



## A Seder for Everyone

### Congregational Seder Second Night

Tuesday, April 15

6:00 PM

Join our annual Congregational Seder on the second night of Passover in the Sanctuary. Come share a delicious traditional Pesach meal as we celebrate the Festival of Freedom. Seating is limited; reserve early to assure your place at our seder table. For CST members only. If you can't make it to the second-night seder, you are welcome to come on Wednesday. If you do attend on Wednesday, please try to bring a non-member with you to experience our warm and welcoming Shomrei Torah Passover observance.

#### Members only

\$18 per adult, \$10 children 12 & under.

#### Reservations required –

Call (707) 578-5519 or reserve online at [www.shomreitorah.org](http://www.shomreitorah.org).

### Community Seder Third Night

Wednesday, April 16

6:00 PM

Come join us for the Feast of Freedom in our Sanctuary, Shomrei Torah's third night Passover seder for the whole community. All are welcome, no Jewish experience necessary. Interfaith? LGBT? There's a place at the table for you. Passover at Shomrei Torah is more than the re-telling of the ancient story of the Exodus; it honors our ongoing struggle for freedom, justice and equality everywhere.

#### The Entire Community is Welcome

\$18 per adult, \$10 children 12 & under.

#### Reservations required –

Call (707) 578-5519 or reserve online at [www.shomreitorah.org](http://www.shomreitorah.org).



Sponsored by the Social Action Committee of CST benefiting Jewish World Watch

Sunday, April 27th, 2014

Registration begins at 8:00 am/Event begins at 9:00

All Ages Invited! Family Friendly Event! Come walk with your STaRS friends (music and activities will be available for children).

On Sunday, April 27, please join your Congregation Shomrei Torah family, as we put our words into action and walk 3 miles together in support of helping those suffering from Genocide (begins and ends at CST). Teen Congregant Gabe Ferrick led the Walk for 5 years, raising over \$150,000 for JWW, supporting vital resources for so many who are suffering from terrible atrocities. The Walk will continue for its 6th Year! Co-chairs Noah Bacon (8th grade) and Jake Matalon (10th grade), in cooperation with CST's Social Action Committee will lead our community as we support this important cause. Together we can continue to make a difference.

Registration and Donations can be made at [WalktoEndGenocide.org](http://WalktoEndGenocide.org).

org. Interested in volunteering? Baking cookies, recruitment, registration - there are many opportunities to help. Or if you have any questions: Please call the CST office or email Jake and Noah at [WalktoEndGenocideSR@gmail.com](mailto:WalktoEndGenocideSR@gmail.com). Your support is greatly appreciated!

*"...join your CST family, as we put our words into action..."*

## HIGHLIGHTS

Board To Seek	
Members' Ideas	page 5
18 Years	page 6
Yahrzeit Change	page 8
B'nei Mitzvah	page 11



## Rabbis' Tisch

**Daniel Matt, "Shekhinah:  
The Feminine Half of God"**  
*Friday April 11 - 6:15 PM*



One of the boldest contributions of Kabbalah is the idea that God is equally female and male. Daniel Matt will briefly trace the development of Kabbalah and then focus on the concept of Shekhinah (the feminine aspect of God) from its rabbinic origins to its full flowering in the Zohar, where Shekhinah is identified with the Sabbath Bride.

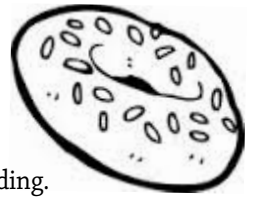
Daniel Matt is one of the world's leading authorities on Kabbalah. He has published over ten books, including *The Essential Kabbalah* (translated into seven languages), *Zohar: Annotated and Explained*, and *God and the Big Bang: Discovering Harmony between Science and Spirituality*. Daniel is nearing completion of his immense project of translating and annotating the Zohar, the masterpiece of Kabbalah.

RSVP to Denise in our office at 707-578-5519 or [denise@shomreitorah.org](mailto:denise@shomreitorah.org).

## Men's Bagel Club

*Sunday April 6 - 9:00 AM*

At the March Bagel Club brunch CST member Victor Pacheco, D.Psy, gave a description of the California Prison system mental health services which led to an active discussion with those attending. Our next two months will focus on issues facing our community



On April 6 Thea Hensel, one of the leaders of the Southeast Greenway, will talk to us about the options for the two mile long property owned by CalTrans that was originally purchased for the extension of Highway 12. Now that the extension is not going to be built, the area could become a public space with gardens, trails, and nature preserve.

On May 4 Matt Stevens will talk about the SMART train that will eventually run from Cloverdale to Larkspur Ferry and what to look forward to when it starts operation. Matt is the Community Education and Outreach person for SMART.

Before each presentation we will enjoy a traditional breakfast of Bagels, Lox and Cream Cheese with all the accompaniments. Please be sure to reserve your Brunch by RSVPing to [CSTbagelmen@gmail.com](mailto:CSTbagelmen@gmail.com) or calling 829-1388.



Rabbi George speaking at the March Bagel Club.

Photos by Phyllis Nesbitt

## Single Payer Health Care Program

*Thursday April 24 - 7:00 PM*

A documentary film on Single Payer Health Care in the United States followed by a panel discussion by three local physicians will be held at 7:00 PM, April 24 in the Sanctuary.

