



shmooze Letter

December 2014



Final Issue

As you no doubt have noticed, this month we adopted a push model of disseminating information. The *Loop*, e-mailed weekly, has turned out to be a more dynamic and timely way of getting information to you than the newsletter format. 'MiLev HaPardes' has morphed into mailings and blog entries by the rabbi. And the web site is being revised to have a more dynamic front page and drop-down menus.

This completes the tenth volume of *Shmoozeletters* going back to January 2004. If you have items that need to be posted or disseminated, please continue to send them to your temple administrator, Charlotte Miller.

Thank you for your loyalty and kind comments of those years.

With kind regards,

Ralf



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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.com](#). Explore, participate, have fun!

Joy, Understanding, and the Still Small Rabbi

She is one of the best gifts I have ever gotten. Naturally, she came home and immediately found herself a space on my desk, just to the side of the computer screen.

She was given to me by two of my congregants after Yom Kippur ended.

'She looks just like you!' he said.

'We couldn't resist,' she added.

Indeed, the first thing I noticed about Little Shulamit (besides the Torah scroll she held in her arms) was the fact that she was clearly either smiling a really huge grin or singing her heart out.

That would be me, at Kabbalat Shabbat services. Or at Religious School, dancing around with our kids. Or at... any number of congregational settings where the thing I most feel and most need is joy.

Perhaps this is what others need most, too? Last Friday, I watched a guest at our service dance with her little girl to a sweet and rousing rendition of *Oseh Shalom*. She clearly longed for the shalom she was dancing for. Her daughter felt as much, I suspect.

And then, this past Sunday, our newest member at Temple Or Olam sent me a note she had written to her adult children.

'We just returned from Friday services,' she told them. 'Like nothing either of us have ever experienced – or imagined occurring – in a synagogue! It was like being at a wedding: food, dancing and singing... We smiled, laughed and sang throughout! The spirit of goodness, sharing and love was intoxicating. I am so glad I found this place.'

Is it possible to make an entire congregation drunk on kindness and goodness?

I could wish for such inebriation. I long for us to remember our vows at Yom Kippur to do better in the coming year, to listen and to forgive, to love.

Every time new members join Temple Or Olam, I take some time to speak to them personally about congregational life. It is hard work to maintain a community, to work with different personalities, to keep the spiritual flames alive while accomplishing the more mundane tasks that are so necessary to each get-together, each program, each communal moment.



Millev HaParodes

From the
Heart of the
Orchard

I ask new congregants to remember, if they are hurt or disturbed by something I have done, to come to me, to speak with me or 'softly and soon.' Go directly to those you might be having any kind of miscommunication with, I ask. Trust them to be able to listen and respond just as you would – with love, with hope, with conviction in the essential goodness and kind intentions of all parties.



Joining a congregation is easy. Staying with one is hard.

Congregations are made of fallible human beings. New congregants who believe (not infrequently) that I am their ideal rabbi will find out in no time that I am just as human as they are.

We all make mistakes and they are often serious.

But most mistakes are also less grievous than they may seem, and much more forgivable than we want to admit. It is, after all, mostly our pride that makes it so difficult for us to forgive others when we feel hurt.

So here, right on my desk, stands my little Shulamit figurine. She is innocent and happy and she loves her Torah.

I want to be like my little figurine: Singing my heart's hopes to the Holy One of Blessing, wrapping the Torah to me, body and soul.

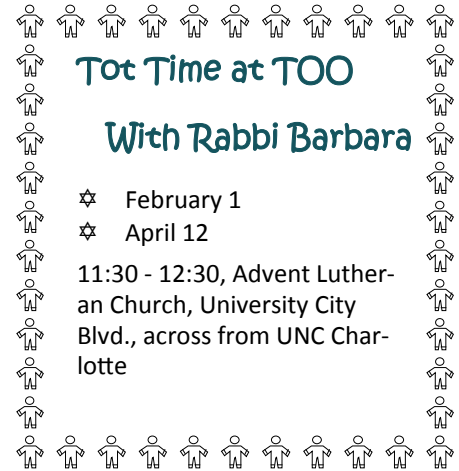
I want to be just like her.

