

Viva Las Vegas



**...the Whole
Megillah!**

**Presenting the
Congregation Beth Ami
Purim Spiel,
March 18 & 19, 2017**

Book by **Jane Rogan Dwight**

Lyrics by **Leanne Schy**

Cat Herding by **Patty Bernstein**

Musical Direction by
Nancy Hayashibara

Set and Costume Design by
Bonnie Boren

Set Construction by **Russ Gurevitch**

Costume Maven **Judy Gunnar**

Sultan of Sound **Phil Dwight**

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SPIELERS (and their sponsors— with thanks)

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**with Merril, Arnone & Jones, LLP; Carolyn Metz Realtor;
Party Tents & Events; Barta Hides; Dierk’s Parkside Café**

Narrator	Arnold Drake
Frankie	Andy Fleming
Dino	Mike Mundell
Joey	Rabbi Mordecai Miller
The King (Anne Brown & Richard Kahn).....	Stefan Rubin
Sammy Mordecai Jr. (Judi Hyman).....	Patty Bernstein
Queen Vashti	Susy Boimoil Lipsin
Showgirls / Ladies	Carolyn Orlik, Bonnie Boren, Joslyn Metzger, Judy Kupfer, Ronnie Rosenbach
Haman (Evelyn Gurevitch).....	Russ Gurevitch
Zeresh	Nancy Fleming
Bubbe (Judy Stern & Mel Decker) (Stan Feingold)	Leanne Schy
Esther	Jenny Levine-Smith
Angie Dickinson	Ronnie Rosenbach
Ava Gardner	Judy Kupfer
Shirley MacLaine	Joslyn Metzger
Marilyn Monroe	Jane Rogan Dwight
Bigthan	Phil Dwight
Teresh	Jane Rogan Dwight
CREW .. (Sponsored by Terry & Russ Gurevitch and Nancy & Andy Fleming and Maury Jones)	
Keyboard/Musical Direction (Bill & Kim Cordell)	Nancy Hayashibara
Guitar	Dave Ballo
Bass Guitar	Ross Jones
Drums	Marc Bernstein
Sound	Phil Dwight
Book	Jane Rogan Dwight
Lyrics (Ethel & Stuart Schy)	Leanne Schy
Cat Herder	Patty Bernstein
Set and Costume Design (Susy & Bob Raful)	Bonnie Boren
Set Construction	Russ Gurevitch
Costume Construction	Judy Gunnar

Viva Las Vegas Megillah Musical Numbers (and their sponsors— with thanks)

My Kind of Town	Narrator, Ensemble
All Shook Up	King, Frankie, Deano
The Lady is a Tramp (Roz Edelson)	Joey, Vashti's Ladies
Heartbreak Hotel	Vashti and her Ladies
Everybody Loves Somebody Sometime	Deano
That's Life (Roz Edelson)	Frankie
Fly Me To The Moon (Roz Edelson) (Myrna Morse)	Zeresh and Haman
Fever (Ethel & Stuart Schy)	Bubbe and Showgirls
Young at Heart	Sammy Mordecai Jr. and Esther
What the World Needs Now (Marge Ballo) (Judy Stern)	Angie Dickinson
Fish Gotta Swim (Stan Feingold)	Ava Gardner
If They Could See Me Now (Myrna Morse)	Shirley MacLaine
Happy Birthday	Marilyn Monroe
I Only Have Eyes for You (Stan Feingold)	Queen Contestants, Women
Hound Dog	King
Johnny Get Angry	Esther
Suspicious Minds	Esther and King
Mack the Knife (Janet & Jeffrey Stein-Larson)	Bigthan and Teresh
Strangers in the Night	Frankie, Deano, King
I Get a Kick Out of You	Haman, Sammy Mordecai Jr.
My Way	Sammy Mordecai Jr., Jews
Don't Be Cruel	Women, Esther
Can't Help Falling in Love (Stan Feingold)	Esther and King
What Kind of Fool am I	Haman
Blue Suede Shoes	King, Sammy Mordecai Jr., Esther, Jews
Burnin' Love	Ensemble
Blue Suede Shoes Reprise	Ensemble and Audience

The Story – Summarized (Spoiler Alert)

King Ahasuerus ruled in ancient Persia, from his palace in Shushan. His queen, Vashti, refused to appear at his party, and Vashti was exiled from the kingdom. After comparing every fair maiden in Persia, the King selected an orphan named Esther to be his new queen, unaware that she was Jewish. When she moved to the palace, her cousin Mordecai accompanied her, in order to watch over her. He was given a position guarding the palace gates, and one day, he learned of a plot by two palace eunuchs to assassinate the king. He reported the plan, and saved the King's life. Meanwhile, the King appointed a new prime minister, Haman. When the Jews would not bow down to him, this evil man proposed that all of the Jews of Persia should be executed, telling King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep themselves separate. Their customs are different from those of all other people, and they do not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them."

