

Congregation
Kehilat Shalom NEWS

A Welcoming Jewish Reconstructionist Community

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Newsletter of the Congregation Kehilat Shalom of Belle Mead, NJ **May 2010** Iyar– Sivan 5770

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Bulletin from the Board-Debbie Gartenberg

Why am I on the board of a synagogue when I am not even Jewish? Why would the members of a synagogue want me on their board, let alone be their treasurer?

These are good questions. For many years – most of my life – I have always wanted to be part of a spiritual home. From when I was about 10 years old, however, I knew I didn't relate to Christianity, so joining a church was not an option for me as an adult. Yet, I was envious of my friends who had ties and commitments with their churches and synagogues where I didn't.



Joining CKS four years ago was just luck. We moved to the area and needed to join a synagogue so our youngest daughter could finish her Bat Mitzvah training. We literally chose the closest synagogue to our home. My husband, Gary, was asked as a new member to be on the Rabbi Search Committee which started his involvement in CKS. Our daughter, for her Bat Mitzvah project, volunteered to hold a rummage sale (with my help). Through these and other activities, Gary and I both got to know a number of people, which helped us feel much more connected to this synagogue. Having a Rabbi I could relate to and who is a hands-on Rabbi also helped me feel connected. Finally, I had found my spiritual home.

I sure wasn't looking to join the board, but when I heard they needed a new treasurer, I became interested. I have held the position before, and have had experience with QuickBooks. The fact that I am not Jewish (although I am feeling more and more Jewish all the time) didn't make any difference. At CKS, we present ourselves as a "warm and welcoming," and it is true. I have been welcomed on the board, even applauded (literally) for my efforts.

I like this community so much that I also got involved in helping plan the Enchanted Evening event. Again, a variety of people joined the effort – long time members, new members, and returning members. It was a really fun planning committee, and of course the event was terrific (except for the storm-with-no-name). Even with missing 41 people, we made about \$7000! Most important of all, we joined together as a community, even though we are personally diverse.

Finally, it is because of our synagogue's diversity that my presence on the board makes sense. We have a large non-Jewish population in our synagogue, and having our board reflect our diverse community is important. This is a terrific community, and I am happy and proud to be a part of it. When a plea goes out to get involved, I encourage you to sign up. I have gotten back so much more than I have given, and I have found my spiritual home – and a few new friends!

CKS GIFT SHOP
Big Clearance Sale
 before the annual meeting!!
 Get all your Judaica needs at great prices and benefit the synagogue.

CKS Donations

CKS gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our members and friends.

General

Shari Diamond

In memory of my father, Herbert Diamond
Steve Fischman

In memory of my father, Edward Fischman
Abby Robinson
Joe and Diane Wions

In honor of Jason Rosenthal's Bar Mitzvah

Annual Membership Meeting and BBQ

Sunday, May 23

After Religious School there will be a BBQ with burgers, hot dogs, sides, desserts and drinks. The entire congregation is welcome! Please RSVP to the office before May 18 so we will have an idea of how many people to expect.

Following the BBQ will be the annual membership meeting. All current members should plan to attend.

CKS Book Group

Monday, May 24, 7:30 pm

Location: TBA

Book - Song Yet Sung by James McBride

ALL are welcome!

For more information please call Marilyn Plotkin,
908-359-1498.

Enchanted Evening

Auction Items Still Available!

If you were not able to attend the Enchanted Evening auction for any reason, don't despair! There are still some terrific items available.

- Poolside Daiquiri Party on June 5th, hosted by Debbie Tesser, Amy Rosenthal and Debbie Gartenberg
- Kol Ahava will sing at your simcha.
- Study Smarter Skills Course with Bob Fass.
- Performance Strategies with Dr. Karen Cohen.
- Life Coaching Sessions with Judi Turkheimer
- Stunning Contemporary Abstract Prints
- To see more descriptions and to bid on the above items, please go to our website at www.ksnj.org. Bids will be accepted through Thursday, April 15, 2010. If you have any questions, please contact Debbie Tesser at auktion@ksnj.org.

**Having a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?
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A DAY OF SERVICE IN NEW ORLEANS



Imagine this. A group of 60 rabbis descends upon a neighborhood in the still flood-ravaged, post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans. After some opening remarks and explanations from our hosts, Beacon of Hope (www.lakewoodbeacon.org), a grassroots organization helping to rebuild New Orleans, we were divided into four groups.

“Who here knows how to use tools?” we were asked. After some good-natured joking about rabbis and tools, a respectable portion of us were shuttled off to a nearby house to put up dry wall, build a stairway, sand, and paint. (Your rabbi, alas, was not among those drill- and hammer-wielding clergy.) The rest of us “unskilled laborers” were sent to three other homes.

