

Bulletin from the Board- Mark Goldhammer

Congregation

Kehilat Shalom

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2009-2010

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The last two and a half years have been exciting and tumultuous for my family and me. One contributor to the excitement and the tumult has been the role I agreed to take on in early 2007 to serve as Congregation Kehilat Shalom's Treasurer.

For all of my complaining, I have to admit that, along with the honor that I feel at having been trusted by to carry this responsibility, I have just plain enjoyed filling this role and will miss it. I will relinquish it at the Congregational Meeting at the end of this month. I will, if approved by the Congregation, remain on the board as a Trustee, but my work responsibilities have made it impossible to continue to provide the treasurer's role the attention it requires. A brave soul, Debbie Gartenberg, has stepped up to take on that role, and I am impressed with her abilities and feel quite optimistic that she is the right person to take our financial management to the next level.

We've come a long way in two and a half years, and I take great pride in our financial and business condition as I pass on this responsibility. We've managed to set our financial condition right, move the debt we were carrying into our mortgage and refinance it under manageable terms. We are in a stable place financially and have implemented policies and systems to preserve that stability.

When I accepted this role, Jim Ohls and Natalie London spent countless hours orienting me, and Natalie has continued to be the background force doing much of the heavy lifting over this time. I was very relieved when Robin Bengochea agreed to have her job expanded to include managing our bookkeeping and day-to-day financials and she has never failed to exceed my expectations. With Robin on top of the details and a new treasurer with excellent business skills to take us forward, I am very optimistic about our future.

I have grown tremendously as a result of the opportunity you've given me and I thank you all for this experience.

The one thing I learned is that we have to budget for expected donations, even though we can only hope our expectations are accurate.

I have heard this statistic many times that synagogues depend on donations to cover one-quarter of their operating expenses. It has been difficult for me to embrace this because it means putting together a budget that relies on donations to pay a substantial part of the costs. What makes me nervous is that we just can't be sure what these contributions will be. But I've finally realized that the alternatives are just not acceptable. I do not believe we can increase dues to cover to cover the difference and I am convinced that the level of services we provide is essential for us to remain viable. I don't think we could grow and prosper if we decided to significantly reduce the services we provide in order to bring the costs to a level that could be covered with our present dues levels alone.

We are flourishing right now, due both to the wonderful leadership and effort of the entire board and many active members, and to our luck in receiving several acts of extreme generosity. I would ask that we focus on working the probabilities so that we stay lucky. To continue with our present success, all members need to take ownership.

All of us do have the ability to contribute something (however small) above and beyond what we pay in dues. Many of us may have the ability to get matching funds from our employers for some or all that we contribute. And some of us have the ability and talents to contribute to efforts to gain revenue from other sources, such as the magazine fundraiser that Bob Fass runs every year.

So I ask for all members to take an interest in the continued success of our community, not just in the way it enriches all of our lives, but also in the way we bring in the funds that allow us to make that happen.

CKS Donations

CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

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Committee Reports

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Message from the Rabbi

IF NOT NOW, WHEN?



First, I would like to open with a public word of thanks to the members of Kehi-Loft (our Hebrew High School) and Karen Fridkis, Kehi-Loft Coordinator, for their inspiring leadership conducting services and facilitating an informative and moving discussion on anti-Gay bias on Friday, May 8th. After exploring this topic for several sessions with Karen Fridkis, as well as for one session with myself, our teens decided it was time to bring this important topic to the congregation.

In their presentation, Kehi-Loft students pointed out that the term "gay" is routinely used as a "playground insult", or worse, as a way of verbally and emotionally harassing classmates – regardless of their sexual orientation. They rightly pointed out the similarities between anti-Gay remarks and anti-Semitic or other racist and sexist slurs. They fielded the comments and questions of the adults and young people in the room with knowledgeable answers and with great finesse.

I was very proud of them – *and so should we all be*. This is not a simple political issue. It is a matter of equality – civil rights that we stand by as Americans. It is a matter of justice and compassion – values we stand by as members of the Jewish community.