Mordecai pleaded with Esther to intervene. Going to the King unsummoned was punishable by death, unless he commuted the sentence by raising his golden scepter. Esther decided "If I perish, I perish," and went to the King. When he raised his golden scepter she invited him and Haman to two banquets, where she revealed that she was Jewish, and persuaded the King to let the Jews defend themselves from Haman's execution militias — thus saving her people and originating Purim.

KNOW YOUR SPIELERS

Andy Fleming, playing the role of the Rat Pack's Frankie, was already a busy child actor on the East Coast when he was discovered by noted Spiel talent scout Walter Guffman while playing the part of Fatty on an episode of *Our Gang*. Since then he has performed in several spiels around the country. Several years ago he moved into spiel management, and served as the producer of spiels here at Beth Ami. He was forcibly removed from that position after the actors in *Les Megillah* extended their performance as an unruly mob and broke into open revolt. Viva Las Vegas represents Fleming's attempt at an artistic comeback.

Arnold Drake enjoyed acting ever since he wrote a play in the 5th grade. High School Plays were "The Willow and I" and "After 20 years." There were skits in Medical Residency, then "Little Mary Sunshine," "Little Red Riding Hood" (the Wolf), "Play it Again Sam" (Woody Allen role), "Yentl" (Rabbi), "Mary, Mary," "Cactus Flower" (Señor Sanchez), the victims in "Arsenic and Old Lace," "Sweet Charity" (Oscar) and his Broadway Musical singing starring role as the Mute King (!!) in "Once Upon a Mattress." Arnold appreciates the fact that we let him sing in the Purim Spiel.

Bonnie Boren: The Beth Ami Purim Spiel used to be a visual wasteland until Bonnie turned her extensive talents to rectifying the issue. This is her 11th Purim Spiel and she finally gets to check something off her "Bucket list." Too tall to be a Rockette, her ambition to execute precision kicks has languished until now. She is very pleased to be a dancing showgirl in the "Viva Las Vegas" Megillah.

This is **Carolyn Orlik**'s first Purim spiel and she is thrilled to be part of the Beth Ami Spielers! Who knew her time performing in the high school marching band kick line, 30 years ago, would prepare her for being a showgirl. And now she gets to sing and dance! What a dream come true.

After his parents gave up on his courageous but ultimately doomed attempts to master the violin, **Dave Ballo** took up the guitar as a teenager and has played continuously since then. He has played guitar in numerous rock bands including such infamous groups as Bo Peep and the Woolites, Blackout, and the aptly-named Feedback. Dave was also a founding member of Limonim, one of Sonoma County's earliest klezmer-revival bands. He currently plays bass guitar in Klezmer Creek, featuring CBA's dynamic duo Patti and Larry Gregg. Dave has played in the Purim Spiel Band for all of Beth Ami's spiels.

Jane Rogan-Dwight, a true Spiel veteran, claims Spieling is what has kept her hair blonde all these years. From MoTown and Beach Boys, Broadway and the Beatles, Nashville and Les Mis to teaming with L. Schy to write this year's "Viva Las Vegas," Rogan-Dwight has been heard saying out loud that the Spiel is one of the great highlights of her year. Those who know her well can attest the actress-writer-director has been seen breaking into song and dance for no reason whatsoever. The challenging role of Teresh as Tap Dancing Shark has provided the best reason of all.

Jenny Levine-Smith's first Purim Spiel experience came when she played the spurned Vashti in a sixties-music-inspired spiel at the Westside Yiddish School in Manhattan in the 1990's. She was hooked on the bright lights in the big city when she performed a version of "Yesterday" to rave reviews and has yearned to reclaim her place in the spotlight ever since. Now in her third and final year as director of Beth Ami Community Nursery School, Jenny is ready for her star turn in the Beth Ami Purim Spiel. She is thrilled to have graduated from rejected-ex-wife in her youth to rejected-potential-future-wife last year to finally, FINALLY, becoming a bride! Thank you, Bryan Levine-Smith, for keeping the home fires burning during this time...

Joslyn Metzger spends most of her time doing improv with her clients as an LCSW, however this is her eighth year taking time out to have a small but consistent hand in the Purim shpiel. Rumor has it that the other hand would already like to be in Canada.

