

KISLEV-TEVET 5772

**ISSUE 49- DECEMBER 2011** 

Rabbi Lotker's

**Deeper Meanings of** 

Hanukkah

Steve Moore

Oy Veygas! a **BIG** Success

Julia Newman

Cheder

Chappenings

Keith Fllott

**Membership Director** 

Report

Steven Graff

Woman's Torah

**Project** 

Sarene Wallace

**Town Hall Meeting** 

Recap





TEMPLE NER AMI **515 Temple Avenue** Camarillo, CA 93010

#### TempleNerAmi.org

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This month's cover photo courtesy of Allyson Williams

We all know the Hanukkah story – but, from time to time, it's worth reflecting on its deeper, spiritual meanings. Judah Maccabeeorganizes a band of guerrilla freedom fighters who successfully overthrow the Syrian-Greek oppressors who have forbidden the study of Torah and the practice of Judaism. With the revolution successfully completed, the Jews turn to the cleansing and dedication (the word

Hanukkah means "dedication") of the holy Temple. With great effort, the Temple is cleansed (archaeologists believe that the tunnel that runs along the Western Wall – the one many in our lives, in our relationships, in our work, in of you have visited in recent years -- was a water pipeline built during this time to bringsufficient water to cleanse the Temple), and the eternal light is lit.

But, as our Talmud teaches, there is only enough pure oil for one day and, in what is the miracle of Hanukkah, the one day's supply of oillasts for eight days. This is the basic story; let's look deeper for some spiritual lessons.

You Have Enough: How many times in life, indeed, in each day, do we think "if I only had more"? More time, more money, more strength, more patience, more help, more friends, more love, more understanding.

The list is endless. One of the deeper spiritual lessons of Hanukkah is that, with confidence in God, what you have is enough! The Maccabees did not have sufficient troops, sufficient supplies, sufficient weapons to defeat a much larger armed force. But with God's help they did. There was not enough oil to be able to last the needed eight days. But with God's help, there was.

What Was Soiled Can Be Made Clean and Pure: a better, brighter, happier and healthier place. Imagine what the Jews found when the war was won. The sacred Temple, where one had to be ina state of ritual purity just to enter, completely befouled with pig's blood, idols and every kind

of dirt and filth and trash. So much garbage that it would take huge amounts of water and effort to

But what was foul and filthy could once again be made into the most holy and pure spot on earth. So it is with our lives. No matter what we've done, no matter what type of trash we have allowed into our sacred precincts, our lives - our souls - can be made pure again.

Once again, the key is God and the determination to commence a "Hanukkah." a rededication of our lives. We are never so far gone, our experience of God, that we cannot repair the damage and cleanse our own sanctuaries.

What Was the Miracle on the First Day?: As you all know, the miracle of Hanukkah was an eightday one - the small flask of purified oil lasted for eight rather than just one day. And so we light candles on each of these eight days. But think about this question: what was the miracle on the first day? After all, it was no miracle that the oil lasted this first day – it was supposed to last a day.

Our sages teach that the miracle on the first day was that the Jews had the faith in God to light the Menorah in the first place. The first day's miracle was having faith in God even when the days literally seemed darkest.

This year, as you light the candles and are warmed by their glow, open yourself to the possibility that you have enough of what you need to make your world into the beautiful place that you want it to be.

May you have the faith in God and yourselves to take a leap of faith to make your own world May you have a joyous, peaceful, and meaningful holiday season.

Chag Samayach!



#### Mai Hanukkah: Why Hanukkah?

As we approach the holiday season (we light the first Hannukah candle on Tuesday night, Decem-

ber 20th), our thoughts often turn to family gatherings, gifts, and food. Why is it that we get together for Hanukkah? What does Hanukkah mean?

Hanukkah means dedication, as we dedicate a monument or a house. Deuteronomy 20:5 is a passage in which an officer speaks to his troops before sending them off to war and asks. "Is there anyone who has built a new house but has not dedicated it? Let him go back to his home, lest he die in battle and another dedicate it." This verse uses the word that is the root of the word Hannukah, which means, to dedicate.

Our celebration of Hanukkah does not come from the Torah. It comes much later, in the 2nd century BCE, from the story of the Maccabees, where Greek Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Ephiphanes forbade Jewish observances including circumcision, Shabbat and sacrifices in the Temple, and the victorious revolt against this oppression led by Mattathias' family including his sons Judas Maccabaeus, Jonathan Maccabaeus, Simon Maccabaeus, and Simon's son John Hyrcanus. Upon their victory, they cleaned and rededicated the Temple, and held a celebration for eight days.

These stories are preserved in the Septuagint and in the Catholic Bible, and are not in the Hebrew Bible. The sages expand on the story of the re-dedication of the Temple in the Talmud, and brilliantly found a way to connect this story to a miracle:

What is [the reason of] Hanukkah? For our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev we begin the days of Hanukkah, eight days where mourning and fasting are forbidden. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed against and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil which lay with the seal of the High Priest, enough for one day's lighting only, but a miracle happened and they lit the lamp for eight days. The following year these days were appointed a Festival with the recital of Hallel and thanksgiving. (Mas. Shabbat 21b).

This miracle, the miracle of the oil lasting eight days, is celebrated today, not only by lighting candles and celebrating Hanukkah for eight days, but also by cooking foods that incorporate oil as well. Of course we have latkes, cooked in oil, but also sufganiyot, dough-

nuts that are cooked in oil and filled with jelly. There are many types of foods, depending on where in the world Jews have travelled, that have incorporated oil into recipes that are utilized for Hanukkah foods. Taro Root Fritters is a Hanukkah recipe developed by Jews living in Cuba, for whom taro root, or malanga, is more readily available than potatoes! This recipe can be found in a beautiful recipe book, Entrée to Judaism, by Tina Wasserman (the book we are using for our Jewish Foods class on Wednesday nights).

As we enter the days of the year with the least amount of daylight, may the light in your hearts, in your homes, and the light of your Hanukkah candles bring you goodness. warmth, and peace. And just as the sages of the Talmud drew the miracle of the oil from a story of battle, may we also be blessed with the ability to recognize and celebrate the miracles in our own lives.

