

Events of the Month

Shabbat Torah Study
Saturday, July 20 10:30 am
Saturday, August 10 10:30 am
at home of Schroeders

See flyer for more information.

**BBQ and Barchu -
Service Under the Stars**
Friday, September 6, 6:30 pm
at home of Gladys Sturman

Our annual BBQ dinner will be prepared by Ventura Kosher, followed by White Shabbat Service Under the Stars 7:30 pm See flyer. Details are subject to change.



See article on page 7 and poem on page 9.



Tisha B'Av Tuesday, August 13
See articles on pages 7 and 8.

Visit our website:
www.shirami.com

Rabbi's Column



During our customary 2-mile walk yesterday morning, we came across a scattering of woodchips on the sidewalk. They were a spill-over from a lawn covered with them. There were enough for me to realize it would take several swipes with my foot to restore them to the lawn.

I didn't want to break stride (I had a smart watch watching my every move, including time and distance!) but I knew something should be done to restore beauty to our neighborhood! And so I made a Talmudic decision.

Rabbi Tarfon is quoted in *Pirke Avot*, "You don't have to finish the task, but this doesn't exempt you from starting it."

So I formulated a plan. I would never break stride, but I would, daily, brush with an isolated swipe, a few chips at a time. It might take a few days, but I would finish the task!

Which is what I did yesterday. I was able to send a few chips to their home and never made Bonnie have to wait, even for a few seconds, for me. And I obeyed the Rabbi Tarfon.

Bonnie commented, "*Nice Kodesh Moment!*" (You'll have to check previous issues of *Shir Notes* to understand that comment.)

This morning we came to the same pile of woodchips and, keeping with my plan, kicked a few more back onto the lawn. Then continued walking.

Bonnie stopped, and walked back to the remaining pile. And with several swipes of her foot, she brushed the rest off the sidewalk.

I commented, "That was a real *Kodesh Moment!*" She said, it takes more than one swipe to complete the job.

I told her what my original plan was—how it would take several days, but it would all get completed. She didn't seem impressed, nor exhibited remorse at spoiling my plan.

But I thought about this for the rest of the walk home. There is great wisdom to what Rabbi Tarfon said. We sometimes don't even start a project for fear we would never finish it (think of your garage). What I didn't realize is that by at least starting the job, there might be other good people who will finish it for us!

So Bonnie and I continued our walk. And we came across, in the alley behind our house, a beanbag chair (it was discarded) that had opened up and the little white Styrofoam balls were scattered everywhere!

What would Rabbi Tarfon have us do? (What would you do?)

Rabbi David Vorspan

Editor's note: Watch your email for summer Thursday 7:30 pm Zoom presentations/discussions to be planned. Stan Schroeder

President's Report



Shalom,

Now that Summer is in full swing, we take our two-month vacation to rest and recuperate so that we will be ready to charge into the High Holy Days. Of course, we get a real running start as Erev Rosh Hashanah isn't until October 2.

We are already planning full steam ahead. As is usual during our time off, we have to keep a close look on our mailboxes for Membership Renewal Packets and High Holy Day Services tickets.

Summer also means looking forward to our **BBQ and Barchu** with a date of September 6, 2024 at the home of **Gladys Sturman**.

For our High Holy Days Services, we will again be joined by **Rabbi Vorspan** and our **Cantorial Soloist, Ayana Haviv**. We hope to make a big push for ticket buyers if you know someone who is looking around for a place to spend Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, put in a good word for Congregation Shir Ami.

So, we look forward to seeing everybody in September and there is always room for one more (or two or three or four) in our Shir Ami family.

As always, if you have any questions or want to provide your input, please feel free to email me at JDPistol@aol.com.

Jordan Pistol, President

Social Action Committee

We had a nice turnout for our Walk Around Lake Balboa Sunday morning, June 2 with **\$1,000** going to the **Rescue Alliance Valley Food Bank**. Director **Richard Rodriguez** spoke to us about the various functions performed by the many volunteers who distribute food to the needy families.



Claire Silverman organized a table for writing cards to our armed service members via **Operation Gratitude** for those who didn't walk. She will continue to accept cards from us with messages of appreciation to our service people. These, however, are the only cards they need from us: blanks, "thank you" cards, and "thinking of you" cards.

