

Torch Award Submission: **TA11- 047**

- Full Title of Entry (80 char max): A Solar Powered Ner Tamid
- Entry Category (You can select up to 2, although you will only win in one):
 - Men's Club Shabbat Yom HaShoah / Yellow Candle Israel / Masorti Hebrew Literacy / Ritual Literacy
 - Hearing Men's Voices Men's Health Youth Programming Programs for Young Men (21-40)
 - World Wide Wrap Shomrei Ha'aretz Club Administration Non-FJMC Program
 - Best Overall Programming* [*Best Overall Programming is not on the basis of a single program, but your club's entire year. A single program submitted in this category will be re-categorized.]
 - I'm not sure, so please select for our club's submission.
- Contact Person: Gary Katz
- Email address for Contact Person: gary.katz@csun.edu
- Club number & Club name: [#1036 – Temple Etz Chaim Men's Club]
[Is it a Men's Club or a Brotherhood? Please specify]
- Number of club members: 76
- Synagogue name, city and state: Temple Etz Chaim, Thousand Oaks, CA
- Club President name (at time of entry): Gary Katz
- Club President name (at time of convention): Gary Katz
- Person preparing entry: Gary Katz
- Email address of person preparing: gary.katz@csun.edu

Part II. Summary Information (2 – 3 sentences):

Temple Etz Chaim was selected as a pilot temple for a Solar Ner Tamid in 2008. Since that time, many other synagogues have followed this part of the Shomrei Ha' Aretz program. With the addition of a special Torch Award for synagogues considering installing or having installed a Solar Ner Tamid this year, we are applying for this award in 2011.

Part III. By submitting this document, I certify, on behalf of the club, that this submission has not been submitted by our club for a Torch Award in a previous year.

This program has not been submitted for a Torch Award in a previous year.

Part IV. Entry Documentation

In 2008, under the stewardship of FJMC Board Member Joel Shrater, Temple Etz Chaim was named a test site for a solar-powered Ner Tamid. This program brought media attention to our synagogue and our Men's Club (see appendix) but recognition of the Solar Ner Tamid as a Torch Award Winning Program was not in place at that time. We are applying for the special Torch Award this year.

Appendix Follows

Eternal Light goes solar in a practical and symbolic move

By Kitty Dill

Tuesday, June 24, 2008

Initiating a plan it hopes will be adopted around North America, a Ventura County synagogue is changing its Eternal Light from a conventional light bulb to solar power.

An Eternal Light, or Ner Tamid, is a special light hanging over each synagogue's Holy Ark to represent God's everlasting presence. A pioneering solar Ner Tamid was installed June 8 at Temple Etz Chaim in Thousand Oaks, said Joel Shrater of Thousand Oaks.

Shrater is a board member of the International Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, a North American organization that supports solar-powered light as part of its "go green" strategy.

"While there have been different kinds of solar-powered lights, there isn't anything like this," Shrater said. He said federation planners wanted a light that was reliable, portable and less expensive, and did not require wiring changes, "messy" construction and special permits.

Temple Etz Chaim is the federation's test site, incorporating a package developed and manufactured at federation request by MacroEnergy, a Malibu-based firm with an assembly facility in Newbury Park, said Shrater, former temple president and former men's club president.

He said the light went from using a traditional AC electrical current and 25-watt fluorescent bulb to direct current and a 12-volt light the equivalent of a 50-watt bulb.

Before, the cost was \$6 a month and now is "zero or close to zero," said a MacroEnergy representative.

What was developed incorporates a light-emitting diode, or LED, technology unavailable until a few years ago, Shrater said.

Officials described a rooftop solar panel about 2-feet square that keeps a battery inside the temple charged so the LED bulb is on day and night. Some sunlight is needed to keep the battery charged, but if there were an unusual number of overcast days, the system also includes a battery charger running from ordinary building AC power.

In sunny Southern California, the battery charger will likely not turn on but is available, the officials said.

The process was simple. The previous bulb was removed from the socket and a unit inserted with an LED.

The federation purchased the system from MacroEnergy, and Donald R. Konald, MacroEnergy owner and vice president, donated his time to install it, Shrater said. He said the cost was \$1,250, not including installation.

Rabbi Richard Spiegel said, "The light is extremely important because it is on around the clock. It symbolizes the eternal nature of God being there forever, that if you have faith there is never complete darkness."

The Eternal Light harkens back 3,000 years, he said.

The temple project is not so much about saving electrical costs as being a guardian, said Shrater. "The men's club wants to lead the way in being stewards," he said.

"What's so special about this is the way it's made," said David Shechter of Thousand Oaks, temple men's club president. "If all the temples do this, collectively it has the potential to conserve a lot of energy."

In North America, there are 700 conservative synagogues embracing about 800,000 Jews, said Jennifer Gersch, with the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs. That figure excludes reformed and orthodox synagogues, she said.

Also involved in the project is Larry Slomowitz of Thousand Oaks, in charge of temple buildings and grounds.

Rabbi Spiegel believes the light has another meaning: hope.

"When I was a kid, we didn't even know the word ecology. Imagine now being in a world where we can't drink the water or breathe the air. It's an international phenomenon of worry we are seeing about the state of the Earth.

"This men's clubs' program is both symbolic and practical, and we want to do what we can," said the rabbi.