This was the scene opening day of the 2010 Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association Convention this past March. The home I worked on was owned by Deborah, who had moved to New Orleans both to be near her mother (who lived through Katrina), and to take part in rebuilding this beautiful and unique city. We helped Deborah clean up her yard – still filled with rocks, glass, and other debris left over from the flooding after the levees failed in the hurricane’s wake. We bagged up the debris, pulled weeds, planted flowers, mowed the lawn, put down a stone pathway between the back door and the garage, and painted the front door. We also sang and talked, catching up with each other as we worked in twos and threes. We ate lunch together on the front lawn in the warmth of the March New Orleans sun. Our homeowner, Deborah, directed us, worked alongside us, laughed and talked with us, and often just beamed with unbounded joy and pleasure in seeing her newly-cleaned yard and brightly-colored flower beds.

Deborah accepted our help with an admirable grace. Her own commitment to help rebuild New Orleans was inspiring. In this formerly middle-class neighborhood of Gentilly, Deborah’s home was the only occupied house on the block. Abandoned houses still outnumber the occupied ones, and the sight of so much debris and foundations overgrown with weeds five years post Katrina was as astounding as it was depressing.

And then, there was Deborah, full of hope about her new home and her new life. But there was something else too. There were us rabbis, bending over and getting our hands dirty, interacting with each other not through the usual study or dinner discussion, but through the “physical texts”, if you will, of Jewish social justice, of all the *mitzvot* that teach us that if study and prayer are to have purpose and meaning, they must lead us to action: to *maasim tovim*/good works and to *tikkun olam*/the repair of the

world. Each of us was so moved by this experience that we moved to incorporate a “day of service” into every Reconstructionist convention in the future.

Here at CKS, our students are required to do a “mitzvah project” as part of their b’nei-mitzvah process. Our students have done everything from collecting food for local food pantries or animal shelters, to collecting and sending bicycles to those in need around the world, to playing the piano once a week at a local eldercare facility.

Maybe we should join them. What would happen if we picked one social justice activity a year to work on as a community? What if we embarked on a project with a service organization in nearby Trenton, for example, or sent a group to work with Beacon of Hope in New Orleans? What if we teamed up with another synagogue or church? What would we learn about each other and ourselves? What might we accomplish?

If this idea interests or excites you, please contact either Mike Galkin (mgalkin@voicenext.com) or myself (rabbi@ksnj.org). Since ancient times, Jewish tradition has challenged us to care for the vulnerable in our society, to seek actively a world of true justice and mercy. Let us live up to this challenge and begin a new “day of service” of our own.

B’shalom,

Rabbi Susan



Tree of Life
Purchase a leaf for \$54 to celebrate a *simcha*! Each leaf includes three lines of engraving.
Contact CKS Office
908-359-0420



The CKS Gift Shop is open each Sunday 10 am - 11 am
Questions?
Susan Waskow 609-333-1113
or Harlene Rosenberg 908-874-8283




Now in its 16th full year, CKS’s non-sectarian pre-school for children 2½ 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 908-359-0420

May 2010



I hope you have all noticed that our last day of Religious School this year is June 6th. Since we only meet once a week, it is most important that we try to include 30 Sundays on our calendar. This year, due to all of the Jewish Holidays that fell on a Sunday, Religious School will go till June 6th. Thanks to the generous donation from a member of the CKS community, it is not a day you want to miss!!! For our Siyyum, end of the year celebration, we will be hosting MUSICAL IQ!!! We will all participate in *Drumatics (Drum Orchestra)* a special drum circle program which gives each participant the experience of being a part of a rhythm orchestra. This fun, high-energy, interactive program will help CKS create a rhythmic symphony! Following Drumatics we will participate in the Mondetta Show – this show brings together musical and rhythmic influences from around the world. This is another interactive show which highlights world class tap dance, musicians, and percussionists.

The entire congregation is invited to be a part of this fabulous morning on June 6th!

5th & 6th GRADE RETREAT!

Five of our students enjoyed a wonderful weekend at Camp JRF, April 30th – May 1st learning about Israel and Lag B'Omer. Some fun highlights included Shabbat Unplugged, Maccabiah games, and a Bonfire, complete with S'mores. Thanks to John Murphy for chaperoning.

CAMP FOR FAMILIES AT CAMP JRF

Family Camp - Camp isn't only for kids anymore! Parents, children, and other family members can now join us for five days of swimming, sports, arts, *havaya* (experiential education), singing, dancing, and all the best that Camp JRF has to offer. August 18 – 22, 2010. For more information, please visit <http://www.campjrf.org/parents/familycamp.htm>.

