

Congregation Kehilat Shalom NEWS

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

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Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ **January 2008** Tevet– Shevat 5768

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President's Message: Feeling of Community

What I saw that day was possibility. And possibility, even if it's still unrealized, is nonetheless real. (Source of quote unknown)



In my first six months as President of CKS, many small improvements have been accomplished, while other changes have just entered the planning stages. If you look back to what I wrote in the August 2007 newsletter, you'll see that we have completed four of the five "near-future" physical enhancements. These included removing the large table in the lobby, replacing it with more appropriate furniture, painting the lobby with a warm inviting color, installing the engraved brick walkway, and most recently, pruning the trees and branches hanging over the building just in time for the mid December Nor'easter.

At the High Holidays I spoke to you about the vision of the Board and our mission statement. The first part of our vision was to offer programming geared towards the adults in the community. To that point, we have had two successful Adult Education classes led by Rabbi Falk exploring Judaism's Relationship to the Environment. We have also recently started our Adult Hebrew classes that meet on Sunday mornings and are sponsored by the National Jewish Outreach.

The second part of our vision was to cultivate a stronger sense of community, both externally and internally. On December 3rd, Kol Ahava led holiday festivities in Montgomery at the Recreation Center. We are still in the planning stages for an interfaith parlor meeting which will encourage participation from all family members of our community. Stay tuned—we haven't forgotten about it. Over the past six months, there have been more individuals participating in events and some new people have the responsibility of tasks that need attention and support. Even so, I wish more parents of Hebrew School children would stay at CKS on Sunday mornings (even for a short while) to share a cup of coffee, tea, juice or a bagel and engage in social conversation rather than simply dropping off and picking up their children. As parents you are making a conscious choice to instill a sense of Judaism to your children. Why not be a role model and show your children your sense of community as well?

As an institution, CKS has a different meaning to each of us. It is an institution of learning and passing on Judaism to the next generation, a place of worship and spirituality and a place for social friendship and community. For many, these meanings collide and combine.

I have never been more proud to be part of the leadership of this community than I have been in the past two months. We came together in support of many B'nai Mitzvah project initiatives. We shipped four very large boxes to Lt. Kenny Elgort's platoon in Iraq. (Please keep the items coming!) Note that Lt. Elgort would like small, pocket-sized toys for local children, such as matchbox cars, plastic dinosaurs, and unused Halloween candy that will not melt. We also came together to support the Javeline family in their time of crisis. The amount of assistance was amazing to see: food for the family, rides to the hospital, providing company and comfort for Nancy, offering play dates for Joanna and Melissa, Hebrew school pick up and drop off, and the amount of prayer for Mitch's recovery. The generosity is beyond what I can describe with words.

Have a Happy and Safe New Year. -Matt

CKS Donations

CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

General Donations:

Howard or Gillian Levy Trust

Joel and Joan Weisblatt

In honor of the Waskow, Klinger, Speilholz and Skoulchi families on the occasion of their children's B'nai Mitzvot

Joel and Joan Weisblatt

In honor of Brian Rosenberg becoming an Eagle Scout

Thelma and Dick Canty

In honor of the engagement of my brother, Bruce Seide and Ide Fernandez

Darryl and Susan Waskow

Thank you to Rabbi Susan Falk, Kate Fridkis and Ed Lacher for your help in preparing Harry Waskow for his Bar Mitavah.

Darryl and Susan Waskow

For Janis Todd, in memory of Mary Barondess

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In honor of Joe Wions

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ROBERT "BOB" FASS
SALES REPRESENTATIVE

The synagogue is updating our *Mishebeyrach* list. Please call or email Robin in the office (908-359-0420 or robin@ksnj.org) with the names of any people whose names you would like to be read during our regular prayers for healing. Please give us names, even if those people have been on the list in the past, if they should still be on the list now. In addition, let us know when a person's name should be removed from the list. Thank you.