We wish you a happy healthy summer and look forward to another successful mitzvah year.

Becky Finlay
Social Action Committee Vice President



Walk Around Lake Balboa June 2, 2024



DONATIONS

Congregation Shir Ami wishes to acknowledge the following donations:

Yahrzeits

Fran Feinman for Stephen Feinman
 Jacquie Gordon for Marshall Gordon
 Sylvia Hockmeyer for Joe Hockmeyer
 Andrea and Leon Nachenberg for Milton Stover
 Stan Rosenbluth for Brandon Gribin
 Bonnie and Rabbi David Vorspan for Sandy and Rabbi Max Vorspan

Birthdays

Jay Cohen (84)
 Irwin Koransky (82)
 Phyllis Schroeder (85)
 Bonnie and Rabbi David Vorspan for Shaina Vorspan (41)

Anniversary

Bonnie and Rabbi David Vorspan for themselves (53),
 Alisha and Rabbi Ahud Sela (23), and Ben and Elana Vorspan (17)

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

Gale Cohen.....	7/1
Heather Hyman.....	7/1
Ethel Granik.....	7/7
Fran Feinman.....	7/12
Barbara Hattem.....	7/22
Phyllis Feldman-Schroeder.....	7/27
Charlene Kazel.....	7/29
Judy Eisikowitz.....	7/30
Edward Schneier.....	8/5
Paula Frankel.....	8/6
Art Altshiller.....	8/18
Bonnie Vorspan.....	8/21
Stan Schroeder.....	8/24
Paul Frankel.....	8/27

Anniversaries

Lorraine and Dan Simansky.....	7/10	59th
Susan and David Lipman.....	7/12	54th
Sima and Steve Schuster.....	7/15	57th
Claire and Lew Silverman.....	8/2	69th
Heather and Mark Hyman.....	8/10	21st
Carol and Art Altshiller.....	8/16	44th

Congregational News

Get well wishes *rafuah schleimah* to:

Phyllis Schroeder
Sheilah Hart
Stephen Schuster
Sima Schuster
Richard Kirshbaum
Jerry Gort
Lew Silverman



May they be blessed with a complete recovery in body and spirit.

Congregation Shir Ami Tribute Cards

Our **Tribute Card Coordinator** will send your cards celebrating *simchas* and conveying your get-well and condolence messages.

Call **Helga Unkeless** at (818) 340-5751 or (preferably). email Helgaunkeless@yahoo.com

Minimum donation of \$5 per card is appreciated.

Rabbi David and Bonnie at March of the Living

by Stan Schroeder

You may know that the beginning of May **Rabbi and Bonnie** went with a group organized by a travel agent to attend the annual **March of the Living**. They spent a week in Poland before the March and a week in Israel after to commemorate Yom Hazikaron (Israel's Memorial Day) and celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel's Independence Day).

They attended the Yom HaShoah ceremony at Birkenau after the 3 kilometer (about 2 miles) walk from the main camp at Auschwitz. The day before the group had the complete tour of both facilities. And during the week before, they toured the death camp at Majdanek and other Holocaust sites.

Their week in Israel was spent visiting sites and learning about the October 7 Hamas massacre leading to the war in Gaza, and how Israelis are dealing with the current aftermath.

Wednesday evening June 26 at 7:30, a Power Point presentation narrated by the Vorspans on Zoom was attended by about 20 of us and recorded at <https://youtube.com/live/ilGpvk2QhuE> and followed by questions, answers, and comments.

I highly recommend watching the recording. I felt like I was there through Rabbi and Bonnie explaining their experience of the exhibits and being right there near the infamous Railroad tracks. Bonnie's mother was a Survivor. She interviewed and recorded her mother and showed the interview at a previous Yom HaShoah. See it at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0tCrBp3TCY&t=1708s>

Their visit to the Warsaw Jewish Cemetery where they were able to find the tombstones of members of the Vorspan [Forspan] family going back over 100 years was especially interesting. The whole presentation was emotional and inspiring. Bonnie explained how she had contacted a local cemetery official through the Holocaust Museum of Los Angeles. You can see their time at the cemetery with the whole group going to these tombstones.