Blessings,

Lisa Bock

Student Rabbi

#### Hanukkah Candle Blessings:

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tsivanu l'hadlik ner shel Hanukah.

Blessed are You, Adonai Our God, Sovereign of all, who hallows us with mitzvoth, commanding us to kindle the Hanukkah lights.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, she-asah nisim laavoteinu v'imoteinu bayamim haheim baz'man hazeh.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who performed wondrous deeds for our ancestors in days of old at this season.

On the first night:

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higianu laz'man hazeh.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, sovereign of all, for giving us life, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this season.



# Cheder Chappenings-Jewish Studies Curriculum by Julia Newman

Shalom Haverim,

Last month our focus was on the curriculum that we use for Hebrew language and prayer. This month we'll take a look at the curriculum and resources that we use for Jewish Studies.

The majority of our texts come from Behrman House Publishers (New Jersey) or Torah Aura Productions (Los Angeles). Of course our entire curriculum is enhanced

by each teacher's individual planning and resources.

Jewish holidays are covered at every grade level each year but the themes, topics and focus change as the students mature and can look deeper into the meaning and celebration of the various holidays.

MOMMY, DADDY & ME!: Infants, toddlers and their parents meet weekly for active Jewish experiences. Jewish symbols, Shabbat and holidays are emphasized through music, movement, stories, foods and crafts.

#### PRE-KINDER & KINDERGARTEN:

The primary focus is on the holidays, synagogue, Jewish symbols and rituals. Children become familiar with sights, sounds, objects, and actions, learning key Hebrew words, songs,

foods, blessings, and rituals associated with each holiday. Shalom Sesame Street are colorful magazines that we use in the classroom.

FIRST GRADE: "Let's Explore Being Jewish" is a wonderful program that "explores the building blocks of Jewish life." Mitzvot, The Bible. Israel. The Synagogue. Jewish Symbols and Life Cycle. What happens at a Jewish wedding? How do we dress the Torah? Why must we be kind to animals? Who are the people in the synagogue? Why is Israel important to the Jewish people?

**SECOND GRADE & THIRD GRADE:** Students study the Ten Commandments as guidelines for living as a Mensch (a good person). They begin reading the Torah through the text "A Child's Bible." These stories "highlight their timeless moral and spiritual truths and apply them to the personal concerns of today's children."

**FOURTH GRADE & FIFTH GRADE**: Students are introduced to modern Israel. This "tour of Israel" includes learning about the people, the geography and the culture of modern Israel. Students study units on the Jew-

ish Life Cycle and also talk about tzedakah,and tikkun olam (repairing the world). Torah study continues with a fun magazine called "Manga Midrash" as well as Book 2 of A Child's Bible—The Prophets.

SIXTH GRADE: Torah study continues with the reading and discussion of the weekly Parasha (Torah portion). In addition, the curriculum focuses on Jewish history with emphasis placed on some of the personalities and events affecting the Jewish people from ancient times until the present and how these events relate to our lives today. Areas of study include ancient Israel, life in the Middle Ages, the shtetl and Eastern European Jewry and the immigrant experience in the U.S.

**SEVENTH GRADE**: The focus is on

Holocaust Education We use the Davidovich text, Hitler's War Against the Jews, along with a powerful curriculum from the ADL and Shoah Foundation. Guest speakers, (Holocaust survivors) and a visit to the Museum of Tolerance add a strong component to our Holocaust curriculum. Ethics is the second part of our Jewish studies curriculum as students wrestle with modern ethical dilemmas, learning the responses to them. Our text is called Ma L'Asot: What Should I Do? When appropriate, we also discuss Jewish current events that arise.

#### What Jews Do on Christmas: Chinese Food, Movie & Discussion

Last year's event was so successful we are reviving this "sacred" tradition at Temple Ner Ami. Here's the plan:

- Come to the Temple on Sunday night,
   December 25th at 5pm for delicious
   Chinese food. The movie starts at 6 pm.
- Everyone is welcome to attend; members, non-members, Jews, non-Jews, everyone!
   The cost is \$20 per person, which will cover the cost of dinner AND the movietry managing that at a restaurant and movie theater these days!
- Please RSVP by calling the Temple so
  we know how much *Kung Pao* and *Moo*Shoo to order (but no shellfish or pork).
  You can pay at the door (or in advance if more convenient).
- After this sumptuous feast, we will adjourn to our theater for a showing of a Academy Award winning holiday classic: It's a Wonderful Life.
  - In it, George Bailey (Jimmy Stewart) has spent his entire life giving of himself to the people of Bedford Falls. He has always longed to travel but never had the opportunity in order to prevent rich skinflint

Mr. Potter from taking over the entire town. All that prevents him from doing so is George's modest

building and loan company, which was founded by his generous father. But on Christmas Eve, George's Uncle Billy loses the business's \$8,000 while intending to deposit it in the bank. Potter finds the misplaced money and hides it from Billy. When the bank examiner discovers the shortage later that night, George realizes that he will be sent to jail and the company will collapse, finally allowing Potter to take over the town. Thinking of his wife, their young children, and others he loves will be

better off with him dead, he contemplates suicide. But the prayers of his loved ones result in a miracle.

- After the movie Shlomo Kreitzer will provide some comments and lead a discussion of just how relevant this Hollywood classic is to our lives today.
- We need volunteers to help with set-up and cleanup. If you can help, please contact Keith Elliott by calling him at the Temple on Thursday afternoons, or via eMail at keithelliott@templenerami.org.



Paul Dwork's "The Magic of Merlin" 6:30 pm

Shabbat Service 7:30 pm

After Services there will be a Teen Sleepover for Grades 8-12

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#### **New Library Acquisitions**

by Phyllis Mandel, Librarian

*Here are four very interesting books now available in our library:* 

#### *IN THE GARDEN OF THE BEASTS* By Erik Larson

Love, terror, and an American family in Hitler's Berlin.

The time is 1935. The place is Berlin when William E. Dodd becomes America's first ambassador to Hitler's

Germany in a year that proved to be a turning point in history. N.Y. Times and L.A. Times best seller list.