Tikkun JRF - Post *b'nai mitzvah* teens and their parent(s) can spend a week working together to make a difference by connecting to local communities and providing much needed support and building through a variety of *tikkun olam* (social action) community service projects such as building, home rehab and demolition, light carpentry, and more. Working side by side with one another, parents will model the caring and activist values they hold and teens will experience the power of their potential to make a difference in the larger world. August 15 – 20, 2010. For more information, please visit <http://www.campjrf.org/news/tikkun-jrf.htm>.

Shari Rothstein

Kehi-Loft



The members of Kehi-Loft celebrated the first month of spring by proving their ability to juggle upcoming exams, spring sports, family events, and countless other activities. However, even as the weather got warmer and external pressures increased, the dedicated members of Kehi-Loft still managed to set aside time to participate in the Loft's many opportunities. Judi Turkheimer visited Kehi-Loft on April 7th where she, as usual, posed thought-provoking and substantial questions for us to contemplate as we enjoyed pizza outside in the pleasant weather. We began the evening by talking about the rules and regulations set forth by schools: what rules must schools impose to create a successful working environment? How do we adapt rules that teens routinely break in order to ensure peace of mind for administrators as well as students? We also defined anxiety, discussed both physical and physiological symptoms of anxiety, and shared stories about our personal anxieties as well as methods by which to lessen the strain of anxiety in our lives. Though Judi answered none of our questions, she led us to examine ourselves in a very helpful and productive way. Thank you so much, Judi and we hope you will join us for more sessions next year!

The Rabbi joined Kehi-Loft on the 14th to help the seniors prepare their graduation speeches. Everyone laughed and enjoyed themselves as the reminisced while discussing the subject of their speeches: what Kehi-Loft means to them. The seniors especially noted the variety in ages, backgrounds, and schools that helped them to understand more about other Kehi-Loft members as well as themselves in a candid atmosphere. Additionally, serving the CKS community by leading services, teaching in the religious school, and participating in other temple events has given the seniors a sense of accomplishment that they will continue to remember as they start on the exciting road towards their futures. We will miss all of the seniors and wish them the best of luck in all of their endeavors! Don't miss out on your chance to hear the seniors' speeches as well as to take part in a special Kehi-Loft service on Friday, April 23rd!

After religious school on Sunday, April 18th, many of us paid a visit to Ilana Berger, an important member of Kehi-Loft, who is in the hospital. Though the room was quite crowded, not just with us but with Ilana's other guests as well, Ilana appreciated the time and effort it took to get everyone together in order to see her and we all enjoyed our time together in support of Ilana's quick recovery. Feel better, Ilana! Thanks so much to Marissa Applegate, Ariel Kramer, Samantha Kramer, Jeremy Bilotti, Gabe Fridkis, Harry Waskow, Nicole Schaum, Dan Kaufmann, and Corey Cochran for taking the time to support a fellow Kehi-Loft member and thanks to Karen and Larry Fridkis for driving all us back and forth to and from the hospital!

On Wednesday April 21st, Kehi-Loft will meet again from 6 until 9 pm. And again, please join us for a Kehi-Loft Graduation service on Friday April 23rd. April showers bring May flowers and hopefully many more exciting Kehi-Loft activities!

Shalom,
Ariel Kramer

May's Kehi-Loft schedule:

Wednesday, May 5 - Regular session
Sunday, May 16 - 7th graders are invited to an introductory session. 6:00 - 8:00
Dinner in Princeton - on one of these dates:
Monday, May 17; Tuesday, May 18; Monday May 24, or Tuesday, May 25

ATTENTION ALL 7TH GRADERS KEHI-LOFT INVITES YOU

to our meeting on
Sunday, May 16
6:00 - 8:00

Please join us and learn about Kehi-Loft

Pizza will be served!

rspv to Karen at

kfridkis@comcast.net before May 14

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What's Your Interest?

Your Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren Counties (JFEDSHAW) has been reaching out to the community to increase the understanding of its mission of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) and to ask those with like interests to help us make the mission succeed. We were pleased with the opportunities to speak recently with the board of CKS and to be able to inform you of some of our activities.

In this piece, let me outline only some of what the Federation has been doing and ask if you might be interested in joining in efforts such as these.

Did you know that in support of our local community, JFEDSHAW was instrumental in aiding Jewish Family Services to obtain a federal grant of \$225,000 to better serve our local elderly? We work closely with JFS as one of our major recipient organizations. Our Business Networking Group brings together local business people for networking to enhance business success in these difficult times (next BNG event is May 7). Your Federation works with local law enforcement agencies and schools to combat acts of anti-Semitic bias and we are a major supporter of the Holocaust and Genocide Foundation of Raritan Valley Comm. College to help educate middle- and high schoolers from around the state on the evils of genocide and ethnic prejudice anywhere. We support Rutgers Hillel to foster continued connection to the Jewish community among college students. The Federation works closely with local synagogues in many ways, e.g. to help find educators, to improve security measures, or to provide mitzvah project ideas for *B'nai Mitzvah* students.

