



# Congregation Kehilat Shalom News

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Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ **March 2007** Adar – Nissan 5767

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## SEARCH COMMITTEE

Subject: Let Your Voice Be Heard

Dear Congregants:

As the CKS Search Committee progresses, we want to give you updates on the process. We've received resumes from candidates who are interested in our congregation. A questionnaire was devised by one of our members who hires top executives for a living and we tailored it for our needs. This written self-assessment was sent to the candidates and will help us with the interview process. We have started the initial process of interviewing candidates via detailed phone interviews, and plan on conducting further interviews as the search continues.

As an essential input into the decision making process, we will need your help to decide what qualities we are looking for in a Rabbi that best fit the diverse needs of our congregation. Your input is key and there are several ways to communicate with us:

1. Attend the parlor meetings where you can interact with Board members about the future of our congregation. Members of the search committee will also be present to hear your concerns about the new Rabbi.
2. Participated in the congregational survey. Access to the survey is being sent out via email; it will also be available on our website and members without computer access will be sent the survey via regular mail.
3. Send emails to our search committee at [searchcommittee@kehillatshalomnj.org](mailto:searchcommittee@kehillatshalomnj.org) if you have specific concerns you would like us to consider.

We will continue to keep you apprised as the process continues.

On behalf of the Search Committee,

Eric Applegate and Hilary Crist



## PURIM CARNIVAL at CKS MARCH 4, 2007

from 1:00 - 3:00  
**PRIZES, GAMES, FUN**  
**Come one, come all!**

Magillah Reading 10:30 - 11:45 (Come in costume!!!)  
Singing and PIZZA  
Purim Carnival: 12:30 - 2:00



## Committee Happenings

### To the Members and Congregants of Kehilat Shalom:

In our recent message to the Membership, we discussed holding a series of informal parlor meetings over the next few weeks so that, in smaller groups, we can all share our aspirations for making Congregation Kehilat Shalom a stronger community. We have scheduled four meetings in February and March. We hope that you will be able to attend one of them. Our parlor will be the sanctuary, on the following Sundays, from 3:00-5:00pm:

March 11 and March 25.

Our goal for the parlor meetings is to inform the congregation, gain your input on a number of key topics and discuss our future:

1. The Board feels that the results of the systemic review have imparted a great deal of valuable information with much relevance to the continued success of this community. We want to review the key issues effecting the congregation from the systemic review, update progress to date, and discuss work in progress.
2. The Rabbi search committee will provide an update
3. Review the committee functions and current status of each of these committees. Gather ideas of what we could or should be doing:
  - a. Grounds/maintenance
  - b. Membership
  - c. Religious Committee - events, organization and participation – Purim, 2<sup>nd</sup> night Passover Seder, High Holiday planning, etc.
  - d. Tikkun Olam – Giving back to the community.
  - e. Hebrew School
  - f. Adult Education
  - g. Sunday Café
  - h. Fundraising
  - i. Gift Shop
  - j. Hospitality – ie. Onegs.
  - k. Long-Range Planning
  - l. Social
  - m. B'nai Mitzvah
4. There are a number of active Havurah – Empty nesters, Kol Ahava, book club, young families,. What do they do and should there be more?
5. Should we resurrect a Men's Club and Sisterhood?
6. Event planning: with emphasis on specific tasks and dates needed
7. Onegs: Should we require/request each family to volunteer at least one Oneg a year?

We ask that each member attend one of the parlor meetings. If you are unable to attend the meeting scheduled for your family, then feel free to come to one of the other meetings. Please RSVP to the synagogue office as to which meeting you will be able to attend. If necessary, we will add a 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. The following is a schedule of when members should attend, but again, if this is not feasible, please attend a different session:

March 11 - Last names L-R  
 March 25 - Last names S-Z

For those families with multiple last names, of course, pick whichever date is best for you.  
 We look forward to seeing you there.