#### THE EICHMANN TRIAL

By Deborah E. Lipstadt

An overview of the trial and analysis of the dramatic effect that the survivors' courtroom testimony had on a world that never fully understood what the millions who died and the hundreds of thousands who managed to survived had actually experienced.



#### **JERUSALEM; THE BIOGRAPHY**

By Simon S. Montefiore

Jerusalem: the universal city, the capital of two peoples, the shrine of three faiths. The prize of empires. The site of Judgment Day and the battlefield of today's clash of

> civilization. This book is on the N.Y. Times best seller list and is highly recommended by The Wall Street Journal.

#### **BEGINNINGS**

By Meir Shalov

In Beginnings, Meir Shalev reintroduces us to the heroes and heroines of the Old Testament, exploring these and many more of

- the first love
- the first dream

the Bible's unexpected "firsts."

- the first king
- the first animal
- the first loving woman, etc.

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Dear Friends at Temple Ner Ami,

My husband and I have sold our house and are moving to the Sacramento area to be near family. We have been members of Temple Ner Ami for over 10 years, and truly found dear friends and spirituality from this congregation. We plan on returning for visits and look forward to seeing you in the future. We will miss you all.

Shalom, Jim and Karen Keys

#### **Religious Practices**

This summer, I accepted the position of Religious Practices Chair. "What is this, I wonder" I asked myself. It turned out to be much more than I imagined.

In theory, the RP chair is responsible for seeing that our Services actually happen. Many things seem to fall into place on their own, but there is so much more to it...do most members know, for example, how much time Naomi Brill puts into coordinating and serving the Oneg of Friday nights? (It is quite a bit, take my word for it.)

In theory, the people making commitments like these have been part of a Religious Practices Committee, so that their efforts can be coordinated, and just as importantly, so they can get the recognition they deserve. We already have a wonderful system of volunteers led by Shari Brody, but I would like to go a step further and invite anyone interested in helping, even in a small way, to join our new Religious Practices Committee. Among the first things I would like to do is to start a schedule of Ushers for Friday night services. The Usher would be there generally to help where needed, whether in setting up the sanctuary or assisting Naomi before the service, greeting people, and helping to leave the sanctuary and social hall in a tidy condition.

In addition to our Friday night Shabbat service, there are other things I would like to see brought back or introduced. Rabbi Lisa, of course, has been leading a Wednesday noon Torah Study, and I now have started a new lay-led Torah Study group on Saturday mornings, at the same old time-9:30 AM to 11:00 AM. I hope to see many of you there; a lay-led study session is an interesting thing, and sometimes very different from one led by an expert.

And most of all, I want to hear from as many people as possible, members AND non-members, about what Temple Ner Ami needs to do to help fill their spiritual needs. Please email me at keithelliott@ templenerami.org, or call me at home at (805) 376-2651. I am also in the temple office on Thursday afternoons, if you ever wanted to drop by.

L'Shalom,

Keith Elliott

#### **Tikkun Olam:**



#### Rescue Mission: They want us back!!!

The Rescue Mission needs 5-7 people on the fifth Saturday of the month. In 2012 it will be: March 31, June 30, September

29, and December 29. Volunteers are needed from 4-6:30pm. I am looking for someone to coordinate two carpools to Oxnard. It is not necessary to volunteer for all four dates; just let me know what you can do so that I can get the information to their volunteer coordinator. This is a wonderful opportunity to have fun, meet new people, and put some light back into the world.

Abraham Lincoln said: "I care not for a man's religion whose dogs and cats are not the better for it." Have you had the opportunity to check out the animal shelter? Are you buying cruelty-free products? Are you eating less meat? I am amazed at the number of delicious animal protein substitutes that are available.

Check out: www.afa-online.org for more resources.

The **Somis Pantry** is looking for food donations. The food for the month of December is: **Cookies**!!

Remember: If you need a ride to the temple, please call me.

Thanks,

Harriet Lit, (805) 484-9119





# The Women's Torah Project

by Dr. Steven Graff

My sister, Wendy Graff, is head of the Women's Torah Project of the Reconstructionist congregation *Kadima* in Seattle, which has created the first known Torah to

be collaboratively written by women from around the world. Wendy began the project because she wanted her daughter (my niece), Mollie, to be able to write the Torah. Wendy said that once she realized that no woman had ever transcribed a torah, and that she could help change that for present and future generations, she was going to be part of that change. The Women's Torah was finished in Seattle, Washington on October 15, 2010, with the help of many hands, hearts, and spirits. It is not only the first Torah written and embellished by an

international community of women, it is the first Torah literally sewn together in community. Dozens of people (including Wendy and Mollie) had the opportunity to fill in letters, sew the parchment panels together, and tie the scroll to the rollers. Many others watched or helped the six scribes put the 62 panels in order. According to Wendy it was one heck of a *simcha!* 

We were raised in a Reform temple in the Bay Area, and it always irked Wendy that she, like many of the girls in the temple, were not allowed to have a *bat mitzvah*. This changed a while *after* she turn 13 when the rabbi's daughter said she wanted to have one, and then the rabbi changed the "rule". Wendy said that she did not like being treated like a second class citizen, and when she realized as an adult that women were not allowed to be scribes for torahs, and that a torah scribed by a woman was not considered *kosher*, she got irked again. Only this time she felt she was in a position to make a

change. Wendy received threats and hate mail from some people for her work on this project, but that only made her more determined to do the work.

Here she is shown with the *yad* that an artist made for her to be used for reading the torah. I cannot tell you how excited I was when several years ago the late Temple Ner Ami congregant Shirley Sussman told me that she was sending some money to help support the Women's Torah Project, and she asked me if I" had ever heard about it?" I was very proud to be able to tell her that it was **my** sister who was leading that project. I remember telling Shirley that it "was a small world after all."

This project was not done lightly; it started in 2000 and finished 10 years later! But what a finish. Wendy was honored by the Reconstructionist movement at the

Annual Convention early in 2011, and she has been invited to speak at Stanford University's Hillel next Spring. [That kind of cracks me up, because back in 1977 I was the head of Stanford Hillel! Again, it's a small world.]