I had participated in the March of the Living with an adult international group in 2006 and their presentation brought back memories of my unique experience.

Am Yisrael Chai! The people of Israel live!



Vorspans' group at Auschwitz gate waiting to start the March



Bonnie and David Vorspan at Birkenau where participants place personal messages on the tracks



2024 participants along the March (from March of the Living website gallery)

Summertime!

by Lou Loomis

Finally summer!

As a Southern California native, I have a particular love and great memories of summer. Yes, it gets too hot here in LA, and yes, it gets crowded. We love to *kvetch* about all that is wrong with the hot summer, but really, there are so many pleasures here that we can enjoy. And, with all the mess of politics ruining our peace of mind (we watch too much TV news), we still have pleasant mornings and evenings that the rest of the country would “die for.”

I grew up here and surfed the local beaches until I was no longer a teenager and was told to get serious about my life. I guess my parents were tired of their hippie freeloaded son living in the back bedroom and not paying rent! It didn't last too long. I got drafted into the Army, and that ended that!

But summer in California is still wonderful. Ask anyone living on the east coast—especially in Florida. They'll tell you.

So far, it's been a year of spectacular highs and gut-wrenching lows. Our Jewish family is facing tragedy and problems only known to us through whispered histories and old newsreels. Antisemitism is rampant both here and in Israel. Israelis inspire us as they excel in their determination to overcome the ancient evil, since it is their existence that is directly under threat, while we here are bit more blasé. Too blasé. That's because we haven't seen much of that tangible threat, as of yet, here at home. But the problems facing Israel are just around our own corner.

Summer is the time we have our getaways, with day trips and longer vacations. In our family, we have created a tradition where we turn our house into a summer camp for our four grandchildren. There are many exciting and fun opportunities to explore not far from our San Fernando Valley home, including the occasional movie or live music in the local parks and museums. There are also several non-Disney amusement parks not far from home (Santa Monica Pier for one, the Balboa Fun Zone for another, and don't leave out the fun of the Ventura Mini Golf that makes fun day trips a joy.

This year Paula and I have even gotten a little daring, by throwing in an excursion out of state.



Last month we went to a wedding in Portland. It did not include any grandchildren, but we don't exclude that possibility for the future. It's only important to create a fun experience which may provide a possible future family outing.

We hadn't been to Portland since our youngest daughter (now a mother of two boys) graduated from college, and it was exciting to explore and see what has changed in twenty years. We saw some of the famous beautiful sights of that city (the botanical gardens, for just one example) and managed to revisit the amazing Powell's City of Books. Google says that Powell's is largest bookstore in the United States, while others claim it's the largest in the country. It also has an enormous Science Fiction and Fantasy Section with autograph of author and long-time Shir Ami member **Robi James** (aka **Rhoda Becker**) prominently encased on one of the store's pillars. Her books and name are a part of literary Portland as long as that bookstore exists. [and if Robi is reading this: **Hi Robi!!**]

I hope you take advantage and explore some of the wonderful things to do and see here on the West Coast (the best coast!). But as I noted, there's no such thing as a permanent escape from the ugly realities of life (while we still have breath). Travel does provide a temporary relief from the stress of daily life, and that is very valuable. But just around the corner lurks...

In our getaway to Portland, thinking we had been transported somewhere magical, we still could not totally escape. It was on our way to the wedding, riding on a bus chartered for the wedding attendees, we went under one of the many bridges in that city, that I saw one lone masked protester dressed in a kaffeyah and waving a Palestinian flag for all the vehicles to see. Later I visited the bar at the wedding venue for a toast to the Israel Defense Forces and a quick prayer for their success in this vicious and terrible war that is being fought for all of our protection.

You can't ever really get away from it all, but no shame in making the best of whatever situation we find ourselves. Have a great summer, stay healthy, and let's meet with our Shir Ami family as soon as our schedules allow. And don't forget:

Am Yisrael Chai! (The people of Israel live!)



Remembering Harvey Cohen on 4th of July

Editor's Note: This article was published in the Daily News June 10, 2022. Harvey was our Congregation Shir Ami founding President. Stan Schroeder

By the time I left and went back to the office to write that first column on the group, they had already come up with a name for their club. They called it "Wings Over Wendy's," and this week it celebrated its 20th anniversary, still going strong, and now including many women pilots and veterans from all branches of service.

