

קהילת אור חדש  
CONGREGATION OR CHADASH  
CONGREGATION OF NEW LIGHT



# The New Light

**Get Involved with Or Chadash**

*By Bill Wahler, OC Co-President*

Those of you who did not get an opportunity to participate in our Shabbaton weekend missed an incredible experience. A combination of religious, educational and social events – all with food!! What more could you ask for?

Lev Raphael, our author-in-residence, took us through several journeys over the course of the weekend as he shared with us how he grew and became the person he is. We followed his journey to becoming a gay man, to becoming a Jew, and coming to terms with Germany as a child of holocaust survivors. A very lively question-and-answer period followed his third talk on Saturday where much more was learned and other areas explored.

We began with food (Or Chadash does seem to travel on its stomach sometimes) and ended the same way with the traditional third Shabbat meal and then Havdalah to conclude.

Plans are under way for a Shabbaton next year and suggestions are welcome and encouraged as to possible speakers and topics.

I want to personally thank the members of the Congregation for their support in this endeavor. A number of our members helped underwrite this weekend so that all members could participate. When I put out a call for volunteers to help in various parts of the weekend (setup, cleanup, ushering) I received a large number of replies and everyone who volunteered was there as promised. They all put in their hour or more (see my November president's message) and helped make things easier for everyone involved.

A very special thanks to Ethel Meyer for all of the work she put in to make the meals as wonderful as they were. Because of that we are going to try a program of quarterly Shabbat dinners, fully catered, that will be reminders of

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The monthly publication for the  
community of

**Or Chadash,  
The Congregation of  
New Light**

In Chicago ....

**Our People,**

**Our Community,**

**Our Synagogue**

**Come Add  
Your Light  
To Ours!**

what your mother and grandmother prepared on Shabbat evening. Details are elsewhere in the newsletter but know that the first dinner will be February 19.

The calendar for 2010 is beginning to fill. Mark these dates down because you won't want to be left out.

**February 19 – Shabbat Dinner**

**March 20 – Or Chadash Gala**

**May 14-16 – Or Chadash Trip to NYC**

**August 13-15 – Conference of the World Congress of GLBT Jews in Los Angeles**

I look forward to seeing many of you at these events and of course at our regular Shabbat services and our educational and social programs each and every month.

## **Thanks to Those Who Helped Make the Shabbaton Possible**

Howie Aronson  
Rich Bender  
Rabbi Larry Edwards  
and Susan Boone  
Sara Fischer  
Rick Greenthal  
Ethel Meyer  
David Miller  
Ed Mogul  
Frank Nussbaum  
Norman Sandfield  
Mike Simon  
and Yehuda Jacobi  
Bill Wahler  
Stephen Weiser  
and Andrew Deppe

## **Road Maps Through our Prayer Books**

*By Linda Preston,  
Education Chair*

Or Chadash “J-Term” classes begin **January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

This January, we will get together in four exciting classes to study the prayer books we use on Friday and Saturday nights and compare them to two new ones published recently by our sister congregations in San Francisco and New York.

Please join us!

When: **Tuesday evenings,  
January 5, January 12,  
January 19, January 26**  
7:00-8:30 p.m.  
Congregation Emanuel  
Cost: \$36

Please join us!

## **And thank you ...**

A general donation from Judith Golden

“Challenge Ourselves” donations from Marshall Keltz (in memory of his spouse, William P. Drewry), Rick Greenthal, Sara Fischer, Lia Green, Joseph Shure, Tom Conroy, Shirley Gendel (in memory of her husband, Max Gendel), Irwin Drobny, Carol Goldbaum, Howard Aronson, and Burl Covan.