One of the things that Kim and I like about Temple Ner Ami is that this is an eclectic congregation,

and one that is full of possibilities. Men and Women, converts and those born Jewish, mixed marriages and couples happily living together, young and old. You name it we have it. I like to think that one of our young children in the congregation will also be a world changer like my sister, that one of them will make a difference to the world, to Judaism, that will forever make a contribution that changes everything. Whoever you are, I look forward to shaking your hand on the bimah some day, and congratulating you on behalf of the Board of Directors for living up to Gandhi's words about "being the change you want to see."



Bruce Hochstadter, CPCU, LUTCF Hochstadter Insurance Agency



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#### **UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU!**



That's right, everybody. Uncle Sam is standing in the wings waiting to see how you'll finish up 2011 - financially speaking - and he can't wait to get a piece of your pie.

Temple Ner Ami has great news for you! We can offer you a charitable

contribution deduction for 2011, so long as we receive your funds before January 1, 2012.

That's right....pay your dues, fulfill your High Holy Day Pledge, make a donation to honor your friends, family or dearly departed or donate to one of our funds, and all of it will be tax deductible for 2011.

You don't know which fund to choose? Here's a list of our funds; they are all earmarked for the specific use described:

**Yahrzeit Board/Tree of Life** - Honor a loved one or special event by purchasing a leaf on our beautiful Tree of Life in the Temple foyer, or purchase a plaque on our Yahrtzeit Board in the sanctuary.

**Newman Scholarship Fund** - Help send a deserving Jewish child to our Torah School by donating to this fund and honor a special person or family with your donation.

**Jaffe Library Fund** - Help our new Library by honoring a milestone or person with your donation to this fund.

**Dubin Teen Scholarship Fund** - Our teens are the future of Judiasm, and this community. Help our teens to have the funding they need to attend camp, meet each other and develop strong Jewish identities. Of course, you may make any donation in honor or in memory of anyone or anything you wish. Our teens thank you!

**Music Fund** - Do you enjoy our choir at the High Holy Days? Do you love having live music accompanying our services? Support the Music Fund and make Temple Ner Ami sing with joy. Make this donation in honor of whatever or whomever moves you to song.

**Art Fund** - Perhaps our least known fund, but oh, what joy we could bring with a donation to this fund! Imagine a mural; imagine creating something tangible as a form of reverence and even prayer. Support the art fund with a donation to honor an artist in your family, either alive or someone who has passed and help us to create something wonderful.

**Rabbi's Discretionary Fund** - Support this fund and you let our distinguished Rabbi make the call. Imagine the good our Rabbi can do with your generosity at his fingertips! Honor a loved one, a milestone, or even say thank you to our Rabbi for his kindness or works.

And don't forget, IT'S ALL TAX DEDUCTIBLE!
-Kaila Kaden





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In the Camarillo Village Square, next to Albertsons

#### **EAGER READERS BOOK CLUB**

Meets Tuesday, December 13th, 10:30 AM

#### December Selection for Discussion: Inheritance, by Natalie Danford

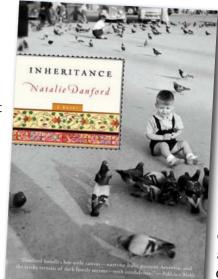
How well do we know our parents?

Olivia Bonocchio's answer to that question would be: not at all. Olivia's father, Luigi, an Italian immigrant who raised her on his own, has kept his past closely guarded.

After Luigi stricken with Alzheimer's dies, Olivia discovers a deed in his name, dated 1940, to a house in Italy. Intrigued, she travels for the first time to his Italian hometown, Urbino. At first, Olivia is charmed by the historic, art-laden city, complete with an architecturally significant ducal palace

and a favorite son Renaissance painter. She's equally charmed by the young lawyer she's hired to help her investigate the deed. But as Olivia begins to delve into her father's past, she is provided a glimpse beneath the mythic surface and, in a be-careful-what-you-wish-for answer to her desire for personal history, uncovers the secret that caused her father to leave his family and his country behind.

Natalie Danford's debut novel, *Inheritance*, explores the challenge of knowing anyone-our parents, our partners, or even ourselves fully.



"Danford is an old-fashioned storyteller, salting her scenes with background detail and ending chapters with cliffhangers... she's finely attuned to the daily pinpricks of private griefs, and the way small tragedies nest inside larger ones."

#### - The New York Times Book Review

"Danford's compact prose is studded with rich and telling detail; even the simple act of chewing a shrimp, 'curled as if to protect itself,' becomes a moment of high suspense. More than the mystery at the novel's center, it is this ability to conjure tension with a single line that makes Inheritance so compelling. " - The Los Angeles Times

"Danford spins an ambitious story told in dual narratives and using a complicated timeline that flows effortlessly forward and backward on itself. The book begins in 1959 and ends in 1939, yet it always reads

in the present tense. This is not an easy structure to master, but Danford does just that in this, her debut novel." - Chicago Sun-Times

"Danford handles her wide canvas in wartime Italy, postwar America, and the tricky terrain of dark family secrets with confidence." - **Publishers Weekly** 



# Teen Connection Fund Raiser Saturday – December 17



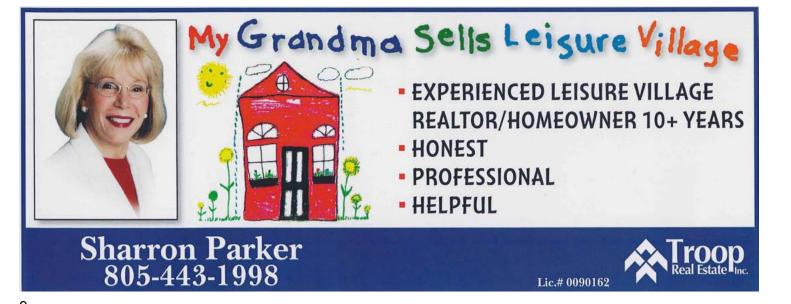
Delicious Breakfast delivered to you by 10 am!

Lox, bagels, cream cheese, onions, tomato, danish or sweet roll, and fruit.

\$15 for a small box - Feeds two \$30 for a large box - Feeds 4 or 5

Please call the Temple at 388-3824, or send an email to Mark at admin@templenerami.org by Monday 12/11 to order your food.

A fun way to support the TNA teens!





