A little over 10 years ago I was looking around for a project that would satisfy specific criterion: It had to be a creative collaboration with others that would contribute something of value to a community.

When I spoke with the rabbis, it was clear that there was a void in programs for seniors. There had once been a program led successfully by Mildred Pechman z”l but it had not been operating for several years. Older TBE members were clamoring for something that would meet their needs and it didn’t take long to realize that forming a monthly speaker series for seniors would meet the above criteria and much more!

Credit for early brainstorming and identifying committee members (and coming up with the title for the program) goes to Nan Goldstein z”l and Ilse Rowe z”l. There are still several “originals” on the committee today: Faye Alexander, Gilda Zelin and Norma Caylin. Others who were there at the beginning were Anne Singer, Esther Wedner, Evelyn Falk z”l, Jane Michaelis z”l, Lucille Pine and Phyllis Rosenberg. Filling out the committee today are: Bobi Robinson, Celia Sifry, Gail Levine, and Karen Green. They are all special jewels, each contributing to the success of Senior Connections in their own unique ways.

Senior Connections commemorates its 10th Year
200 programs and there is no dearth of knowledgeable and talented individuals in our area to invite to speak or perform. We are proud of the fact that our bi-monthly offerings are of wide appeal to people of diverging interests. Our presenters range from university scholars and other experts in disciplines such as Jewish studies and theology, history, science, literature, theater, popular culture, creative writing, and health; to professionals in the social, civic and political arenas, as well as performers of classical and popular music, dance and presentations of films.

There have been too many great programs to single out any particular highlights, but our annual Rabbinic Roundtable and luncheon each spring deserves special mention. A big Todah Rabah goes to Howie ‘Chaim’ Schneider for organizing these panels each year.

Senior Connections is organized by seniors but it is open to all. If you are free on any 2nd or 4th Monday, you are most welcome to attend our programs. Please look for our poster and pick up a postcard in the lobby listing our upcoming programs. Want to get email announcements? Have ideas for programs? Want to get involved? Please contact me at marsp777@gmail.com.

‒ Marlene Pitkow

Formerly called Tot Rock Shabbat

Please join us for our new Shabbat program for families with young children on Friday, February 19.

5:45 PM Vegetarian Family Potluck Shabbat Singing Dinner
6:30 PM Fabulous engaging Shabbat activities for all ages
  - Family story time
  - Adult parent learning (childcare available)
  - Child-friendly hands-on Jewish activities

Meet and schmooze with other Jewish families with young children at this new fun community Shabbat event.

Potlucks at TBE are kosher style. We do not serve meat and milk together and we don’t serve pork or shellfish.

The program is free and open to the public. Please RSVP to Sarah Clarkson sclarkson@tbeaptos.org to save your place at dinner.

A special thank you to our sponsors Lynn LeRose and Ed Garner, along with PJ Library www.pjlibrary.org.

Rock Shabbat
Friday, February 5, 7:30 PM

Sponsored by Mashugana Chavurah:
Jasmine Berke, Linda & Buddy Gerstman, Vicki Halil & Gerry Kondo, Liana Orsolini, Jack Hain, Susan & Paul Karz, Bill Sillavo, Julie Lorraine & Barry Marks—in honor of Scott Roseman’s 60th birthday.

Please look for our poster and pick up a postcard in the lobby listing our upcoming programs. Want to get email announcements? Have ideas for programs? Want to get involved? Please contact me at marsp777@gmail.com.

‒ Marlene Pitkow
Calendar Highlights

TBE Social Action Committee Presents:
National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT)
—a documentary exposing the torture of solitary confinement.

Sunday, February 7, 3:00–5:00 PM

Produced by filmmaker Matthew Gossage, the film examines the mental health, racial justice, and human rights implications of the systemic use of solitary confinement in United States prisons, in the context of mass incarceration in the U.S. It is a call to action to end solitary confinement torture.

Small group discussions after the film will be facilitated by Marie Levin and Cynthia Fuentes of California Families Against Solitary Confinement (CFASC) www.familyunitynetwork.org; Willow Katz, of the TBE Social Action Committee (SAC) and Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity Coalition; members of the TBE SAC; and others to be announced.

TBE Book Group

Our next selection for discussion will be Dara Horn’s “A Guide for the Perplexed: A Novel.”