Invitations by Sharon

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Message from the Rabbi

TU BISHVAT AND THE POWER OF BLESSINGS



The ancient Rabbis taught that one should say 100 blessings every day. "Is it possible," you might ask, "to say that many blessings in one day? Do 100 blessings even exist?" Indeed they do – if not more than 100. In fact, there are blessings in Jewish tradition for almost every occasion. Aside from the blessings over the bread and the wine, there are blessings for all kinds of

food and drink. There is a blessing for fruit that grows on trees and for fruit that grows in the ground. There is a blessing for attaching a mezuzah to the door, for retiring at night and for rising in the morning. There is a blessing said before having sex. There is a blessing for seeing the ocean, seeing an electrical storm, seeing a rainbow, seeing trees in bloom, seeing a person profoundly learned in Torah, and even for seeing a person profoundly learned in secular studies.

Reciting blessings was the Rabbis' way of making ordinary moments extraordinary and holy. The blessing formula they created allows us to address God both personally – "Blessed are You Adonai" – and as a community – "our God, Ruler of the Universe." By acknowledging the sacred, blessings serve as a constant reminder that our power as human beings on this earth is not without limit.

The Kabbalists, or Jewish Mystics, took the rabbinic idea of blessing one step further. They believed that reciting blessings with kavannah, with sincere intention, had the power to help heal the world – a world that is fragmented and broken. In order to create an opportunity to recite more blessings, the Kabbalists initiated a Seder for the holiday, Tu Bishvat, the New Year of the Trees, which this year arrives on January 22nd. This is one of the reasons we eat so many kinds of fruit on Tu Bishvat. Each time we eat a fruit and say a blessing over it, we are offering up our help to the Creator to repair our broken world. If you want to learn more about Tu Bishvat and its mystical traditions – and have a good time doing it – come join us for our Tu Bishvat Progressive Dinner on January 19th.

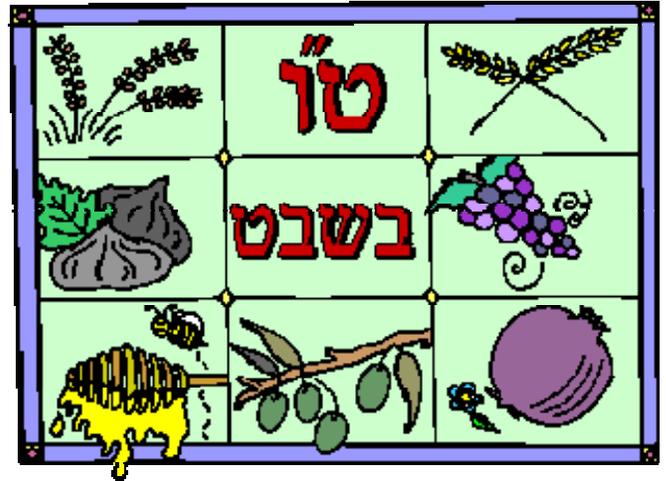
Here at Congregation Kehilat Shalom, we have many blessings of our own to celebrate. We have a hard-working Board of Directors and many, many members applying themselves to vital committee work. We have a dedicated administrative and Hebrew school staff – and we have wonderful children and young adults not only learning about Jewish tradition, but also, many of whom give of their time and energy to helping others learn. We have our own building and grounds, and we are about to celebrate our 25th Anniversary! Most of all, we have a caring community of members ready to pitch in when one of us is ill or in trouble.

The Kabbalists taught that by saying blessings, humanity holds the power to move the universe. So let us all say a blessing for Congregation Kehilat Shalom.

Happy New Year, Happy New Year of the Trees, and Happy Anniversary!

B'shalom uvracha,

Rabbi Susan



Kindercapers

Now in its 14th full year, the JCCBM's non-sectarian pre-school for children 2-1/2 to 5 years old, offers a unique atmosphere, giving children a chance to explore, create, and, most importantly, learn to think and reason.

For more information, call 908 359-0160.

The CKS Gift Shop
is open each Sunday
10 am - 11 am

Questions?
Susan Waskow 609-333-1113
or Harlene Rosenberg 908-874-8283

Tree of Life

Purchase a leaf for \$54 to celebrate a *simcha!* Each leaf includes three lines of engraving.