#### **DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

#### Members & Children

The state of the s		_			
Dr. Robert Improta	Thursday	December 1	Marcia Zatkin	Wednesday	December 14
Rene D'Inca	Friday	December 2	Howard Barr	Thursday	December 15
Daniel Graff	Friday	December 2	Dr. Gina Burstein	Thursday	December 15
Elinore Felder	Saturday	December 3	Jei Liorah Shapiro	Thursday	December 15
Shoshanah Rebekah	Steinberg	December 3	Mariana Krastein	Friday	December 16
Celia Tobey	Saturday	December 3	Brian Sadowsky	Friday	December 16
Robert Sacks	Tuesday	December 6	Drew W. Pomerantz	Sunday	December 18
Robin Lefkovits	Wednesday	December 7	Sanford Garfield	Wednesday	December 21
Dorothy Rosenfeld	Wednesday	December 7	Julian Weiss	Wednesday	December 21
Tobie Treitman	Wednesday	December 7	Russell Kamola	Saturday	December 24
Barbara Finsten	Thursday	December 8	Marty Schneider	Sunday	December 25
Ellen Brand	Friday	December 9	Stan Shaul	Sunday	December 25
Stanley Reshes	Saturday	December 10	Gloria Brodie	Monday	December 26
Robert Scheerger	Saturday	December 10	Renee Stein	Monday	December 26
Joyce A. Brown	Sunday	December 11	Ron Wallace	Tuesday	December 27
Joel Zneimer	Sunday	December 11	Stan Baratta	Wednesday	December 28
Dr. Walter Burstein	Monday	December 12	Emily Henderson	Wednesday	December 28
Samantha Marguerite	e Jamieson	December 12	Gail Kleinman	Wednesday	December 28
Lee Edwards	Tuesday	December 13	Jennifer Greenblatt	Thursday	December 29
Stefania Spiegel	Tuesday	December 13	Susan Weinstein	Thursday	December 29
Sylvia Leventhal	Wednesday	December 14			

<sup>\*</sup> This table is based on Temple records. If your information is missing or in error, please contact the Temple office.



#### **TODAH RABBAH - Means Thank You!**

Message from Naomi Brill, Oneg Chair

It is my pleasure again to thank the generous Temple members who sponsored Onegs

during the month of November.

#### They were:

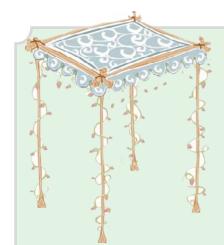
- the parents of the **Seventh Graders** who conducted the service so beautifully on November 11th.
- **Libby and Charles Pierce** who sponsored an Oneg in memory of Libby's mother, Emma Beacher, father, Abraham Beacher, and brother, Matthew Beacher.
- **Sandra Goodwin** who honored the memory of her parents, Kitty & Henry Copeland, by sponsoring the Oneg on Nov. 18th.

- On November 25, we had four sponsors: **Naomi Brill**, in memory of her husband, Richard Brill, **Max Heller**, in memory of his wife, Sylvia Heller, and **Sarene Wallace** in honor of the Temple, and Nadine Frankel.

A big "THANK YOU" to all these thoughtful people for helping to make our Onegs attractive and enjoyable.

Please remember to call me if you want to sponsor an Oneg. You can either bring some of the refreshments or give the Temple a donation to cover same. This is a special and meaningful way to either celebrate a "simcha" (happy occasion) or to remember a loved one.

Naomi Brill, Oneg Chair, 388-8511



#### DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Name	Day	Date	Year
Shlomo & Charlotte Kreitzer	Thursday	December 1	26th anniversary
Kenneth J. & Gretchen O. Laskey	Saturday	December 10	51st anniversary
Jack & Marlene Votion	Monday	December 19	47th anniversary
David & Sandra Fischler	Tuesday	December 27	25th anniversary

<sup>\*</sup> Listings based on Temple records. If your info is missing or in error, please contact the Temple office so we may correct our database.

# **Teen Connection Calendar Wednesdays from 6:30-8:30**

#### **DECEMBER**

Fr-S	2-4	NFTY Fall Kallah (Malibu)
Wed	7	NAUTY

Wed 14 Confirmation

Fri 16 Teen Sleepover (8-12th Grades)

Sat 17 Lox in a Box Fundraiser

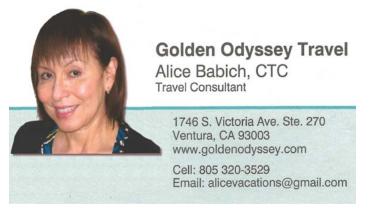
Wed 21 WINTER VACATION

Fri 23 Hanukah Shabbat Wed 28 WINTER VACATION

#### **JANUARY**

Wed	4	NAUTY
Wed	11	Confirmation
Wed	18	NAUTY
Wed	25	Teen Talk









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# Sisterhood Will Host Sought After Yoga Instructor

I have been writing for the Megillah for the past 18 months and have invited, praised and thanked Temple and Sisterhood members for a variety of good

things. I am always sincere in what I have to say and in what I suggest that you try to attend as a Sisterhood sponsored event, activity or program.

The activity that is coming up on **Thursday, Dec.15, 7:30 PM** at the Temple, will be exceptional! Our guest is Purusha Hickman, a yoga instructor for almost 35 years who has been MY Yoga teacher for a year. He has studied, taught extensively, and believes in what he does. His Yoga classes in Thousand Oaks are filled to capacity as his knowledge, humor and teaching style are greatly enjoyed.

Purusha teaches stretching, focus on breathing, becoming more balanced and gaining strength through gentle yoga movements. The hour that he has planned for us is an introduction to gentle yoga which will be done while we are seated on chairs wearing comfortable clothing.

Purusha is an amazing Yoga instructor and we are very fortunate to have him come to our Temple. His usual honorarium is more than we can afford. When I asked him to consider coming to our group, he graciously agreed to a reduced amount. There will be a charge of \$5.00 per person with a minimum of 20 people needed for him to be here. Please invite your

friends and significant others, as we want to show him our appreciation for his interest in our health and well being. He is a humble and modest man that I know you will enjoy meeting!