Save the dates:  
Aug. 13 - 15, 2010  
Los Angeles 2010  
20th World Conference of  
GLBT Jews

<http://gltjews.org/la2010/>

## **Our Mission**

To provide a warm and affirming community where all Jews can feel welcome. To accomplish this mission, Or Chadash will:

**Remember** that it was founded as an answer to the prejudice that gay and lesbian Jews experienced in other synagogues;

**Strive** to ensure that no Jew experiences prejudice within our community;

**Maintain** affiliations with the Union for Reform Judaism and the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations;

**Build** strong ties within the greater Jewish community of the metropolitan Chicago area;

**Dedicate** itself to the basic obligations of Jewish life, including:

- **Respecting** the contributions of people of all generations
- **Sharing** the life-cycle events of its members
- **Celebrating** Shabbat and the holidays
- **Fostering** prayer with sincerity
- **Visiting** the sick
- **Comforting** the bereaved
- **Encouraging** the study of Torah

Congregation Or Chadash is a not-for-profit organization that is largely supported by contributions from its members and friends. Please remember us generously.

## Cycles of Our Lives

### **Happy Birthday**

January 10 Stephen Neeley  
January 15 Howard Wax  
January 22 Jeff Rolim  
January 24 Tom Conroy  
January 26 Robin Sampliner  
January 29 Jakov Neiditch  
January 31 Tom Conroy  
January 31 Debrah Goodman

### **Thanks for the Oneg....**

**Friday, January 1:** Oneg still available for sponsorship

**Saturday, January 2:** Lunch still available for sponsorship

**Friday, January 8:** Oneg still available for sponsorship

**Friday, January 15:** Oneg sponsored by Ed Mogul in memory of his father, Sidney Mogul, and his brother, Barry Mogul

**Friday, January 22:** Oneg sponsored by Susan Jacobson in memory of her grandmother, Goldina Schwartz

**Friday, January 29:** Oneg still available for sponsorship

### **January Service Schedule**

**Friday, January 1:** Rabbi Larry Edwards

**Saturday, January 2:** Saturday morning Shabbat service, 10 a.m.

**Friday, January 8:** Rabbi Larry Edwards, Judith Golden, and Linda Preston with our **special guest**

**speaker, Jo Ellen Green Kaiser from Sha'ar Zahav** at 8 pm

**Friday, January 15:** Rabbi Larry Edwards at 8 pm

**Friday, January 22:** Susan Jacobson and Judith Golden at 8 pm

**Friday January 29:** Rabbi Larry Edwards and Judith Golden

**Tu b'shvat, Shabbat Shira with our Choir**

## **Shabbat Dinner – February 19, 2010**

Join us for a very special catered Shabbat dinner on **February 19**. Brought to you by the folks who catered our very successful Shabbaton, join us for a brisket dinner that will take you back to your childhood. For the vegetarians among us there will be an equally excellent Tuscan Bean Stew.

Come and share the Shabbat with other members of Or Chadash and then join us for services and a wonderful program featuring Bonnie Wade from the GLBTQ Home Program. There is much more about Bonnie and the program elsewhere in this newsletter.

Dinner is only \$20 and advance reservations are required. There is a reservation form in this newsletter and there will be one on our website also.

Any questions call Bill Wahler at 847-321-0155 or e-mail him at [wwahler@aol.com](mailto:wwahler@aol.com)

### **Challenge Ourselves**

*By Carol Goldbaum, Development Chair*

For the past five years we have had challenge grants: The first was sponsored by Steve Weiser and Carol Goldbaum; this was followed for three years by Norman Sandfield; and this past year Rob Pooley and Howard Wax sponsored our challenge grant. These challenge grants have raised \$80,000 over 5 years. This year we do not have a sponsor to lead us. So we will “Challenge Ourselves”.

You may have been contacted by members of the congregation asking you to Challenge Yourself to keep Congregation Or Chadash in the black. Please give generously. These calls will begin near the end of the tax year and an opportunity to share your money with us instead of Uncle Sam. We are asking each person to give as close to the maximum of what they have given before or, at least an average of their donations to the challenge grants over the years.

No congregation, no matter its size, can survive on dues alone. Usually, dues cover half or less of the expenses of running a synagogue. Last year our expenses exceeded our income by \$12,000. Thank goodness, we have a reserve fund, but it will not last long at that rate.

Congregation Or Chadash is a very special congregation. It is a family, a community, a place to explore your identity, and a place where you can return, as well as a wonderful mixture of ways to pray and play.