Contact Shelley Nord
908-874-8464

Hebrew School Happenings



JANUARY
 2 Wednesday *No Class* Winter break
 6 Sunday music cooking
 9 Wednesday art
 13 Sunday art
 16 Wednesday music cooking
 20 Sunday *No Class* MLK Jr's Birthday
 23 Wednesday Mock Shabbat 5-6
 27 Sunday Tu B'shvat Seder
 30 Wednesday music



Well, these pictures tell a thousand stories. Our students made wonderful Hanukah crafts with Arielle Starkman, from window clings to beeswax candles. Her ingenuity and preparedness make her a shining example of organization, creativity, and commitment to our community.

Students in K-5 enjoyed making latkes with Josh and 6th and 7th graders loved making Sufganiyot, Israeli doughnuts. Kol Hacavod to Josh and Carrie Fischman for all of the preparation and running around that they did to make these recipes come to life.

Seventh graders learned about the Ten Commandments and wrote some of their own. Rabbi Susan and I sat in on the class and really enjoyed their bright ideas and dedication to learning.

Kindergarten through fourth graders had the pleasure of singing with Debbie Grauer. As they raised their voices in song, they learned Chanukah blessings and songs.

Our tutors continue to work with students one on one to help them learn to identify the letters of the Alef Bet and to associate specific sounds with the letters. Please continue to have students practice reading Hebrew as often as possible. Students will learn more from frequent short study sessions (as during TV commercials) than they would from fewer long sessions (half an hour before school once a week). The fifth and sixth graders were challenged last month to write all of the letters of the alef bet with the sounds they make and their names. Regular study will make this an easy task that will improve reading fluency and increase self assuredness during B'nai Mitzvah lessons.

I hope to see you all at the Tu B'shvat Seder on the 27th. Stay warm and dry!

Dori

Shabbat Superstars on page 6



Hebrew High School/Youth Groups

HEBREW HIGH SCHOOL



As the new year begins, I thought it would be appropriate to take a moment to acknowledge all those who have helped with the Hebrew High school this semester. There are many people who give their time and talent to make this program happen.

First thanks are to the committee who helps organize the program. **Natalie London, Gayle Holtzman, and Harlene Rosenberg** serve on the committee. Their efforts have ensured that CKS has a high school program for its students. They have shaped the direction of the program and are available to lend a hand whenever needed.

The Hebrew High School committee would like to thank all the congregant volunteers who have come to lead a discussion with our interested teen students. Your generosity has enabled the program to broaden its scope and has brought a glimpse of the "real world" into the classroom. I would especially like to thank **Susan Krisiloff** who has lead a series of discussions about medical ethics. We are grateful to you for your time and expertise. We hope that you will continue the discussions into the new year. **Judi Turkheimer** lead her first life coaching session with the students in both the Thursday and Wednesday classes in December. She offers an unique perspective on the teen years and generates in-depth discussions with the students about moral and ethical issues. We look forward to her return in 2008. **Richard Cohen** just volunteered to be one of our regular discussion leaders for the Thursday class. Richard lead two discussions this year, one in November and the other in December. He intertwines his background as an attorney with his knowledge of Torah to create thoughtful conversations about challenging topics. Thank you so much, Richard, for agreeing to return on a monthly basis to the Thursday group. **Susan Waskow** is the backbone of the Wednesday class. Each week she generously volunteers to lead a discussion with the younger class. She finds interesting varied topics to bring to into the classroom and is always open to the student's input. Her classroom has an informal atmosphere that allows the students to relax and have fun while expanding their Jewish education.

The glue that holds the classroom together is **Rabbi Susan**. She has expanded the knowledge base of the students in the three short months that she has lead discussions. Her energy and enthusiasm have invigorated the students. We hear glowing reports from the students about the breath, depth, and variety of her discussions. The committee thanks her for her work with the Hebrew High School students and is most appreciative of her time spent with the program.