Rabbi Barbara

The Wrap Artists had a Successful Performance

Our gift wrapping table at Concord Mills turned out to be a spectacularly successful fund raiser for the Religious School: Our volunteers raised an amazing \$1008.57. Thanks to

- ✧ Preston and Michael Berkowitz
- ✧ Arlene and Michael Filkoff
- ✧ ALL the Garcias
- ✧ Doris and Jacqueline Gordon
- ✧ Keri Huneycutt
- ✧ Richard, LingLing, JingJing, and Philip Jacobson
- ✧ Tom and Leanna Jensen
- ✧ Charlotte Miller
- ✧ Marci Mroz
- ✧ Steve and Robbin Smith
- ✧ Roz Sydney
- ✧ Evan and Leta VanArsdale and a friend of Leta's



Tot Time at TOO

With Rabbi Barbara

- ✧ February 1
- ✧ April 12

11:30 - 12:30, Advent Lutheran Church, University City Blvd., across from UNC Charlotte

Donations for November/December

- Michael Berkowitz for the Religious School
- Michael and Arlene Filkoff for the Ruth G. Kingberg Children's Education Fund
- Doris and Jason Gordon for the Religious School
- The Salant / Kanofsky families in honor of Sierra Kanofsky's bat mitzvah for the Building Fund
- Ralf and Barbara Thiede in memory of Wilhelm Thiede
- Margery and John White in memory of Ellie Joffe and in honor of Rabbi Barbara and Robbin Smith



I wanted to thank Arlene and everyone who was involved in the Shabbaton. The weekend was so much fun. I also want to congratulate Melanie Carty and Jacob Brayton on their recent engagement. Their faces are glowing with love and excitement. Robbin Smith asked me to kvell about Phillip Jacobson, who has recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout. Way to go!

Remember, if anyone wants to send me a kvell about someone in the TOO congregation, please email me at Marilynaf@aol.com. Kvelling is good for the soul!

It's Coming! Dinner, Dancing, & Dessert 2015



Our third annual Dinner Dancing & Dessert 'On the Wings of Love' is fast approaching on February 7, 2015, at the Mooresville Citizen Center. This is our major fundraiser for the year, supporting our budget and the Dove House Children's Center of Statesville. We have an expanded three-course dinner, beer and wine, dancing, both live and silent auctions of jewelry, painting, trips, baskets, tickets, and more.

How can you help?

- ✧ By buying tickets for yourselves and selling to your friends. Bring a group! We will be glad to arrange group seating. Just let us know. Tickets are a nice round \$50 each this year.
- ✧ By suggesting possible auction donors or soliciting them. Email Arlene at afilkoff@gmail.com for info.
- ✧ Would your business or someone you know like to be a sponsor? We have very reasonable sponsor packages that include tickets to the event and PR space. Email Arlene.
- ✧ As requested, our dinner menu is below.

Appetizers—out at 6:00 p.m.

Crostini, spinach and artichoke dip, mango and pineapple salsa, homemade lime chips

Dinner—out at 6:30 p.m.

Smoked Beef Brisket
Sweet Spiced Chicken / white and dark meat
Grilled Sweet Potatoes
Gourmet Macaroni and Cheese
Southwestern Baked Beans
Bread and Fruit Salad
Winter Green Salad

Red Velvet Cheesecake
Caramel Apple Cake
Chocolate Chip Kahlua
Lemon with Sweet Glaze



December **BIRTHDAYS**

12-03 Caleb Malin	12-06 Diego Garcia	12-08 Ralf Thiede	12-14 Jinmey Jacobson
12-25 Rebekkah Grossman	12-28 Sergio Chait	12-28 Anna Garcia	12-30 Azalee Everhart

12-01 Belle Wetterhahn grandmother of Michael Filkoff	12-01 Thomas Jetton father of William Jetton	12-06 Gertrude Resnick mother of Phyllis Herschenfeld	YAHREZEITS	
12-09 Dorothy Filkoff stepmother of Michael Filkoff	12-10 John Jensen father of Tom Jensen	12-12 Rose Solomon mother of Sylvia Jordan		12-15 Benno Chait father of Sergio Chait
12-19 Martha Marshall mother of Brenda Marshall	12-20 Dr. Irving Joffe	12-24 Mortimer Berkey great-uncle of Arlene Filkoff		12-27 Celia Clark great-aunt of Michael Filkoff

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