



Congregation
Kehilat Shalom
NEWS

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

Editor—Karen Bartels
karen.bartels@verizon.net
fax 609-921-1899
home phone 609-921-1811

Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ **February 2008** Shevat – Adar 5768

Congregation
Kehilat Shalom
253 Griggstown Rd.
Belle Mead, NJ 08502
Phone: 908-359-0420
Fax: 908-359-8848
Regular office hours:
M-W-Th 8:30-3:30
T-8:30-6pm F-8:30-1pm

Rabbi

Susan Falk
rabbi@ksnj.org

President

Matt Rosenthal
president@ksnj.org

**Community Engagement
Coordinator**

Robin Bengochea
admin1@ksnj.org
robin@ksnj.org

Administrator

Sofie Uppal
sofie@ksnj.org

Hebrew School Principal

Dori Daus
principal@ksnj.org

Lay Cantor

Kate Mende-Fridkis

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Rabbi Installation Announced

"A person who says, "What do I have to do with the burden of the community?" destroys the world."

Tanhumah Mishpatim 2 127a

Congregation Kehilat Shalom has weathered well a period of transition in 2007. On April 25, we, as a community, will mark this interval with an installation ceremony for Rabbi Susan Falk—a celebration of a new beginning and an honoring of new leadership.

Let us all come together to acknowledge the holiness of the act of community leadership in all its aspects, including the spiritual leader of our synagogue. An installation ceremony is a formalized way to show that we value and appreciate our community and its leaders, in particular our new rabbi. It gives us a chance to share her vision for the community and it affords us an opportunity to celebrate something that should not be taken for granted.

The installation ceremony will take place as part of our regular Friday night services on April 25th, 2008. Rabbi Jacob Staub from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College will lead the installation blessings. Our Lay Cantor, Kate Fridkis, will also participate in the service. Plan to hear pieces by Kol Ahavah and the Hebrew School choir. The evening will be rounded out by more music at a special Oneg Shabbat.

Please plan to come and participate in this special ritual and service and empower our new leader to strengthen, nurture, expand and further develop our community. Childcare will be available onsite. Donations to the synagogue to cover the cost of the special Oneg and service booklets would be greatly appreciated. Invitations for this special celebration will be sent out this month.

See you there!

Rabbi Liaison Committee is Looking for Your Feedback

It's hard to believe, but Rabbi Susan has been with our congregation for almost six months. Hopefully, most of you have had a chance to meet and work with her or attend services, adult education or other events she has led. The Rabbi Liaison Committee would like your feedback, impressions and suggestions with respect to Rabbi Susan's leadership at the High Holidays, other services you may have attended, B'nai Mitzvahs, other events you may have participated in and personal interactions you and your families may have had in relation to synagogue or pastoral matters (how things went, what was good and what could be improved). Please send your feedback to:

Dave Campeas, Rabbi Liaison Committee -- 609-915-9021 or dave.campeas@princetonone.com
Deborah Tesser, Rabbi Liaison Committee - 908-904-0457 or dbtesser@embarqmail.com

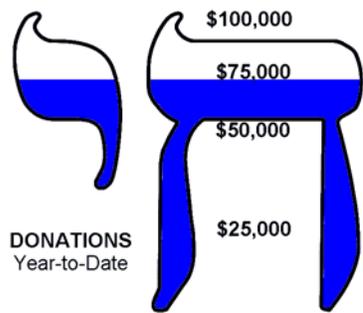
To the Congregation Kehilat Shalom Community:

I have been very remiss in not thanking everyone for all the support given me when my mom passed away. Many of you knew my mother, who came to High Holy Services at our Temple for about 15 years, and felt a part of our community. Thank you to all who offered encouragement, either personally or through sympathy cards. Thank you to everyone who was able to attend the Shiva services where warm memories were shared. And, of course, a special thank-you to Rabbi Susan, who went out of her way to make sure I got through that most difficult of times.

With great appreciation,
Janis (Barondess Todd) and family

CKS Donations

CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.