In February 2007, New Jersey's first Civil Union Act took effect. With this Act, same-sex couples who enter into civil unions are provided most of the rights granted to married couples under NJ State law. Under the provisions of the federal Defense of Marriage Act, however, same-sex couples are denied the 1,138 rights that heterosexual married couples have under federal law. Moreover, regardless of the law, the words "civil union" and "marriage" carry decidedly different connotations. In the words of former NJ Chief Justice Deborah Poritz:

What we name things matters.... Labels set people apart surely as physical separation on a bus or in school facilities.... By excluding same-sex couples from civil marriage, the State declares that it is legitimate to differentiate between their commitments and the commitments of heterosexual couples.

Sadly, Justice Poritz's words have shown themselves to be painfully accurate. The New Jersey Civil Union Review Commission found that civil unions have failed to grant full rights to same-sex couples, even in such basic areas as employment benefits and hospital visitations. Indeed, nearly a decade later, civil union couples in Vermont still report the same obstacles as New Jersey civil union couples today. The Commission found that civil unions create a category of second-class couples, and it strongly urges full marriage

equality in order to eliminate the stigma and denial of rights to same-sex couples.

The "Freedom of Religion and Equality in Civil Marriage Act" (#A2978/S1967) to grant same-sex couples the right to marry will be voted on *this year*. What can you do to help? Call, email, or write your State Senator, Christopher Bateman, or other local representatives.

Tell them that discrimination against one group of people diminishes us all – socially, economically, emotionally, and spiritually. For sample letters or statements, check out the website of GardenStateEquality.org. Consult the websites of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation (JRF.org) and the Union of Reform Judaism (URJ.org), both of whom have supported same-sex marriage and other GLBT rights for decades! The time to act for equality, social justice, and civil rights is now. In the words of the great Rabbi Hillel: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?"

Chazak, chazak, v'nitchazek. Let us go from strength to strength and be strengthened. *Rabbi Susan*

Rabbi Susan - Contact Information:
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Hebrew School



They say that a picture says a thousand words. I could say so many more than a thousand words about the beauty and joy that I have experienced as the Hebrew School Principal at the JCC of Belle Mead Hebrew School, the Leeba"n School, and the Kehilat Shalom Hebrew School. Whatever the name, it has been the people of our congregation that have made this a wonderful place to be. It has been a wonderful gift to me to be a part of your lives. I have watched some of the students start as Kindergarteners and travel all the way through Fifth grade. I have had the pleasure of watching many children grow into Jewish adults as they prepared for and celebrated B'nai Mitzvah. The teachers, parents, volunteers, and students have made my time here feel very well spent. I will miss working with you all.

Thank you ,
Dori



Kehi-Loft



Late April and May provided the Kehi-Loft students a variety of activities in which to participate. In addition to their regular class sessions at Kehi-Loft, the students also ran a car wash fundraiser, led Shabbat services, welcomed the 7th grade students to a session, and had their last class at a restaurant in Princeton.

During a Wednesday class the rabbi held a follow-up session on the subject of anti-Gay bias by describing and fielding questions on some of the changes in the LGBT community and its acceptance in larger society. The class discussed specific topics including changes in the legal system, media, arts, and entertainment, schools, and public resources.

The students led their fifth and final Shabbat service on May 8th. At this service in addition to leading the congregation in prayer, the students gave the D'var Torah. The topic of their sermon was the culmination of previous class discussions that focused on prejudice and the harm that careless speech can inflict on others. Many thanks to Ilana Berger, Ariel Kramer, Harry Waskow, Allie Kent, and Josh Kent for leading the congregation in prayer and leading a discussion during the service.

The session with the 7th graders was a resounding success. Class began with a Passover egg hunt (an original idea from the students!). The Kehi-Loft students filled empty plastic eggs with candy treats, hid them, and watched the younger students as they went on a search for the hidden treasure. Hints were freely given for the eggs that were especially difficult to find. After a fun and laughter filled search all the eggs were discovered and the candy consumed! Following the egg hunt, the students enjoyed a pizza dinner while music played in the background. Next, I led a discussion that explained the Kehi-Loft program to the younger students. The Kehi-Loft students jumped in to share how much they like and get out of Kehi-Loft. To quote one, "I like coming here. It's a place where I can get away from everything else and relax and just be me." Many 7th graders indicated that they are planning to register for the program for next school year. If you are a 7th grader (or a returning Kehi-Loft student) and have not yet registered, please send in your forms today!