Set in the present and in 1896 and 1171, “A Guide for the Perplexed” jumps back and forth between Cambridge, Mass.; Cambridge, England; Alexandria, Egypt, and Cairo. In the present, Josie Ashkenazi, a 33-year-old genius, has become rich by creating an electronic platform, Genizah, which catalogs every moment of a person’s life.

“A Guide for the Perplexed” is available in paperback, audio and digital formats.

We will meet at Alan and Leta Miller’s, 107 Iowa Dr., Santa Cruz, on Tuesday, February 16. Our discussion begins at 7:30 PM; please arrive early enough to allow us to start promptly.

Senior Connections

February 8
The Basics of Climate Change—a lecture by Pauline Seales of the Santa Cruz Climate Group

The presentation will include some basic scientific background on climate change, as well as recent updates, with audience interaction and a lot of time for questions.

Pauline is a representative of the Santa Cruz Climate Speakers Group which was formed in early 2015, with the mission of informing the general public about climate change and engaging in dialogue.

February 22
A screening of the 2007 film, “Making Trouble” (85 mins.)

“Making Trouble” is a documentary about legendary funny Jewish women who broke barriers and shook the social order to make us laugh. It profiles six Jewish women who struggled and sacrificed for their fame, and who turned the old “death is easy, comedy is hard” joke completely on its head. Molly Picon, Fanny Brice, Sophie Tucker, Joan Rivers, Gilda Radner, and Wendy Wasserstein proved that comedy is easy; being a Jewish woman in comedy is hard.

Presented by the Jewish Women’s Archive, “Making Trouble” includes archival footage and photographs from performances by the featured comedians, giving audiences a glimpse into each of their lives and careers over the last century. Each series of snapshots with accompanying commentary illuminates what it meant at the time to be Jewish, to be female, and to dream of making it on the stage and screen.

Programs are on the 2nd & 4th Monday of each month from 2:00–3:30 PM. (Come at 1:30 to nosh & schmooze.) Open to the public. Free.

The Forgotten Refugees

a film & speaker

Sunday, February 21, 7:00 PM
900 High Street, Santa Cruz

co-sponsored by Hadassah Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz Hillel and Temple Beth El

In 1945, there were one million Jews living in the Middle East & North Africa, part of the diverse fabric of peoples native to the region for over two millennia. Yet in 1948, with the establishment of the State of Israel, anti-Jewish riots and government-sponsored intimidation set off a massive wave of Jewish emigration.

From Casablanca to Baghdad, Jews abandoned their ancestral homelands, leaving behind their homes, communities and livelihoods—suddenly becoming refugees. For decades, many never shared their experiences of being forced into exile. In “The Forgotten Refugees,” for the first time, the stories of these Jewish refugees are told.

Directed by Michael Grynszpan and produced by Avi Goldwasser, “The Forgotten Refugees” won the “Best Featured Documentary” award at the Warsaw Jewish Film Festival and the “Best Documentary Film” award at the 2007 Marbella Film Festival.

OUR SPEAKER: Caroline Shaaya was born in Baghdad. In 1971, at the age of six, she escaped with her family through Iraq’s northern border to Iran, and from there to Israel. She served in the Israeli air force from 1984–1986. She received her B.S. from Loyola Marymount University (LMU) in Electrical Engineering, and an M.A. from Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS) in teaching foreign language. Currently she works at the Defense Language Institute (DLI) as a program analyst and resides in Capitola, CA. She has a powerful story and is a great speaker.

JIMENA (Jews Indigenous to the Middle East & North Africa) has a 40-member eyewitness Speakers Bureau.
We all know about Internet security hacks, ranging from government breaches to stolen data from Sony’s computers. While disturbing, these intrusions only scratch the surface of what hackers can do. Our major corporations, government, utilities and banking systems all rely on the Internet. Adversarial governments are constantly trying to steal information and, even worse, trying to figure out how to create calamity. The potential consequences are dire. Please join us at the next Brotherhood Brunch to hear Dr. Ethan Miller—TBE Member, UCSC Professor and holder of the Symantec Presidential Chair in Storage and Security—speak on the future of data storage and Internet security. Beginning at 10:00 AM, we’ll nosh on a delicious all-you-can-eat bagel brunch, take care of a little Brotherhood business, followed by Ethan’s talk at 11:00, concluding around noon. Recommended donation is $3 for Brotherhood members and $5 for non-Brotherhood members.

Save the Date

MITZVAH DAY
Sunday, March 6
9:00 AM–12:00 noon
Help make a positive impact in Santa Cruz County by working together with other Temple members.