The Social Action Committee is co-sponsoring the event along with the Jewish Free Clinic, Jewish Community Center, Social Action Committee of Beth Ami, Congregation Ner Shalom and B'nai Israel.

Nearly every democratic country in the world has some version of single payer health care except the United States. A donation of \$5 for the Free Clinic is cost of admission. Refreshments will be served.

For more information, contact the CST office.

## Rosh Chodesh

*Tuesday April 8 – 7:00 PM*



Shomrei Torah women: Please join us for our monthly gatherings for sisterhood, learning, contemplation, and fun. The meetings are held at Shomrei, classroom Bet, between 7 and 9 PM. All are welcome, whether you've come before or not.

**Tues., April 8**—We will study teachings and texts to make your Passover seder more spiritually meaningful, as well as exploring what is constraining for us and how we might want to break out of any narrow places in our lives today. Alissa will facilitate.

**Sat., May 3**—Looking ahead to Mother's Day, we will study feminine wisdom from the Talmud and spiritual texts. Judith will facilitate.

**Sat., June 7**—Having just celebrated Shavuot, we will study teachings related to the Book of Ruth: paragon of loyalty, who took on Judaism by choice, and foremother of King David. Alissa will facilitate.

For more info, please contact the CST office.

B2B@CST  
network and nosh

## Business To Business

*Tuesday April 8 - 7:30 AM*

Our April meeting's scheduled presentation will be by Joy Danzig, of "NJOYBREAD!" – her baked good samples should entice you to attend. First timers are always welcome – bring your business cards if you have them. Also on the April agenda is the upcoming Membership Directory and the vision for the business directory section. Guest will be Marcy Pluznick-Marrin .

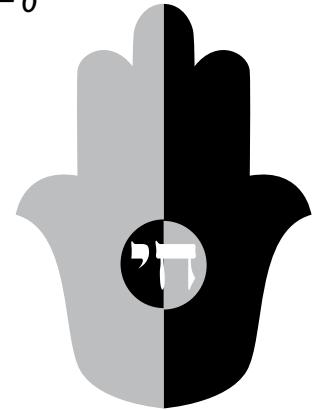
The February meeting featured Judy Freedman, Realtor with Coldwell Banker. She is a very experienced realtor who puts buyers and sellers together, handles appraisals, financing, "flippers", short sales, foreclosures, the gamut. She knows the value of staging and renovations. Judy appreciates referrals and pays a referral fee. She fielded questions from the group on the near and future of real estate investment and Zillow estimates.



February's speaker Judy Freedman

## Chai Weekend's Special Services

*April 4 – 6*



## CHAI WEEKEND

After 18 years it's Chai time for a Chai five.

**APRIL 4–6**

Don't miss the special Erev Shabbat service and Oneg on Friday, April 4, at 6:15 PM where Rabbi George Gittleman will be honored on the Chai Anniversary of his installation as Shomrei Torah's Rabbi. The service will include the presentation of a one-of-a-kind Tribute Book containing messages of love and support from members of the Shomrei Torah family, and will be followed by an elaborate Oneg Shabbat in celebration of Rabbi's 18th anniversary on our pulpit.

The Saturday Shabbat service at 10:30 AM will also feature a special observance of the Chai anniversary and recollections by those whose lives Rabbi George has touched over the past 18 years. Rabbi Ken Ehrlich, the former Dean of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion and the rabbi of Rabbi George's installation 18 years ago, will be speaking.

On Sunday morning at 11 AM, the religious school will hold an assembly for all grades where current STaRS students will honor Rabbi George.

There is no charge to attend these events and all are invited to participate.

# WALK TO END GENOCIDE

a project of **JWW**

Jake Matalon, Noah Bacon,  
Congregation Shomrei Torah  
Social Action Committee  
Walk Co-Chairs

Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis,  
JWW Co-Founder

Janice Kamenir-Reznik,  
JWW Co-Founder & President

Take a stand. Raise your voice.  
Step in the right direction.  
**WALK to End Genocide!**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2014**

**8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

(Registration opens at 8:00 a.m. Walk begins at 9:00 a.m.)

**Congregation Shomrei Torah**  
**2600 Bennett Valley Road**

**ATTEND IN PERSON** Register as a team captain, join an existing team or walk as an individual.

**ATTEND VIRTUALLY** Register as a **Walker in Spirit** to raise money from wherever you are.

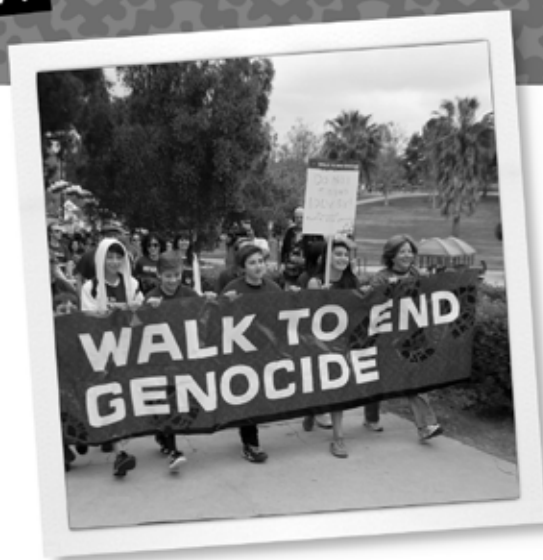
**SUPPORT JWW** Make an online donation at [WalktoEndGenocide.org](http://WalktoEndGenocide.org) today.