Board of Trustees

### CKS BOOK CLUB

DATE	BOOK	AUTHOR	HOST
3/5	<i>Saving Fish From Drowning</i>	Amy Tan	Thelma Canty
4/16	<i>The #1 Ladies Detective Agency Tears of The Giraaffe</i>	Alexander McCall Smith	Natalie London
5/14	<i>Like Water for Chocolate</i>	Laura Esquivel	Kristina Wise

Our meetings start at 7:30, and please call to let the hostess know you are coming.

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Where's God in the Purim Story? Where's Moses in the *Haggadah*?



God is absent from *megilat Esther*; The hero of the Exodus is absent from the traditional retelling (Haggadah) of the Passover story!

Rabbi Avi Weinstein of [Hillel's Joseph Meyerhoff Center for Jewish Learning](#) wrote:

The holiday of Purim is based on events as recounted in the Book of Esther. The Book of Esther, known as the *megillah* (Hebrew for "scroll") has one glaring "omission." The name of God is never mentioned. The Jews' salvation remembered on Purim is often referred to as the "Hidden Miracle," hidden because no supernatural event was responsible, merely the combination of personal courage and good timing.

The Passover Haggadah also has a glaring omission. Where is *Moshe Rabbenu* [Moses our teacher]? Moshe is not even mentioned once. How can we have a recounting of the Exodus and ignore the central character? What point is the Haggadah trying to make?

One answer lies in this question, "If God is hidden during Purim, why is Moshe hidden during the Pesach seder?"

One chooses to be courageous, but timing often depends on factors beyond our control. We choose to exploit the opportunities when offered, but the opportunities present themselves. When timing works in our favor, we either call it "lucky" or "Providential," depending on our worldview or our belief system. The "hidden miracle" of Purim sees the hand of God in the well-crafted natural events of the story. The *megillah* says, "And the Jews were enlightened..." enlightened to the fact that this salvation was not of their making alone.

Purim encourages us to understand that there is no such thing as a self-made person. We all had partners who contributed to our lives...

The story of the Exodus [in the Torah] might lead one to believe that God had to rely on Moshe to bring miracles into the world, that Moshe was not entirely human. The seder reminds us that not only was God ultimately responsible for the redemption, God was entirely responsible. As the Haggadah says, "God took us out", not by the hands of an angel, not by the hands of a messenger, but the Holy One in God's full glory." © 2002 Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.

Rarely do we read of or have we experienced God's direct intervention in human history. The Torah's story of Passover has God noticing the suffering of the Israelites and tapping Moshe to be God's spokesperson. Moshe is just a tool for the Divine in bringing about the transfer of the Israelites from slavery to a mere human to serving the Godly. God takes front stage in the story, bring plagues, overseeing the process of liberation and instructing the Israelites on how to prepare for their physical departure from *mitzrayyim* "The Narrow Place" (Egypt) and how to recall this liberation as a multi-generational spiritual

journey to be recalled each and every year.

Purim is closer to our everyday experiences. God seems overly absent from the events. We read of human courage and determination to stand up to evil in an apparently atheistic setting.

Yet the characters are aware of being part of something greater than themselves and their reaching out to a Greater Power in their troubles. Mordechai warns Esther when she hesitates to speak to the King about the decree against the Jews, saying, "Do you think that you'll escape the [fate] of all the Jews in the King's House? If you remain silent at this time, relief and rescue will come from elsewhere, and you and your family will be lost... Who knows? Perhaps you got to be the queen for just a time like this." (Esther 4:13-14)

In other words: As we go through our lives, we should never lose sight of the Greater Drama of which we are a part. In some profound way, both the Passover *Haggadah* and the Purim *megillah* are reminding us through these absences of the need to clearly discern what Godly work we each are called to be doing in this world. In figuring out what God wants of us we are taught to be keenly aware of the limitations of any one human in how things play out.

On the scale of human evolution, any one human life is a mere short-lived spark. What we are called to do in our brief time on earth is to learn, live, and thereby uphold and perpetuate our Godly-values. We Jews have encoded these sacred teachings in our folkways, also known as "the mitzvot."