Judy (Hulen-Cohen) Gunnar was the most exciting actress on the Long Beach University stage in 1966! With her Theatre degree in Design, she went on to design childrens' theatre at the Art and Garden Center in Ross, CA, and the best ever Halloween costumes for her children. Spending 35 years selling fabrics to wholesale accounts, she has saved lots of scraps! And do they come in handy for Purim Masks, drapes, hats and table cloths. For past Spiels, Judy's wholesale accounts have supplied the colorful backdrops for our staging and this year she is contributing to the success of 'dressing' the cast. Judy will do anything Theatre... but sing!

Judy Kupfer: This is Judy's 3rd year as a spieler. As if she didn't spend enough time hanging out as the youth education director at Beth Ami, she seems to enjoy singing, dancing and gazing at the stars at this magical time of the year.

Leanne Schy let the last two years of Purimspiel casts get through two entire spiels without dancing. Not this year. Her technique for choreographing Purim spiels involves raising the ridiculousness level of the entire show, thus making the dancing stand out less in comparison. Jane Rogan Dwight tried to offer the cast a dramatic refuge from dancing, only to succumb to the lure of tap shoes herself.

Marc Bernstein grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts and took up the drums in high school. He played in a blues band while attending American University in Washington, DC. Then there was a 20-year drum-playing hiatus until he moved to Northern California in 1989. He got “bit by the bug” again, playing in a storage room at the Friedman Center with the then live-in custodian, Gregg Hudson, and Jon Batzdorff. He plays currently with Zim-Zum and assorted Chabad bands as well as the annual Beth Ami Purim Shpiel. Ba-da-boom!

Mike Mundell was born at a very early age in Oregon. Coming from Humble Roots (not far from Portland) he began his rise to stardom. Throughout his childhood Mike was always acting— mostly in, but often “out.” His first break came at age 7 when he starred in the Crawford Dance School’s annual Tap Extravaganza. Mike went on into medicine, but never lost his passion for “treading the boards.” He found a way to satisfy both needs, and for the last 35 years has been captivating and enthralling audiences in the theater—the operating theater. Of course, a successful run there means that every patron falls asleep after the first few lines. We’re hoping he’s gotten past that by now.

Rabbi Mordecai Miller was forced onto the Purimspiel stage when it was discovered that he could really sing, and that his name was extremely holiday-appropriate. Recognizing beshert when he saw it, Rabbi Miller has graciously accepted his fate. We tried to think of a way to have him simultaneously play his clarinet while singing, acting and dancing, but sadly, we couldn’t. You will all just have to come to a Beth Ami musical event, when Rabbi Miller and his clarinet sometimes sit in with the band.

Nancy Fleming, long-time veteran of Beth Ami Purimspiels, is pleased this year to portray a character who has never before appeared in a CBA Spiel—Zeresh, beloved wife of Haman! Who knew she had a Slovenian accent? Nancy also appears as one of the rabble who ooze onto and off the stage throughout the play. Nancy was the first person to receive an M.A. in Accents, at Hoboken University.

Nancy Hayashibara is a well known pianist, accompanist, coach, artist and cartoonist. In 2008, Ms. Hayashibara came to the rescue of the Beth Ami Players. The company needed a pianist/accompanist but we received so much more. She has been instrumental in raising the standards of the Purim Spiels to new heights. And if they’re not any higher, it’s not her fault. We are so glad to have Ms. Hayashibara back with us again. This year she had to deal with a cast who could sing only in keys never before seen in sheet music. She probably invented new ones.

Once a spieler, always a spieler! **Patty Bernstein** takes on a new challenge in the “Viva Las Vegas!”spiel. With a fresh perm and a penciled-on mustache, she channels Sammy Davis Jr. playing Mordecai as she/he guides beautiful and courageous Esther to save the day. She also guides the notoriously hard to herd spiel cast in the search for the perfect rehearsal schedule that makes everybody happy. Somehow, no one knows how, she remains cheerful.

Phillip Claude Dwight is best known as The Sultan of Sound, or Phillydog Dwight. This is no ordinary sound tech behind that Mackie board. Weaned on jazz, he first picked up a trombone at age 10, and his 1964 Fender Precision L-series sweetheart at age 16— Phil always says he’s a musician first. He loves to make beautiful sound happen, and is committed to the Beth Ami Spielers because they really need him. . . oh, rather because it’s so rewarding. If he can leave his mixing board, he may sing a bar here and there. This is his 11th year in the Beth Ami Spiel.

Ronnie Rosenbach caught the Purimspiel bug in 2014 as one of the original Jersey Girls - and she’s been looking for an antidote ever since. After a two year hiatus, she’s back as Angie Dickinson in this year’s Purimspiel. Her musical and dance background includes the Newark Ballet School, the Battin High School Choir as well as prolonged practice singing in the shower. CHP has threatened her with a citation for attempting to bribe an officer with hamantashen after he pulled her over on the 101. “But officer,” she pleaded, “I was only practicing my songs. I can’t help it if my voice sounds so much better in the car.”