## Sponsorship opportunities available.

Please call 818.501.1836 x204 or email [amy@jww.org](mailto:amy@jww.org).

*All sponsors receive recognition on the **WALK website**, on event signage and on print/digital marketing which will be widely circulated to tens of thousands of individuals from across the country.*

**REGISTER TODAY AT**  
**[WalktoEndGenocide.org](http://WalktoEndGenocide.org)**



## JOIN US

### SANTA ROSA

Sunday April 27  
CST – 2600 Bennett Valley Rd

SAN DIEGO Sunday March 23

ORANGE COUNTY Sunday April 6

LOS ANGELES Sunday April 27

CONEJO VALLEY Sunday May 4



**TEN YEARS.**  
**ONE LIFE AT A TIME.**  
**FIGHT GENOCIDE. DO NOT STAND IDLY BY.**

JWW is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Los Angeles, Tax ID 20-3406211. The work of JWW is nonsectarian and nonpartisan and focuses on three crucial strategies: Education, Advocacy and Refugee Relief.

## Women's Retreat

*October 24-26*

Save the date for our biennial Shomrei Torah Women's Retreat. Please join us for a weekend of community, music, spiritual exploration and relaxation! This year our weekend retreat will be held at the beautiful Mountain Home Ranch in nearby Calistoga on October 24-26, 2014. The ranch sits on 340 acres and has 5 miles of hiking trails on the property. If you don't feel like driving once you arrive, you will have everything on site that you could want. If a spa day is what you have in mind, then the mud baths of Calistoga are only about 15 minutes away. Mark your calendars so you won't miss this wonderful weekend retreat. More details are forthcoming, but the change in venue means a lower price point and a closer location.



## Yom Ha'atzmaut Israel Independence Day

*Monday May 5*

Join us in celebrating Israel's 66th birthday!  
**4:00-6:00PM** – Viewing and discussion of the classic Israeli film about the chaotic early years after independence, "Salach Shabbati" starring Chayim Topol.

**6:00-7:30PM** – a free catered Israeli feast brought to us by Leira Satlof & Nature's Serving. Includes Israeli Dancing  
Please RSVP to the Temple office at 707-578-5519 or email [denise@shomreitorah.org](mailto:denise@shomreitorah.org)



## Board To Seek Members' Ideas For Mortgage Annual Meeting

*Sunday May 18*

The special fund that pays Shomrei Torah's mortgage is scheduled to run out in March 2017, and the Board of Directors is looking to members for ideas on how to pay the mortgage after that.

The depletion of the mortgage has been anticipated since the fund's inception nearly a decade ago, when it was initiated with the first Capital Campaign. Two subsequent phases of the campaign raised enough to extend the fund for three more years. Now the congregation must decide whether to launch a fourth phase of the Capital Campaign or to seek other alternatives for paying the estimated \$9,500 monthly mortgage payment starting three years from now.

The conversation about the mortgage will begin on May 18, at the Congregational Fair that will include an outdoor barbecue and kids' activities in addition to a brief formal meeting where directors will be elected and a new budget passed. The finance committee will lead an open forum to discuss financing alternatives.

More information about the meeting and the effort to educate the congregation about the mortgage situation will appear in future issues of the Voice and on the synagogue's web site.

## Shomrei Torah Camping Trip

*June 13 - 15, 2014*

**Samuel P. Taylor State Park**

Share Shabbat, music with Susie and a weekend of fun with your congregational family. The cost is \$10 per person (adult or child) for the weekend and the registration deadline is May 12th. Each couple/family will be responsible for helping put together one meal with 2-3 other families. Once registration is complete, a supply and contact list will be sent out to all the campers.

SPACE IS LIMITED and we expect to fill up quickly! If you would like to come, please contact the CST office with the following information: # of Campers, names and ages.

We look forward to sharing a fun weekend.

## Save The Date!

*Sunday May 18*

**Congregational Fair**

*Outdoor barbeque,*

*kid's activities and more!*



## 18 Years

The number 18 is special in Jewish tradition, a number that also functions as a symbol for the most essential thing we have – chai/life! So much “life” has happened since Laura, Levi, Sophie, and I arrived here 18 years ago! Words seem inadequate to express the varied, rich and deep experiences we have shared.

When I arrived, Shomrei Torah was a small but vibrant congregation with two “retired” part time rabbis and 150 families. I was the first full-time rabbi to serve the congregation and we were all trying to figure out what that meant. I had served a number of student pulpits, but Shomrei Torah was my first and only full time position since I was ordained in May of 1996. My kids were 5 months old, Laura and I were new parents, setting up house in a new town; we all grew up together. It’s been a journey of a lifetime, one I won’t try to encapsulate here. What I will do is share a few of the Chai-lights of the journey, the road we’ve walked and continue to travel to this day.

When people ask me what I am most proud of at Shomrei Torah, I always say our lay leadership and their volunteer ethic. What an inspiration to witness the intensity and depth of talent given freely and for many years by so many dedicated members of our community. Countless hours of work, worth hundreds of thousands of dollars (literally!), given out of love and dedication to who we



are and what we stand for. They have donated years of their lives as if Shomrei Torah was their full-time job—when most already had full-time jobs—to the cause of building and sustaining our Jewish community. Whether it’s leading services or reviewing our finances or pulling weeds, it’s all holy work: a prayer offered up with one’s whole being in service to the Most High, manifest in the everyday. Awesome!