The students had a busy morning during the CKS Open House washing congregant cars. Thanks to all who brought their car in for a spring spritz. Special thanks to the adults who assisted the students and helped coordinate the fundraiser. Three cheers to Tom Berger, Herb Milich, and Eric Weitze for all your help at the car wash!

Kehi-Loft will begin a new meeting schedule next year. Instead of meeting for one Sunday evening a month and three Wednesdays, we will meet on two Sundays

and two Wednesdays. The change was made in an effort to accommodate students who are in weekly Wednesday evening activities at school or who find they have too much homework during the school week.

Kehi-Loft is a place and a program that welcomes our teen children and encourages frank discussions about a wide range of topics. Students are given a voice in which topics will be discussed and how the sessions will be structured. It is a place where friendships can form between students across the usual separation of grades. Students are given the opportunity for leadership roles and can find a home in the CKS community after their b'nai mitzvah. Kehi-Loft students become important contributing members of our congregation by leading Shabbat services, assisting in the Hebrew School, organizing fundraisers, and helping at community wide events. They become active members of our congregation as they take their next steps towards Jewish adulthood. Kehi-Loft welcomes all post b'nai mitzvah students in grades 8 through 12. If you're not a member already, please join us today!

Shalom,

Karen Fridkis, Kehi-Loft chair

KEHI-LOFT

a weekly program for
post b'nai mitzvah students
alternating

Sunday and Wednesday
evenings from 6:00 - 8:00

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Jewish Community

GETTING TO KNOW....

The Barth Family



Family: We're both native New Jerseyans, Jackie originally from Forked River in south Jersey, and Jeff from Roosevelt - a small Jewish arts community near Hightstown. Jackie spent her summers lifeguarding at the local lakes, and eventually made her way up to Madison when enrolled at Drew University. Jeff attended George Washington University, and then stayed in DC as a reporter on Capitol Hill before moving back to New Jersey. We met in 1992 at work, started dating (secretly of course!) in 1994 and married in 1996 on Drew's campus.

Chloe is almost 7 years old and very interested in soccer and creating books ("Written by Chloe Barth, Illustrated by Chloe Barth"). Amelia will be 5 in October and loves to sing and dance... She's our little actress. We're an interfaith family -- Jeff was raised Jewish, and Jackie Catholic (but is non-practicing).

Occupation: Jackie's been a stay-at-home mom since the day Chloe arrived on July 4, 2002 (one month early!)....However, her resume is finally ready for distribution, she's in job search mode. She's looking for a part-time Project Management or HRIS role at a "green" company... If you have any leads, please let me know! Jeff is an account executive for Hewitt Associates - an HR outsourcing firm. The firm (and his clients) are global, but he works mostly in Bridgewater and New York City.

Community Activities: Jackie's been heavily involved in Montgomery's Orchard Hill PTA for the last two years. She's a VP on the board and chairperson of the Environmental Concerns Committee. This includes activities like community nature walks, the Township Earth Day Fair, an environmentally-focused assembly for the 1,100 K-2 students (3 identical shows in one day) and a weeklong Earth Day celebration. As for Jeff, well, he'd *like* to be more active in the community, and *less* active at work. (Is it time to retire yet?)

Hobbies: Jackie likes reading (she's in a book club), eating (dinner and gourmet clubs), watching theater (theater club) and recycling (beyond what Somerset County accepts). She goes to the gym, though doesn't much like it! She loves the outdoors and--if she had the time, resources and free babysitting--would much rather be hiking, mountain climbing, horseback riding or canoeing. Traveling abroad is also a passion, but is not something we've done lately, since the kids came along. Her favorite locations are Greece, Ireland and her second home - France (she studied there for 4 months in college). Her top 3 wish-list destinations are Costa Rica, New Zealand and Africa.

Jeff likes creative cooking (which feeds Jackie's eating hobby), running, reading, movies, going to Bruce Springsteen concerts, and his favorite pastime of all, hanging out with the women in his life - Jackie, Chloe, and Amelia.