We “Challenge Ourselves” to raise \$15,000 through this year’s challenge. Please give with your heart for your community.



## ***Announcing Friends of Or Chadash*** ***By Andrew Deppe***

The Development Committee of Or Chadash is delighted to announce the formation of a special new group of community supporters. *Friends of Or Chadash* offers an opportunity for those who are part of other faith communities (or those wishing to remain unaffiliated) a way to support the mission of our congregation — to serve as a Jewish presence in Chicago's LGBT community and as an LGBT presence in the greater Jewish community.

What began as a discussion about inviting support from former members became a full-fledged congregational initiative. *Friends of Or Chadash* will give LGBT Jews and other supporters who may be committed elsewhere a way to participate in the life of our congregation. They can do so without feeling an obligation to attend weekly Shabbat services, purchase High Holy Days tickets, or commit to committee work.

Or Chadash is no longer the only safe space for LGBT Jews to worship openly in Chicago, as it was in 1976. Many synagogues are actively recruiting LGBT individuals and families. **Our congregation continues to provide a special place for coming out, sharing experiences of LGBT parenting, meeting other LGBT Jews, studying Torah from a queer perspective, and participating in a congregation with an unusually talented lay leadership.** Through *Friends of Or Chadash*, members of the broader community have their own vehicle by which to support our outreach and unique programming.

Membership in *Friends of Or Chadash* will include special recognition in Or Chadash publications, an invitation to a champagne brunch in April, a charitable tax deduction and, of course, the satisfaction of helping our community grow. The cost is \$180 for the year. Letters of invitation are scheduled to be mailed in January 2010. Our invitation list is still in progress, so feel free to send suggestions of potential supporters to [andrewdeppe@hotmail.com](mailto:andrewdeppe@hotmail.com).

## Quick Updates from the Social Action Chair

*By Laurie Grauer, Social Action Chair*

Or Chadash proudly participated in Edgewater's Holidays Around the World Celebration on December 12 and received a thank you from the event organizers:

*December 17, 2009*

*Congregation Or Chadash  
5959 N. Sheridan Rd.  
Chicago, Illinois 60660*

*Congregation Or Chadash,*

*Thank you for participating in the Holidays Around the World Celebration held on Saturday, December 12 at the Broadway Armory Park. Your organization was an essential part of this first-time event, and you joined over 200 other community members in coming together to learn and celebrate how the many cultures represented in our neighborhood celebrate the winter holidays.*

*This event could not have been a success without the hard work that you and other community organizations put into representing cultures from around the world. Attending children, adults and families were able to partake in the many traditions represented right here in Edgewater, and many expressed to me just how informative and fun each station was to visit.*

*Thank you again for participating in the first ever Holidays Around the World Celebration. I look forward to working with Or Chadash again to provide an even better experience next year for Edgewater neighbors.*

*Sincerely,*

*Harry Osterman  
State Representative  
14<sup>th</sup> District*



Laurie schools neighborhood children in the art of dreidel playing while Elise explains candle lighting at Edgewater's Holidays Around the World Celebration on December 12



### Tzedaka Drive

From December until the end of January, Or Chadash will be collecting funds for our volunteer night with the Night Ministry.

Since 1976, the Night Ministry, a non-denominational, non-profit organization, has served Chicago's most vulnerable. They work with populations of all ages, races orientations and creeds; and their services range from counseling, to housing, to free nightly meals.

Funds raised from this Tzedaka drive will be used to purchase supplies so that OC members can personally prepare and distribute meals to Chicago needy on **February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010**, from the Night Ministry Outreach Bus. Any money that is not used to purchase supplies will be donated directly to the Night Ministry. For more information regarding the drive or our volunteer night with the Night Ministry, please contact Laurie at [lauriegrauer@hotmail.com](mailto:lauriegrauer@hotmail.com).