*“What an inspiration to witness the intensity and depth of talent given freely and for many years by so many dedicated members...”*

Another Chai-light for me in all these years of service is the inter-married makeup of our community. When I left seminary, the greater Jewish world was frightened to an almost hysterical degree about the growing intermarriage rate. In a decade or two, so the line of “reasoning” went, the Jewish people would

disappear, washed away with the tide of intermarriage like some castle made of sand. No doubt intermarriage poses real challenges for the Jewish community: challenges and opportunities. Roughly 90% of our families with school-age kids are intermarried and about 60% of the congregation as a whole, and rather than threatening the Jewish life we work to build and share, the non-Jewish members of our congregation are often the most active, doing their part and more to help us fulfill our mission as a center for progressive, Jewish life in Sonoma County. This was something I did not anticipate when I arrived here 18 years ago, and something to celebrate today.

While we have much to celebrate, there is at least one aspect of our shared experience that does not fit in that category; the reality that the more one lives in a community over time, the more loss we experience. It’s holy work to walk with people through “the valley of the shadow”. It’s an honor I cherish but it does not come for free; there is a personal price to pay for serving, caring for and losing so many people over so many years. Our cemetery is a heavy place for me. I sometimes find myself there, not really remembering how I arrived, wandering around looking for and saying “hello” to old friends. I could swear I see them in the supermarket, or walking down the street, but when I look again, there is a resemblance, a memory, but not the person. Loss is accumulative; it doesn’t get any easier, at least not for

*“Another Chai-light for me in all these years of service is the inter-married makeup of our community.”*

me. Still, death is a great foil for life. In facing death and comforting the bereaved I have the opportunity over and over again to appreciate and evaluate our lives and ask the question that God asks Adam, “Ayekkah! Where are you?”

Being with families through the generations is one of the ways I know I am where I ought to be. What a gift it is to marry a young man/woman who was my bar/bat mitzvah student years before. Even better to then celebrate the children they bring into the world! There is a biblical blessing that essentially says, “may you merit the harvesting of the crops you sowed, the wells you dug, the grapes you grew.” This blessing might seem strange – who else would enjoy the work of your hands? – but in a world often at war, one could easily plant a crop only to have an invading people reap what you sowed. We are not at war, at least not in Santa Rosa (Barukh HaShem!), but it is not all that common for a rabbi to stay in one place, especially his first pulpit, for so long. The greatest gift of these past 18 years is the depth of relationships we have been able to forge, l’dor v’dor, from one generation to the next.

**B’shalom,  
George**

## Keeping Passover

Growing up, I did not live in a home that kept kosher, but as my mother likes to say, we always "kept Passover." Passover was a special time of year when we would clean out our cupboards of all leavened product (chametz), read labels for signs of the foods we weren't supposed to eat, and I developed a strange love for large square peanut butter and jelly matzo sandwiches that crumble to pieces with the first bite. I have strong family memories surrounding Passover. I remember my grandfather Morris giving out silver dollar coins to all of the children in exchange for the afikomen. After my grandfather died, my dad assumed the role of leading the annual service and took great pride at the head of the table with his large brood gathered around. My grandmother (Bubba) and Aunt Sheila were constant guests at the table and the number of people varied from year to year, usually another family from the synagogue or out-of-town visitors joined us. My mom liked to boast, "We're having 25 people for our Seder this year!" We always needed to rearrange the furniture, put extra leafs in the dining room table, and set-up folding tables for the kids. My mother's china was used and we all dressed up for dinner. Four large glasses of Manishevitz were consumed by all before the night's end and the kids often ended up in giggles at some point during the proceedings, much to my



grandmother's chagrin. Since my father's death in May, 2002 my oldest brother now leads the family Seder for all who are able to assemble. I rarely make it to southern California for Passover anymore. My grandmother just celebrated her 96th birthday, suffers from dementia, and lives in a nursing home in San Diego close to my aunt. She's not able to travel for Passover, but my aunt makes sure that Bubba has what she needs to celebrate the holidays. While my grandmother's short-term memory is nearly nonexistent, she does have a strong recall of the feeling of being with family and celebrating the Jewish holidays. During Passover we are instructed to welcome the stranger into our homes so they too can recount the story of the exodus, share in a meal and enjoy companionship. Like most synagogues, Shomrei Torah offers a second night congregational Seder. Last year Shomrei Torah established a Third Night Seder to make sure that all Jews in our midst have the opportunity to be in community during Passover. Shomrei Torah members are invited to join with us for the second night on April 15 and our Third Night community-wide Seder is on April 16.

**Chag Pesach Sameach,  
Rachael**

## LEGACY NEWS

### Meet Legacy Circle Member Adele Pickar



Adele and Irv Pickar moved from Albany, New York, to Santa Rosa in September of 2000 to be closer to family members. They attended High Holy Day Services at Shomrei Torah that year. They found the welcome so warm that they became members of Congregation Shomrei Torah shortly thereafter.