May we embrace the opportunity of these coming holydays to yet again, humbly realign our lives towards the Godly by learning about, and practicing the mitzvot of Purim and Passover. A joyous Purim and a kosher Passover to one and all!

*Rabbi Michael Tayvaf*

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## Hebrew School Happenings

### MARCH



#### Shabbat Superstars

For January are (name(grade)):

1/5/07:

Harry Waskow (6), Dorothy Waskow (2), Ian Murphy (3), Gabrielle Rubinstein (3), Jason Rosenthal (4), Allison Rosenthal (1)

1/27/07

Zach Slotkin (6), Dorothy Waskow (2), Jackie Konlowski (7), Harry Waskow (6), Mia Van Peenen

(7), Melissa Javeline (2), Rebecca Ravitz(5), Joanna Javeline (5), Neil Brandwein (7), Jessica Ravitz (2), Nora Bradley (6), Emma Cohen (5), Greg Auerbach (6), Nicole Meissner (5), Nancy Weiss (5), Corey Cochran (5), Erica Gavzy (7), Jamie Thompson (7), Ben Seitz (6), Dan Klinger (6), Rachel Spielholz (6), Mari Skoulchi (6), Dylan Carson (5), Ben Weinstein (5), Jeremy Bilotti (6)

#### March

4 Sunday Purim-

7 Wednesday

11 Sunday- Cooking-Dance

14 Wednesday Cooking

18 Sunday- Music

21 Wednesday

25 Sunday- Passover Walk Through- Music

28 Wednesday

Fifth Grade students delighted in joining two teddy bears in holy matrimony early in February as part of their year long study of the Jewish Life Cycle. William and Elizabeth Ravitz gave the children the experience of witnessing a Jewish Wedding between people. It was a lovely ceremony officiated by Rabbi Tayvah during which their children held up the Chuppah.



Thanks are owed to Judy Turkheimer for leading our Tu B'shvat Seder this year. Many thanks are also owed to all of the parent volunteers who made sure that there was cut fruit to serve to the students, juice

to pour, and a clean building when they left. It is astounding to me the outpouring of volunteer effort and engagement that this community displays. If you have fulfilled your Involvement Bond requirement, and would like to be reimbursed, please fill out the form in the office. If you would like to donate the bond to a special fund for the Hebrew School, there is a place to note that on the reimbursement form. As always, just because you have fulfilled your requirement, does not mean that we do not need your help. The Hebrew School needs all of the parent support that you can provide, whether it is helping out in the office, organizing the supplies, supporting a teacher in the classroom, organizing a pizza night, tutoring Hebrew one on one, making phone calls, setting up for Mock Shabbat, guiding students through learning stations, staying for Tefilot, or any of the million things that parents do. Please don't hesitate to call or email me, or just stop in and tell me you would like to help. I will have no trouble finding things to do ☺

The past month also found the sixth grade working on a Leadership project. The culminating activity was the creation of an art museum that described Jewish Leaders throughout History. I hope you were able to stop by and see it.

The K-2 class has flourished under the guidance of Karen Fridkis, who has helped the children learn prayers, taken them on a tour of the building, the Ark, and the Torah, as well as read many wonderful stories and challenged them at their own levels.



Each child is encouraged to stretch to their own level of understanding. Each grade is given materials that are geared to what is age appropriate. Volunteers and tornanim in the K-2 class are put to work helping each

grade level achieve.

Enjoying being part of the evolution of our culture,

*Dori Daus*, Principal

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908-874-8464

### CONGREGATION KEHILAT SHALOM YOUTH GROUP

**February** brought our youth group back to shul for a Saturday evening dinner followed by socializing and games. The group met from 5:30 until 10:00 on February 10th. The reports tell me that a good time was had by all. Whether it was through playing cards, Apples to Apples, or Taboo, much laughter rang through the synagogue on this cold winter's night. Many thanks to Tom Berger and Natalie London for chaperoning the event.