General Donations:

Ed and Susan Krisiloff
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 Special thanks to the Krisilof family for helping at Brian's Eagle Court of Honor.
 Barbara and Peter Futhmann
 In honor of Harry Waskow's Bar Mitzvah and in thanks to Susan and Darryl for their hospitality.
 Jeff Bachrach and Karen Cohen
 In honor of Rachel Spielholz' Bat Mitzvah
 Jeff Bachrach and Karen Cohen

High Holiday:

Ed and Susan Krisiloff
 Janis and Alan Todd

Rabbi's Discretionary Fund:

Janis Todd
 To thank the Rabbi for her support

Congregant's Assistance Fund:

Lisa and Rich Kent
 To thank Kate Fridkis in honor of Allison Kent's Bat Mitzvah

Hebrew School Fund:

Lisa and Rich Kent
 To thank Ed Lacher in honor of Allison Kent's Bat Mitzvah

Committee Reports

I would like to acknowledge all the help I have received from Meryl Bisberg in generating publicity for the synagogue. Knowing that I was busy with everything involved in a parent's death, she has taken it upon herself to write various articles about Temple events, especially for the Jewish press. The pictures you have seen in the Speaker or the Jewish State were sent by Meryl, as was the Chanukah information, and I don't want to take any credit for her hard work. She is truly a co-chair of the Publicity Committee, although unofficially, since she wears so many hats and does not want to add another one. I wanted to make everyone aware of this and thank her publicly for her assistance, good work and generosity.

Janis Barondess Todd

"Get to Know Your Rabbi" – CKS Breakfast Party!

WHO: Everybody

WHERE: CKS Lobby

WHEN: Sunday, February 3

TIME: 10:00- 11:30 a.m.

Stop by after Hebrew School drop-off or just come on over and have an informal conversation with Rabbi Susan over bagels and coffee.

CKS Book Club

February 11: Kabul Beauty School by Deborah Rodrigues
 Hosted at the home of Susan Lerner.

ROSH CHODESH

Women's Spirituality Group

A welcoming space for woman to explore spirituality together. **Next meeting scheduled for:**

Thursday, February 7, 2008

Our newly formed Rosh Chodesh group is creating a sacred space to explore Jewish women's issues with particular emphasis on personal spirituality, ritual, and celebration. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Karen Fridkis at kfridkis@comcast.net or 609-333-1119

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Strangers and Sojourners



At this time of year in our Torah cycle, we find ourselves in the midst of the Exodus story. A man named Moses brings down the mighty Egyptian Empire by the power and signs and wonders of YHVH (what we pronounce as Adonai). The little band of runaway slaves cross miraculously on dry land through the Sea of Reeds, make their triumphant escape from slavery and Pharaoh's army, and then find themselves at the foot of Mt. Sinai, trembling before their collective vision of God and God's law.

Does it matter whether or not these stories happened exactly the way the Bible recounts them? Probably not. Do we need to believe *literally* in these stories in order to be good Jews? Definitely not. Does it matter that these are the stories that *we tell about ourselves as a people*? You bet it does.

No other story is more central to our identity as Jews than the story of our enslavement in a strange land, and our deliverance from oppression. We tell this story over and over again. And not just on Passover. Every Shabbat, we celebrate our right as a free people to have a day of rest. On Sukkot, we remember our wanderings in the desert when we were free, but still homeless. On Shavuot, we learn that freedom comes with awesome responsibility when we receive the Torah at Mt. Sinai. And, in that Torah, we are told no less than 36 times *not* to oppress the stranger, for *we were strangers* in the land of Egypt. As Jews, our formative identity as slaves and strangers, as well as much of our history, teach us the precious value of freedom and the terrible costs of oppression.

We know this deep in our hearts and souls, and we are proud of the messages of social justice that spring from our tradition. But can this central message of our origins as strangers in a foreign land help us to heal our environmental problems as well? This is one of the questions we explored these past few months during our adult education sessions on Judaism and the Environment. In our final session, we examined the text in which we are told God says: "The land must not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is Mine and you are but strangers sojourning with Me." In other words, there is a sense in which ownership is a fiction. We are all tenants on God's earth. As good tenants, it is our responsibility to see that God's land – and all the plants and rocks and animals that are contained within it – are cared for properly. As strangers and sojourners on this earth, we should strive to live lightly upon it, leaving God's Creation in good condition for the next generation. We are the world's expert resident aliens, the earth's "perfect strangers".

Is this a value that Judaism can contribute to the global environmental dialogue?

Jewish teachings insist that everything we do in this world matters. And we can begin right here at Congregation Kehilat Shalom. I hope you will all take the time to read Meryl Bisberg's informative article (in this issue), "The Greening of CKS". In it, you will find ways that you can pitch in and help make our own synagogue a more sustainable and eco-friendly environment. The most important thing I have learned over the first six months of being your rabbi is that our best resource is us. We possess a huge store of intellectual knowledge and practical expertise that can help us move our community forward. Our children, too, are smart and sophisticated and eager to learn about the values of Jewish tradition. When we work together, we can make great things happen.