Adele has had several life altering experiences since she joined Shomrei Torah. The members of Shomrei Torah, along with Rabbi George and Rabbi Stephanie, have provided support for her as she journeys on without her husband Irv, and her sister Caryl.

Adele was in a class of eleven women who studied with Rabbi George for over a year to prepare for their B'not Mitzvah. On January 12, 2013, Adele celebrated this remarkable accomplishment with her class. She is a member of the Caring Committee and a past member of the Lifelong Learning Committee. She attends Torah Study frequently as she continues to learn about the Torah and what it means for us in our life today.

In February, 2009, Adele traveled with Rabbi George and members of the Congregation on very special trip to Israel. In October, 2012, she traveled to Eastern Europe with Congregation members. She found a small but vibrant Jewish community in Budapest. She learned that the history of the Holocaust is being actively taught and remembered in Germany. However, when she visited the Czech Republic and Austria, she found that the history of the Holocaust was not taught in the schools.

Adele finds the sense of welcoming to all, the gift of care to those in need, Rabbi George's approach to Reform Judaism with its relevance to our present lives, and the sense of community the most important aspects of being a member of Shomrei Torah. She treasures the friendships of people of all ages and interests who create the Shomrei Torah community.

It is Adele's hope that this strong belief in community will continue; that young people will have a place to receive an education which includes a sense of Jewish history, the development of Jewish identity, the importance of Israel, and a path to our Jewish future; that Shomrei Torah will continue to attract people who are engaged in the constructive social issues of the day; that spirituality will enrich the member's lives; that the sense of inclusion will remain the foundation of Shomrei Torah. Her gift is meant to be used to secure these attributes for future generations.



## Yahrzeit Change



According to Jewish Tradition, the names of deceased loved ones are read aloud on the anniversary of their death, their Yahrzeit, including those of deceased Mothers, Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, Spouses, and Children. For years, the list of names read aloud at services has included names submitted without the limitation established by tradition. Over time, as the Congregation has grown, so has the list. In response to this, the Board of Directors has decided to adopt a somewhat different procedure. All names submitted previously and in the future, will be included in the Shabbat Announcements distributed at services. Members will continue to receive letters regarding the anniversary of the death of all loved ones on the list. On the other hand, the names read out loud by the Service Leader will include Mothers, Fathers, Sisters, Brothers, Spouses/Partners, and Children in accordance with tradition. Service Leaders will, of course, invite those in attendance at services to say additional names as we always have in the past. The Board trusts that this procedure will be comfortable to members of the Congregation.

## JCC Chaverim News

Greetings and happy spring. This continues to be a fabulous year for Chaverim and Jewish teen programming. For the remainder of the school year, if you are a Jewish teen who is not a member of Chaverim, call Rick Concoff, about visiting a class. See [jccsoco.com](http://jccsoco.com) for info on Chaverim events and classes.

**Thanks and Shalom.**

**Rick Concoff, JCCSO CO Chaverim Teen Director,  
and Camp Chai Director  
707-8233916  
[concoff@yahoo.com](mailto:concoff@yahoo.com)**

## Environmental Action Committee

### Tip of the Month

Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.

~ Ecclesiastes xi.7

### Why is this Light different from all other lights?

In our ongoing effort to make a difference and leave our children a living planet, why use LED (light-emitting diode) bulbs?

- They use 75% less energy than incandescent bulbs
- They can last at least six times longer than incandescents
- They provide instant illumination with no warm-up time
- They're safe and contain no mercury or hazardous materials

[https://pge.myenergysites.com/Articles/The-new-bulb-you-have-to-see-to-believe?WT.mc\\_id=RESnewsletter\\_dec2013\\_email\\_LEDBulb-CTA-link](https://pge.myenergysites.com/Articles/The-new-bulb-you-have-to-see-to-believe?WT.mc_id=RESnewsletter_dec2013_email_LEDBulb-CTA-link)



## Social Action Committee

Thanks to the Soup Makers! Shomrei Torah members stepped up to meet a critical need in the community. Over 30 people answered our call for volunteers to make and serve soup for the homeless. Each Monday during February and March, four pots of homemade soup were brought to Catholic Charities' Emergency Winter Shelter program at Samuel Jones Hall. Over 300 cups of hot soup were ladled out to grateful people seeking shelter from the cold. A special thanks to Enola Nelson for coordinating this project.

### Save The Date

*June 29 - Domestic Violence/ Joshua Safran book event*

*August 8 - Rabbi Michael Robinson memorial service*



Jake Matalon speaking about the April 27 Walk To End Genocide at the March SAC meeting

Photos by Phyllis Nesbitt



## Renowned singer Julie Silver performing on March 1st at Shomrei Torah.

*It was a wonderful, spiritual, moving event!*



## SCTribe

### *Save the dates for this month's SC Tribe events!*

On April 4th is this month's potluck Shabbat dinner. Join us for a fun, friendly, and relaxing family-style Shabbat dinner hosted by one of our members.

On April 19th we celebrate Passover with a full Passover seder. Get ready for some delicious food, music, singing, and all around merriment as we celebrate this holiday tribe style.