This was the youth group's second successful evening held at our synagogue this school year. After chatting with a few youth group members, it was decided that there will be more of this type of youth group evenings at CKS. These "home" evenings allow for greater flexibility than other youth group events that are held elsewhere. Teens with other commitments can come late and still participate in the event, the atmosphere is low key and friendly, the location is convenient for all, and the price is right. At our next youth group dinner, we will be asking the parents to share in the fun. While the teens meet in the community room in the back, the adults can socialize in the lobby. At both the December and February youth dinner/game night several parents stayed to socialize. Next time, we'll officially incorporate the adults into the event! Who knows we may even broaden the dinner menu selection!

**Save the date: Saturday evening, March 24**

### RECONSTRUCTIONIST REGIONAL YOUTH GROUP

The regional youth group had a very successful gourmet cooking class in January at the home of one of the teens from String of Pearls. It was the largest number of participants yet - 17 teens with many new people, too! Thanks for youth advisor, Josh Goldsmith, for organizing and to the Cutler family for hosting.

The February regional youth event will be dinner at Panera in Princeton followed by a comedy improv show on the Princeton University campus. Princeton's first and foremost improv comedy group, Quipfire, will be performing. Josh proclaims their shows are wildly funny. I have no doubt that the event will be fantastic.

Save these dates for March:

**Saturday, March 10th - 7:30-9:30 Fondue and Jewish Comedy night**

**Friday, March 16th 7:30 -back by popular demand -Yuri Lane performance**

If you haven't attended one of these regional youth group events yet, why not give it a try? Pick from either of these two exciting events for March or come to both! Contact me at [kfridkis@comcast.net](mailto:kfridkis@comcast.net) or email Josh directly at [jgoldsmi@princeton.edu](mailto:jgoldsmi@princeton.edu) for more information.

Shalom, *Karen Fridkis*, youth group chair

### HEBREW HIGH SCHOOL

The Hebrew High School program hired a new teacher for Thursday's class. We said a sad farewell to Leslie Wiener who taught the class for the first semester. Leslie originally planned to take a leave of absence for the birth of her baby. However, her plans changed and her family will be moving out of the area in the spring. Tonight I learned that Leslie gave birth to a baby girl, Leah Rose. The entire Hebrew High School congratulates Leslie and Ross on the birth of their third child. Mazel tov and best wishes to you.

Leslie's introduction to conversational Hebrew will be followed up by our new teacher, Eli Ungar. Welcome, Eli!

Eli Ungar is the new Hebrew Teacher working with the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade class. Eli has split the class into two segments: the first is about the history of the becoming of Israel as the state of the Jews all over the world, starting with the founding and the wars the state of Israel has been through over the past 58 years. This will build up to an awareness of the current and future issues of the State of Israel. The second part of the lessons is the

development of the spoken language of Hebrew, starting with the different formations of the verbs and the building of sentences using those verbs.

Eli's goal for Thursday's class is to print out a news article in Hebrew from the Hebrew newspaper and read it with the students in class and then discuss the article with the class.

Thursday's class continues to be taught by two teachers. Eli Unger teaches the first hour and Rabbi Tayvah teaches the second. Rabbi Tayvah continued to lead interesting discussions with the teens through the month of January.

Wednesday's class is kept busy with a variety of teachers. Susan Waskow is the class's main guide. She is with the class for an hour almost every week. Judy Turkheimer, Rabbi Tayvah, and I weave in and out of the class during the month.

Judy explains her teaching method with the following: "Group coaching in the Hebrew High class seems to be a great success. Each class, the group determines what topic they'd like to explore. We've discussed issues including; why homework is important or not, why we are here (on earth), judging people by their appearance and more. When I coach, I listen, ask questions, offer observations, reflections and feedback, encouraging students to reflect on their thoughts, choices and responsibilities. It is a safe environment in which students share opinions and are always right. All students participate and I am astounded by the brilliance they offer."

Thanks, Judy, for sharing your expertise with the high school students. They're lucky to have you as a coach!

