pew report was drawing were based on comparing their numbers with those of the National Jewish Population Survey (NJPS) of 2000. But here's something worth noting: The 2000 study self-consciously chose not to include Jews with "weak" connections to Judaism in their research.

That led to the erroneous conclusion that Jews were far more likely to identify themselves as Jewish by religion thirteen years ago, and that the number of Jews who had decided they were Jews of no religion had skyrocketed in the past decade or so.

Go back, however, to a NJPS 1990 report. In that report, twenty percent of Jews chose 'none' for religion. Twenty-two percent of Jews interviewed in 2013 said they were Jews of no religion. Somehow, 2% over 23 years just doesn't look all that significant a rise in Jews without religious affiliation and ties to me.

What's the point?

Jews have always had lots of ways of identifying as Jewish. Jews are a people group, and our ancestors did not separate religion from culture, ancestry, even geography. Where you were born and whom you were born to determined the kind of religious practices you inherited. Born in Athens? Athena would be the most important deity for you

# Millev Harperdes

From the  
Heart of the  
Orchard

and yours. Born in Alexandria? Egyptian deities would be your source of divine knowledge and power.

Born in Israel? Your god was YHVH and the temple practice and sacrifice was your people's source of much of its religious ritual.

Here's why I am hopeful about the future of Jews and Judaism:

- ✧ Lots of children of intermarried folks are growing up to be Jewish. Inter-marriage is not a threat to our people – it's a source of diversity, commitment, and even growth. Just take Temple Or Olam: Our intermarried couples are the most supportive couples you could hope for in the life of a congregation.
- ✧ The total number of Jews in America has risen substantially over the years. In 1990, the estimates put the population at about 5.5 million. Now the best statistics suggest that we weren't counting so well in previous surveys. There are certainly well over 6 million Jews in America.
- ✧ It looks like Jewish practice is increasing – particularly around Passover seder attendance and fasting on Yom Kippur.
- ✧ What's happening at TOO? Our children are growing up to be literate and attached to their Jewish identities. We are expanding our learning and understanding of all sorts of things – from Torah study to Hebrew. We may be small, but we are committed.

Jews have been around on this planet for a very long time. I think we'll be around for a long time to come, despite the headlines.

Let's be optimistic. Then let's continue working to strengthen our commitments: To community, to family, and to Temple Or Olam.



*Rabbi Barbara*

To listen to the Charlotte Talks episode with Rabbi Barbara, go to [wfae.org/post/thanksgiving-shifts-judaism](http://wfae.org/post/thanksgiving-shifts-judaism)



Welcome to the new version of the adult education column and its new name, chosen by the members from several suggestions. Thank you, Earl! Our committee, which welcomes your input and involvement, is working hard to get things going for this year. Our first activity is the Israeli dancing at the Chanukah party, followed by another dancing opportunity on January 11 (which we hope will become an ongoing activity), and a trip in March to see the IMAX movie "Jerusalem." We are also working on a class by Rabbi Barbara on "Where was God?" and possibly Jewish cooking, Friday Night at the Movies, and a phone-in discussion class we are calling "Maimonides Café."

In order to put our priorities straight and give everyone an interesting topic, an email survey will be rolling out in the next week or two. If we do not receive your response in a week's time, we will call to get your responses. The callers will have the response forms in front of them and will gladly mark the forms for you. If you have not emailed your response, please respond to the caller so that your responses are recorded.

At Temple Or Olam, learning is a legacy we have received and will pass on to our children. We hope that you will participate as we plan future learning opportunities for all to enjoy!

Arlene Filkoff, Chair  
Adult Education Committee



## Israeli Dancing with Penny

January 11, 2014 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at McGill

Rediscover the exhilaration of traditional Israeli dances and breeze into the new year! We need at least twelve preregistered adults, so please register today! We are encouraging advance payment to avoid handling money on Shabbat if at all possible. To preregister, please go to [www.or-olam.org](http://www.or-olam.org) and click on the PayPal link; specify "Israeli Dancing." Prices are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children.

For questions, please call Arlene Filkoff at 704-875-2352 or e-mail [afilkoff@gmail.com](mailto:afilkoff@gmail.com).

# Board of Directors' Meeting

November 24, 2013

7:00 p.m., via conference call

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

Your Board of Directors met on Sunday, Nov. 24, via conference call. Key points are below. The next meeting is Sunday, Dec. 22 at 7:00 pm via conference call.