For more information and RSVP's please contact us at [sonomacountytribe@gmail.com](mailto:sonomacountytribe@gmail.com)

Like Congregation  
Shomrei Torah on  
 **facebook®**

## Board of Directors

The Board of Directors met on February 13, 2014 and took the following actions:

- Approved an amended Yahrzeit policy that will limit names read from the bimah to spouses/partners and first degree relatives of CST members
- Authorized expenditure of \$15,120 over 3 fiscal years for 600 new High Holy Day prayer books
- Agreed with the Executive Committee's recommendation to move forward with a solar equipment service contract with Solar Craft
- Approved 4 new families for membership

Additionally, the Board began planning for our upcoming General Membership Meeting on May 18, 2014

## Announcement

### The Susy Raful Essay Contest

This is a reminder for Sonoma County Jewish High School students---The annual Susy Raful Essay Contest seeks entries. The essay contest is part of the annual Holocaust Commemoration Program(April 27th); this year spotlighting Regeneration: Lessons From The Holocaust.

The program will focus on how survivors have rebuilt their lives and, most importantly, how they inspired younger people with lessons on how to live in this world. Details of the invitation and rules covering the \$500 prize can be found at the Sonoma JCCs web site-[www.jccsoco.org](http://www.jccsoco.org). Essays are due at the Congregation Beth Ami office no later than April 11, 2014. For more information call 360-3000.

Friday April 25 – 5:00 PM

**Dear Families,**

Thanks to all for your fabulous participation in our Friday night January Tot Shabbat celebrating the happy birthday of the trees. We have so much to be thankful for especially THE RAIN – yeah! Thank G-d!



The rabbis teach us that when we enter the month of Adar, joy increases. This year we have Adar I and Adar II! We look forward to seeing you soon to be merry with you. The April Tot Shabbat program will focus on ritual items in the Jewish home.

**Blessings & Love,  
Tot Shabbat Lauren**

## Babies & Bagels

*April Date TBD*

Do you have a baby? Do you like bagels? If you answered yes to the previous questions then this group is for you! Join us for a light nosh and some refreshing adult conversation, while you watch your child/children interact and play with others in their age group. Come for the bagels, stay for the community! Please contact the CST office for more information. We would love to see you there!

## Camp Chai Summer Day Camp 2014

*Where your community feels like family!*

Camp theme is 'We Are the World', celebrating Jewish cultural diversity around the globe.



**Session I:** June 16-20

**Session II:** June 23-27

For campers entering K - 7th grade

Counselor-in-Training (CIT) Program for 8th & 9th grade

Camp is Monday - Friday, 9 am - 3 pm at Finley Community Park

Camp Director: Rick Concoff

Camp flyers are located in the CST lobby, or visit [www.jccsoco.org](http://www.jccsoco.org) and click on camps for more info. or call Beth @ 707 528-2549.

**Dear STaRS Parents,**

I can't believe we are getting so close to the end of the school year. This year has been full of such wonderful programs and exciting class projects. I am really looking forward to the Mitzvah Mall, Rabbi George's Chai Celebration and wrapping up for summer.

Please take advantage of the early bird discount of \$50 per student for registering for STaRS before June 1, 2014.

The registration forms will be sent home with your children, and they will be available for pick up in the office on or about April 1. Due to a transition at CST, there will not be registration online this year. Remember your registration process is not complete without the \$200 deposit turned into the office.

**April 6th Chai Celebration**

Please join us for our special t'filla service from 11:00-11:15 when we will present the magnificent mural to Rabbi George on behalf of his 18 years at Shomrei Torah.

**April 13th 7th Grade Mitzvah Mall**

The seventh graders will display pictures and information about their Mitzvah projects. All of our other grades will go through and learn about the different projects. They will have the opportunity to ask questions and decide where their tzedakah from the year will be donated. Parents of all children are welcome to come take a look at the amazing things our B'nei Mitzvah students are doing.

**April 13th 6th Grade tallit Workshop**

Sunday from 11 AM-2 PM will be the culmination of this year's studies in a really significant way. Each family will have the opportunity to create a tallit together. The tallit is made of silk and will be totally appropriate for your child (or another member of the family) to wear on their special day. In addition to creating this work of Jewish art together, we will study the significance and history of wearing tallit and learn how to tie the special knots (tzitzit). This is really a once in a lifetime opportunity and I hope you will all attend. Please RSVP so we have enough food for you!

**April 27th Walk To End Genocide**

Family Friendly Event! Come walk with your STARS friends as we join our CST family and walk together in support of helping those suffering from genocide (Music and activities will be available for children). It begins and ends at CST. Registration begins at 8:00 am/Event begins at 9:00

**School Schedule**

Sundays – 9:00 – 11:15 AM – K-3rd

Sundays 11:00 -1:00 PM – 4th -7th grade

Wednesdays – 4:00 -6:00 PM 4th -6th Grade

**B'shalom,  
Rabbi Kramer**

## Environmental Action Committee Happenings

By the time this article appears, the efforts of the environmental group at CST will have resulted in a forum on March 4 to educate consumers of their electricity provider choices that 20,000 customers must make by May 1, 2014. The remaining 200,000 customers in Sonoma county and 5 cities will have that choice over the next 2 years. We're gratified that over 220 people have registered to hear Geof Syphers, CEO of Sonoma Clean Power, and Tom Bottorff, Senior Vice President of PG&E, speak at our seminar. We hope that those that will make the choice learned something.

Our committee is busy with planning the Community Involvement Day March 27. This will have happened by the time this issue is out and we hope the much needed rains held off that day and that everyone had some fun and exercise.