CHILDREN’S PURIM CELEBRATION
Sunday, March 20th
9:45 AM
Megillah Reading, Costume Parade & Purim Carnival

PURIM FOR ADULTS
Wednesday, March 23
7:00 PM
Megillah Reading & Adult Purim Party
at 900 High Street
Santa Cruz

WOMAN OF VALOR
Friday, March 11
7:30 PM
Please save the date to celebrate Marilyn Rigler as this year’s recipient of the Candy Coonerty Woman of Valor Award. Join us after Shabbat services on Friday, March 11th at 7:30 PM, for a very special ceremony and community oneg. The award honors the legacy of community service exemplified by Candy’s life. Marilyn has given a lifetime of service through her political activism, service on the Board of Hillel and Hadassah, community service and as founder of the Jewish Film Festival, among many other contributions. Please join us.

SIMCHA GOODWILL COLLECTION
March 18-20
Friday, Saturday, Sunday
10:00 AM–4:00 PM
REFLECTIONS FROM RABBI RICK

A Month to Reflect on and Appreciate Rabbi Shifra’s 10th Anniversary at TBE

I am proud of our Temple for many things that we do. One of the most important and sacred of our achievements is the successful Jewish education of our youth. While Rabbi Paula and I work hard toward this, it is the primary responsibility and accomplishment of our great Rabbi Educator, Rabbi Shifra Weiss-Penzias. This year is the tenth year of Rabbi Shifra’s devoted service to our Temple and I want all of us to acknowledge and celebrate a decade of effective development of our Temple School and youth programs.

When she started, Rabbi Shifra brought us a rare combination of the knowledge and wisdom of a rabbi and the educational training of a credentialed teacher. She also brought years of Jewish youth and Jewish camping leadership experience. Combining this with tremendous hard work, creativity, a love of kids and of Judaism, she has developed a Temple School and youth program that all of us can be proud of. Two things have been particularly important in this achievement. She has recruited and maintained a great teaching staff, and suffused the school and youth programs with her view that the Temple School should have meaningful Jewish learning coupled with being fun. A great example of her vision well executed is the development of KEF, the Hebrew word for fun, which gives our older students on Wednesday afternoons, a choice of one fun Jewish educational elective each quarter. Who did not love the Jr. Rock Shabbat band at our Chanukah celebration, which is a KEF elective? The vast majority of the time our kids enjoy their Temple School experience and are happy when they are here. Many of them love Temple School. In our day and age this is a great achievement. Rabbi Shifra has also been key in developing our annual Bar/Bat Mitzvah family retreat which has built community among our Bar and Bat Mitzvah students and their families. In a time when the dropout rate after a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is about 70%, we usually have a 65% retention rate in our exciting Hebrew High.

Our senior youth group is flourishing. In the fall they had a creative sleepover at the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Nineteen of our teens just got back from a wonderful ski trip with Rabbi Shifra. Not only did she ski with them, but she mentored them in their development and leadership of meaningful worship services on Shabbat.

I also want to give a shout out to Kate Hochler, our great youth group advisor who grew up in our Temple. Our youth group has benefited from her special energy and spirit which has made the youth group so successful.

Another thing Rabbi Shifra has done is to have inspired so many of our teens into service and leadership, including many who have been student aids in the Religious School. Rabbi Shifra has also fostered our teens into active participation with the National Federation of Temple Youth, the youth movement of Reform Judaism. Many attend regional N.F.T.Y. activities and have served on the regional N.F.T.Y. board, making lifelong Jewish friends from all over Northern California. As usual, two of our teens have just left for their N.F.T.Y. high school semester in Israel. Of course we are especially proud that one of our Temple Beth El youth, Aliza Gazek, was the national president of N.F.T.Y. North America just a few years ago. I know N.F.T.Y. was pivotal in my engagement in Judaism in my high school years and I am pleased it is for so many of our teens currently as well.

The kind of great Jewish educational and youth group experiences that we provide are pivotal to the future of Judaism. We can all have nachas in our Temple youth and each member can feel pride that together, we are ably raising new generations of Jewish people. All of this is the direct result of Rabbi Shifra’s hard work and seasoned leadership.