They filled the Encino Banquet Hall on Thursday, honoring the 100th birthday of World War II veteran **Harvey Cohen**, surrounded by his family. They also honored more than 25 longtime members all in their late 90s.



Dennis McCarthy



WWII Veteran Harvey Cohen, a new Wings Over Wendy's member, celebrates his 100th birthday with four generations of his family during the local veterans group's 20th anniversary luncheon at Balboa Golf Course's banquet hall in Encino on Thursday, June 9, 2022. (Photo by Sarah Reingewirtz, Los Angeles Daily News/SCNG)

Independence Day - Tuesday, July 4

Haym Salomon, Jewish Financier, and George Washington

Haym Salomon's (1740 - 1785) life was brief and tumultuous, but his impact on America was great. A Polish-born Jewish businessman, he advanced from a penniless refugee to become one of the most important financiers of the American Revolution.

Risking his fortune, he helped fund **General Washington's** army, securing loans at rock-bottom prices. After the war was won, Salomon used his own money to help finance America's newly-formed but impoverished government.

Sadly, his generosity was not repaid. It seemed that Congress did not recognize their debt to Salomon, refusing to repay the money they'd borrowed. When Salomon died in poverty at the age of just 45, his family was left unable to reclaim his debt from the government.

In 1975 the U.S. Postal Service issued a stamp hailing Salomon as a 'Financial Hero of the American Revolution.'

There is a bronze statue in Heald Square in Chicago's Michigan-Wacker Historic District of **George Washington** and the two Revolution financiers **Robert Morris** and **Haym Salomon**.



Robert Morris, George Washington, Haym Solomon

Tisha B'Av (Ninth of Av) Tuesday, August 13 (excerpted from Jewish Virtual Library)

Tisha B'Av, the Fast of the Ninth of Av, is a day of mourning to commemorate the many tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people, many of which coincidentally have occurred on the ninth of Av.

As the name implies, the holiday occurs on the ninth of Av, unless the ninth falls on Shabbat.

Tisha B'Av primarily commemorates the destruction of the first and second Temples, both of which were destroyed on the ninth of Av (the first by the Babylonians in 586 BCE; the second by the Romans in 70 CE). Although this holiday is primarily meant to commemorate the destruction of the Temples, it is appropriate to consider on this day the many other tragedies of the Jewish people, many of which occurred on this day, most notably the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492.



The restrictions on Tisha B'Av are similar to those on Yom Kippur: to refrain from eating and drinking (even water); washing, bathing, shaving or wearing cosmetics; wearing leather shoes; and engaging in sexual relations. Work in the ordinary sense of the word is also restricted. People who are ill need not fast on this day. Many of the traditional mourning practices are observed: people refrain from smiles, laughter, and idle conversation, and sit on low stools.

In synagogue, the book of Lamentations is read and mourning prayers are recited. The ark (cabinet where the Torah is kept) is draped in black.

In Jerusalem masses gather in the Kotel (Western Wall) Plaza seated on the floor and low stools to mourn the destruction of the Temples. Many sleep the night on the stone floor on the Kotel Plaza as an expression of mourning for the destroyed Temples.

It is also traditional for Jews to pray on the Temple Mount. Now Jews are allowed to visit the Mount, but not to pray.



Remember the Past, But Don't Be Held Captive by It

by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

We remember for the future and for life.



Judaism is a religion of memory. The verb *zachor*, remember, appears no fewer than 169 times in the Hebrew Bible. “Remember that you were strangers in Egypt”; “Remember the days of old”; “Remember the seventh day to keep it holy”. Memory, for Jews, is a religious obligation. This is particularly so at this time of the year. We call it the “Three Weeks” leading up to the saddest day in the Jewish calendar, *Tisha B’Av*, the anniversary of the destruction of the two Temples, the first by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon in 586 BCE, the second by Titus in 70 CE.

Jews never forgot those tragedies. To this day, at every wedding we break a glass in their memory. During the Three Weeks, we have no celebrations. On *Tisha B’Av* itself, we spend the day fasting and sitting on the floor or low stools like mourners, reading the Book of Lamentations. It is a day of profound collective grief.