- ✧ Membership Committee is working on a greeter program as a welcoming presence to our activities for both members and visitors. Research shows that personal contact is the best way to attract new members.
- ✧ Adult Education Committee received approval from the Board to charge fees for programs that have an expense component. All programs will be planned as much as possible to be revenue neutral.
- ✧ Fundraising Committee is off to a good start with \$476.35 income from two quick events: the jewelry sale at Cox Mill Elementary Fall bazaar and the gift wrapping at Bass Pro in Nov. Next big opportunity is gift wrapping at Bass Pro again on Christmas Eve.
- ✧ Approved the membership of Melanie Carty.
- ✧ Approved the concept proposed by President Earl Greenwald of a small ad hoc committee to evaluate our facilities and propose options for the future. This is another step in the Board's long-range planning effort.

## Board Committee on Facility Needs

Temple Or Olam is moving into another decade. This year is our tenth anniversary and will be celebrated in a grand way at our Dinner Dancing & Dessert event on February 8. Don't miss it!

An anniversary is also a time to take another look at who we are and how we operate. The Board of Directors has already begun a long-range planning discussion around membership and future growth. A companion to that discussion is a fresh look at the facilities we use, whether they meet our congregation's needs, and are there alternatives.

An ad hoc committee is being formed to gather some options to inform those questions. This is a short-term commitment of about two months to provide alternatives, not necessarily solutions. Can you lend some expertise in real estate, space planning, financing, or growth issues? Contact our president at [president@or-olam.org](mailto:president@or-olam.org).

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, and Dessert** event on February 8 at the Mooresville Citizen Center. 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.

## Another Mother of a Chanukkah Party - Sunday Dec. 8, 3:00 - 7:00

We need you and your guests! Join us to

- ✧ enjoy professional instruction in Israeli dance
- ✧ craft decorative ornaments with your kids
- ✧ win some gelt in dreidel games
- ✧ hear stories and songs by Rabbi Barbara
- ✧ eat mounds of traditional foods
- ✧ have another chance at a 'dancing rabbi' toy
- ✧ light the menorahs you bring and remember why we are here



We have invited the community. Make this a special occasion for everyone by bringing a generous dish to share, by volunteering to lead a craft table, and/or by helping with setup/decorating/takedown. Email [templeadmin@or-olam.org](mailto:templeadmin@or-olam.org) with your commitments and suggestions. Thanks.

There will be child care from 2:30 to 7:00.

See you there!

## Wrap it up!

We had a taste of the holiday rush at Bass Pro Shops a couple of weeks ago and picked up some easy fundraising income for our budget. We will have the granddaddy of all wrapping opportunities again on Christmas Eve. **We need everyone to take a 1 or 2-hour shift.**

Fundraising gift wrapping at Bass Pro Shop (Concord Mills Mall)

Tuesday, Dec. 24, 8:00 am - 6:00 pm

Contact Cheryl Greenwald at [cg@greenwalds.net](mailto:cg@greenwalds.net)

## Academic Time: Please Keep it in Mind

The Fall semester at UNC Charlotte is ending, and that means the Thiede's are making their way through (literally) hundreds of exams and papers. Rabbi Barbara and Ralf will be communicating with us only when an emergency arises so they can focus on completing their work on deadline. Many thanks for your understanding – they appreciate it very much.

Wednesday Dec. 5 through Thursday, Dec. 12

E-mail Charlotte Miller at  
[templeadmin@or-olam.org](mailto:templeadmin@or-olam.org)



# Kvelling Corner

My first kvell is about our children and teens who participated in Temple Or Olam's November Children's Service. I was so enchanted by their sparkling eyes and joyful smiles. Their singing was so beautiful, enthusiastic, and right on key. I was amazed at how the students knew when to stand and when to sit. My heart was filled with the knowledge that our Jewish past is carried forward and becoming our Jewish future.

Thank you to Keri and Arlene for being such great religious teachers. Thank you to Rabbi Barbara for having such an amazing voice and for teaching the students how to sing. And, last but not least, I want to thank all the parents who wake up early in the morning to shlepp their kids to our religious school.

Remember - if you have someone, or an event, that you want to kvell about, send the information to Marilyn. Kvelling is good for the soul.

[Marilynaf@aol.com](mailto:Marilynaf@aol.com).