Ross Jones became mesmerized by the bass guitar at a tender age while listening to his older brothers’ records of *Rubber Soul* and *Yessongs*. He joined his first band in high school, studied music theory in college, and continued to play in various ensembles in southern California. Besides the Purim Spiel players, Ross holds down the low end in local bands *The Endorphins* and *Hot Nails Open*. He also has six subwoofers in his home, much to his wife’s dismay and children’s delight.

Russ Gurevitch was born in a log cabin in Illinois, was raised by wolves, and taught himself to read by candlelight each night after long days spent splitting rails and.....wait!? You mean you wanted *his* biography! OK, then, here goes. He was born and raised here in Santa Rosa on a chicken ranch, and, between then and now, many interesting (and some not so interesting) things have happened. Currently starring as the Singing Surgeon in various hospital settings, he is now performing in his 6th Spiel. Previous triumphs (?) include turns as Mordecai, the King, a Wing Man, Jean Val Jean Val Jean Val Mordecai, another Mordecai (conspiracy theorists see a pattern here). And now finally he gets to be the villain!

Stefan Rubin is not quite our youngest King Ahasuerus, but he is definitely the tallest. Stefan has two connections to the Beth Ami Purim Spiel: he studies voice at the Santa Rosa JC with our music director Nancy Hayashibara, and he was Bar Mitzvahed at Beth Ami. That’s because he is the son of Joel ‘Jake’ Rubin, a past president of the congregation and a past Purimspiel Haman to boot. We gave Stefan the part of Elvis, the King, in order to see what he looks like without a beard. Also, have you heard him sing?

Susy Boimoil, this year’s Queen Vashti, hails from Toronto, Canada, and has been living in Sonoma County for a couple of decades. She co-owned a record store in Sebastopol where she raised her equally talented son, Jeremy Lipsin. She is a professional singer and musician, and has performed in her native land and here in California in many nightclubs and lounges, as well as fronting a local rock band gigging around the county. She has also acted in stage productions at Pegasus Theatre and Sonoma County Repertory Theatre. She is in the process of working on a solo act as well as a duo production: her upcoming wedding to Bob Starr in April.

Thanks to Elizabeth Jarlsberg for holding down the fort every day, and to Jose Espinoza, Miguel Monroy and their hard-working AKLEAN staff. Thanks to Purim Spiel party organizers Judi Hyman, Carol Swanson, Barbara McGee, Eleanor (Elly) Cohen, Adrea Moss, Terry Van Horn, Barbara Tomin, Carolyn Metz and Judy Stern.

Thanks to Ronnie Rosenbach and Jeff Sternfeld for wine, and thanks to all who donated for the party and play. Thanks to kitchen committee mashgiach and baking maven Ahuva Simon-Sa'ar, deputy mashgiach Richard Kahn, and Ahuva's team of hamentashen bakers: Janet & Jeffrey Stein-Larson, Alexandra Abend, Anne Brown, Lee Feinstein, and Myrna Morse. After weeks of assembling and baking, they created 1,350 kosher dairy hamantashen.

Thanks to Barb McGee and the USY kids who put the fabulous Shalach Manos bags together. There is one for every Beth Ami member family; if you have not picked yours up yet please do so.

Thanks to Asher Nathan and Ahuva Simon Sa'ar for chanting the real gantze Megillah for us.

Bonnie Boren, our wonderful set and costume designer, wishes to thank Russ Gurevitch for framing and constructing her vision, and Russ, Len Cohen, Andy Fleming, Ronnie Rosenbach and Terry Gurevitch for getting the set up. She also thanks Ruth Rosenberg, who assisted in making costumes, and Sonoma Cutlery for our costume shop space, and of course Judy Gunnar the costume maven.

Thanks to Phil Dwight of On Q for the ever evolving sound system. And thanks to Rabbi Miller and the tolerant congregation of Beth Ami.

Encore: Blue Suede Shoes sung by everybody

Well it's one for the gelt

Two for the spiel

Three to get Haman

What a schlemiel!

Now don't you

Step on my Shushan Jews

You can step on my shoes

But lay off of my Shushan Jews.

Shu-shu-

Shushan Jews

Shu-shu

Shushan Jews, yeah!

Shu-shu

Shushan Jews, yeah!

Shu-shu

Shushan Jews,

Well you can do anything

But lay off of those Shushan Jews!



Congregation Beth Ami

4676 Mayette Avenue, Santa Rosa, California 95405 · 707-360-3000

www.BethAmiSR.org

email: office @BethAmiSR.org