Keyn yehi ratzon. May it be so. *B'Shalom,*

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



February

- 3 Sunday music cooking
- 6 Wednesday art
- 10 Sunday art
- 13 Wednesday music cooking
- 17 Sunday *No Class* Presidents' Weekend
- 20 Wednesday Mock Shabbat 5-6
- 24 Sunday music
- 27 Wednesday music



The last glimpses of 2007 appear in pictures as we see students enjoying the last Mock Shabbat of that year, students proud of the hamsas that they made with Arielle Starkman.



January was welcomed with open arms as Josh Fischman taught another wonderful cooking class, Rugelach. The name for which is derived from the Yiddish word for "Royal". The delightful smells and tastes aside, Josh always has great information to share with his students.

Parent volunteers are the backbone of our institution, and this was extra true at the end of 2007 and beginning of 2008. Larry Spinrad saved the day by subbing last minute. The Spinrad family has also supplied the Challah and juice for two of our Mock Shabbat celebrations. Andy Sokel brought in supplies for Mock Shabbat in December and is constantly around the building fixing things, replacing light bulbs, and helping our



physical plant look and perform to its best ability. Holly Grace Nelson covered the office for Anna, answering phones, getting students to and from class as necessary and keeping the building secure.

Kol Hacavod to Robynn Mann, the Sixth graders and Rabbi Susan for running a beautiful Tu B'shvat Seder. The four cups of wine (ok, it was grape juice) that start as white and gradually darken to purple reminded us of the four seasons as we tasted three kinds of fruits; one with an inedible outer shell, one with an inedible pit and one that was entirely edible.



Dori Daus



The Greening of CKS – A Report from the Adult Education Program



In October, December, and January, many of us participated in Rabbi Susan's Sunday morning series entitled: "Judaism and the Environment, From Genesis to Eco-Kashrut". We talked about everything from the story of creation in Genesis and its environmental implications, how our food is grown and how our farm animals are raised and slaughtered, traditional kashrut *versus* eco-kashrut, renewable energy and organic food alternatives, how to celebrate Shabbat environmentally, and finally how to reduce our carbon footprint here at CKS. Not only did we get to know our Rabbi better and come to know how important this subject is to her from both a Jewish and personal perspective, but many participants shared their own insightful understanding of Jewish texts and tradition. In addition, it should be noted that our own Reconstructionist movement is very involved in this issue, as evidenced by their Environment page chock full of articles at their website www.jrf.org.

As the Adult Education program moves on to other topics throughout the remainder of this year, many of the questions raised in the environment series still beg for a response. There are ways we can take action as a community to make our congregation greener and bring out the best in ourselves as Jews, as planetary citizens, and as members of the CKS community. Here are just some of the activities we identified:

- Replacing all synagogue light bulbs with high-efficiency long-life bulbs.
- Hosting a showing of "An Inconvenient Truth" at the synagogue.
- "Greening" our kitchen by removing all styrofoam supplies, finding more recyclable alternatives, eliminating non bio-degradable cleaners, etc.
- Completing an environmental survey of our property for types of plants, potential usage, etc.
- Investigating solar and wind energy alternatives sourced on synagogue property.
- Supporting our kids by continuing to teach about Judaism and the environment in the Hebrew School and Hebrew High and helping students with environmental initiatives, such as starting a compost area for our food waste on our property and planting a vegetable garden this spring.
- Carpooling to synagogue and reducing driving on Shabbat. Reducing our use of electricity and electronics on Shabbat by spending it quietly reading, studying, or enjoying time together!

It is time to turn our thoughts and our discussion into action. There is much to do, but if each of us just does a little, together many hands will get the job done. Whether you are very involved at CKS, or are not currently involved at all, perhaps there is just one thing on this list that caught your attention and for which you can carve out some time. Or perhaps you have some expertise in one of these areas and would be interested in heading up a Tikkun Olam/Environment committee and organizing others. Either way, please open your hearts, your minds and your hands to do good -- once you start, you will see how rewarding it is, how you will inspire your children, and how many like-minded new friends you will make at synagogue. Please contact Rabbi Susan or Meryl Bisberg mbisberg@patmedia.net, or Holly Nelson, hollygracenelson@verizon.net if you are ready to lend a hand in this effort.

As Rabbi Tarfon said in Pirkei Avot, "It is not necessary for you to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it." Indeed, if we cannot begin to perfect our synagogue, how will we ever perfect our world?

Chazak, chazak, v'nitchazek
Let us go from strength to strength!
Meryl Bisberg, Chair, Adult Education

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Upcoming Events...