As many of you know, Rabbi Shifra came to us with experience as a congregational rabbi with her own congregation at a large Temple in Seattle, Washington. Though Rabbi Shifra has only a three quarter time position, she has always worked many more hours, generously pitching in to lead services and provide pastoral support when Rabbi Paula and I both need to be away. She has volunteered her time to teach in our Adult Education program where she is a popular teacher. As a member of the Senior Leadership Team she has helped shape the growth of our congregation over the last decade and has organized and led two major fundraisers for the entire Temple on her own time. One of the ways her creative spirit has enriched us is through bringing us Rock Shabbat which she had developed in her congregation in Seattle. These are just some of her valuable contributions beyond how well she has done her job as our Rabbi/Educator.

Please join me this month—through emails, notes, phone calls, and conversations in the hallway—in expressing acknowledgement and appreciation for Rabbi Shifra’s devoted service to our congregation for a decade. She is a real blessing. Thank you Rabbi Shifra and Mazel Tov!

B’shalom,
Rabbi Richard Litvak, Senior Rabbi

ROSH CHODESH

All women are welcome to attend Temple Beth El’s Rosh Chodesh Adar 1 service on Tuesday, February 9, 7:00 PM, at TBE. As it is written, “Be happy, it’s Adar!” We will count our blessings and share our joys together. By the end of the hour, each participant will try several practices to combat depression and enhance contentment. Call lay leader Janet Newman at 831-471-8424 (evenings) for more information.

MARCH 2016 SHOFAR DEADLINES • Copy is due February 3. Advertising deadline is February 5. Email copy or advertising questions to mstein@tbeaptos.org or call (831) 460-1389.

TEMPLE SCHOOL NEWS

Allow me to kvell about our Jewish educational programming. In each grade we have a wonderful balance of Jewish learning, fun Jewish experiences, and community building.

As I write this, I am getting ready to take 19 kids from our SRFY Youth Group to Lake Tahoe for our annual ski trip. I have watched these kids grow up and I am impressed by how exceptionally supportive, kind, thoughtful and mature this group of teens are. There is a wonderful camaraderie among our students, which I attribute to our community building atmosphere and our positive Jewish values that the teachers have communicated both in and out of their classrooms. Our teachers are constantly growing and innovating, creating dynamic lessons which strive to be culturally relevant to today’s students so that they have what they need to shape their own personal relationship to Jewish history, Hebrew, Israel, Jewish practice and G-d. When we went to Aegis for Chanukah in December, the kids saw the real meaning of Chanukah reflecting in the eyes of the residents as they interacted with our caring and wonderful students.

This year’s theme is “Choice.” The students “buy in” by being able to choose which aspects of their Jewish identity they are drawn to at this time in their lives. I am inspired by the creativity, energy and enthusiasm that our teachers, parents, youth leaders and students put into this and all of our experiential learning efforts.

―Rabbi Shifra Weiss-Penzias

TEMPLE SCHOOL CALENDAR

Wednesday, February 3
Temple School 4-6, KEF; 7th grade & Hebrew High

Sunday, February 7
TS 4-6, Yad B’Yad & Jewish Parenting Class

Wednesday, February 10
TS 4-6, KEF; 7th grade & HH

Sunday, February 14
No TS—President’s weekend

Wednesday, February 17
TS 4-6, KEF; 7th grade & HH

Sunday, February 21
TS 4-6; Jewish Parenting Class

Wednesday, February 24
TS 4-6, KEF; 7th grade & HH

Sunday, February 28
TS 4-6, 1st grade parent participation & Jewish Parenting Class

Mount Madonna School
Open House
February 20, 11:00am

RSVP 408-847-2717
MountMadonnaSchool.org

Pre/K - 12th grade | CAIS & WASC accredited | Nonsectarian | Bus transportation available | Founded in 1979

info@tbeaptos.org  •  www.tbeaptos.org  •  February 2016  •  The Shofar 5
A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Every year I take part in a journaling project called One Little Word (OLW). At the end of December I start to consider a word that I want to focus on in the coming year. In past years I have chosen words such as ‘focus,’ ‘forward,’ ‘complete,’ and ‘thankful.’ The word helps me balance my life, set goals, and hopefully end the year on a positive note. In recent weeks, our senior management team has been looking to the future of our temple, creating a vision for what our staff and programs will look like next year and beyond. During this process, Rabbi Paula mentioned something that I would like to propose as a temple-wide OLW for 2016. The word is ‘connecting.’ Not just connecting – but connecting with meaning. We have an opportunity to connect on so many levels as part of the Beth El community. How you make these connections is up to you, but we want the opportunities to be there for all of our members to connect in meaningful ways. Whether that be through Shabbat services, Temple School, work on committees, or socializing through Sisterhood and Brotherhood, connecting will be paramount.