## **Special Program February 19** *By Laurie Grauer, Social Action Chair*

Please join us at Shabbat Services on **February 19** when we will host a very special speaker, Bonnie Wade. With 15 years experience in social services, Bonnie began her career working at the City of Miami's Commission on the Status of Women as the staff aide to the director. She later moved to Chicago to take a job with Metropolitan Family Services providing case management to elders. In 1999 she began working specifically with LGBTQ youth as a prevention case manager at a drop in and has never looked back! She's gone on to spend 5 years as a manager at a homeless youth shelter on the Southside of Chicago. Currently, Wade is the founding associate director of the LGBTQ Host Home Program at UCAN, an innovative housing model that is an alternative to the shelter system. In addition to her professional work, she is a founding member of The Fire This Time Fund. Bonnie received her masters degree in social work from The University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration.

The LGBTQ Host Home Program at UCAN is an innovative housing model that provides an alternative to the shelter system for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning youth who experience homelessness. The Host Home volunteers step forward and open their home for a period of time to a youth ages 18 – 24. Both the youth and the host volunteer go through a rigorous screening and training process facilitated and supported by trained social work professionals. All youth accepted into the program have demonstrated the desire and ability for self improvement. The goal is to create the safety and stability necessary for the youth to work towards their goals of self-sufficiency. Whether the focus is on education or vocational skills, the stability and safety from the streets our host volunteers provide help to make this program happen. Housing, in conjunction with ongoing clinical support from a clinical case manager, frees the youth up to focus on their goals and achieve the overall goal of the program – a “permanent” transition from

homelessness to independence for many LGBTQ youth who experience homelessness.

Please join us and learn more about this important program in our community.

## **The Chesed Brigade** *By Rabbi Larry Edwards & Sara Fischer*

Acts of *Chesed* (“lovingkindness”) include visiting the sick, helping those who are limited in their ability to get out and around, and responding to other needs such as helping members at the time of death of a loved one. In fact, by being a member of Or Chadash, you are part of a community that strives to care for one another. The Chesed Network is simply a way of developing a list of “first responders” for those activities that make us a community. By signing up for the Chesed Brigade you indicate your willingness to be called upon occasionally to help fellow Or Chadash members.

Those interested in participating should contact Sara Fischer, who will be its coordinator, at [sara.fischer@mac.com](mailto:sara.fischer@mac.com) or leave a message on the congregational phone. You will also be asked to complete a one-page questionnaire about your interests and availability.

We hope you will include this in your mitzvahs in the coming year.

## **Hear Jo Ellen Green Kaiser on “Queer Liturgy”**

On Friday evening, **January 8**, Jo Ellen Green Kaiser, editor of *Zeek* and project manager for the Sha’ar Zahav siddur, will join us to discuss the process of making the new book as well as to address the topic “What Is Queer Liturgy and Why Should We All Start Using It?”

She will speak at **7:15 (before services)** and also offer the d’var Torah.

## **Get in the Game!**

We will be holding a game night on **Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>** at the home of Howard Wax and Robert Pooley, 1530 S. State Street, #12E, Chicago. We will start the evening off with havdalah at 6 PM.

We ask that you contribute \$10 toward the cost of dinner (pizza and accompaniments) and drinks.

Plenty of games will be available, but please also feel free to bring your favorite game.

For additional information, please contact Howard at [howardwax@hotmail.com](mailto:howardwax@hotmail.com).

## **Adult B'nai Mitzvah Study: Roadmaps Through the Wilderness**

If people are interested, we may organize individual adult bar or bat mitzvah study, or perhaps a small group of several people who are interested in studying together for adult b'nai mitzvah study as a group.

Study for an adult bar or bat mitzvah would involve:

\*6-18 months preparation, depending on previous background.

\*Depending on previous background, an Intro to Judaism class, or a few books and articles selected in consultation with the Rabbi.

\*Prepare a minimum of 10 verses to read (chant, if possible) from the Torah

\*Prepare Torah blessings.

\*Prepare haftarah blessings and at least part of the haftarah.

\*Prepare a d'var Torah.

\*The bar/bat mitzvah could be done either at a first Saturday service or a second Friday service (when we read the Torah).

\*Invite friends and family to attend, and to make donations to Or Chadash in honor of the occasion.

\*Sponsor the Oneg for that service, perhaps expanded.