Hebrew Chanting Circle

When: Thursday, Feb. 7, 2008, 7:30 to 9:00 PM

Where: Temple Sholom, 594 N. Bridge St, Bridgewater

Fee: \$5.00 donation You are invited to join a community gathering of chanting using sacred Hebrew phrases that promote the healing of our souls (Tikkun Ha'Nefesh) as we strive to contribute to healing our World (Tikkun Olam). Hebrew is a sacred vibrational language, and the repetition of a sacred phrase can clear the mind of clutter and create a sense of inner peace and wholeness. In the silence that follows, we can listen for God's voice within us. No prior knowledge of singing, chanting, or Hebrew language is necessary.

Women's Day of Rest and Renewal

When: Saturday, Feb. 23, 2008, from
8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

Where: Temple Beth El, 67 Route 206 South,
Hillsborough

Fee: \$36 (Sisterhood Member);
\$42 (Non-Sisterhood Member);
Additional fee for crafts project

Ohr Tikvah is sponsoring a workshop with Rabbi Robin Nafshi at Temple Beth-El Sisterhood's 7th Annual Women's Day of Rest and Renewal. The daylong program -- **Connections to the Heart, Body & Soul** -- will include gentle yoga for all ages, a creative Shabbat worship service, catered luncheon, an art project using fused glass, and Chai Tea, an American Tea Ceremony that includes guided meditation and special teas. Rabbi Nafshi will lead Torah study and engage us in a discussion exploring *Parshat Ki Tasa*. The program is open to all women, and one need not be a member of a synagogue Sisterhood. Call Susan at 980-874-4648 to receive more information and to register.



Jewish LIFE presents Curt Leviant, *The Mystery of the Golem*, Thursday, February 21 at 7 p.m. at the Shimon and Sara Birnbaum JCC, Bridgewater. Looking ahead to March...Eva Mekler, author of *The Polish Woman* has been **rescheduled** for Thursday, March 6 at 7 p.m. at the JCC. Dr. Murray Spiegel, author of *300 Ways to Ask the Four Questions*, will speak on Thursday, March 13, 7 p.m. at Congregation Or Chadash in Flemington (please note new location!). The fee for each program is \$10/Jewish LIFE Member and \$15/Non-Member. Call the JCC at 908-725-6994 to register. Additional details on Jewish LIFE programs are available in the Jewish LIFE brochure posted at www.ssbjcc.org.



May 8, 2008 - Israel at 60 Community Yom HaAtzmaut Community Celebration Hosted by the Flemington Jewish Community Center. Sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren

Counties and Local Area Synagogues 5pm-8pm Music, dancing, Israeli food, crafts, speakers, film and much, much more! Additional information to come

June 1, 2008 - Community Trip to Israel Day Parade in New York and Community Celebration Upon Return at the JCC

Sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren/Shimon and Sara JCC. Details to come!

November 12-21, 2008 - Israel At 60 Community Mission to Israel

Sponsored by the Jewish Federation Hosted by George and Harriet Blank, luxury bus, professional guides, Israeli breakfasts, many dinners and lunches, fantastic itinerary being developed which will include 3 nights in the North, 5 nights in the Jerusalem area. More details to come! Congregation Kehilat Shalom Hosts

"Building Jerusalem One LEGO At A Time"

Belle Mead, NJ - Congregation Kehilat Shalom invites the community to a special family event "Building Jerusalem One LEGO At A Time" on Sunday, May 18, 2008 from 9:30-11:30 am at Congregation Kehilat Shalom.

Participants will be building a 400 square foot model of Jerusalem using 60,000 LEGO building blocks. The final structure will include the walls around the entire Old City, the Kotel, the Second Temple, all of the gates into the city, David's Tower, the Montifiore Windmill and many buildings within the walls of the city. This special program will be led by Stephen W. Schwartz, Architect from Livingston, New Jersey.

"This is a wonderful family event that includes children, parents, grandparents and great grandparents who are building all together," says Matt Rosenthal, President of Congregation Kehilat Shalom.

Fee is \$5 per person (maximum of \$15 per family); children under 8 yrs participate for free. Cost includes breakfast and a family LEGO brick for the Kotel.

To register, please contact Robin R. Bengochea, Community Engagement Coordinator for Congregation Kehilat Shalom at 908-359-0420.