An RSVP on this event is a must! Please email me at Bothbrodys@aol.com, or call me at 805-492-2129. I need to hear from you by **Monday, December 12th** to let me know that you are attending!

Sonia and I hope to see you on Thursday night December 15th, 7:30 at the Temple.

- Shari Brody



Congratulations to the Pritz
Family on a wonderful B'nai
Mitzvah ceremony held here at
the Temple on Saturday, 11-12-11.

Aunts, Uncles, & grandparents were present and participated in the ceremony. Proud parents Kurt and Danalynn had the honor of the presenting the Tallis, as Joshua, Rachael, and Brandon were called to the Torah as a Bar and Bat Mitzvah.

Mazel Tov to the Pritz family!



# Oy Veygas!

#### What happened in Oy Veygas stayed in Oy Veygas .....

....Except all of the great prizes, like the Giant bicycle (are you still riding around in circles Marty?) the 60" flat screen TV (you're welcome Karen & Nino) and the HP-G6 laptop computer (happy Skyping Barbara & Mark) to list a few.

Not to mention the great memories of all the fun had with your friends while "bellied up" to the gaming table or out-biding someone in the closing minutes of the silent auction.

And last but not least, the \$\$\$. With the help from everyone that came to Oy Veygas, to all the gracious sponsors, donors and to all who volunteered in any way (especially Allen Treitman for making the wonderful food, Arlene Cohen who rounded up an incredible line-up of silent auction items, and to all who stayed and helped clean up after the event until about 1:30 AM).

#### Oy Veygas generated a net profit of over \$13,000!

Participation is what made this event a huge success, and PARTICIPATION IS THE KEY TO GROWING AND THRIVING here at TNA. The more the merrier!

As I was standing on the stage and looking around at all the smiling faces and people laughing and enjoying themselves, it made me very happy and proud. I couldn't have asked for a better night as the event chairperson.

With that in mind I did note a few things that will make next years (yes, I'm already starting to plan) *Oy Veygas* even better. To name a few, we will have a bigger venue so that everyone has a place to sit and eat, and we'll have more gaming tables to accommodate all gamblers. The silent auction will have more room, and you will get a list of all the items and their location when you come in the door.

As the fundraising chairperson I would like to thank all our gracious sponsors/donors on behalf of our entire congregation. Without them (and my incredible wife Jennifer), this great night would not have been possible. I'm listing them in random order.

THANK YOU SO MUCH! - Steve & Jennifer Moore

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# Oy Veygas! Hall of Fame

#### **Table Sponsors**

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#### **Event Sponsors**

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Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf John Kerwien Mimi's Hallmark Lisa Kadowaki Presto Pasta Ann Burke Andria's Seafood In-N-Out Burger Party Pleasers Naomi Brill Jay & Arla Crane Harley's Camarillo Bowl Channel Islands Ice Center **Skating Plus Buena Lanes** The Wine Closet Karen Dworsky Harry & David Trader Joes The Moore Family Lure Fish House Pacific Fresh Fish Round Table Pizza George Thompson Diamond Co. Olas Mexican Grill Chuy's Mesquite Broiler

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#### I would also like to thank all the volunteers that made this possible. I apologize if I missed your name!

**Andrew Greenberg** Gary & Cathy Lieb Arlene Cohen Dale & Bobbe Jacobs Kaila Kaden Greg, Erica, & Shelby Hartman Gary Goltz Pam Bogen

Luminous Skin Care

Jay & Arla Crane **Iack & Teri Milner** TNA Sisterhood Eli Moore Steve DeBuke David Pitt R. J. Massev Greg & Gail Goldwyn

Joan Frank Annelies Regen Sarene Wallace Keith & Robin Elliott Nadine Frankel Shlomo & Charlotte Kreitzer Anne Burke Harriet Lit

# The Temple Gratefully Acknowledges the Following Contributions

#### Honorariums/Memorials

Anonymous giving thanks to Steve & Jennifer Moore for a fantastic *Oy Veygas!* 

Muriel Rosenkranz, Oneg Sponsorship in loving memory of her Mother, Jennie Tenenbaum

Gloria Brodie, in loving memory of her sister-in-law, Sylvia Lachman

Betty Stallman, in loving memory of Paul Schallheim

Betty Stallman, in loving memory of her husband, Edwin Stallman

Seth & Charlotte Brandes, Oneg Sponsors in honor of Julia Newman & all she does for the temple Charles & Libby Pierce, in loving memory of Libby's mother Emma Beacher, her father, Abraham Beacher, and her brother Matthew Beacher

Donald Seidler in loving memory of Mildred's beloved Mother, Emman Goldberg Jules & Leatrice Posner, in loving memory of Leatrice's beloved Mother, Tillie Shack Teck

William & Claire Goldstein, in loving memory of Sheldon Goldstein

Lee Edwards, in honor of her being one of the Oneg Hosts on December 16th

Sandra Goodwin, Oneg sponsor in loving memory of Sandra's Parents, Kitty & Henry Copeland Della Carmona, in loving memory of her mother, Zlatta Lertzman

#### **General Donations**

Steve & Jennifer Moore in support of our fund-raising event, Oy Veygas!

#### Rabbi's Discretionary Fund

**Ruth Weiss** 

Naomi Brill in loving memory of Naomi's mother, Rose Marcus

#### **Newman Scholarship Fund**

Arline Grether in honor of Arla runing a marathon

Israel Feingold in honor of and in loving memory of Clarie Feingold's birthday Anonymous in celebration of the good health of the Magnificent Julia Newman

Harry & Judy Knobel wishing a Happy Anniversary to Julia Newman & Saul Lessler

#### **High Holy Day Pledges**

Ron & Sarene Wallace Allen & Marcia Zatkin Jules & Leatrice Posner Anne H. Wolfson Irving & Arlene Bergman Paula-Jeane Feinberg Richard & Robin Lefkovits Jim & Karen Keys

William & Helen Gardner

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Joel Zneimer/Betty Fink
David & Sandra Fischler
Zelda Greentree
Doris Weinberg
Leona Hallman
Israel Feingold
Andrew & Shellie Leff
Keith & Robin Elliott
Bernard & Helene Scherer

(Donations shown are those received from October 21st thru November 18th)