If there is a group of people going through this process at once, we might schedule a series of perhaps three sessions, in which we discuss various issues related to the desire of the people in the

group to do this, what it means, how bar mitzvah developed, what seems most important in the service itself, etc.

If you are interested, please contact Rabbi Edwards to discuss this further.

## **Or Chadash will Participate in Affinity's Annual Burning Bowl Ceremony**

In showing solidarity with all Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer communities, members of Or Chadash will participate for the first time in Affinity's annual Burning Bowl ceremony.

Affinity is a non-profit organization in its fourteenth year serving Chicago's black lesbian and bisexual women's community. For fourteen years, Affinity has served the black lesbian community through a combination of educational, social and community collaborations. One of the central elements of Affinity's mission has been the creation of opportunities for visibility, empowerment, and leadership for black lesbians locally, while serving as a national organizing model.

Similar to our Tashlicht service, or the annual discarding of our sins on Yom Kippur, Affinity's annual Burning Bowl Ceremony is a ritual that enables attendees to let go of their past transgressions and focus on their spiritual goals for 2010. Or Chadash will be on hand to lend support and give a short presentation and the Jewish response to spiritual renewal. There will also be a keynote address given by Rev. Phyllis Penese, cultural presentations from other organizations, and live performances.

The event will take place on **Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, from 2pm-6pm** at the Washington Park Refectory, 5531 S. Russell Drive. For more information or if you would like to join us at this event, please contact Laurie Grauer at [lauriegreauer@hotmail.com](mailto:lauriegreauer@hotmail.com)

## January Dine-around

How about some really good Italian pizza? The story of pizza begins in Naples during Roman times, when a bread more similar to pita was rolled by hand and cooked with leftovers on top. No leftovers at this great place. Join us at

**Apart Pizza**  
**5624 N. Broadway**  
**January 8 at 6:15**

No reservations are needed, but try to arrive by 6 p.m. to ensure adequate seating. *Bete' Avon*

## Double Celebration January 29

Sometimes Shabbat Shirah (the Sabbath of the Song at the Sea) and Tu Bish'vat (the New Year for Trees) coincide, as they do this year. Thus we shall be celebrating both music and fruit that night.

The choir will join Judith Golden to offer an extra dimension to the service. And the Oneg slot will include a brief seder for Tu Bish'vat, celebrating the trees and what we hope will be some progress on climate change coming out of Copenhagen.

### Congregation Or Chadash

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Email: [Office@OrChadash.org](mailto:Office@OrChadash.org)  
Website: [www.OrChadash.org](http://www.OrChadash.org)

Rabbi: Laurence Edwards  
Cantorial Soloist: Judith Golden

Co-Presidents:  
Robin Sampliner and Bill Wahler  
Executive VP: Maryl Rosen  
Treasurer: Rick Greenthal  
Webmaster: Marvin Levin

*Rabbi Edwards is available by appointment and can be reached via email:*  
[rabbiedwards@orchadash.org](mailto:rabbiedwards@orchadash.org) or  
phone (773) 326-1490

## Gala 2010! by Maryl Rosen

We are very excited about Or Chadash's upcoming Gala Benefit on **March 20, 2010**, which will be held at Spertus Museum on Michigan Avenue in Chicago, overlooking Grant Park, and hosted by our Jewish lesbian comedian Jessica Halem. We are looking forward to celebrating Or Chadash with Jessica's comedy, food stations catered by Wolfgang Puck Kosher Catering, an open bar serving beer and wine, and a terrific silent auction.

Or Chadash is fortunate to be able to have three honorees this year. We will be honoring Howard Wax and Robert Pooley, who met at Or Chadash and were married in 2004 by Rabbi Larry Edwards and Howard's sister, Rabbi Pamela Wax. Howard served as president of Or Chadash from 2005-2008 and has served on Or Chadash's Board since 2004. Howard and Robert are the proud parents of twins Marcus and Sarah. Howard and Robert also sponsored the Wax-Pooley Challenge Grant to benefit Or Chadash in 2008-2009.