This past month, the teens and I spoke about the many upcoming events at shul. The Purim carnival is around the corner and the students went through the attic in search of any left-over prizes for last year. We discussed some of the games that they want to organize at the carnival. We also brainstormed about next year's Hebrew High school schedule and tried to solve a folk tale mystery story.

Thanks to the parents and students who bought pizza for the Wednesday and Thursday classes - Tom Berger, Natalie London, Susan Krisiloff, Carrie Fischman, and Jake Fridkis.

Shalom,

*Karen Fridkis*, Hebrew High School chair.



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# Ohr Tikvah Jewish Healing Center

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Upcoming Events...



## Healing Waters: The Mikveh as a Source of Renewal for Men and Women

**When:** Wednesday, **March 7**, 7:30 to 9 PM  
**Where:** Shimon and Sara Birnbaum Jewish Community Center  
 775 Talamini Road, Bridgewater

**Fee:** Donations welcomed

Rabbi Robin Nafshi will provide an overview of the ancient Jewish ritual of immersion in sacred water, and lead a discussion about ways we can mark significant life transitions with traditional and new immersion ceremonies. In the spring, Ohr Tikvah will sponsor a visit to the mikveh of (Reform) Congregation Shir Ami in Newtown, PA. Rabbi Robin Nafshi was ordained by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 2005. Her rabbinical thesis explored the ancient Jewish ritual of hand washing, and from doing this research, she developed a general interest in Judaism's sacred uses of water.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Bringing Jewish Worship to Jewish Seniors

**When:** Sunday, **March 25**, 10:30 AM – 12 Noon  
**Where:** Shimon and Sara Birnbaum Jewish Community Center  
**Fee:** Donations welcomed

In Ohr Tikvah's continued efforts to reach all members of our Jewish community, including those who live in area assisted living facilities and nursing homes, we are pleased to hold a workshop designed to train young people and adults how to lead Shabbat and holiday services for seniors who are unable to attend Temple services. Dr. Kayla and Jim Paul will lead the interactive training workshop and distribute service prayer books they have compiled and are using in their community. Participants will be able to take these materials home to help us build skills and gain confidence in conducting services.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Coping with Loss - Bereavement Support Group with Rabbi Robin Nafshi and Lillian Swickle, ACSW

**When:** Tuesday evenings, 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM –  
**March 20, April 10 & 24, May 8**  
**Where:** Jewish Family Service, 150 West High Street,  
 Somerville, NJ  
**Fee** \$40.00 (\$10.00 per session)  
**PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED BY 3/13**

Rabbi Nafshi and Lillian Swickle will create a safe and supportive space for individuals who have experienced a recent or not-so-recent loss to talk, to listen to others, and to learn practical and spiritual tips to cope and gain strength and healing. Please call Ohr Tikvah to register to ensure a minimum of eight participants in the group.

# Jewish LIFE



JEWISH LIFE PRESENTS AN EVENING WITH ANN KIRSCHNER, AUTHOR OF *SALA'S GIFT, MY MOTHER'S HOLOCAUST STORY*, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7 AT TEMPLE BETH-EL, HILLSBOROUGH

Bridgewater, NJ –Jewish LIFE (Learning Is For Everyone) presents an evening with Ann Kirschner, author of *Sala's Gift, My Mother's Holocaust Story* on Wednesday, March 7 at 7 p.m. This program is open to the community and will be held at Temple Beth-El, 67 Route 206 South in Hillsborough (908-722-0674). The fee for the program is \$15/person. *This program is sponsored in part by Friends' Health Connection.*

Few family secrets have the power both to transform lives and to fill in crucial gaps in world history. But then, few families have a mother and a daughter quite like Sala and Ann Kirschner. For nearly 50, Sala kept a secret: She had survived five years as a slave in seven different Nazi work camps. Living in America after the war, she kept from her children any hint of her epic, inhuman odyssey. She held on to more than 350 letters, photographs, and a diary without ever mentioning them. Only in 1991, on the eve of heart surgery, did she suddenly present them to Ann and offer to answer any questions her daughter wished to ask. It was a life-changing moment for her scholar, writer, and entrepreneur daughter.