Two and a half thousand years is a long time to remember. Often I am asked – usually in connection with the Holocaust – is it really right to remember? Should there not be a limit on grief? Are not most of the ethnic conflicts in the world fueled by memories of perceived injustices long ago? Would not the world be more peaceable if once in a while we forgot?

My answer is both yes and no, for it depends on how we remember.

History answers the question, “What happened?”
Memory answers the question, “Who, then, am I?”

Though the two are often confused, memory is different from history. History is someone else’s story. It’s about events that occurred long ago to someone else. Memory is my story. It’s about where I come from and of what narrative I am a part.

In the case of collective memory, it all depends on how we tell the story. We don’t remember for the sake of revenge. “Do not hate the Egyptians,” said Moses, “for you were strangers in their land.” To be free, you have to let go of hate. Remember the past, says Moses, but do not be held captive by it. Turn it into a blessing, not a curse; a source of hope, not humiliation.

To this day, the Holocaust survivors I know spend their time sharing their memories with young people, not for the sake of revenge, but its opposite: to teach tolerance and the value of life. Mindful of the lessons of Genesis, we too try to remember for the future and for life.

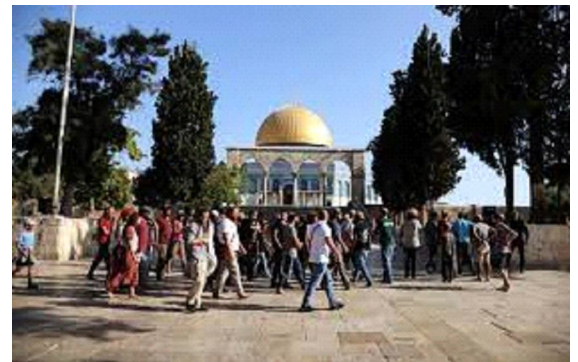
In today’s fast-moving culture, we undervalue acts of remembering. Computer memories have grown, while ours have become foreshortened. Our children no longer memorize chunks of poetry. Their knowledge of history is often all too vague. Our sense of space has expanded. Our sense of time has shrunk. That cannot be right. One of the greatest gifts we can give to our children is the knowledge of where we have come from, the things for which we fought, and why.

A society without memory is like a journey without a map. It’s all too easy to get lost.

None of the things we value – freedom, human dignity, justice – were achieved without a struggle. None can be sustained without conscious vigilance. A society without memory is like a journey without a map. It’s all too easy to get lost.

I, for one, cherish the richness of knowing that my life is a chapter in a book begun by my ancestors long ago, to which I will add my contribution before handing it on to my children. Life has meaning when it is part of a story, and the larger the story, the more our imaginative horizons grow.

Besides, things remembered do not die. That’s as close as we get to immortality on earth.



Jews visiting Temple Mount Tisha B’Av 2022

TREE OF LIFE

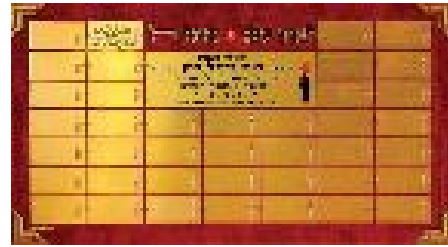


This beautiful Tree of Life, with leaves priced at \$100 and rocks at \$250 (one remaining), makes a perfect way to celebrate family occasions and support Congregation Shir Ami.

The Tree is on a rosewood background and consists of gold-colored leaves and rocks. It is displayed at all Congregation Shir Ami services and events.

For more information or to place an order, call Helga Unkeless at (818) 340-5751.

Congregation Shir Ami Memorial Board



If you would like to honor the memory of your loved ones by dedicating plaques on our new Memorial Board, please call Helga Unkeless at (818) 340-5751 so she may mail you an order form. The cost of each plaque is \$36.

Each plaque may contain up to three lines of engraving: English name, Hebrew name, and the years of birth and death. Both of our Memorial Boards are displayed at all our services.