## Der Magid un der Gvir

A shtetl iz mushve gevorn mit a magid, er zol darshenen in shul yedn donershtig tsvey chadoshim tsayt. Iz dem ershtn mitvoch, iz der magid gekumen tsum gvir fun shtetl un hot em gebetn layen a hunderter ot af eyn tog. Morgn in ovnt vet er em avekgebn. Der gvir flegt gevöyntlach afile nit layen kein gelt azöy hendem-pendem, ober a b'kovedem idn, a magid hot er gelien. Af morgn noch der droshe hot der magid opgegebn dem nogid dem hunderter un hot zach fayn badankt. Dem tsveytn mitvoch iz er vider gekumen tsum gvir mit der zelibiker bakoshe un af'n ander tog vider opgegebn. Azöy hot er geton a mol finef. Un der gvir hot gezen, az der magid git em op dem zelibikn hunderter, velchn er git em. Hot er em gefregt: "Ich farshtey nit, rebe: ich ze, az ir darft dem hunderter gor nit hobn, tsu vos layt ir ba mir?" Macht der magid: 'Emes, ich darf dos gelt nit, ober ir farshteyt, - az me hot a hunderter in keshene, ret zich gor andersh!"

(Immanuel Olsvanger, Röyte Pomerantsen, Schocken, New York 1947: 164-65)

## The Preacher and the Rich Man

A shtetl has reached an understanding with a preacher; he is to give a drash at shul every Thursday for two months. It's the first Wednesday, and the preacher went to the shtetl's rich man and asked to borrow a hundred for one day. He would return it the next morning. The rich man was not in the habit of loaning money willy-nilly, but to an honorable Jew - a preacher - he did give the loan. The morning after the drash, the preacher did return the bill and thanked the man nicely. On the second Wednesday, he returned to the rich man with the same request, and he reimbursed him just the same on the following day. He did that five times. And the rich man noticed that the man returned to him the exact same bill that he had given him. So he asked: "I don't understand, rabbi: I see that you don't need the one hundred, so what are you borrowing it from me for in the first place?" And the preacher went: 'Okay, I don't need the money, but you understand, - with one hundred in your wallet, you just talk differently!"

(transl. Ralf Thiede)

## Precious Moments



On Nov. 30, John Jensen became bar mitzvah and made history by having the event in the NASCAR Hall of Fame. Here he is functioning as tour guide to his guests and to the rabbi (in red, lower left).



Arlene Filkoff and Cheryl Greenwald sold jewelry at the Cox Mill Elementary Fall Bazaar. Together with a second event, a gift wrapping booth at Concord Mills Mall, the fundraising team has brought in almost five hundred dollars.



CALENDAR

- Dec. 04 7 p.m. Adult Hebrew
- Dec. 08 3 - 7 p.m. Chanukkah Party at McGill - guests welcome  
child care available 2:30 - 7:00 p.m.
- Dec. 11 7 p.m. Adult Hebrew
- Dec. 13 7 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat family service - guests welcome
- Dec. 15 5 p.m. Torah study
- Dec. 22 5 p.m. Torah study  
7 p.m. Board Meeting
- Dec. 24 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Gift Wrapping fundraiser at Pro Bass Shop, Concord Mills
- Dec. 29 5 p.m. Torah study
- Jan. 02 7 p.m. Adult Hebrew
- Jan. 03 7 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat service
- Jan. 05 5 p.m. Torah study
- Jan. 11 4 - 6 p.m. Israeli Dancing at McGill  
(preregister at [www.or-olam.org](http://www.or-olam.org))
- Feb. 08 Save the date: Dinner, Dancing, and Dessert!

## December BIRTHDAYS

12-03

Caleb Malin

12-14

Jinmey Jacobson

12-08

Ralf Thiede

12-28

Sergio Chait

## YAHARZEITS

12-01

Dr. Irving Joffe  
husband of Ellie Joffe

12-08

Celia Clark  
great-aunt of Michael Filkoff

12-05

Mortimer Berkey  
great-uncle of Arlene Filkoff

12-29

Toby O'Callaghan  
sister of Cheryl Greenwald

## Donations

Thank you to Michael and Arlene Filkoff for their donation in memory of Dorothy Filkoff (Michael's stepmother and Michelle & Rachel's grandmother) and of Belle Wetterhahn (Michael's grandmother and Michelle & Rachel's great-grandmother). Thank you also to the following members who are sponsoring the Israeli dance instructor for our Chanukkah party on Dec. 8:

- ✧ Heather and Sergio Chait
- ✧ Marilyn Atlas and Scott Needham
- ✧ Arlene and Michael Filkoff
- ✧ Rabbi Barbara and Dr. Ralf Thiede
- ✧ Robbin and Stephen Smith

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

**templeadmin@or-olam.org**

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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**

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