To register for an evening with Ann Kirschner, please call Friends' Health Connection at 800-483-7436 or visit on-line at [www.friendshealthconnection.org](http://www.friendshealthconnection.org). Copies of Ann Kirschner's book will be available for purchase at the event.

*Invitations by Sharon*

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# MARCH 2007

What's going on at Congregation Kehilat Shalom?

March 2007  
11 Adar 5767 - 12 Nisan 5767

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 11 Adar §6:36PM FAST OF ESTHER Morning: Exo. 32.11-14, 34.1-10. Afternoon: Exo. 32.11-14, 34.1-10. Afternoon: Isaiah 55.6- 56.8 10 - 12 Hebrew High School 5 - 7 PM	2 12 Adar §5:34PM 7 PM Singing & Storytelling Shabbat evening service	3 13 Adar §6:38PM Tetzaveh: Exo. 29.19- 30.10 Shabbat Zakhor Deut. 25.17-19. I Samuel 15.1-23 9:30 AM Shabbat Shaharit service; Erica Gavzy's Bat Mitzvah celebration
4 14 Adar §6:39PM PURIM Exo. 17.8-16. Magillah Reading 10:30- 11:45 AM FOOD and SINGING Purim Carnival 12:30 - 2:00 PM (No Hebrew School)	5 15 Adar §6:40PM SHUSHAN PURIM	6 16 Adar	7 17 Adar Hebrew School & 8/9 Hebrew High Schools 5 - 7 PM	8 18 Adar 10 - 12 Hebrew High School 5 - 7 PM	9 19 Adar §5:41PM 7:45 PM Food for thought Shabbat Service	10 20 Adar §6:46PM Kee Tissa: Exo. 33:12- 34:35 Shabbat Parah Num. 19.1-22. Ezekiel 36.16-36 3:30 PM Shabbat Minhah Service; Jaclyn Konkowski's Bat Mitzvah celebration
11 21 Adar Hebrew School 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. 3 - 5 PM Parlor Meeting	12 22 Adar	13 23 Adar 7:30 pm Board of Trustees Mtg.	14 24 Adar Hebrew School & 8/9 Hebrew High Schools 5 - 7 PM	15 25 Adar 10 - 12 Hebrew High School 5 - 7 PM	16 26 Adar §5:49PM 7:00 PM Shabbat Service	17 27 Adar §6:53PM Vayakhel: Exo. 37:10- 38:20 Pekude: Exo. 40:1-40:38 Shabbat Hahodesh Exo. 12.1-20. Ezekiel 45.18-46.18 10-11:30 AM Torah Study Inner and Outer Sacred Space
18 28 Adar Hebrew School 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.	19 29 Adar	20 1 Nisan ROSH HODESH Num. 28.1-15.	21 2 Nisan Hebrew School & 8/9 Hebrew High Schools 5 - 7 PM	22 3 Nisan 10 - 12 Hebrew High School 5 - 7 PM	23 4 Nisan §5:56PM 7:45 PM Shabbat Service	24 5 Nisan §7:00PM Vayikra: Levit. 4:27- 5:26 Isaiah 44.1-23. 9:30 AM Shabbat Shaharit service; Rebecca Underberg-Davis' Bat Mitzvah celebration
25 6 Nisan Hebrew School 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. 3 - 5 PM Parlor Meeting	26 7 Nisan	27 8 Nisan	28 9 Nisan Hebrew School & 8/9 Hebrew High Schools 5 - 7 PM	29 10 Nisan 10 - 12 Hebrew High School 5 - 7 PM	30 11 Nisan §6:04PM 7:00 PM Shabbat Service	31 12 Nisan §7:08PM Tzav: Levit. 8:1-8:36 Shabbat Hagadol Malachi 3.4-24.

[;Candle Lighting, §Observance End. Times are for Belle Mead, NJ]

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## Congregation Kehilat Shalom News

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*Fulfilling the religious, educational and social needs of our Jewish community since 1982.*

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