# TEMPLE NER AMI

#### Yahrzeits - December 2011

#### Friday, December 2, 2011

Garey Cook.....fiancée of Dalya Dektor
Charles Fridberg.....husband of Ruth Fridberg
Zlotta Lertzman.....mother of Della Carmona
Josephine Urbach.....Mother of Cynthia Urbach
William Weinberg.....husband of Doris Weinberg
Carol Linz.....mother of Annelies Regen
Sam Ballonoff.....uncle of Jay Collins
Matthew Beacher.....brother of Libby Pierce
Mary Diamond.....mother-in-law of Israel Feingold
Esther Shev.....mother-in-law of Jean Shev
Jim Williams.....brother of Mary Grey

#### Friday, December 9, 2011

Shirley Novak.....Great-grandmother of Jennifer Witt
Dora Chorna\*\*....mother-in-law of Max Heller
Sol Rosen.....Father of Gerald Rosen
Fannie Smith.....grandmother of Dr. Robert Improta
Samuel Cooperman.....father of Gilbert Cooperman
Gus Honick.....husband of Diane Honick
Harry Selbert.....father of Norman Selbert
Barbara Zimmerman.....daughter of Myrna & Seymour
Zimmerman
Maurice Clark.....father of Michael Clark

Maurice Clark.....father of Michael Clark
Joyce Nathan.....late wife of Dr. Robert A. Nathan

#### Friday, December 16, 2011

Morris Stolman.....father of Betty Stallman
Etta Bach.....grandmother of Sarene Wallace
Lorraine Kaplan.....mother of David Kaplan
Nadine Zneimer.....wife of Joel Zneimer
Bobbie Friedman.....mother of Vicki Sharp
Laurie Perr.....husband of Jack Perr, mother of
Daniel Perr
Jacob Uran.....father of Raye Gabriel
Samuel A. Friedman.....father of Beverly Kerwien
Gussie Kerner.....grandmother of Jan Safran
Blake Werner..... father of Juliaan Howell
Adele Carner.....mother of Dorothy Rosenfeld
Ted Cook.....grandfather of Romy Henderson
Esther Lerner.....mother of Larry Lerner
Leo Schallheim.....father of Paul Schallheim

#### Friday, December 23, 2011

Becky Held.....Mother of Rosalie Sherbrooke
Michael Metz.....brother of Cathye Clark
Sid Reshes.....father of Stanley Reshes
Jack Gorelick.....father of Diane Honick
Max Lauer.....father of Myrna Zimmerman
Abraham Shligersky.....father of Sara Shye
Samuel Weiss.....father of Julian Weiss
Sophie Behar.....mother of Regina Brutzkus
Meyer Joseph Karstadt.....father of Harriet Silvertrust
Emma Sacks.....mother of Robert Sacks
Dora Goldin.....mother of Leon Goldin
Betty Miller.....mother of Isabelle Blau
Arnold Shaffron.....brother of Lorraine Weingardt

#### Friday, December 30, 2011

Nathan Isaacs.....father of David Isaacs
Natalie Krantz\*\*.....wife of Marvin Krantz
Marcel Lerner.....father of Larry Lerner
Jack Stolman.....brother of Betty Stallman
Barnet Levene.....father of Helen Gardner
Louis Necowitz.....father of Sidney Necowitz
Anne Mesirov\*\*.....mother of Fred Mesirov
Isaac Shev.....father-in-law of Jean Shev
Doris Hershberg.....sister of Frank Seiden
Morris Jaffe.....father-in-law of Elaine Jaffe
Robert Krakover....son of Edward Krakover
Bert Traxler.....father of Gary Traxler
Bertha Blau.....mother of Sy Blau
Henry Brott.....late husband of Ruth Brott Nathan

The Temple's *Yahrzeit* Board has spaces available for remembering loved ones who have passed away. The requested donation for memorial plaques on the *Yahrzeit* Board is \$350.00 per plaque.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Name on the Yolanda Cramer Memorial Yahrzeit Board

#### TOWN HALL MEETING RECAP...

by Sarene Wallace, Executive Leadership Team

Our second Town Hall meeting with the congregation was held Nov. 17. It was a great opportunity for the board and congregation to share feedback on a number of issues related to the temple.

The 28 people attending received updates on what's happened since the last Town Hall meeting, and heard about the importance of members getting involved in our many committees. Each board member introduced themselves, then shared information about the committees they chair and how the congregation can get involved.

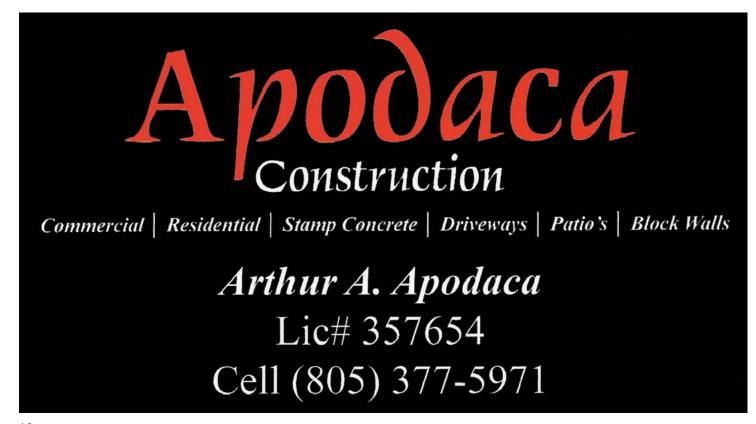
Keith Elliott is looking for people to serve as ushers on Friday nights, Gary Lieb needs help organizing the Purim Carnival, and Steve Graff is looking for ideas on programming including bringing in some speakers.

There was a brief report from Arla Crane on the membership roster project she is working on. Betty Fink asked about membership renewals, and we have 172 member families which is 10 fewer than last year. Allen Zatkin asked about forming a Men's Club.