The New Colossus by Emma Lazarus



Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glowes world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,



Emma Lazarus - 1849-1887

Posthumously famous for her sonnet, "The New Colossus," which is engraved on the base of the **Statue of Liberty**, Emma Lazarus is considered America's first important Jewish poet

Shop at Ralphs - Earn Money for Shir Ami

by Maralyn Soifer

Here is an easy way to earn money for our Temple. We are now officially a **Ralphs' community agency**. All you have to do is follow these simple instructions to help earn money for Congregation Shir Ami.



1. If you don't have a Ralphs' rewards card already, go to the store or go to website **www.ralphs.com** and select **Order a Ralphs reward card**.
2. Once you have your card, go to the website: **www.ralphs.com** and select **Create an account**
3. If you have an account, your email address is your account ID. If you forgot your password, select **Forgot your password?** and you will receive an email with instructions to reset it. Follow the instructions to enter your email address and create a new password.
4. If you already have a Ralphs' reward card and an account, you will see Account Summary when you login. You can change to our Temple by clicking on **Edit** within **Community Rewards**.

You can do a search for Congregation Shir Ami by putting in the number **92785**. Our congregation will pop up and click on the button next to the name. Click on the button that saves the changes.

5. You should also check the bottom of your receipt when you shop. It should say "**At your request, Ralph's is donating to CONGREGATION SHIR AMI**".
6. If all else fails, call me in the evening at (818) 704-0306. I'll be happy to walk you through it.
7. Start Shopping!

Make sure that the clerk swipes your card each time you shop. Verify that your receipt shows a contribution to Congregation Shir Ami at the bottom.

Important Note: All participants must confirm their selection annually starting in September. On or after September 1, sign into your account and reconfirm Community Rewards selection.

Congregation Shir Ami
 P.O. Box 6353
 Woodland Hills, CA 91365



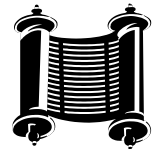
No sessions scheduled.

“Around the Rabbi’s Tisch”

This popular Shir Ami educational series has concluded its 5784 season. Come join us after Sukkot to start the 5785 Fall season for our Thursday evening weekly discussion of Rabbi Vorspan’s selected topics of Jewish interest. We discuss Jewish texts and current events as they relate to Jewish values and our lives as Jews. All sessions will continue to be on Zoom. This is a unique opportunity to learn and share in an informal format in your own chair with your own computer or tablet or phone. Call Rabbi Vorspan at (818) 888-9817 for more information.

Torah/Shabbat Study at the Schroeders’

July 20 and August 10



The sessions are held at the Schroeder home, 8450 Winnetka Ave. Unit 14. We discuss the weekly Torah portion and upcoming holidays or aspects of Conservative Judaism.

The July 20 Torah portion is *Balak*, and August 10 is *Devarim*, the first in the Book of Deuteronomy. We are commanded “*la asok b’divre torah*” (to engage in the study of Torah). Join us and fulfill the mitzvah.

Call Stan at (818) 718-7466 or email stanpacbell@gmail.com for more information.



Congregation Shir Ami invites you to attend our annual

BBQ AND BARCHU

FREE to MEMBERS! (who have paid 1/3 membership + extras by August 18)

&

WHITE SHABBAT

Friday, September 6

DINNER AT 6:30 pm

FOLLOWED BY KABBALAT SHABBAT SERVICES at 7:30

Held at home of Gladys Sturman

4411 Park Mallorca, Calabasas (818) 222-4694

Please join us for this special evening. We will share a delicious catered barbecued chicken dinner with all the fixin's by Ventura Kosher and then participate in outdoor Shabbat services led by Rabbi Vorspan. We encourage you to dress in white clothing to help Rabbi Vorspan remember his summer camp Shabbat experiences. This program has been a favorite of the congregation for over 15 years! Call Stan Schroeder at (818) 718-7466 or Gladys for more information.

Dinner: \$24 person for guests

The ABSOLUTE deadline for dinner reservations is Friday, August 30

-----Tear Off-----

Please return this reservation form with your check (if required) by August 26 to

Congregation Shir Ami – BBQ and Barchu

P.O. Box 6353

Woodland Hills, CA 91365

Name _____ Phone No. _____

No. of members (No charge) _____ No. of guests and members after deadline @ \$24 _____
(if 1/3 membership and extras paid by Aug. 26)

Total enclosed \$ _____