We will also be honoring Joey Mogul, an attorney who focuses on civil rights cases involving police misconduct, criminal cases brought against individuals engaged in street demonstrations and other forms of First Amendment expression, and capital defense cases. She is also an adjunct law professor at DePaul University College of Law teaching at the Civil Rights Clinic and recently published "The Dykier, the Butcher, the Better: the State's Use of Homophobia and Sexism to Execute Women in the United States" in the *New York City Law Review*. She has been actively engaged in the litigation and community organizing around the Chicago Police Torture cases, recently presenting these cases to the United Nations Committee Against Torture and the Human Rights Committee in Geneva, Switzerland in 2006.

We look forward to sharing our celebration with Or Chadash members and people outside of Or Chadash who would like to enjoy a fabulous evening out. Tickets will go on sale soon.

Finally, we are in the process of gathering silent auction items. If you have a fabulous item you would like to donate or have a lead on tickets, gift certificates, or the like, please contact Marvin Levin at [marvin@spsmail.biz](mailto:marvin@spsmail.biz)

### ONEG SPONSORSHIP

Celebrate a birthday, graduation or anniversary, or honor/memorialize a loved one with an oneg sponsorship. Please contact the Or Chadash office at [office@orchadash.org](mailto:office@orchadash.org) to make arrangements and pick a date. Thank you!



## A Purpose Worth Supporting

By Rabbi Larry Edwards

One of the purposes of Pastor Rick Warren's purpose-driven life seems to be to use religion as a club with which to beat those who are not of his particular sexual persuasion. A network of evangelical Christians he helped to establish in Uganda has been supporting the death penalty for homosexuals. *Yasher Koach* to Rachel Maddow for pounding away at this issue. Thanks to her and many others, Warren has finally been convinced to speak out against the death penalty (the death penalty!) for gays in Uganda. Thanks, Rick, for being so Christian about this.<sup>1</sup>

Uganda is not the only problem. Eighty-five countries around the world criminalize homosexual behavior, and seven of those include the death penalty.

But here is some good news: the Organization for Refuge, Asylum, and Migration (ORAM), just a year old, will be surveying NGOs and pressing for wider recognition of the special issues faced by LGBT refugees. ORAM was founded by Tel Aviv-born son of Holocaust survivors, Neil Grungras. His previous gig was with HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), one of the truly great refugee assistance organizations.



You can read more about Grungras and ORAM in the *Forward*:

<http://www.forward.com/articles/120132/>

While working in Israel, according to the *Forward* article, Grungras found ways to help gay Palestinians:

His experiences with gay Palestinian refugees in Israel — he also founded a refugee law clinic at Tel Aviv University — were “a turning point” that gave birth to ORAM, Grungras said. “There’s a long history of gays from the Palestinian authority escaping to Israel from oppression, arrests and honor killings,” he said. “At that time, no one else was doing any work with gay Palestinians in Israel. They got bounced around. They would have certainly been killed had they returned home. They were abandoned by everyone.”

You can also visit ORAM's own website to look for ways to help: <http://www.oraminternational.org/>  
I would have to count Neil Grungras among my current heroes. He brings passion and energy to a goal that draws on the deepest lessons of Torah and of Jewish history. Here is a purpose-driven life worth emulating – and supporting.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/religiousright/2102/%E2%80%98calling%E2%80%99\\_rick\\_warren\\_to\\_task\\_on\\_anti-gay\\_ugandan\\_law](http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/religiousright/2102/%E2%80%98calling%E2%80%99_rick_warren_to_task_on_anti-gay_ugandan_law) and related articles



Reservation Form  
Congregation Or Chadash Shabbat Dinner  
Friday, February 19, 2010

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Friday, February 19 Shabbat Dinner at 6:00 pm**

Cost for meals is \$20 per person

**Please reserve by February 12, 2010**

Please include payment with this form, either by check/money order or by filling in the credit card payment information above. All payments should be made payable to Congregation Or Chadash and mailed to:

Congregation Or Chadash  
5959 N. Sheridan Road  
Chicago, IL 60660.

I have enclosed a check/money order for \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_ person/people

**or**

Please charge my credit card \$\_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_ person/people

Type of Credit Card: \_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_ Discover Card

Name as it Appears on Card: \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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