So will you join us in our year of connecting with meaning? Do you have connection ideas? Please feel free to contact me with any thoughts. I welcome any opportunity to meet with you to discuss your vision. Maybe you will decide to adopt one little word as well. I would love to share this journey with you.

B’shalom, Adrienne Muscat Swedlove

Expansion Report

The Temple received word from the Santa Cruz County Planning Department in December that the application for the expansion of the Temple building with a new Litvak Wing was approved. That means the various reviewing agencies, such as environmental planning, the fire marshal, the sanitation district, and environmental health, determined all was in order for the project to move ahead in the process of obtaining a building permit.

Honoring Rabbi Rick

A wonderful steering committee—Sheila Baumgarten, Lauren Schaefer Goldstein, Eddie Sher, and Toby Alexander—is pulling together plans for the May weekend celebration in honor of Rabbi Rick as he moves to emeritus status. Save the date for the Friday night service, a Saturday night event, and a Sunday daytime gathering May 21–23. More information will be coming your way!

Library Volunteers

The library team has a couple of projects lined up and we need several extra sets of hands (and eyes and brains) to complete this work. No previous library experience is required and there is a flexible range of slots to be filled. Having a smart phone (iPhone or Android) and availability on Thursdays between 3:00–5:00 is a plus, but we can find something for almost everyone. These are short time commitments—about a month or so, depending on how many people volunteer and how well things go with the projects. If you are interested, available or just curious, contact Lee Jaffe at leejaffe54@gmail.com.

Gift Shop Hours & Offerings

In February the Gift Shop is open on Wednesdays from 2:30–6:00 PM, and Sundays from 9:30 AM–12:00 noon. Or you can call Ruth (831) 476-1154 or Shirley (831) 685-2710 to make an appointment.

Our Israel shipment just arrived, with wonderful new kippa designs, tallits and wall art. Come take a look!
Simcha’s Ode to the Rain

What could be more fun than a rain walk or run With our brand new boots in the mud? Puddle splashing joy along the way A special time to learn through play. Plenty of time outdoors together Exploring and learning, whatever the weather! Building memories to have and to hold With our boots and umbrellas We’ll never grow old!

THE MAZON PROJECT IS TBE’S LONGEST-RUNNING SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAM.

Thank you very much to our compassionate congregants that have generously provided dinner to the Santa Cruz River Street Homeless Shelter every Sunday of the year, on behalf of Temple Beth El!

January Volunteers were Zena Krakowsky (2X), Margaret Brose, Judi Novik (2X), Rachael Katz (5X), Shelly Nadelman-Douglass, Wilma Gold (5X) Nancy & Marc Yellin, Rose Ashford, Susan & Stephan Karon, Meryl Selman (X4 w/group honoring Laurie Goldstein), Gwen Kaplan, Cheryl & Dennis Caspe.

An additional December volunteer was Susan Handloff Hammer.

To sign up for the Mazon Project, please use the SignUpGenius link listed under “Mazon Project” in the “Social Action” pull-down menu on the Temple Beth El website or contact one of the committee co-chairs Chris Goldstein at orongold@aol.com or Robin Belkin at Robin@MyVeryOwnCoach.com.
"There are no problems, only opportunities for growth." –Rebbetzin Dena Weinberg

It gets me through almost everything. It means that God is sending me this so that I can grow. It prevents me from blaming others, including myself. It frames a situation not as something overwhelming that is impossible to solve, but as a puzzle that can be worked out, and the process of working it out is where real growth takes place. Words are powerful; as soon as you reframe from "problem" to "opportunity," you pull down the covers, get out of bed, pull up your boot straps and rise to the occasion. No one wants problems, but who doesn’t want opportunities? –Lori Palatnik

February 2016

Temple Beth El Jewish Community Center • Sh’vat–Adar 1, 5776

All events are subject to change. Please check the Temple website. www.tbeaptos.org or call the office at 831-479-3444 to verify information.

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<td>2</td>
<td>Healing Circle, 12:30pm</td>
<td>Temple School 4:00pm</td>
<td>7th Grade &amp; Hebrew High 6:45pm</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Torah Study, Rabbi Paula 12:00pm</td>
<td>Primary Sources, Rabbi Shifra 1:00pm</td>
<td>Library Open 3:00pm</td>
<td>Bereavement Group 7:00pm</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Rock Shabbat Service 7:30pm</td>
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