FEBRUARY 2008



February 2008
25 Shevat 5768 - 23 Adar I 5768

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 25 Shevat 7:08AM/5:17PM Family Shabbat Services - 7:00 pm 5:45 PM Shabbat Dinner, Grades K-4	2 26 Shevat 7:07AM/5:18PM Mishpatim: Exo. 21.1-22.3. Jeremiah 34.13-20, 33.25-26 4:00 pm - Zachary Slotkin Bar Mitzvah
3 27 Shevat 7:06AM/5:19PM Hebrew School 9:00 - 10:30 AM - Adult Hebrew 10:00 - 11:30 AM - CKS Breakfast Party with Rabbi Susan	4 28 Shevat 7:05AM/5:21PM	5 29 Shevat 7:04AM/5:22PM	6 30 Shevat 7:03AM/5:23PM ROSH HODESH I Num. 28.1-15. Hebrew School Hebrew High School 5-7 pm 7:15 PM - Education Committee Meeting	7 1 Adar I 7:02AM/5:24PM ROSH HODESH II Num. 28.1-15. Hebrew High School 5-7 pm 7:30 PM Rosh Chodesh Women's Spirituality Group Meeting	8 2 Adar I 7:01AM/5:26PM Shabbat Services - 7:45 pm Regional Youth Group - trip to NY to B'nai Jeshurun	9 3 Adar I 6:59AM/5:27PM Terumah: Exo. 25.1-40. I Kings 6.1-13.
10 4 Adar I 6:58AM/5:28PM Hebrew School 9:00 - 10:30 AM - Adult Hebrew	11 5 Adar I 6:57AM/5:29PM CKS Book Club meeting 7:30 PM.	12 6 Adar I 6:56AM/5:30PM 7:30 PM Board of Trustees Meeting	13 7 Adar I 6:55AM/5:32PM Hebrew School Hebrew High School 5-7 pm	14 8 Adar I 6:53AM/5:33PM Hebrew High School 5-7 pm	15 9 Adar I 6:52AM/5:34PM Shabbat Services - 7:00 pm	16 10 Adar I 6:51AM/5:35PM Tetzaveh: Exo. 27.20-28.30. Ezekiel 43.10-27.
17 11 Adar I 6:50AM/5:36PM NO HEBREW SCHOOL	18 12 Adar I 6:48AM/5:38PM	19 13 Adar I 6:47AM/5:39PM	20 14 Adar I 6:45AM/5:40PM PURIM KATAN I Hebrew School Hebrew High School 5-7 pm	21 15 Adar I 6:44AM/5:41PM PURIM KATAN II Hebrew High School 5-7 pm	22 16 Adar I 6:43AM/5:42PM Shabbat Services - 7:45 pm	23 17 Adar I 6:41AM/5:43PM Kee Tissa: Exo. 30.11-31.17. I Kings 18.17-39. Regional Youth Group Event - Rollerskating
24 18 Adar I 6:40AM/5:45PM Hebrew School 9:00 - 10:30 AM - Adult Hebrew	25 19 Adar I 6:38AM/5:46PM	26 20 Adar I 6:37AM/5:47PM 7:30 PM - Religion Committee Meeting	27 21 Adar I 6:35AM/5:48PM Hebrew School Hebrew High School 5-7 pm	28 22 Adar I 6:34AM/5:49PM Hebrew High School 5-7 pm	29 23 Adar I 6:32AM/5:50PM Shabbat Services - 7:45 pm	

[;Candle Lighting, \$Observance End, Printed January 15, 2008/8 Shevat 5768 for Belle Mead, NJ USA]

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Billing/Payments	Sofie Uppal- 908-359-0420 ext. 1 sofie@ksnj.org
B'nai Mitzvah (helpers, celebrations)	Meryl Orlando- 732-329-8945 Shelley Nord- 908-874-8464
Board of Trustees 2 nd Tues.	Matt Rosenthal- 908-874-0787
Building/Grounds/Décor	Andy Sokel- 609-466-8749 andsok@aol.com
Building Usage/Access	Robin Bengochea- 908-359-0420 ext. 1 admin@ksnj.org
By-Laws	Victor Elgort- 908-874-8535 vselgort@nmmlaw.com
Congregants' Assistance Fund	Rabbi Falk- 908-359-0420 ext. 2 rabbi@ksnj.org
Education 1 st Wed.	Lisa Kent- 908-578-2972 lisa@luminationsgroup.com
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Pastoral Emergencies	Rabbi Susan Falk 908-359-0420
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Publicity	Janis Todd- 609-799-8384
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Technology Computer and Networking	Larry Fridkis- 609-333-11190 Mitch Javeline 908-359-6860
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February 2008

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