We're starting to think about our next in-depth environment topic to study, now that our electricity forum has happened. We had initial discussion of the topic of water. Roy Sparrow suggested reading a book "The West Without Water" which is a current best-seller and might provide some stimulus to our studies. Anyone interested in joining our discussions can attend our next brunch meeting April 20 at 10 am. Contact Rick Reisman, <rickcath@sonic.net> for details.

*"We're gratified that over 220 people have registered to hear Geof Syphers, CEO of Sonoma Clean Power, and Tom Bottorff, Senior Vice President of PG&E, speak at our seminar."*

## Bar Mitzvah

**Max Cohen**

*April 12, 2014 – Nissan 12, 5774*

Please join us in celebration as our son, Max Cohen, becomes a Bar Mitzvah on April 12. Kiddush luncheon to follow.

**Jodi and Dylan Cohen**



## Bat Mitzvah

**Aleah Rose Rusoff Armstrong**

*April 26, 2014 – Nissan 26, 5774*

Please join us in celebration as Aleah Rose becomes a Bat Mitzvah. Kiddush luncheon to follow.

**Rebecca Rusoff**

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# Join the Shomrei Torah Community in Counting the Omer

## From The CST Ritual Committee

### What is the counting of the Omer?

According to Torah (Leviticus 23:15-16; Deuteronomy 16:9-10) we are obligated to count fifty days, beginning on the second day of Pesach and ending just before the festival of Shavuot – a period called “the Omer.” An “omer” is a unit of grain, a way to measure the sheaves that were brought as offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem, starting at the Pesach celebration and continuing through the spring harvest, the time of Shavuot, when the receiving of Torah is commemorated. In 2014, the Omer begins on the night of April 15 and concludes on the evening of June 2.

### What’s the point?

As Rabbi Rachel Saphire describes it, “The counting for our ancestors originated in response to the uncertain conditions of the spring harvest season. The fruits of this season were the basis for their livelihood. They counted the days hoping to ensure that the days would pass with God’s blessing” (<http://tmt.urj.net/archives/4jewishethics/030812.html>). Since few of us now depend on the land for our support, why continue the practice? There are many understandings of the purpose of counting the Omer. Here are a few:

- Like all Jewish rituals, we may choose to count the Omer because... it’s tradition! Repeating what has been done by Jews around the world and across time connects us to the Jewish people as a whole, to our ancestors, and to our history.
- Although we no longer live in the precarious world of our ancestors, our lives are often uncertain and full of anxiety. Counting the Omer adds a structure that allows us to reflect on what is truly important and to pray for our own wellbeing and that of others.
- Counting the Omer draws a line between

Passover, when we celebrate our freedom, and Shavuot, when we commemorate the giving and receiving of Torah at Mt. Sinai. It reminds us that, while freedom is attractive, it can leave us wandering in the wilderness. Our true liberation is not complete until we discover the kind of meaning found in the principles and practices of Judaism, outlined in Torah.

- Counting the Omer helps us remember to appreciate the value and the wonder of each day. As it says in Psalm 90:12, “Teach us to count our days, that we may obtain a wise heart.”
- From the perspective of Kabbalah, the Omer period is seen as a time that offers special opportunity for spiritual growth. Counting the Omer directs us to reflect on a particular combination of aspects of the divine on each of the counting days. For more on this complex, fascinating system – a combination of meditation, prayer, and self-help – see <http://www.aish.com/h/o/>.

### How is it done?

There are two parts to the traditional counting of the Omer, which takes place each evening, beginning on the second night of Pesach and continuing through the night before Shavuot. First, we recite this blessing:

*Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha'Olam asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tizivanu al sefirat ha'omer. Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ground of all Being, who has sanctified us with your commandments and commanded us to count the Omer.*

Then, we state the day – and eventually the week and day – of the count:

- For the first six days, we say, “Today is the first [second...third...etc....] day of the Omer.
- Starting with the seventh day (the end of week

1), we also include the number of weeks that we have counted. On the thirteenth day, for example, we would say, “Today is thirteen days, which is one week and six days of the Omer.”

For help keeping track of the weeks and days, there are many web sites with Omer calendars, ranging from the Kabbalistic ([http://therefinersfire.org/Omer\\_Schedule-2014.pdf](http://therefinersfire.org/Omer_Schedule-2014.pdf)) to one designed for kids ([http://www.torahtots.com/holidays/pesach/omer\\_%20listing\\_%205774.htm](http://www.torahtots.com/holidays/pesach/omer_%20listing_%205774.htm)). More options are available by searching with key words like “counting omer 2014.” Or, as part of a personal ritual – or one created with family or a Chavurah – counting boards or ritual objects can be created and decorated.

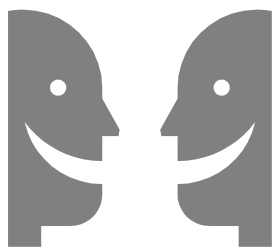
Beyond these basics, what we make of counting the Omer is up to us. Each evening’s count can be a time of reflection or meditation or study. It may be an individual practice or part of family life (<http://pjlibrary.org/pj-blog/index.php/archives/753/counting-the-omer-with-children/>). We can set aside a little quiet time or include music or conversation. We can create a goal for the seven weeks – to improve ourselves or the world around us in some way – or simply step back, breathe, and experience the flow of time.