January and early February will bring new congregant volunteers into the Hebrew High School classroom. Below is the exciting schedule of discussion leaders that we have lined up:

Wednesday's classes:

January 9 - Rabbi Susan/Susan Waskow
January 16 - Rabbi Susan/Susan Waskow
January 23 - Rabbi Susan/Larry Spinard - discussion topic TBA
January 30 - Rabbi Susan/Matt Rosenthal - Jews/Superheroes
February 6 - Rabbi Susan/Lisa Kent - formation of Israel.
Lisa's discussion might spill over into the next week.

Thursday's classes:

January 3 - Richard Cohen- Jewish law or another topic
January 10 - Rabbi Susan/Hilary Crist - discussion about being an actor, auditioning; acting exercises w/volunteers
January 17 - Rabbi Susan/ **volunteer needed**
January 24 - Judi Turkheimer - life coaching
January 31 - Rabbi Susan/Matt Rosenthal - Jews/Superheroes
Shalom,
Karen Fridkis, Hebrew High School chair

CKS YOUTH GROUP

In December the youth group held their annual shul-in from Saturday evening, December 22nd to Sunday morning, Dec 23rd. Many, many thanks to Susan Waskow who volunteered to chaperone this all night event. Hopefully, she slept a little bit during the ten hour get together. There was pizza for dinner, bagels for breakfast, and lots of time for fun in between.

January event - TBA. Please watch the weekly email newsletter for information about future events.

REGIONAL RECONSTRUCTIONIST YOUTH GROUP

This email came from youth group leader, Steve Marcus, announcing the calendar for 2008. Please make note of the events and plan to come!

From Steve:

We've put together a complete schedule of events for the rest of the year for the Teen Group. Please put these dates on your calendars and encourage your synagogues to put them on their calendars. We'll update you on specifics as the events draw nearer, but for now pleaaaaaase remember these dates.

Dec 27th-- Rock climbing at the Hamilton Rock Gym
January 19th-- Homefront Grocery Packing
February 5th-- Leader Meeting
February 8th-- New York trip to B'nai Jeshuan
February 23rd--Rollerskating
March 1st-- "The Flood"-- Musical at 185 Nassau
March 4th-- Leader Meeting
March 15th-- Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Environmental Project
March 29th-- Shul-in at KS
April 3rd-- Leader Meeting
April 19th-- Chocolate Seder
May 3rd-- Hike in the Sourland Mountain area
May 17th-- Senior end of the year party

Email Steve smarcus@Princeton.EDU for more details.
Shalom,

Karen Fridkis, Youth Group Chair



WINTER JEWISH LIFE PROGRAM NOTES

Jewish LIFE programs scheduled this winter include:
Dr. Steven M. Cohen, *American Jews: Implications for Jewish Education and Community Building* on **Wednesday, January 16 1 p.m.** **Amy-Jill Levine**, author of *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* will be our guest speaker on **Thursday, January 31 at 1 p.m.** Prize-winning Author Kurt Leviant will be the speaker on **Thursday, February 21 at 7 p.m.** Mr. Leviant's latest book, *The Mystery of the Golem*, is the translation of Yudel Rosenberg's influential Hebrew Novel, *The Golem and the Wondrous Deeds of the Maharal of Prague*. All programs will be held at the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC in Bridgewater. The fee for each program is \$10/Jewish LIFE Members; \$15/Guest. Please register in advance for all programs by calling the JCC at 908-725-6994 x201. For further information on Jewish LIFE programs, please go to www.ssbjcc.org/jLife.htm.

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Nancy Weiss
Dorothy Weiss
Emma Cohen
Scott Weitze
Jason Weitze
Jack Weitze
Susan Rosenthal
Ben Applegate
Justin Corsan
Danielle Corsan
11/ 30
Scott Weitze
Ian Murphy
Tess Kowalski
Lea Goldhammer
Nicole Schaum
Dorothy Weiss
Ben Applegate
Rachel Underberg-Davis
Dorothy Waskow
Harry Waskow
12/1
Jason Rosenthal
Allison Rosenthal
Corey Cochran
Jeremy Orlando
Joanna Javeline
Melissa Javeline
12/7
Jacob Varga
Scott Weitze
Emma Cohen
Jackie Sokel
Nicole Schaum
Derek Dalpe
Dorothy Waskow
Dorothy Weiss
Nancy Weiss
Marc W - 1st grade
Dylan Carson
Ben Eckardt
Tess Kowalski
Paige Kowalski
Corey Cochran
Nicole Schaum
Dorothy Weiss
Ben Applegate
Rachel Underberg-Davis
Dorothy Waskow
Harry Waskow

