

## Temple Beth El offers events both religious and secular

By DIANE NOLAND  
STAFF WRITER

**M**USICAL entertainment, political discussion, holiday celebration, meditation and spirituality classes, history seminars, an affirmative talk on lesbians and gay men, children's carnival and ancient language study — all this and even more can be found in one location in the span of a month's time at the Temple Beth El Jewish Community Center in Aptos.

Though called the Jewish Community Center — and many events scheduled are designed exclusively for temple members — most events and classes include the entire community, said Julie Lorraine, program director.

Lorraine accepts proposals for classes three times a year and works with seven committees to put together the center's year-round curriculum of classes and entertainment.

"There are two sides to our adult education program — religious and secular," Lorraine said. "Many who are not Jewish want to learn more (about the religious aspects)."

Two upcoming religious classes open to the community are "Hasidism: The Mystical Tradition," taught by Rabbi Naftali Citron April 27, class fee \$7; and a six-session class titled "Basic Judaism, The Bible Through Jewish Eyes," Sundays April 2 through May 21, \$30.



Around 450 families attend the Temple Beth El Jewish Community Center in Aptos.

# Providing a forum for culture

Musical and dramatic presentations for both adults and children are presented at Temple Beth El, which boasts a fine Steinway piano and excellent acoustics.

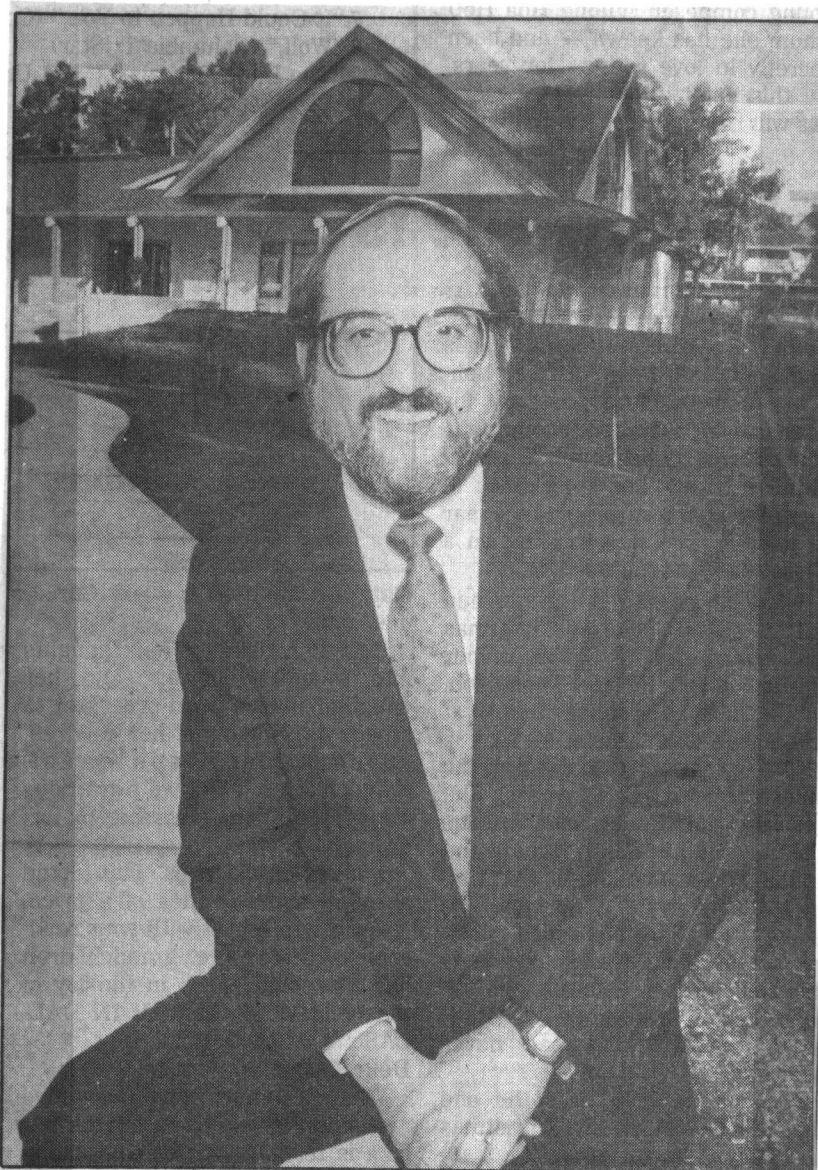
Last year, the temple, which serves 450 families, hosted entertainments such as classical guitarist Scotland Spelias and Paraguayan harpist Ramon Romero; a 14-woman reader's theater ensemble called My Kin Talk in a presentation of "What Do You Call A Female Mensch?" a comedy of drama, laughter and tears; and children's performance artist Linda Arnold.

The temple also hosted Cabrillo Cantiamo, directed by Cheryl Anderson last November, and hosted artists from Opera San Jose singing arias from popular operas. Sometime later this year, Bernie Dean, producer, director and actor, will present a musical production based on the famous Rothchild family's rise from the ghettos of Germany to the most powerful banking houses in Europe. Dates are not yet set.

"It's a full-length musical — direct from Broadway — abridged

APTOS - 1990-1999





**Above, Rabbi Richard Litvak leads meditation classes at the center. Below, Paula Marcus, who is cantor for the temple, drops by the Simcha Preschool Fridays to lead the class in Shabbat (sabbath) songs.**



into a fast-paced, one-man show," Lorraine said. "He received a Tony Award for it."

Spirituality classes are a popular offering as well, Lorraine said, such as Rabbi Richard Litvak's meditation classes (for members only), and Eli Cohen's two-section class open to everyone on "bringing God into your life — creating time and space for that." (The next session of Cohen's class runs Thursdays from April 20 to June 1.)

Jewish History in America, capturing Jewish experience and influence in colonial times through the Civil War to the Gold Rush, was well-received by the public last fall, Lorraine said. Classes in autobiography writing, yoga, drama and pain and stress relief are also offered periodically.

Temple Beth El hosts speakers like Stanford University professor Clayborn Carson, director of the Martin Luther King Jr. papers project, who spoke on a provocative topic, "Building Bridges in the Age of Tribalism," and periodically presents KSCO AM 1080 host and moderator Eric Schoeck in talks on local and national political and economic issues. Schoeck will appear next April 6.

Services are presented that appeal to members and non-members alike, such as Yom Hashoah, "A Holocaust Remembrance," written by Adam Fisher, and attended by almost 400 people last year. Yom Hashoah will be presented again April 28.

A newly acquired 36-passenger bus now allows Lorraine to arrange day trips to interesting places like the recent docent-led tour of Judah Magnes Museum in Berkeley (attended by 34) and an upcoming tour of Filoli Gardens near Woodside. The Filoli trip May 9 will cost \$15.

At the center, parents can learn prayer-book Hebrew, so they can keep up with their children, who are learning it in religious school; singles groups for all ages incorporate social, cultural and social action such as parties, ski trips, theater trips and toy drives or disaster-relief work; athletic types can join in golf, tennis and mountain bike rides; and children ages 5 through 12 can enjoy three weeks of summer camp June 26 through July 14, which includes two camping trips of three days and two nights, one in the woods and another at the beach.

Always on the lookout for interesting classes and events, Lorraine said she encourages suggestions.

"I like people to bring their ideas to me so I can put them into action," she said. "We really do try to reach out to the whole Santa Cruz County community."

*For further information on classes and events at Temple Beth El Jewish Community Center, call Julie Lorraine at 479-3447.*