## Wrestling Jerusalem Intersection for the Arts 925 Mission Street San Francisco *Sunday, April 6 – 2:00 PM*

If you missed the play Wrestling Jerusalem at Shomrei Torah last year, there is another opportunity. The New Israel Fund is partnering with Aaron Davidman, the playwright and performer. Following the Sunday April 6 matinee, NIF will host a “Peace Café”, an opportunity to break bread and engage in a vibrant, open, and respectful community conversation facilitated by Rachel Eryn Kalish, the founding facilitator for the Year of Civil Discourse. Some discounted tickets are available for students, seniors, and groups. To purchase tickets, go to [www.wrestlingjerusalem.com](http://www.wrestlingjerusalem.com)



## Cancer Resource Team At Your Service

If you were recently diagnosed with cancer, there are other members of the congregation who have experienced similar challenges and want to help. Would you like someone to talk with you and/or members of your family? We are here to listen, answer your questions and hold your hand. Contact the CST office to be paired up with a member of the team.

## Limmud Bay Area 2014 Registration *Opens April 1*



Registration opens April 1 for the third annual Limmud Bay Area Experience, a two-day extravaganza of Jewish learning, scheduled to take place July 13 and 14 at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park. For the past two years, Limmud has sold out within weeks, so conference planners advise early registration.

This year's event will feature hundreds of sessions ranging from film screenings and hands-on arts and crafts to lectures from renowned speakers. Kids aged 18 months to 13 years will have their own Camp Limmud experience, and there will be special programming for older teens. Tickets which include kosher meals and one night's lodging will cost \$295 for single occupancy, and \$235 per person for double occupancy. A limited number of sliding-scale tickets will also be available on a first-come first-served basis.

Limmud Bay Area is part of the world-wide Limmud movement, a network of 60 different Limmud communities. Each Limmud community runs on volunteer power, relying on local volunteers to organize and run each Limmud event.

For more information go to [limmudbayarea.org](http://limmudbayarea.org), where you can join the mailing list and learn more about Limmud Bay Area 2014.

## Free Admission to the Contemporary Jewish Museum

In commemoration of Passover and The Contemporary Jewish Museum's (The CJM) current exhibition, Arthur Szyk and the Art of the Haggadah, The CJM is pleased to offer FREE admission between April 17-22. There is an array of Passover programs throughout the holiday season.



## Purim Shpiel Program Correction

In the Purim Shpiel program, the recognition of the volunteers inadvertently omitted thanks to Laura Rose and Linda Bornstein for their baking. If anyone else was missed, please accept our apologies and thanks for all of your hard work making the Purim Shpiel a great success.



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#### For Non-Members

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Ads and payment must be received in the temple office by the 5th of the month to start in the next month's issue.

For more information, please call the temple office at 707-578-5519.

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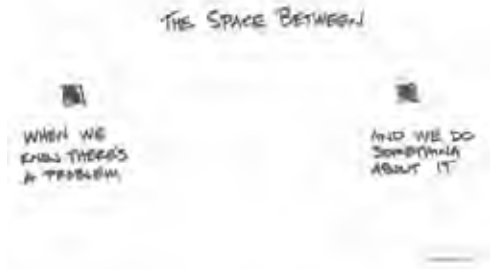


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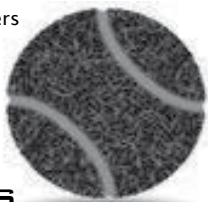
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## APRIL SERVICES

### Friday, April 4

6:15 pm  
*Shabbat Service*  
*Chai Celebration*

### Saturday, April 5

Weekly Torah portion: M'tzora, Lev. 14:1 – 15:33  
8:45 am  
*Torah Study led by Rabbi George*  
10:30 am  
*Shabbat Service*

### Friday, April 11

6:15 pm  
*Rabbi's Tisch – Daniel Matt*

### Saturday, April 12

Weekly Torah portion: Acharei Mot, Lev. 16:1 – 18:30  
8:45 am  
*Torah Study led by Meredith Cahn*  
10:30 am  
*Bar Mitzvah of Max Cohen*

### Friday, April 18

6:15 pm  
*Shabbat Service*

### Saturday, April 19

Weekly Torah portion: Shabbat Chol Hamoed Pesach,  
Exod. 33:12-34:26  
8:45 am  
*Torah Study led by Rabbi George*  
10:30 am  
*Shabbat Service*

### Friday, April 25

6:15 pm  
*Shabbat Service*  
*Potluck Oneg Shabbat*

### Saturday, April 26

Weekly Torah portion: K'doshim, Lev. 19:1 –  
20:27 Exod. 33:12-34:26  
8:45 am  
*Torah Study led by Jerry Roth and Perry Angle*  
10:30 am  
*Bat Mitzvah of Aleah Armstrong*

See our latest calendar at [www.shomreitorah.org/calendar](http://www.shomreitorah.org/calendar)

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- To worship God in accordance with the beliefs and teachings of Reform Judaism.
- To cultivate and nurture in ourselves and our children a love and understanding of Jewish heritage.
- To develop a sensitive, caring and supportive congregational community where all are welcome and included.
- To act with responsibility and compassion in our community.
- To support the principles of equality, freedom and shalom among all peoples.