JANUARY 2008

January 2008
23 Tevet 5768 - 24 Shevat 5768

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 23 Tevet 7:21AM/4:43PM	2 24 Tevet 7:21AM/4:44PM NO HEBREW SCHOOL	3 25 Tevet 7:21AM/4:45PM Hebrew High School 5-7 pm	4 26 Tevet 7:21AM/4:46PM Family Shabbat Services - 7:00 pm	5 27 Tevet 7:21AM/4:47PM Vaera: Exo. 6.2-7.13. Ezekiel 29.1-21.
6 28 Tevet 7:21AM/4:48PM Hebrew School 9:00 - 10:30 AM Adult Beginner's Hebrew Class	7 29 Tevet 7:21AM/4:49PM 7:30 PM Rosh Chodesh - Women's Spirituality Group	8 1 Shevat 7:21AM/4:50PM ROSH HODESH Num. 28.1-15. 7:00 PM Board Meeting	9 2 Shevat 7:21AM/4:51PM Hebrew School Hebrew High School 5-7 pm 7:00 PM B'nei Mitzvah Family Meeting 7:15 PM Education Committee Meeting	10 3 Shevat 7:21AM/4:52PM Hebrew High School 5-7 pm	11 4 Shevat 7:21AM/4:53PM Shabbat Services - 7:45 pm	12 5 Shevat 7:20AM/4:54PM Bo: Exo. 10.1-11.3. Jeremiah 46.13-28. 9:30 AM - 4, 5, 6, 7 grades Family Breakfast 10:00 AM Shabbat Services
13 6 Shevat 7:20AM/4:55PM Hebrew School 9:00 - 10:30 AM Adult Education Judaism and the Environment Part III: Eco- Shabbat	14 7 Shevat 7:20AM/4:56PM	15 8 Shevat 7:19AM/4:57PM	16 9 Shevat 7:19AM/4:58PM Hebrew School Hebrew High School 5-7 pm	17 10 Shevat 7:18AM/4:59PM Hebrew High School 5-7 pm	18 11 Shevat 7:18AM/5:00PM Shabbat Services - 7:00 pm	19 12 Shevat 7:18AM/5:01PM Beshalah: Exo. 13.17-14.31. Judges 5.1-31. 6:00 - 11:00 PM - Tu B'Shevat Progressive Dinner Regional Youth Group Event
20 13 Shevat 7:17AM/5:03PM NO HEBREW SCHOOL	21 14 Shevat 7:16AM/5:04PM	22 15 Shevat 7:16AM/5:05PM TU B'SHEVAT Religion Committee Meeting	23 16 Shevat 7:15AM/5:06PM Hebrew School Hebrew High School 5-7 pm	24 17 Shevat 7:14AM/5:07PM Hebrew High School 5-7 pm	25 18 Shevat 7:14AM/5:09PM Shabbat Services - 7:45 pm	26 19 Shevat 7:13AM/5:10PM Yitro: Exo. 18.1-18.27. Isaiah 6.1-13.
27 20 Shevat 7:12AM/5:11PM Hebrew School 9:00 - 10:30 AM - Adult Beginner's Hebrew Class	28 21 Shevat 7:11AM/5:12PM	29 22 Shevat 7:11AM/5:13PM	30 23 Shevat 7:10AM/5:15PM Hebrew School Hebrew High School 5-7 pm	31 24 Shevat 7:09AM/5:16PM Hebrew High School 5-7 pm		

[Candle Lighting, §Observance End, Printed December 18, 2007/9 Tevet 5768 for Belle Mead, NJ USA]



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January 2008

Deadline for next newsletter: **January 15th**