Favorite Movies: Jackie -- Titanic, Dances with Wolves, Slumdog Millionaire, Somewhere in Time. Jeff -- A River Runs Through It, Raging Bull, Bull Durham.

Favorite TV Shows: Jackie -- Grey's Anatomy, American Idol, Bachelor/Bachelorette, and in the old days - Seinfeld, Friends, Felicity, Party of Five, Northern Exposure. Jeff -- The Office, Mets games (until about the 7th inning), Curb Your Enthusiasm, and Jeopardy.

Favorite Music: Jackie -- The Fray, O.A.R, OneRepublic, Green Day, Taylor Swift, Carrie Underwood, Dixie Chicks, Madonna, Bryan Adams, Prince, Bon Jovi. Jeff -- Bruce Springsteen, The Clash, John Prine, Nanci Griffith.

Favorite Books: Jackie -- The Time Traveler's Wife, Water for Elephants, The Secret Life of Bees (to name just a few!). Jeff -- anything by Cormac McCarthy, also Catcher in the Rye, Paris Trout, and a good bio or history piece - No Ordinary Time (FDR), David Halberstam.

Favorite Childhood Memories: Jackie -- Camping trips (in a tent without an aerobed!) with my family before my parents got divorced. Sharing a room with my sister and singing songs before we fell asleep. Jeff -- Picking vegetables in my grandfather's backyard garden. Also, my father taking me and my brother to Mets games in the 60s and 70s. And now, returning the favor by taking my parents to Mets games. (They still find a way to lose!)

If I Had More Time: Jackie -- Besides more outdoor activities and travel, I would clean out the basement and organize all my childhood treasures and photos.... ever the practical one! Jeff -- I'd be a backyard vegetable farmer, read and write books, and sit on the back deck with a glass of wine and a view of the sunset.

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JUNE 2009

9 Sivan 5769 - 8 Tammuz 5769

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 9 Sivan 5:30AM/8:23PM	2 10 Sivan 5:29AM/8:24PM	3 11 Sivan 5:29AM/8:25PM	4 12 Sivan 5:29AM/8:25PM	5 13 Sivan 5:28AM/8:26PM 7:00 PM - Shabbat Services	6 14 Sivan 5:28AM/8:27PM Naso: Num. 4.21-5.10. Judges 13.2-25. 4:30 PM - Scott Papsin Bar Mitzvah
7 15 Sivan 5:28AM/8:27PM	8 16 Sivan 5:28AM/8:28PM	9 17 Sivan 5:27AM/8:28PM 7:30 PM - Board Meeting	10 18 Sivan 5:27AM/8:29PM	11 19 Sivan 5:27AM/8:29PM	12 20 Sivan 5:27AM/8:30PM 7:45 PM - Shabbat Services	13 21 Sivan 5:27AM/8:30PM Behaalotekha: Num. 8.1-9.14. Zechariah 2.14-4.7. 7:00 PM - Got Talent - Hebrew School Talent show
14 22 Sivan 5:27AM/8:31PM	15 23 Sivan 5:27AM/8:31PM	16 24 Sivan 5:27AM/8:32PM	17 25 Sivan 5:27AM/8:32PM	18 26 Sivan 5:27AM/8:32PM	19 27 Sivan 5:27AM/8:33PM 7:00 PM - Shabbat Services and Learner's Minyan	20 28 Sivan 5:28AM/8:33PM Shelah: Num. 13.1-14.7. Joshua 2.1-24.
21 29 Sivan 5:28AM/8:33PM	22 30 Sivan 5:28AM/8:33PM ROSH HODESH I Num. 28.1-15.	23 1 Tammuz 5:28AM/8:33PM ROSH HODESH II Num. 28.1-15.	24 2 Tammuz 5:29AM/8:34PM	25 3 Tammuz 5:29AM/8:34PM	26 4 Tammuz 5:29AM/8:34PM 7:45 PM - Shabbat Services	27 5 Tammuz 5:30AM/8:34PM Korah: Num. 16.1-22. I Samuel 11.14-12.22
28 6 Tammuz 5:30AM/8:34PM	29 7 Tammuz 5:30AM/8:34PM	30 8 Tammuz 5:31AM/8:34PM				



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June-July 2009

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