Attendees asked for clarification on how the board is approaching the rabbi situation for next year. It was shared that a Rabbi Evaluation Committee has been convened with three congregants, three board members and a staff member. The committee was designed to represent a wide range of demographics within the congregation. Each attendee at the meeting was asked to write down what they wanted to see in a rabbi for Temple Ner Ami. The feedback will be delivered to the committee, which will take everything into consideration. Even if you didn't attend the meeting, you're invited to submit your feedback to Tresidents@templenerami.org. Please only include WHAT qualities you'd like in a rabbi, not WHO you'd like the rabbi to be. The goal is for every interested congregant to share their thoughts, comments and desires with the committee.

Also, I'd like to ask a favor of you. Keith Elliott, chair of our membership and religious practices committees, is calling every household to introduce himself and to hear your thoughts. Please return his calls if he leaves a message. He really wants everyone's input so that he and the board can make TNA the best it can be.

The next Town Hall Meeting will be early next year. Details will follow. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please send me an e-mail at Tresidents@ templenerami.org.





# From the Membership Director Keith Elliott

Hello to all my fellow members! I hope your Thanksgiving holiday was a good one.

Last month, we held another Town Hall meeting, and a couple of us on the Board will

be writing about what was discussed this time. I am going to focus on the issues that affect US, as members of TNA.

At the last Town Hall in July, there was a terrific turnout, and a great deal of emotion. Surprisingly the turnout was far lower this time (and we on the Board are taking to heart all suggestions as to why.) I really wish to thank those who were there-and I hope that those people were able to see that our current Board is working very well together, and taking in all the information, suggestions, and advice from members that we are able to get.

Our situation is not a scary as it was back in July. At that time, I was not yet on the Board, and the picture I saw of the TNA community was not comforting. We were learning that our Synagogue was not capable serving our community in the manner we expect, and that it had not been able to do so for some time. Funds not intended for regular operations were being used to delay the inevitable.

What that inevitable was is this-with our current number of members, and the commitment to our Temple that they are able to make, we are not in a position to have a full-time synagogue that meets all the needs and desires of the community. We currently have a bit over 170 family units, which is not too far below our high of 182, but the reality is that we haven't been able in recent years to commit what we once did. The result is, we have had to go through some very painful readjustments, especially the shift from full time to part time clergy. As the Membership Director, it essentially falls on my shoulders to increase the number of members to the point where we CAN have the things we all agree that a synagogue must offer its community-in particular, a full time clergy, a broad program of education for young people and adults alike, and additional non-religious events that help us stay anchored together.

Traditionally, members of a congregation expect that their Board of Directors take care of such things (I certainly have always felt that way, whether I was aware of it or not.) I don't want us to take that approach; as a Membership Director, I don't see myself as a "recruiter" or "salesman" for TNA, but as a focal point for YOU as members, and your representative to the Board.

The responsibility for growing our membership to the point where we can enjoy those benefits of a full time synagogue falls on every member, not just on a few volunteers behind closed doors. In essence, while

I do wish to ask for as many volunteers for the Membership Committee as I can get, EVERY member of TNA should see themselves as being part of that committee. Our survival as a community depends on every single member accepting that they are personally in charge of our survival, rather than just a "customer" of the Temple.

I am not appealing for money (though obviously, money helps.)

I am asking that every member talk to me about what we need to do to grow enough to have the things we want. If we had

50 new members join, then all the pain and tension we experienced in the last year could be made to go away. I need people to help me help my congregation, with advice, volunteering to help make phone calls to announce events or just check on people's well-being, volunteers to help me staff various programs, and most importantly, people to tell me what they expect and how they think it can be achieved. I want to hear encouragement, complaints, offers of help, reasons why people you know have left TNA, all of it.

What I need most of all is for our members to be involved. PLEASE contact me-my home phone number is (805) 376-2651, and my email is keithelliott@templenerami.org. Together, we can grow TNA into an organization that can serve ALL the needs of our community, and G-d willing, even help those outside it as well.

L'Shalom, Keith Elliott

#### Calendar of Torah School Sessions, Services & Events Torah School is Monday & Wednesday, 4:15-6:15

#### **DECEMBER**

Mon/Wed	5/7	Regular session
Fri	9	Family Shabbat Service led by the 6th Grade (Dinner)
Sat	10	B'nai Mitzvah Family Education (9:30-12:30)
Mon	12	Regular session + Camp Kadimah Hanukah
Wed	14	Regular session + Camp Kadimah Hanukah
Mon	19	WINTER VACATION
Wed	21	WINTER VACATION
Fri	23	Hanukah Shabbat
Fri	23	Tot Shabbat Dinner and Family Program (5:45-7:15)
Mon	26	WINTER VACATION
Wed	28	WINTER VACATION

#### **JANUARY**

Mon	2	WINTER VACATION	
Wed	4	Regular session	
Mon/wed	9/11	Regular session	
Mon	16	NO TORAH SCHOOL - Martin Luther King Holiday	
Wed	18	Regular session	
Fri	20	Family Shabbat Service led by the 4th/5th Grade (Dinner)	
Sat	21	B'nai Mitzvah Family Education (9:30-12:30)	
Mon/Wed 23/25		Regular session, WedJunior Youth Group 6:15 -7:30	
Fri	27	Tot Shabbat Dinner and Family Program (5:45-7:15)	
Mon	30	Regular session	

#### **DECEMBER Outside Organization Meetings**











#### **CITY OF HOPE**

No Regular Meeting This Month Board Meeting - Monday Dec. 26, 2011 - 9:30 AM Donald Seidler - 805-987-0917 - President

#### **ORT MEETINGS**

Board - Thursday, December 1, 2011 - 10am

Regular Mtg. Thursday, December 22,2011 - Noon This months meeting will feature Klezmer music!

Annelies Regen - 805-445-9722 Sharron Parker - 805-443-1998

#### **NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS**

Tues Mixed Meeting 7-8:15 pm, Wed. Mixed & Ladies Mtgs. 7-8:15 pm Sat. Mixed 6:30-7:30 pm, Sunday (Men only) 7-8 am

#### **HADASSAH**

No Meetings in December, Next Mtg. Tues., 1/3/12 Judy Meisels - Co-President 805-482-9222

#### **GIRL SCOUT/BROWNIE TROOP 60817**

Meets alternate Thursdays. Next meetings, Thursday, Dec. 8th & 22nd, 5:30 pm

# Go to www.TempleNerAmi.org for the latest Calendar Information!



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