In Israel there is a refrigerated truck donated by JFEDSHAW that brings lunches to hungry children of every background and abused children there now have a refurbished safe house and halfway house because of our Women's Philanthropy Division, which is now raising funds so that impoverished Jewish and Arab women in Israel can get loans to start their own businesses. Israelis displaced from their employment in Gaza are finding reemployment through monies raised by your Federation. Our Young Leadership Group is now raising funds to help children immigrated to Israel (Project Smiles) get much needed dental care (and we are working with religious schools in our area to help in this work).

Elderly Jewish citizens in the countries of the FSU receive needed food via donations raised by your Federation. We work to assure the safety of Jewish citizens of countries that threaten that right. Recently, JFEDSHAW was one of only two (of 157 US Federations) to have a project for raising funds to aid the citizens of Haiti up and running within 24 hours of the earthquake. Jewish Federations raised over \$5 Million for a country with a miniscule Jewish population.

This is just a taste of what the Federation, with your support, is up to. If you want to know more or would like to join in and provide your own talents and skills, let us know. Contact me at etolman@embarqmail.com or Diane Naar at 908-725-6994 (ext 202).

Thank you,

Ed Tolman, President JFEDSHAW

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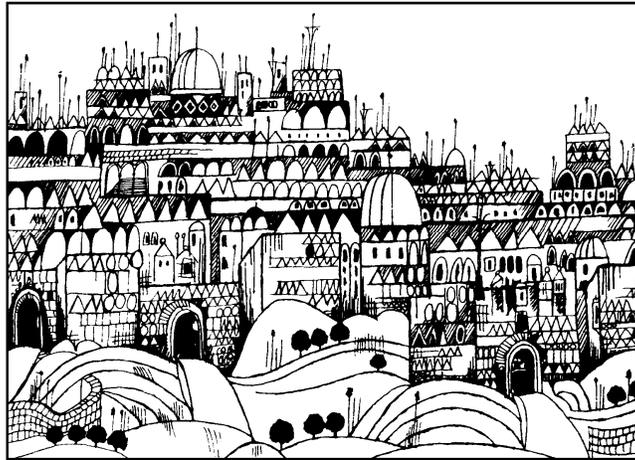
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MAY 2010



17 Iyar 5770 - 18 Sivan 5770

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Emor: Levit. 21.1-22.16. Ezekiel 44.15-31.
2 LAG B'OMER 9 - Noon - Hebrew School	3	4	5 6-8 PM Kehi-loft	6	7 7:00 PM Shabbat Family Service	8 Behar: Levit. 25.1-24. Behukotai: Levit. 26.3-27.34. Jeremiah 16.19-17.14.
9 9 - Noon - Hebrew School	10	11 7:30 PM Board Meeting	12 YOM YERUSHALAYIM	13	14 ROSH HODESH Num. 28.1-15. 7:45 PM - Shabbat Service	15 Bemidbar: Num. 1.1-54. Hosea 2.1-22.
16 9 - Noon - Hebrew School 6-8 PM Kehi-loft	17	18 EREV SHAVUOT 7:30 PM - Membership Committee Meeting	19 SHAVUOT Exo. 19.1-20.23, Num. 28.26-31. Ezekiel 1.1-28,3.12.	20 SHAVUOT II (YIZKOR) Deut. 15.19-16.17, Num. 28.26-31. Habakkuk 3.1-19.	21 7:00 PM Shabbat Service and Learner's Minyan	22 Naso: Num. 4.21-5.10. Judges 13.2-25. 9:30 AM - Rachel Underberg-Davis Bat Mitzvah
23 9 - Noon - Hebrew School Noon - Membership BBQ followed by Annual Membership Meeting	24	25 7:00 PM Religion Committee Meeting	26	27	28 7:45 PM - Shabbat Service	29 Behaalotekha: Num. 8.1-9.14. Zechariah 2.14-4.7.
30	31					

Whom to contact for...	
Adult Education	Meryl Bisberg- 908-874-8970
Beautification	Rhonda Wynston-Kraftt 908-864-0046 Audrey Starkman 908-904-0432
Billing/Payments	Robin Bengochea- 908-359-0420 ext. 1 admin@ksnj.org
B'nai Mitzvah (helpers, celebrations)	Meryl Orlando- 732-329-8945
Board of Trustees 2 nd Tues.	Matt Rosenthal- 908-874-0787
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Every effort will be made to publish contributed items, but due to space restrictions, placement and format are at the discretion of the editor.

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May 2010